Post classroom observation reflection questions

CoAT Participant: Jacob Norton
Course observed: MA 131, Calculus for Life and Management Sciences A (recitation)
Date of observation: 10/13/2011
Time of class: 12:25
Observed by: William Kranec

1. What did you feel went well in this class session?
During this session I had created an extra worksheet to help students practice evaluate integrals. Like in any subject, practice is a critical element to recognizing the finer points of the process of integration. I started the class out as I always do, by asking if there are questions about old material and putting an outline of what I wanted to get done on the board. I then reviewed the main points of the material that Bill had gone over in lecture during the week by going over examples. I then let them work at their own pace on the extra work by themselves or with students around them and ask questions about homework questions or the practice integrals. When a question was asked by at least two students I stopped everyone and went over it with the whole class to make sure that the method for that question was understood.

The class went well overall. The students were involved, though a bit reserved probably due to Bill’s presence. The students were willing to ask bigger questions of me and interact with each other to ask smaller questions.

2. What would you like to change about this class session if you had to teach it again?
I would like to change how I ended the class. I didn’t do a good job in bringing the class to a conclusion. Because it was a recitation during which time I was going over questions, it is a bit more difficult to have a logical conclusion because students are working on different questions but I still would have liked to impart some singular last message before students left.

3. In light of the observer’s comments, what aspects of your teaching approach will you look at changing in the future? How will you do this?
I would like to have a strong ending to classes. I have a general idea how to start a class, but the end is still not as strong, but is just as important. Also, I would like to use the board more efficiently. If this had been a lecture, I think that I would have had a plan of what I wanted written up on the board. However, as it was a recitation after my initial examples I only wrote on the board those questions that students asked about which led to some disorganization.

4. What have you found useful/not so useful about the observation process?
I thought it was very useful to have an experienced teacher watch the class and look for areas in which I could improve. Student feedback is often too general to be instructive about specific methods in the classroom, so this is very useful.