

Learner Focused

There are many aspects of an educator that foster a learner focused education experience. Included in this collection are examples of materials developed, lesson plans, and feedback from students and colleagues in professional development sessions.

Culturally Diverse Learners is the result of a \$30,000 BC Campus project that involved four faculty from Nursing, Business, English and Modern Languages and Tourism. These faculty volunteered to help produce a video series that captures some of the challenges for both students and faculty in classes with students from many different cultures. Joining the faculty are Theatre and English as a Second Language students. None of the scenes is rehearsed. This project was a collaborative effort with Penny Heaslip, Kyra Garson and Wesley Eccleston. I am particularly pleased of the 'learning moment' idea to include a scene of the students after their experience working on the project. There is a link on the links page.

The email is an example of my commitment to understanding student needs, and sharing with colleagues.

English Language Overseas is feedback from visiting teachers from China. This was the first of three groups of teachers that I worked with.

Inge was an exchange student who, while her English was very strong, needed support to understand the academic expectations at TRU. She was very surprised to know that TRU students are welcome, and expected to meet with faculty outside of class time.

Jane Birkbeck enrolled in the TESL (Teaching English as a Second Language) program at TRU. As she was coordinator in her faculty, she decided to audit the course. At the end of the course she thanked me and said she knew she knew alot before the class, but that she had really learned in this course. I decided to ask Jane to expand on that for me as she represents the perspectives of both teacher and learner.

The 2 classroom observations were part of my most recent summative evaluation. They provide an idea of class learning outcomes, tasks and activities, classroom management and my relationships with students.

Kiyomi is an immigrant, adult learner in mid-career. I was asked if she could join my class at midterm time because she was struggling. Perhaps the approach she needed was experiential and supported with scaffolding. She managed to go from a D to a C+ in 6 weeks.

Stephanie was an exchange student. This facebook message came as a complete surprise but reinforced my need to consider more than the intellectual aspect of students. From both her and Inge's notes to me, as well as the completion of my masters research, I shifted my approach to curriculum.

Feedback from faculty development sessions from peers is important to me. I have been given feedback forms created by conference committees and also have created my own in order to broaden the information I receive from participants' in order to consider my approach in other sessions. These are examples of what I have used and indicate what participants enjoyed and could use in their own classes.



Thompson Rivers University Centre for Teaching and Learning



[View Video](#)

The Wave

Managing student questions and evaluating comprehension during class

Resources: [Working with International Students](#)



[View Video](#)

Team Work

Forming teams that value diversity

Resources: [Preparing Students to Value Diversity in Teams](#)



[View Video](#)

Plagiarism

Examining and explaining the rules of Canadian academic culture

Resources: [Plagiarism: Cultural Perspectives](#)



Office Hours

Working through assumptions of roles and rhetoric

From: Gerry Hewitt
To: Ebourassa@tru.ca
Date: 06/03/2008 10:40:19 am
Subject: Re: spelling and Saudis

hi Emma -

Thanks for the interesting and informative email. This kind of backgrounding is SO helpful.

Gerry

>>> Emma Bourassa 03/06/08 9:04 AM >>>

Hi all,

If you are interested in some cultural learning background for Saudis who have difficulty with spelling, I'm forwarding a response that has shed some light on more than that aspect of our Saudi learners.

e

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HONGKOU INTERNATIONAL

Final Program Evaluation

Instructor: Emma Bourassa (ELO)
Bruce Thompson (Oral)
Bruce Thompson (IWYM)
Date: August 27, 2002

A. English Language Overseas (ELO)

1. Was the program useful? Why or why not?
 - Yes, I think it's useful, because our students and we are all ESL learners. We really need a chance to study with ESL. It's very helpful for improving our English level.
 - I think the program was very useful for my future teaching. Emma used a variety of teaching methodology and she was devoted to teaching.
 - Yes, I learned how to organize the classroom activities efficiently and my English level has been improved as well.
 - The program was useful. I've improved a lot in the easy or more English way to express my ideas. My accent and pronunciation get a success in some way. I've got more ideas about western teaching methodology.
 - Yes, it is helpful in my future teaching.
 - Yes, it was useful, because we learned writing method which is what we lack most and it broadens our minds in giving lessons using different ways.
 - I think the program was very useful because Emma had shown us so many kinds of teach methodologies.
 - The program was very useful because from the classes I've taken from Emma I've known more about western teaching methodology which will help me in teaching when I'm back in China.
 - Very useful because we could learn some teaching methods, e.g. How to stimulate the students' interest in English and some writing skills in English. They are both very useful in my teaching career in China.
 - Yes, I can improve my English writing, speaking, listening and reading quickly.
 - I think the program was very useful in our work. We have learned a lot from Emma. She is very strict with us.
 - It's useful because Emma did a good job. She taught us how to write different kinds of articles. It really does good to my writing skills and warm-up games made all of us feel interesting. I will use warm-up games in my class.
2. Was there anything else that you expected to review or learn in this program? Explain.
 - Yes, I want to know something about the culture of Canada such as: arts.

