



October 29, 2018

Ben Holt
Southwestern Oregon Community College
1988 Newmark Ave.
Coos Bay, OR 97420

Dear Ben:

Thanks for allowing me to visit your MTH 95 Intermediate Algebra class today. It is a pleasure observing you teach. It was good being in your classroom.

You do a great job of helping students feel relaxed and comfortable. It is obvious you care about their learning and success. You demonstrate that through the Exam I Reboot in which you allow students to retake a different exam that may allow them to earn additional points to their score. However, you challenge them by acknowledging the exam may also give them a lesser score, so the intention is to learn and know the concepts rather than rely on chance. I also like the POW or problem of the week. I assume this is a problem that reviews the concepts of that week or previous weeks for additional practice and review.

I like the organization of your course with a basic pattern of lecture, group work, and problem presentation. Your lecture on quadratic formulas was intriguing today. I like how you use the screen and the board to introduce, explain, and illustrate concepts and problems. You do an excellent job of demonstrating the thought and solution process line upon line and precept upon precept.

I am fascinated by the “human side” of mathematics you use to structure today’s lesson. Your discussion of Babylonian mathematics provides a unique context for working out contemporary solutions that expand basic quadratic principles, specifically completing the square.

I like how you encourage the use of patterns that become templates students can use and reuse to solve problems. Not only is this a good strategy, but you’re reinforcing consistency. You provide good examples that become guides for the students. You show students short cuts only after they understand the reasoning behind the strategies.

You are supportive and encouraging with students. Students were engaged and comprehending the process. Students demonstrate critical thinking as they apply principles of completing the square. You suggest real-life use of these principles by focusing on the Babylonian application to calculate inheritances and interest and solve irrigation and harvest problems. I like how you have students put their pencils down, not take notes, but be present. You remind them that they are exercising many skills as they simplify problems.

Above all, you demonstrate that you are a prepared teacher who cares for students and for your discipline. Well done.

Take care,


Rodney D. Keller