

Lesson Description

The second class I decided to observe is Spanish 101 at The University of Arizona. This class meets four days a week for fifty minutes intervals with the teacher teaching two classes back to back, but in different rooms. This class was conducted with the expectation that all electronics were put away, including putting away earbuds that are usually in the students ears. I am not sure what textbook is used for this class, but no textbook was seen during the class period, an observation that seems to be the same between the two different language classes I had observed. The class size is 20-25 students, but only about 18 students had shown up with the class being mainly women dominated. A stark difference to the Japanese 102 class where men were the dominant students.

To start the class, the teacher greeted the students in Spanish and waited for the students' response, but to my surprise no one responded and class moved on after a short pause of silence. Like Japanese 102, the teacher briefly goes over the plans for the day, but unlike Japanese 102 this brief introduction is done entirely in English. The majority of this class period was focused on reviewing certain topics that they struggled with in their midterm. This is where the class shifted from using English to using Spanish. The teacher gave all instructions in Spanish and if the students seemed confused, the teacher would repeat the instructions in Spanish, but with motions and gestures to give context for the students to follow. All activities done in this class were mainly focused on group activities either done in pairs or done in large groups. These activities involved playing games which required the students to get up and move around. To end the class period the teacher had the students do a quick reflection. This reflection focused on their language goals for the final semester and a short reflection on their language journey so far.

The teacher managed the classroom mainly through moving around the classroom. I say this in the sense that I observed that the teacher was constantly moving and giving each student a designated moment with them. For example, during the beginning of class, if a student was late then the teacher made a point to walk over and give a brief overview of what they were doing while also reminding them of the rules of the classroom (technology use if the student had their phone or earbuds out). This in itself was a way for the teacher to manage the environment of the

classroom. The other way the teacher managed the classroom was making sure everyone was participating by walking around the classroom during group participations. During these activities it is important to note that not all students wanted to participate and instead sat in silence. During these times the teacher made a point to walk up to each one and make sure they engage in the activities.

Reflection

There were a few techniques I found myself wanting to try from this observation. One of them was rather unique as I feel like it is something that we often forget about, but it's also something that is needed when learning a new language. The unique technique was the explaining of why in regards to a language. For example, when it came to the use of a certain word that can be used in different means than it is used in the English language instead of just saying "because that is how it is in this language" the teacher went deeper and explained the reasoning behind the grammar/vocab point so that the students had a deeper understanding of the Spanish language. This is a technique that I want to try implementing at least in my 101 classes, but perhaps for classes past 101 also implement this technique, but speak in the designated language instead of explaining it in their L1. Another technique I would like to implement into my teaching is the movement of the teacher. I prefer when the teacher actively moves around the classroom and interacts with the students, I felt like this made it easier for the teacher to get an insight on what the students are doing during group activities as well as give the students opportunities to ask questions when the teacher walks by. This was a complete opposite to the Japanese 102 class, but strangely I found that the Japanese 102 class was more active in participation. Taking this into consideration I might try to find a middle ground after doing some research on why the class participation was so vastly different between the two.

This observation was almost a complete opposite in regards to how the teacher teaches language. For example, in Japanese 102 the teacher only used Japanese while in Spanish 101 the teacher used English, the Spanish 101 teacher actively moved around the classroom while the Japanese 102 teacher stayed at the front. Yet the materials used and how the class was conducted was almost identical. They both started with a greeting and overview of what they were going to do as well as made extensive use of group activities and most notable the absence of the physical textbook in class. Through these observations it made me realize that although teachers have

different styles in regards to teaching, they tend to follow the same format when it comes to the lessons themselves. After observing two different classes I find myself wanting to implement the way the teacher teaches or manages their classroom from both teachers. I prefer the way the Spanish 101 teacher actively moves around, but I prefer the way the Japanese 102 teacher only speaks in Japanese to the students.

I want to briefly mention one strange thing I noticed in my observations. There was a clear gender domination in each classroom. In Japanese 102 I observed that the classroom was made up of around 75% male while Spanish 101 was the opposite with about 75% of the class being female. In addition to these observations I had the chance to see the students of the Japanese 102 class before the one I observed and to my astonishment, the class was 100% male, with not a single female student in sight. This left me wondering why there was such a big difference in gender when it came to certain languages. If I had the opportunity I would have liked to ask how much gender difference there was in both programs (Japanese and Spanish) and if the gender inequality was still evident than I would have loved to conduct further research on why there are more males taking Japanese than females and why there are more females taking Spanish than males.