

Supervision: NN April 4 – 201110/31/2012

I'll write my comments in red in the text from the last time; thus it is easier for you to see how things to my eyes have developed.

But let me put it straight right here: It is much better! Very encouraging to me.

General remarks:

A well structured lecture. Good and balanced PowerPoint-slides. You create a friendly atmosphere.

Your pace is too fast. This periodically makes your English hard to understand, and besides, it makes it difficult for the students to keep concentration and attention.

You started out pretty fast, but within 5 minutes or so your pace was good and it remained good – this is impressive, for slowing down is very difficult to many teachers (to my experience, anyway). You also made a bit longer pauses between the individual slides when the contents were very different – very good.

When teaching a small group like the one today, you should interact much more with the students – activate them, that is. Thus they learn much better – personal involvement supports learning, passive listening hampers it. Actually, research has shown that the lecture is not the best way to deep learning, on the contrary (I take it you know this concept from your CBS courses).

See comments below – you're moving, indeed, so be on track and experiment. Do contact me if you want to discuss ideas or just need a piece of advice.

In the text below you'll find some advice and focus points – as I wrote the other day: This is not sterile criticism, but constructive input for you to reflect upon and use.

Altogether, I am happy to see how well you have received my advice. You have improved very much over these few weeks, and if you stick to the things YY and I as well as XX have recommended, you'll be a very good teacher within a shorter period of time. I'll be happy to supervise you in the next term, if you feel like it – but only then. It is not a necessity.

My general advice: Work on making the students more active, ask more questions, squeeze in some of these small exercises of the Idebank. Use the pause / break strategy more. But as I said the last time: It's technicalities – and you'll easily be able to make these changes. And when you leave a class with the feeling of having really made a difference, teaching becomes

PowerPoint:

The slides are just fine and well lay-outed; good fonts, good graphs. But you should insert graphics whenever possible – visual learning is much more efficient than auditory / word based learning. Actually the two worst ways of learning is learning by listening and learning by reading text (only about 15 % learn well by listening and about 30 % by reading).

Good the last time, even better this time – the graphics make the slides come to life.

At the start you did not interact much with the presentation, but it got better. Work on this, try to sort of guide the students through the slides by pointing etc.

Blackboard:

You should use the blackboard by yourself to create variation and to stress important facts. Of course also when the students ask you to clarify something – which you did quite well.

I do realize that the blackboards are horrible to work on because the PowerPoint screen covers most of them. So when drawing a table you run into problems – it is hard to see the cells and the labels. I'd suggest that you dim the projector, pull up the screen and use the whole blackboard.

When you use the blackboard then be careful not to speak into it turning your back to the students. Draw slowly so that the students can also make the drawing if they want to.

You still talked quite a lot to the blackboard. Write a bit, turn to the students, write again etc.

The first table you drew (on the left hand side of the blackboard) could be seen – more or less, anyway – in the back of the room. The second one had a very small, relatively illegible hand writing. Generally you should not use capital letters unless you really want to stress something; in all other cases, use your normal hand writing and write in large letters.

Gestures and Facial Expression:

I do know this is a difficult field because gestures and facial expression is to tightly linked to our personalities. When we are asked to change something in this respect, it is as if we have to change our personality. But gestures and facial expression are as a matter of fact a professional tool in teaching, so we should take this into consideration.

Your body language on the whole is a relaxed and open. Good.

Still good – see below.

Your facial expressions, however, are very unchanging. Use your face – smiles (you have a very friendly smile!), friendly frowning, raising the eyebrows – to stress what you say and to interact with the students. Be careful not to close your eyes while speaking.

You are much more relaxed now, and this has a very positive impact in your whole appearance. You still close your eyes a bit too much – work on it; it's not that urgent.

Language and voice:

You have to work carefully with your pronunciation; here you run into difficulties – serious problems now and then. You obviously are aware of this problem, for some times you make brief pauses in order for you to get a word correctly pronounced, but there is still a way to go.

As far as I can hear, you should pay special attention to these topics that are crucial for understanding you:

- Don't 'eat' individual syllables, first of all in long words – this happens very often and many words sort of vanish in mumbling
- p / t / k tend to get a pronunciation like b / d / g
- /w/ is not pronounced with both lips (with 'kiss mouth'), but like a /v/
- long vowels (they tend to be short)
- /th/ in word endings (both) is often pronounced /f/.

