



In-Class Teaching Observation

Instructor Name: Julie Snyder-Yuly		CTLE Consultant: Kurt Guner
Course Number & Name: COMM 2110		
Date: 1.27.2016		
# of Students: 39		
<u>Category</u>	<u>Yes/Mostly/ Partially/No/ Not Applicable</u>	<u>Comments</u>
CLASS ORGANIZATION		
Warm-up/Review		
Class begins on time <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Greets students Lets students know class is starting 	Yes Yes	Professor Synder-Yuly greeted everyone warmly after chatting with students before class started and began on time. She began the class session with some brief housekeeping concerning the next few classes and upcoming assignments.
Lesson outline given at the beginning of class, verbally and visually (e.g., on board, slide)	Yes	Once she finished her discussion of upcoming assignments, Professor Synder-Yuly gave students a verbal outline of what the class would discuss.
Elaborates upon prior courses, lessons, assignments, and/or readings	Yes	Early in her discussion of proxemics, Professor Synder-Yuly reflected on past lessons.
Presentation and Practice Phases of Lesson		
Draws upon student experience, current events, and/or scholarly sources	Yes	The instructor asked students to share their personal experiences after watching a video from a popular TV show.
Pace and flow of lesson supports learning (not too fast or too slow, suitable for note taking, questions and reflection)	Yes	Professor Synder-Yuly's pace was consistent and even throughout the course. Her speaking tone was measured as well, and she had a great command of herself on "stage."
Lesson content, activities, and materials are appropriate for student level (not too simplistic or advanced)	Yes	The content was well-tailored for the class level as students felt comfortable sharing their personal stories. If the material is far too advanced, students can feel too intimidated to respond.
Uses a variety of teaching techniques (e.g., lecture, discussion, demonstration, small group work, film/audio clips, etc.)	Yes	The instructor mixed in videos, discussion, lecture, and Q&A with her students seamlessly, keeping their attention throughout class.
Appropriate active learning: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides an application component (e.g., students can connect theory to practice, demonstrate a personal connection to course content) Adequate time provided for completion of in-class activities 	Partially N/A	Professor Synder-Yuly did not include a dedicated application component in her class, but she did make sure to include numerous Q&A sections that allowed students to interact with the material on a personal level. Adding more specific active learning components (like small group work, presentations, group quizzes, etc.) can effectively break up the lecture and give students a chance to connect with the material in new ways. Students who prefer to learn by doing, students who learn by listening, and students who

		learn by watching can all be accounted for with a good mix of activities.
Provides appropriate breaks (for classes longer than 80 minutes)	N/A	The class was not long enough to warrant a break.
Wrap-up		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finishes with an overview of what was covered • Class ends on time • Closes lesson appropriately (e.g., bidding farewell) 	Partially Yes Yes	The class ended with a very brief discussion of key topics, but a more distinct outline would have been better. The class ended on time and Professor Synder-Yuly made sure to close with a cheerful farewell to the classroom.
LEARNING OBJECTIVES		
Provides action-oriented learning objectives for lesson	Partially	Professor Synder-Yuly clearly had learning objectives in mind, but she did not make them explicit to the classroom.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of learning objectives appropriate for session length • Lesson content matches learning objectives • Engages students in application of at least one learning objective In-class activities are explicitly linked to lesson objectives 	N/A Yes N/A	Because the objectives were not explicitly made clear, it is impossible to judge if the number were appropriate or if the in-class activities were linked directly to them. That being said, Professor Synder-Yuly seemed to have an idea of what she wanted to get across and clearly had specific ideas that she felt were very important. The content in the lesson revolved around these ideas, though if they had been turned into action-oriented learning objectives both students and the instructor would be on the same page and would know what is expected of them.
INSTRUCTOR INTERPERSONAL SKILLS		
Teacher presence: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintains eye contact • Appears engaged/interested in material • Body language indicates confidence, willingness to engage, comfort in teacher role • Demonstrates knowledge of student names or is in process of learning names 	Yes Yes Yes Yes	There is a level of irony to critiquing the communication skills (specifically interpersonal skills) of a Communications professor, but here we are. I thought Professor Synder-Yuly had excellent eye contact and body language throughout the class. She appeared engaged in the material and everything in her posture and attitude carried a sense of competence and comfort. In addition, she seemed to know the names of most of the students and had very positive and personal interactions with students throughout the class session.
Language is respectful and inclusive	Yes	Professor Synder-Yuly always used very positive language and was careful to avoid any offensive language, especially when discussing sensitive topics.
Students stay after class to interact with instructor	Yes	Several students stayed late after class to discuss different matters with the instructor, who patiently made time for them.
STUDENT BEHAVIOR		

