

OBSERVATION REPORT

On April 10th, 2023, I audited a three-hour Listening and Speaking ESL class at the University of Montana (IC 113) at 9am. This was a class for Advanced English students (levels 5/6). All of the students in the class were ESL students studying abroad from Japan.

The class was organized in a U-shape with the students side by side at their desks. They could interact with one another and see the instructor at the same time, which is ideal for a Listening and Speaking class. The room had upper windows for light as well as additional ceiling lighting and a projector with accompanying computer set up at the front of the class. The room was also equipped with a whiteboard. There wasn't much additional information on the walls.

The agenda for this class was to have the students finish up Unit 10 on "Food" from their "Pathways" textbook. They had presentations to give, and then the class transitioned to talking about their next topic which was health and technology debates.

The instructor began with a warm-up activity where she instructed the students to write their digital habits on a piece of paper. They had to write both positive and negative habits. Next, students chose a goal for themselves to change a negative to a positive. They discussed with each other and with the class. This was a decent icebreaker to get the students engaged and talking right away.

Next, the students were giving presentations that they had prepared based on a survey project they had completed the previous week. They utilized the projector. The students were graded on vocabulary, pronunciation, and their assignment elements. After each presentation, the instructor prompted the class to ask questions and talk more about the topic which was GM food and food waste. The students seemed engaged and talked a lot with one another.

I will note that the students were very inclined to speak with one another in Japanese often, and had to be reminded a few times to speak to one another in English more. The instructor also made sure everyone participated by calling on different people who hadn't spoken in awhile to ask them for input. I could tell she was really paying attention to the individuals.

After the presentations, the teacher asked everyone to take out a small piece of paper to do a final reflection. She asked the students what they found interesting about Unit 10, what was boring, and what was difficult. The students all wrote thoughtful answers. She then asked them to tell what they had written. I think it was very helpful to have the students write their answer first and then answer verbally. It was a good scaffolding technique to help them organize their thoughts instead of being put on the spot.

The instructor asked the students what was surprising about the American students they had surveyed. She did a good job of leaning into cultural differences and allowing the students to be themselves so that they don't feel too much pressure to act a certain way and can become more comfortable listening and speaking in English.

Next, the teacher grouped the students into their survey groups to make new debate groups. She had them sitting in groups of 4 facing one another. The students were given a handout on debate structures. This was another excellent scaffold to help them with organizing their thoughts. We used the computer to listen to a sample debate. Then, students got to utilize their laptops and phones to research what they wanted to debate. All the ideas were written on the board. They settled on "Transgender athletes should be allowed to join the olympics" and "Fossil fuels should be banned by 2050 in Japan."

These were controversial topics chosen 100% entirely by the students themselves. I really enjoyed this kind of content-based and student-led learning environment. The Pathways book they utilized is organized similarly with interesting world topics and lots of pictures.

When the teacher (Judy) led the class activity, she was very fluid. Something very important to remember is to constantly gauge the engagement of the class and alter your approach as you go. If students didn't respond well, she would switch it up, offering different questions, phrasing things in another way, or she would switch to individual questioning or add in a visual or a new example. If the students were talking a LOT and messing around, she didn't try to over-control them. Instead, she would ask the student to explain in English the joke or to say whether or not they enjoyed or understood the activity. It was really important to me that the teacher did not have a (me vs. them) mentality. Instead, you could tell she viewed the classroom as a small community and treated everyone fairly.

Her dominant approach seemed to be a mixture of audio-lingual and communicative language teaching with lots of student-led activities. Because of the nature of a speaking/listening course, she was able to keep engagement through authentic sources, media, and real-life examples. She had a very casual, conversational style while utilizing synonyms and context examples so that everyone was sure to understand. She asked thoughtful questions and prompted different students for answers so that no one felt left out.

PRACTICUM REPORT

*IC 108- Business Writing - February 23rd, 2023- 1pm
University of Montana*

Activity Title: Resume Help- Tutoring

Target Skill: Writing

Activity Objective(s): The activity was for students to work on the drafts of their resumes, adding all of the content discussed in the proper formatting and with proper grammar.

Class Level: Advanced 5/6

Materials: Student laptops and workbooks. Projector.

Time: 1 hour

Procedure:

This was an individual tutoring activity where I helped students with their professional resumes. Initially, I went around the classroom just to read through and see what everyone was working on. Then, I stayed with each student to ask them thoughtful questions about what they were working on and help them to include all of the elements needed for a resume. The students were very responsive and willing to speak with me.

With the individual aspects, I was able to explain the reasons behind different kinds of formatting. Students were listing jobs and describing what their responsibilities were. We went over the fact that complete sentences were not always necessary in resumes. We talked about dates and locations for jobs. The students got a chance to describe to me aspects of their previous jobs. I helped them with synonyms and different ways they could phrase things to communicate their meaning.

Reflection:

The students responded very well to casual correction and asked me why certain things were said a certain way. It was difficult, however, for me to not just tell them the answer to things. It's important to allow the students to have space to put things into their own words. The students seemed to want everything to be done "right" and so prompted me for the right words. Sometimes instead, I would flip the script and instead ask them the reasoning behind their own word choice. This was a very good exercise for me in bringing a more formal type of attention to the interactions, causing them to think about their own writing from an outsider's perspective.