

I observed Jennifer Mahal teach on Sept. 17, and Nov. 1, 2013.

The first lesson involved teaching nomenclature for alcohols and addition and elimination reactions. It was immediately apparent that Ms. Mahal had a good relationship with the students, which speaks to her interpersonal skills. This class had many vocal students who asked a lot of questions, which she was able to answer. Her lesson was well thought out, and had a logical flow to it. She related what she was teaching back to prior learning and also to real world applications. When I reviewed my observations with her after the class, I pointed out some strategies that she could use to better demonstrate the mechanism for the chemical reactions. Ms. Mahal was very open to this feedback.

I arrived a few minutes into the next class, observed on Nov. 1 and was greeted by a room full of students enthusiastically playing a card game of Redox wars. Ms. Mahal had a timer running on the Smart Board, and when time was up, she was easily able to move on to the next part of the lesson, despite the fact that the students really seemed to enjoy playing the game. She went on to teach how a redox table is constructed. She did this by doing a sample question, but making the students answer all her questions to gather the necessary information. Ms. Mahal then had the students work on building another redox table based on a series of spontaneous and non-spontaneous reactions. She spent time with students who were struggling with the concept, while letting others work on their own or with partners to build the table. There were additional questions for students to do if they completed the table sooner than some of their classmates. Ms. Mahal checked that everyone had built the table correctly by moving around the room, and then asked everyone to watch a short video (that they had watched previously) that demonstrated how to build a redox table using hypothetical metals and ions. She checked for understanding, and students said it made a lot more sense than the first viewing. Her classroom management skills were very evident as she transitioned between activities, gauging whether the students were ready to move on. She asked a student who was ready to launch into a discussion of the weekend movie releases to focus on the task at hand, which he did. One student commented that Ms. Mahal is very understanding and good at explaining concepts in different ways until the student understands the concept. Another student said that they got to do a lot of fun activities. I noticed that the variety of activities during this class kept student interest and engagement high. The structure of the activities demonstrated her student-centred focus to teaching. Her flexibility was evident as the students had negotiated a postponement of a quiz, which she agreed to. Her openness to feedback, and readiness to embrace suggestions leads me to believe she has a strong team orientation. Her instructional knowledge is solid, and I am confident that once she has taught the entire curriculum, she will make adjustments to her lessons based on her understanding of the concepts themselves and experience of which ones students struggle with.

Ms. Mahal demonstrates creativity, energy, instructional strategies and a passion for teaching that will serve her well as she embarks on her teaching career.



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