- I like drama or different classroom activities.
 - Some content about grammar is a little easy for us.
 - I like Emma, she was so precise, and the atmosphere was so active.
 - The atmosphere of the lesson is casual and easy. The teacher is well informative and much dedicated. The form of different activities is varied. The communication between T & S is genuine.
 - A lot of different activities and the vivid body language of the instructor and the quote of the day.
 - I like this program very much. I like Emma's classes very much. I think I have learned a lot from this program. It will be useful for my English teaching in the future.
 - I think the contents of this program are very rich and the objectives are very clear cut.
 - It's useful, does good to my oral English, listening comprehension and writing skills.
5. Do you have any other comments about the program?
- No
 - It's great!
 - No
 - Well organized, smoothly carried out and sufficiently informed.
 - The program does good to my English.
 - We come from different schools if the program is designed according to the English level it will be more useful.
 - Pretty good!
 - We have a lot of activities in class. These activities are very interesting and let us focus on our classes then we have more interest to learn English. Emma prepares for the classes carefully and in detail. She has many different teaching methods. I also like them. Above all, she is a good teacher. J She works hard. We all like her and often encourages us.
 - It is good enough!
 - I hope the program will be better and better. If chance given, I'll take part in the program again.

B. Introduction to Western Teaching Methodologies (IWTM)

1. Was the program useful? Why or why not?
 - Yes, it's useful. It will benefit my future teaching.
 - Yes, useful. Bruce showed us a wide variety of teaching methodologies.
 - Yes, it enabled us to have some access to the western teaching methodologies and some new teaching philosophy.
 - Yes, it gives me a chance to compare the western and the Chinese teaching methodologies and quite a few of the ideas can be adopted in China.
 - Yes, it is useful in my teaching.
 - Yes, it made me get information about western teaching methodologies.
 - The program was useful.
 - Yes, western teaching methodologies is one aspect of western culture.

- I hope I could study for another two months to learn more from Emma. I hope I could practice writing a newspaper report. Beside, I'd like to have some exercise of dictation, I mean jot down ideas quickly while listening.
 - I wanted to learn more idioms and slangs.
 - I expected to get more knowledge on the following points: 1. more various ideas on class arrangement. 2. more colloquial idioms as well as some background knowledge.
 - I expected to learn more cultural background about Canada such as: the history, literature or arts.
 - Yes, I want to have the chance to observe more experienced teachers lesson (ESL lesson) to get information from them.
 - I think it is good enough for me.
 - If possible I'd like to learn more about how to use drama to improve English proficiency. Also, I'm very interested in using body language to give visual explanation for students.
 - No
 - I think it is enough to me. I like this program and enjoy the lessons.
 - I expect to learn some natural daily English because it's useful for daily life and communicating with native people.
3. How could this program be improved?
- I don't have idea about it; I think its good enough.
 - This program was already very good. It was well organized, logical and fun.
 - It is already good enough.
 - This program can be improved by having more activities out of the classroom. Practical drill is very important – a more authentic situation. *not for her necessary*
 - Add more outdoor activities. The teacher can introduce some features or customs in Canada.
 - Time is too limited, if we have much more time to study here I think the program should be divided into groups according to students' level.
 - Maybe can let students communicate with native speakers – if we have enough time.
 - In my opinion, what I need is just more time, I man to lengthen the time of each period so that I can learn more.
 - If the students could be given more chances on time to communicate with the local people, I think, it would be better.
 - I think that it is good enough.
 - Through this program, we had a lot of chance to practice writing, speaking, listening and reading. So we had improved our English level.
 - Make some plans according to our suggestions, then use them to find out if they are fit for ESL students or not. *teacher organized activity*
4. What did you like about this program?
- In this course, we have a lot of activities, warm-up games; how to write article like Canadians.
 - I like them very much.
 - Well organized activities.
 - Good teacher, nice teaching plan, definite teaching aim and happy class atmosphere.

