

Classroom observation



I was fortunate to have taught the current second years during the first semester. At first, some of the students were scared and overwhelmed as they were not aware that I would be presenting my classes in English. On the first day, all of the interpreting devices were used by the Afrikaans students. However, during the class, some of the students stopped using it. After three classes, there were no students using the interpreting services and the interpreter soon left the class as her services were not needed anymore by the students. I encouraged the Afrikaans students to speak in Afrikaans as I assume that sharing experiences and feelings are better expressed in a language you feel comfortable with.

In addition to the language, I observed few other things that bothered me while I gave class:

The use of cellphones

Lack of class participation

Lack of student integration

Lack of class preparation

Lack of meaningful discussions

Students who are introverts

During the first semester it took me sometime to discover these observations and towards the end of the semester I tried to address these concerns; however it was too late to actually monitor and evaluate it.

During the second semester, I tried to explore opportunities to address these concerns in a way that it will benefit each student and the class as a whole.

The use of cellphones & lack of participation

During class I encouraged students to work in groups, at each session there would be a fun and creative activity that I would integrate in the module that relates to the learning outcomes of that study unit. In this way students were encouraged to work together and they needed to focus on their group activity as I encouraged every student to participate. I made these learning opportunities fun and exciting; therefore the students were very much willing to interact.

Lack of student integration and lack of class preparation

During the first semester, the classroom dynamics felt strange to me, there would be a group of English students seated right at the top, a group of Afrikaans students seated in the middle and a small group of English students seated towards the bottom; however this seating arrangement stayed through to the second semester. There was no integration between these groups of students; observing this, I used a platform to integrate the students; I made use of socrative, an online learning tool. I placed students in groups of my own, making sure that there was integration

between students and at the beginning of every class, we played Socratic. I would develop 10 – 15 questions relating to the outcome of the study unit for that specific session and the students would answer the questions, at the end of the game, I would give the group that won a sweet / chocolate. In this way, students were encouraged to prepare for class as they would not be able to answer the questions if they did not prepare. This also encouraged student integration.

Lack of meaningful discussion and students who are introverts.

I wanted to create an online learning environment beyond the classroom. Most students step out of the classroom and leave the knowledge behind. I wanted to encourage students to link the outside world with the classroom, I wanted students to bring the outside world in to the classroom. This is the reason I integrated Twitter in the classroom. I encouraged each student to download the Twitter app and register an account. I encouraged them to tweet regarding their experience in class. I would also encourage them to discuss certain topics and concepts relating to the study unit outcomes. It was a good way to evaluate if students understand the theory and I would encourage them to tweet / post on examples relating to the theory. This also enabled students who are introverts and shy to share their experiences and opinions on the Twitter platform.