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ENGL 388V

Learning Log #2

 I’ve really been having a great time working with Catherine to teach 101S. I’ve gotten a lot more comfortable with the students and I feel confident in my relationship to Catherine (she even requested for me to be her UTA next semester, too!). We talk after class every day and review how the lesson went and what’s up next. She’s very straightforward with me, both when I do something right and when something I did could be improved.

 I delivered my first lecture on Monday and it went so well! I taught a lesson on Tim O’Brien’s firs chapter in *The Things They Carried* and every student read the material. I was a little shaken up: this weekend, my grandfather passed away and the lesson revolved around the concept of death and grief. I worried that my own fresh grief might affect the lesson, but it ended up lending itself to a deeper, more genuine conversation. We had an awesome discussion about how the chapter could relate to the inquiry assignment. I actually had an issue with too many students raising their hands! I decided to sit down and stress the informality of the discussion and I think that really put them at ease with me. I really couldn’t have asked for it to have gone any better.

 I have actually taken a lot of what we’ve learned in 388V and used it in our classroom. I try to keep the readings about balancing instructor involvement in discussion in mind when speaking to the class. I used a replica of the charts we used to pick groups for our project in my own class to assign group projects. I’ve been keeping in mind the aspects of Bloom’s Taxonomy as I evaluate my students’ participation and comprehension.

 I had my first meeting with a student that is at risk of failing the class. He was actually very receptive. I was nervous that he might not take me seriously because I’m not the professor. I had to sit him down and explain that if he didn’t start doing the work, he would have no choice but to retake the course and spend even more time sitting in a subject he didn’t actually care about. He seemed to understand some of the points I made and we agreed to work on getting him more involved. That class, he raised his hand more times than I’ve ever seen him do before. It felt good to know that I might’ve inspired him to work for a better grade and experience.

 So far, it’s been a great experience! I’m really glad I decided to take a chance and become a UTA. The job is rewarding and inspiring.