Hi Emma!

You're the first one I have to say goodbye... and that's very sad... I appreciated your ESL classes a lot (even though I struggled sometimes...)

You provided an easier settlement for me in TRU and also in Canada. It was not only through your quality of student's work in your classes, but also, or mainly, through your understanding of how hard it is to be (and live) in a different country. You're the only instructor I had, that really cared of the well-being of the students and ^{you} helped a lot in terms of inter-cultural understanding. I will miss you!!!

And don't forget me Inga:

(my mum's address in Berlin, which is the most permanent one)

Inga Kjer

Am Volkspark 51

10715 Berlin

Germany

Tel: +49 30 8617825

inga-kjer@web.de

I hope we stay in touch!!!

Have a great summer...

love, Inga

8 May 2012

Dear Emma;

Thank you for including me in the list of folks who will be delighted to support your application to assume the Coordinator position in the TRU Center for Teaching and Learning. Based on my experiences with you in the roles of facilitator and classroom teacher I know you have both the knowledge and skill to offer a broad range of teaching and learning opportunities for faculty across the disciplines.

From my first-hand experience I know you are a highly effective teacher; an organized administrator with a fine sense of humour; a clear, gentle and generous communicator; and an enormously skilled facilitator. It is my belief that teaching, administrative work and communication all depend on skillful facilitation that empowers learners to stretch their own skills beyond what they believe to be their comfort zones. I have watched you do this in the classroom space and in various workshops.

In the Winter 2011 term I audited your Intercultural Communications course, TESL 3030, through the English as a Second Language department. While I learned much from your significant intercultural research, slides, exercises, assignments, and mini-lectures, I learned even more from watching you navigate the divergent learning styles and 'wants' of a course that brought together ESL learners, ESL teachers, and ESL-interested students. Perhaps best of all was the research you compiled between classes that allowed you to communicate directly to the varied student learning goals. All this is what I mean when I highlight skillful facilitation within and outside of the course.

Certainly the most fun and perhaps the best learning I've had in a workshop at TRU was the International-Eyesing Curriculum course you co-facilitated last May. In a very short time, I learned *so much* about intercultural communication, program development, curriculum design and development, that I still refer to my workbook and notes as I plan each term's courses. The workbook will be such a valuable resource for me this fall when I teach SOCW 4520 Education for Social Change: Gender, Race and Class. I simply cannot thank you enough for your patience, challenge, knowledge and ability in that setting.

All good wishes that TRU faculty will find you utilising your superb skills in the Centre, allowing larger groups to go forward in our teaching and learning.

Warm regards,


Jane Birkbeck
Associate Professor, Social Work

Instructional Skill

Comments

Instructor's expectations/student responsibilities clear?

yes. clearly outlined at beginning

Session drawn together/summarized usefully?

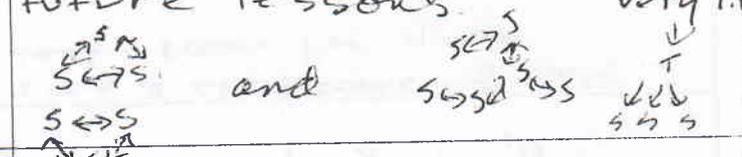
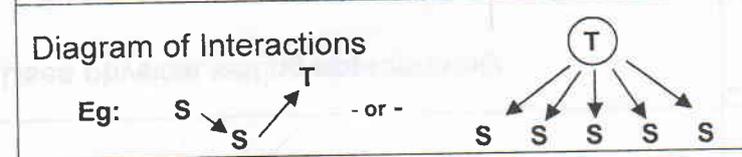
yes - debriefing at end to link this activity to previous readings + things discussed in previous classes. Also tied all of this to real life.

Time for questions?

yes

Transition to next session?

video of "cat herders" to tie in with whole concept being discussed in past + future lessons.