Other problems

- You often place the stress of a word on the wrong syllable (legis'lative, pos'sible).

Use this website for controlling and exercising the pronunciation : <http://www.howjsay.com/>

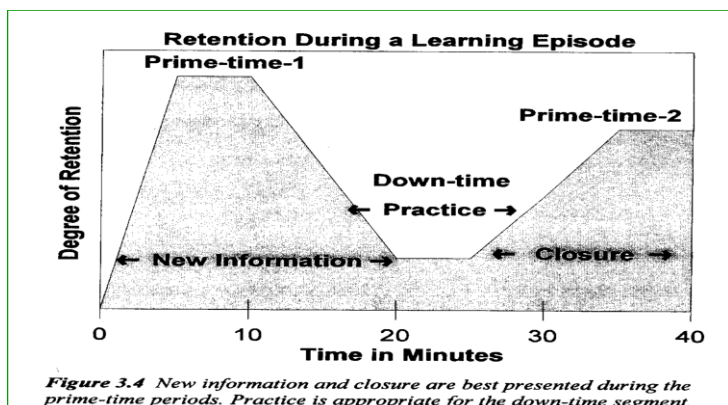
Finally your speed is too high, which also makes it difficult to decipher what you say.

On a whole you should be much more distinct and be careful that the words do not sort of melt together. So do slow down. I'm sure there is a lot of interference from your native language, so one of these tourist phrase books from your own country covering the UK might be of some basic help.

I'd suggest that you ask for a language supervision of an expert of English from ASB – which I am not (English is my second foreign language, German my first one).

When I hear your English today it is as if it were another person talking. There are still a few problems (p / t / k; stresses in certain words), but you definitely do not have more problems than so many other professors. I think you have been rather nervous the first time I supervised you (which is only understandable), and that this has affected your pronunciation. XX also found your language efficient and absolutely understandable – and she knows what she talks about.

Creating attention:



David A. Sousa
How the Brain Learns².
 Thousand Oaks CA:
 Corwin Press
 2001

This graph shows how the attention and retention develops over a 40 minutes period. After only 12-15 minutes the attention of the students drops dramatically, and you have to take various measures (other researchers have come to the same results).

Change of performance (the teacher's performance, that is), is a fine way of bridging the attention gap: address the students directly by telling a joke or something, use another medium of presentation, change colors in your presentation.

On www.lslab.dk (our homepage) you find a so called Idebank (base of ideas) with activities to use for activating the students – there is an English version.

Interaction:

Much of this is of course covered in the above text, but I'd like to sum up.

- Use breaks. Adults cannot digest information for more than 25 minutes at a time in average (this goes for university students), so there must be some breaks / activities in the middle of the lesson. To put it short: After 25 minutes many students simply close down and if we don't do anything the time is to some extent wasted.
 - You have taken the first step in this direction, but hang on. Use more short and a bit longer breaks.
- Beside this, it is very important to give the students the opportunity to reflect on what you and they have said. Make short breaks every 7 minutes or so (1,5 – 2 minutes) for the students to check notes, discuss with a table neighbor, stretch themselves, stand up, etc.
- When people give you an answer you don't expect / is wrong, then don't turn them down by saying e.g. 'This was not the answer I expected'. Try to get the best out the question by starting a dialogue with the student. Of course teaching should not degenerate into sentiment, but it is important to keep the students motivated, and this is a very good way to do this.
- Do ask more questions, questions that make the students reflect. Use some of the activities mentioned in the Idebank – not least think-pair-share is a most efficient activity. Don't forget to repeat / sum up the answer or the question from students sitting in the first rows – when you are placed behind them it's hard to hear what they say.
 - There is still room for improvement, but you're on the way. Work on using more direct questions or other activities like the ones in the Idebank. I know this is difficult to implement when one hasn't tried anything like it – but try out some activities step by step; Rome was not built in one day.
- Half of the time you faced the class when speaking, but you also talked to the screen quite a lot – definitely not because you need help; you're well prepared and do know your subject! It's a bad habit, I think.
 - Not a large problem this time – good.

Let's touch bases!

Best,