

CLASSROOM OBSERVATION

Observer: Maripaz García, Ph.D., SPAN 110 Course Director
Observed: Laurie Lomask, graduate student, Yale University
Place: LORIA B50, Yale University
Date & Time: Wednesday, October 5, 2011 10:30-11:20am
Size of class: 16 or so

General impression

This was an excellent class in which students learned and practiced the reflexive verbs. The teacher spoke in Spanish at all times.

Classroom management

A couple of students once in a while were not paying attention and talking among themselves about non-class-related issues, making jokes or being distracting.

The teacher maintains the floor well and recovers it without a problem after students have been working on an activity.

The teacher requests students to speak in Spanish when they ask her questions in English.

Class activities

10:30 The teacher explains in Spanish details about tomorrow's composition.

The teacher tells students to review stem-vowel changing verbs, which they saw yesterday, and they fill out a worksheet she provided. When students finish, they all share and the teacher writes the verbs on the whiteboard.

10:42 The teacher tells students to go to p. 147 where reflexive verbs are explained and asks for volunteers to read a paragraph that uses reflexive verbs.

10:50 The teacher shows a powerpoint presentation to pinpoint the difference between reflexive and non-reflexive verbs. She explains where to write the pronoun.

10:55 They work on a textbook exercise in pairs and alone. The teacher circulates to help. She speaks Spanish. At times, she allows them to ask in English.

11:06 The teacher shows on screen the daily routine of Antonio Banderas and then requests students to write about the daily routine of a famous person. They work in groups of two or three.

11:16 They share their paragraphs. The teacher does not interrupt the flow. At the end of the student's speech, she writes all correct forms on the whiteboard. Three groups share.

Techniques

As corrective feedback, the teacher uses mainly metalinguistic clues to initiate self-correction ("este es un verbo que cambia de raíz, entonces..."), direct correction (particularly for pronunciation), and repetition with emphasis. She praises students who do a good job.

At one point, when the teacher realizes students are making too many errors, she interrupts the exercise and goes back to re-explain a specific issue.

To clarify new vocabulary, teacher draws on the whiteboard.

Students volunteer and the teacher also calls on them.

When a student doesn't understand, the teacher re-phrases using simple and comprehensible input.

The teacher requests full sentences from students when they do not use full sentences.

Suggestions

I suggest maintain certain distracting students away from each other. I also suggest placing some of them on the front of the class to assure better attention and reduce their possibility to hide.

I already met with the instructor and I suggested her to keep the activities a little bit more authentic and apply them to the students' real lives, like following up sentences with real questions about their routine and why they do what they say they do. This will make the language more authentic and real. It might relax students too.

END OF OBSERVATION