<p>Students' academic maturity & focus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quiet easily when instructor begins • Are attentive (e.g., not chatting or surfing the web) • Arrive on time • Stay until session finished 	<p>Yes Mostly Mostly Mostly</p>	<p>A number of students arrived late (a total of 10 students arriving over the course of the class), being slightly disruptive as they settled in. When they arrived they were focused and attentive, not talking to each other during the lecture. However, a few students were surfing the web rather than taking notes.</p> <p>Many students began packing up their bags a few minutes early, which disrupted the end of the lecture. Directly addressing this issue can convince students to stay focused until the end of class.</p>
<p>Students' interpersonal conduct:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in turn-taking and listening to each other's comments/questions • Use respectful and inclusive language 	<p>Yes Yes</p>	<p>When students had differing opinions they were thoughtful and patient. One student shared an anecdote about Middle Eastern culture and a Middle Eastern woman said it was incorrect, but everyone had a great attitude throughout.</p>
INTERACTION		
<p>Instructor checks or is aware when students are lost or hurried (asks content comprehension questions, monitors during group work)</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Throughout class, Professor Synder-Yuly stopped after discussing major points and checked in with the class to make sure that everyone was on the same page.</p>
<p>Instructor questioning style:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asks one question at a time • Questions are clear • Provides ample wait time (10 secs) for student answers before repeating, responding or moving on 	<p>Yes Yes Yes</p>	<p>The questions asked in the classroom were all clear and included ample wait time for students to respond. In addition, it was obvious what the instructor was asking due to the clarity of her language.</p>
<p>Instructor response to questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aware of raised hands and answers question that was asked • Verifies that question was answered to student's satisfaction • Reacts appropriately in the event he/she doesn't know answer (e.g., writing it down to respond later or asks the rest of class to attempt a response) 	<p>Yes Yes N/A</p>	<p>Students raised their hands often and sometimes would do so while another student was still talking. Professor Synder-Yuly would sometimes point and nod to the student with their hand raised in order to let them know that they were up next, while getting them to refocus their attention on the student who was still speaking. This is an excellent practice that keeps students engaged while simultaneously making sure that they pay attention to their peers.</p> <p>There were no questions that "stumped" the instructor, so it is impossible to judge her reaction to not knowing an answer.</p>
<p>Instructor fosters engagement and participation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instructor uses appropriate methods to generate participation • Asks a variety of question types (e.g., factual, application, opinion, critical) • Builds off student answers/comments 	<p>Yes Yes Yes</p>	<p>Professor Synder-Yuly used many different methods to encourage participation. She included two different movie clips and asked a large variety of questions that required different levels of knowledge. When students would respond with an interesting anecdote, the instructor would build off of it and follow the tangent to its natural conclusion rather than shutting it down immediately.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourages dialogue, discussion, student-student interaction (engages more than just a few students) In light of incorrect response, remains respectful, not immediately negative; turns into a teachable moment 	<p>Partially</p> <p>N/A</p>	<p>While the professor made sure to encourage dialogue in the classroom, this dialogue was largely student-instructor, not student-student. Including more student-student interaction (with small group work or activities, or even partner quizzes) can create a more dynamic classroom environment.</p>
AUDIO-VISUAL AIDS		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uses effective visual medium for material and classroom Visual aids complement, illustrate or explain material Visuals are uncluttered (e.g., appropriate amount of text per slide, whiteboard content clear and organized) Pacing of visuals appropriate 	<p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p>	<p>Excellent visual aids. The instructor's PowerPoint was interesting and well balanced, and she included two videos to drive home specific points about nonverbal communication.</p> <p>The visuals were well organized and evenly paced, making it easy for students to follow along as they took notes.</p>
SUMMARY		
<p>Strengths of lesson overall, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lesson planning (e.g., objectives, activity selection, pacing, assessment) Teacher presence Teaching & learning methods 	<p>The visuals were extremely well done and the pacing of the lesson matched up perfectly with the PowerPoint. In addition, the instructor included videos that broke up the lecture, piqued the interest of the class, and still delivered important information to the students.</p> <p>Professor Synder-Yuly's teacher presence was strong throughout class, as she maintained an air of compassionate competence during her lecture. She was an excellent mix of warm and professional, and had great command of the room.</p>	
<p>Opportunities for growth, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lesson planning (e.g., objectives, activity selection, pacing, assessment) Teacher presence Teaching & learning methods 	<p>The lack of explicit learning objectives made it slightly more difficult for students to ensure that they were on the same page as the instructor. While the professor clearly had a very defined idea of what the class session would accomplish, she did not make those ideas clear to the classroom.</p> <p>The interaction between the instructor and her students was very strong, but there was little to no student-student interaction in the classroom. Including more activities that grouped students together could lead to a more engaged classroom environment.</p>	

Dear Professor Synder-Yuly,

Thank you for the opportunity to visit your classroom! As I said before, my Master's degree was in Communications so many of the elements of your classroom led to pleasant flashbacks. Below please find my general comments.

I found your class to be entertaining and informative, with your presence as a teacher sticking out as particularly strong. You seemed poised and confident on stage, and your interactions with students were extremely positive. You asked a variety of different question types and consistently managed to get your class to engage with the material on a personal level. This is no small feat! Getting students to interact with their professor can be difficult enough, but many of your students were sharing personal stories with the classroom, which I thought was fascinating.

One potential room for growth would be to encourage more student-student interaction through the use of active learning activities. These do not necessarily have to be graded for credit, but they do force students to interact with their peers in different ways. The atmosphere in your classroom was extremely positive. I remember one interaction between students in particular: a student made a comment about communication styles in the Middle East and a Middle Eastern woman in your class said that she disagreed and that her experience was different. The first student graciously apologized and no feelings seemed hurt. I believe you should capitalize on this atmosphere by developing more activities that get students working together.

This is largely nit-picking, however, as your classroom was well organized and extremely engaging. You have developed a number of practices that I hope you continue over the years, though as always there is room for tinkering. Please let me know if there is anything I can do to help you improve your teaching.

Sincerely,

Kurt Guner
Graduate Fellow
The Center for Teaching and Learning Excellence