

Reflections

Lesson one

I was pleased with the level of student engagement with the topic and lesson. The images and fairytale titles were useful visual cues which activated the students' schemata on fairytales allowing them to contribute ideas, memories and vocabulary. My assumption that students would be able to recall key vocabulary from previous years and articulate these in the target language however, proved incorrect in most cases. Although students could offer titles and fairytale figures in the TL, they were not yet able to offer vocabulary on problems or themes. This meant there was much talking in English. There was also talking in some groups as I was giving instructions and I need to have a strategy for dealing with this.

Lessons two and three

In general, I was pleased with this lesson. I felt students were engaged and worked well. I used a variety of tasks and modes of lesson delivery so students did not get bored in this double lesson. Grammar can be dry, but I thought my teaching of it as an inquiry-based, discovery exercise in the context of the fairytales prevented it from being a boring, isolated grammar drill. I also felt my instructions were clear. My decision to separate the less motivated, chatty students also worked well. There were clear benefits for these students; not only had they been more focused on class material, but their learning had also been supported by their more motivated and capable peers. There was also a clear benefit for the entire group as the quieter classroom had optimized learning for all. Although I did not need to use it, I had decided on a clear strategy for behavior management which was to simply stand and wait. I had seen my mentor implement this and it was very effective. I was also pleased with my implementation of ICT in this lesson. Students could see its value as tool for learning. The use of ICT in the classroom will, however, be a challenging area for me as I have not grown up with digital literacy. This is an area I will need to focus on as I could see in this lesson how even more engaged students became while populating the verb chart on the laptop for peer sharing.

My mentor was also generally pleased with this lesson. I had offered a variety of tasks through which students had learnt the imperfect in an engaging way. She also thought my explanations in relation to the grammar were clear and detailed. This is one of my strengths as I have a thorough understanding of both German and English grammar having recently completed a double major in German and linguistics in my undergraduate degree.

She did however also point out that I need to begin my lessons in a more engaging way. Beginning this lesson by asking students if they had thought of any new fairytale vocabulary since the last lesson was not productive. She has suggested I begin with a puzzle. The benefits in doing this are two fold; not only does it encourage punctuality as students know they have something challenging to look forward to, but it also engages students and helps them focus especially at the beginning of a double lesson.

Lesson four

Once again, I was generally pleased with this lesson. The anagram puzzle at the beginning of the lesson was highly effective. It not only engaged the students but also allowed for consolidation of the imperfect verb forms for regular and irregular verbs. I was also pleased that students were highly engaged in and were able to achieve the quite challenging text sequencing activity. Clearly, my ESL training and experience has given me valuable insight into the importance of scaffolding students learning and I see this as one of my strengths. In addition, I thought the lesson was well structured.

My mentor was also very pleased with this lesson. She commented on my willingness to heed her advice and make improvements to my lesson. This was evident in the puzzle with which I began my lesson. She also commented on my ability to scaffold vocabulary and concepts so the rather complex text task was achievable for students. In addition, she remarked that my lessons are well structured with appropriate sequencing.

Lesson five

I was again pleased with this lesson. The jumbled sentence task at the beginning of the lesson worked well as a focusing strategy as well as a review of the imperfect for the upcoming test. The text analysis questions were interesting and engaging for students and not as easy as they first thought. Although the questions were in the TL and therefore challenging for students, my checking of their understanding first and scaffolding when necessary, helped students solve them. I am also very pleased with the activities and handouts I have created for the students and see this as one of my strengths. In addition, I am happy with my stance in the classroom, I feel my firm yet friendly manner is effective in building rapport with the students.

Lesson six

I was pleased with the lesson. Both the text sequencing task and text analysis questions had been engaging for the students and have now set them up for the end product. The test was a worthwhile task. Although it will not count towards their formal assessment, some students had taken it seriously so there were some pleasing results. With 59% the class average, there were four students above this with two students on 94% and 85%. There were however, 5 students below the average. In this group, three students were only slightly below on 56% and 52%, with the other two well below on 25% and 31%. The latter two also happen to be the least motivated in the group. This was a very valuable exercise as it gave me insight into the writing of tests as well as the opportunity to see how much students had learnt from my teaching of imperfect verb forms. As my mentor pointed out, in spite of my thorough teaching of the imperfect, some students were still not able to apply it with some success. In a future unit with the imperfect, I will include more activities on the form, perhaps using an interactive computer aided program, before testing students.

My mentor was very pleased with this lesson. She thought both the text sequencing task and the text analysis questions on Dornröschen had been well thought out and had been very valuable as scaffolds for the end product. She also thought that I had supported both these tasks well by

eliciting/pre teaching necessary vocabulary and concepts. I see scaffolding as one of my strengths.

Lesson seven

I was pleased with this lesson. The hidden fairytale figures activity at the beginning of the lesson was a change from the anagram and the students were thoroughly engaged. In contrast to my teaching of the imperfect, which began with a verb substitution table on the board, this lesson on coordinators snuck up on students in a listening and cloze exercise. This worked well within the context of the fairytale and students liked discovering the word order for themselves.

My mentor also commented on the effectiveness of the hidden fairytales figures. She also mentioned that students appear to be more and more willing to take risks by speaking more freely in response to my questions. She did however; comment that I had used complicated grammar terminology on my worksheet which was not necessary and can confuse students.