

**Yale Teaching Center
Post-Observation Report**

Observer: Annie de Saussure

Observed: Laurie Lomask – Intermediate Spanish II, Span 140, Section 06

Date / Time: Tuesday, April 23, 2013 10:30-11:20 in WLH 204

Preparation and Structure

Laurie was very well prepared for class. She came to class with several activities and presentations for the students which kept class time dynamic and activities varied.

The class was well structured and divided between work in small groups and full-class discussion. This is especially important for a class of that size (around 14 students) in order to allow all students to speak and use the language during class time.

Laurie clearly had a pre-set structure for the class, but she also demonstrated flexibility and adaptability. When students seemed to have questions about a certain aspect of the story they were discussing, she attended to their questions thoughtfully and thoroughly.

Teaching Strategies and Materials

Laurie's class was very student-centered and communicative. The students did most of the talking, and they worked very independently and autonomously. From my own experience teaching, I appreciate how much work goes into building a classroom environment where students feel comfortable enough to take charge of their own learning and class time in this way.

She used several different activities to engage the students. First, she had students separate in groups based on the color of their shirts. This was a creative and fun way to divide students into new groups and to have them work with other students they might not usually work with. She had the students in these groups work out putting certain events from the novel they were reading in chronological order by rearranging slips of paper. This activity had students engaged and talking to one another very actively, attempting to recall details of the story together.

Following this group activity, Laurie led the students in a review and class discussion about the story. Many students volunteered their thoughts and perspectives in this discussion. It was dynamic and engaging.

Finally, Laurie used a PowerPoint presentation to engage the students. The theme was about artists who have been declared insane and whether or not we can determine if they really were insane. She showed examples of the work of different artists, including Goya, Frida Kahlo, Van

Gough, and Sylvia Path. After each slide, students discussed and debated in small groups about whether or not the artists were insane and why.

Finally, the last slide engaged a film that the students had seen which dealt also with insanity. It was clear that there was a thematic relevance to this discussion. It evoked some of the main materials that the student had reviewed throughout the course.

The last slide had a series of discussion questions listed on it. Students were to sit in small groups and come up with answers to the discussion questions. These questions seemed designed to review vocabulary, grammar and the content of the stories and films that the students had been seeing and reading. The students were to finish these questions for homework.

Classroom Management and Affective Factors

Laurie managed the class very well without being the center of the class, which can be a difficult balance to achieve. She used class time very effectively in such a way that all students were talking and using the language during class in a variety of different ways.

I was struck by how comfortable the students seemed to be in the class. They were not afraid to speak up and voice their opinion. Laurie has successfully created a positive and engaging student-centered learning environment in her classroom.

Conclusion

Laurie's class was a fun class to observe. It was engaging, upbeat and dynamic. Watching her teach gave me some ideas of how I could make my classroom more student-centered and how I might better foster student-to-student learning. It was great to see, during the group work for instance, how Laurie's students were teaching each other and answering their own questions about the story or about grammar. It was really student-centered learning happening right before my eyes. It was a great class, and I wish Laurie the very best in her teaching years to come!

Annie de Saussure
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