

The Knitterly Teacher

I have taught a lot of things in my life. I can remember teaching dancing, Bible stuff (duh), flute, math, reading, etc. I've lead plenary session at large events. Most recently, I've started to teach water aerobics at the YMCA nearby.

Last Saturday I taught my first knitting class. Now, I've taught or helped folks one-on-one with knitting issues, because if you've knit as long as I have, it's hard not to do so.

Teaching a class on a pre-determined topic for *which people have paid* is a whole new kind of teaching. The basics are the same as any teaching. What are my goals for the students in the class? How can I help them along in their learning? What resources can I leave with them or lead them to so that the learning does not end with the Session?

The class? Intro to Lace Knitting.

First, a digression. I am silly enough to, when my college roommate Lolly retaught me to knit continental style (thanks, Lolly!), decided to make my first sweater a long-sleeved sweater on size 1 and 2 needles, in an all-over lace pattern. The only good thing was that I didn't choose cotton yarn - instead, it's some kind of itchy mohair/wool blend that I can't wear next to my skin. Yes, I am crazy.

But I did finish it. And altered the length of the body and sleeves to my petite frame. This was a sign of my future knitting determination.

So, going back now to look at what I wanted to know when I first tried lace knitting I realized several things:

- Charts are cool. I'm a visual learner, and what a chart would have done for me I simply cannot express.
- The person who invented the lifeline should win the equivalent of the Nobel Peace prize for knitting.
- Stitch markers are not for small minds. They are for any mind that can wander for even a nanosecond.
- Fixing lace mistakes comes with the territory - you are not stupid or dumb if you make them - we all do.

And you know what? I don't think any of my students thought I was new to teaching knitting...