
TANZANIA CONNECTIONS

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How do you measure success?

How do you measure success, if not outright success, then progress? In the US, we use tests, grades, and other external measures: numbers, numbers, numbers. Numbers have always been my friends. But somehow, when I think about the adult English classes here in Tanzania - numbers don't seem adequate.

I could talk about the number of students who come to class but that fluctuates from day to day. I can talk about challenges I give them that might look like quizzes but are not. (I learned early on that my adult learners are intimidated with the prospect of being wrong or being judged with a score. So I have avoided scores -- but not challenges, games, and questions.) So, is success less for the student who only comes once a week as opposed to the core group who comes to every class. When they are in class all of them were engaged and tried to participate. So, is success measured by what I teach or what they think they are learning?

I have been asking myself these questions as our time here at Manow winds down. Yesterday, was the last meeting of my English skills class in Tukuyu. This was a special class that met over the course of five Friday's starting in October. We set it up for staff and pastors at the Konde Diocese who wanted to improve their conversational English. (Like my adult English class in Manow, interest and skills varied tremendously.) Each week the number of participants varied and there were a few that came each week. By yesterday's class they were asking and answering each other's questions and putting up with my interjections. It wasn't always "correct" English but it was communication well beyond the basics. The basics being:

- My name is _____.
- I come from _____.
- I have ___ (#) children.
- How are you? I am fine.

The students were talking about their jobs. How long they have been working in Tukuyu. What they liked to do when they were not at work. What they liked best about their jobs, and what they wanted to do when they retired or moved on. It was real stuff - - things that made up their lives and the lives of their families. They struggled when I asked them questions that dug a bit deeper (Which of your children are most like you or your spouse?) But they gamely tried to answer. Not letting the fear of being incorrect get in the way of telling the story. I was so proud of them. They were talking to each other and ready to try new topics. I think that these are fine measures of success. I feel very fortunate to have been able to work with them. *Ginny*



Ginny

Reflections

As I write this, we are nearing the completion of our time in Manow and teaching Pre-Form 1 English. It is a time of mixed emotions. Our time here has been incredible, as well as challenging. It has been frustrating, and it has been the experience of a lifetime. We have made good friends; we have challenged ourselves and our students.

The progress the students have made is becoming unquestionably apparent as we begin reviewing for the final exam. Thinking back to that first week, they couldn't write a three-word sentence that made

sense. Now, sitting here correcting their 2-page stories about sustainable farming is a bit overwhelming. I'm quite certain that if I took a 10-week class in a foreign language, I could not write as well as they now write.

I am in awe of the openness of the students, their willingness to learn and how hard they try, even the ones who are not the top performers.

Thank you for your support enabling the teaching of Pre-Form 1 English. It is the willingness of people to help others become educated, that will enable us all to address and hopefully solve the very large problems of our countries and our planet.

Suzanne



Suzanne

Review, remember, and study.

Review, remember, and study. This was said to the students every day as they left the classroom. I too practiced this every day as I left the classroom. I thank the students who looked at me out of the corner of their eyes with a devilish grin when I asked interesting questions waiting for an individual response. I thank them for their humorous challenge. I have taught English language skills that keep getting better, thank heavens! Student David's sentence after our first-aid unit, "My car is allergy to the road." David now has a clearer understanding of where cars and roads are and how allergies effect people and not cars!

I have given so much of myself to these students. And they have given so much of themselves to me. I will think of them and remember them forever.

Thank you for supporting me in this inspirational journey.

Johna



Johna

Send email!!

We would love to hear from you about how things are going for you, and how you like the newsletters this year. We may not be able to respond as quickly as in the US, but we really like hearing from you.

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If the newsletters inspired you to think about teaching in the program, please let Nancy know. Her email is wintersnl@comcast.net