

November 7, 2011

Dr. Mike Weber and I were colleagues at BYU-Hawaii for the 2010-2011 school year I am pleased to have this opportunity to put together some of my observations from my visit to Dr. Weber's physics class on Friday April 1st, 2011.

During my hour long visit, Dr. Weber conducted an engaging lecture discussion with his students. He began the class by going over the student's homework questions, providing various examples for clarification, correction and elaboration. Next, he reviewed the key elements from the content the students had discussed to date, an important strategy before introducing new material. During his discussion he used a variety of visual-aides both as a strategy to stimulate conversation for those that were more visual-spatial as opposed to simply verbal-linguistic as well as an academic accommodation for those that may have had some form of a processing disorder(s). Dr. Weber's visual-aides ranged from a summative power point reviewing the four fundamental classic laws of physics; he drew various diagrams both on the front and side whiteboards; he even introduced a video clip from youtube on wave length infrared to help the students better understand the concept.

Dr. Weber did a wonderful job helping the students make re-life connections with the content as well as actively involving them with the material through higher order questions, challenging them to really engage with the material. He consistently managed the student's engagement time by moving around the room varying his physical proximity with each the 12 students, calling on different students to expand or challenge a new idea or concept, asking for students to explain a

problem he had written on the board or provide an alternative solution. Dr. Weber's enthusiasm throughout the lecture was contagious and his consistent ability to answer questions, make connections, even provide alternative descriptions and explanations all demonstrated not only his fluency with the material, but his love for his content as well— both important elements for teaching a subject effectively.

Dr. Weber's physics lecture provided an effective balance between challenge and support – what Lev Vygotsky referred to as the “Zone of Proximal Development,” which from my experience as an professional educator demonstrates his understanding that no one student is alike; that today's classrooms consist of a range of abilities and interests and successful educators constantly strive to create environments where students actively engage in the learning process – not simply attend lectures and take notes.

It was a pleasure visiting Dr. Weber's class and if I can provide any further information or clarification on my observations, please feel free to contact me: Dr. Aileen Watts, aileen.watts2@gmail.com, (703) 624-2951.