What I take from the lesson as an observer. Emma is a well organized teacher who attempts to

activity a graphic illustration of what class had been discussing re different types of societies

illustrate points being discussed in class in ways interesting to stds (activity + video)

COMMENTS
I enjoyed observing Emma's class

afp

My name is Kiyomi Hayashi. I took Emma's 057 writing class in 2009's fall semester. I am writing this evaluative letter to tell you why I think Emma is an excellent teacher. The first reason is, I think Emma feels very responsible for her student's progress. When her students hand in assignments, they are not covered with red marks that point out our mistakes when they are returned. Instead, she gave them back with a mark and general comments that we were to fix before we handed them in again. In this way we were encouraged to rethink things like structure and organization. She always made time for me when I could not think of how to fix the assignment for myself. Once again she did not make me feel wrong and gave me hints about how I could fix the assignment myself. When I emailed her for help, I often received a response on that day, or the next day. The second reason is, Emma knows which mistakes are more common depending on the student's original language. By knowing how other languages arrange their information and which habitual phrases will sound strange in English, she is able to tell each student which mistakes to watch out for. This keeps us from making the same mistakes over and over again. One of the biggest problems for any ESL student is how to decide which word to use when there are many choices of words with similar meanings. Emma would use gestures to teach us which words expressed the idea more, or less strongly. By combining a gesture to the words we were taught, we learned the nuance present in each of the words. As you can see, I believe Emma is an excellent teacher. The biggest proof for me was that my English skills improved when I took her class.

Kiyomi Hayashi

January-26-2010

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Between You and Stefanie Knecht

**Stefanie Knecht**

2:39pm Dec 12th

Report Message

I'm actually not sure if you are really the person I hope you are...Anyway, let's try this.

My Name is Stefanie and I attended an English class at UCC in '03. The teacher of my English class was a Emma Bourassa. If u know what I'm writing about keep on ready otherwise I'm truly sorry I bothered you!

Well, I just wanted to tell you what an amazing teacher you were! Your way of teaching not only Englisch, but the Canadian culture too, made my one year stay at Kamloops a lot easier and of course a great experience! Thank you so much for that!

May you and your family have wonderfull holidays!

The best wishes all the way from Switzerland

Stefanie Knecht

PS: please excuse my rusty English

**Emma Bourassa**

4:47am Dec 13th

Stephanie, how wonderful to hear from you! Yes, I remember, and thank you so much for your kind words. It really means a lot to me!

How have you been? What have you been doing? Where are you these days? I would love to know what you are up to.

UCC was granted university status a few years ago, and we are now Thompson Rivers University. I'm still enjoying teaching ESL as well as working with teachers from other countries with teaching ESL. We continue to have students from around the world which is challenging yet extremely rewarding.

I hope you are well.

Happy holidays! And thanks so much for contacting me!
emma

CLASSROOM VISITATION

Traditional

Instructor: Emma Bourassa Course/Section: TESL 303 (01) Date/Time: Mar. 25 5:30-6:30 Evaluator: Nancy Killick

INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITIES

Instructional Skill	Comments
How does the instructor meet the class?	chatting with students as they arrive
Outline/objectives/overview for session given? Tie in with previous session?	had objectives written on board introduced idea that they were going to be playing a game
Uses physical setting appropriately.	- used 2 classrooms - 1/2 stds in each room for game.

PRESENTATION

Instructional Skill	Comments
Is the instructor well prepared?	yes - sheets for game prepared.
Is the instructor organized and logical in the presentation?	clear explanation of goal of game
Are complex ideas explained clearly?	n/a (besides explaining how to do activity, no explanation needed)
Are key concepts/important points emphasized?	yes - stressed that they had to get someone in other group to sign contract.
Speaking skills/eye contact/mannerisms.	clear speaking voice, pleasant manner
Variety of techniques/aids.	good use of blackboards, projector for short clip. ("Cat Holders")
Use of elicitation techniques.	at debriefing, did her best to elicit ideas from students
Response to student questions or performance	there were no std. questions

Uses physical setting appropriately.

- gave a useful analogy to exemplify activities
- explained criteria of activity and gave examples
- took advantage of all areas in the Language Lab
- arranged chairs in groups of 6, and then in groups of 3 or 4
- handled a large group (17 people) easily
- moved to different parts of the room to speak to students

What I take from the lesson as an observer/Suggestions for development

- Emma used the Language Lab setting to her advantage (different groupings)
- I liked the way she had pre-planned her working groups to include a cultural mix in each group
- demonstrates careful planning and cultural sensitivity
- I liked how she often checked students' understanding of the activities throughout the lesson
- "Are we okay?" "Do you need help with something?"
- she gave clear directions for each segment of the lesson and provided examples to further clarify what she wanted from the students
- it was a carefully planned lesson with different components that will connect into one large final project

CLASSROOM VISITATION

Traditional

Instructor: Emma Bourassa Course/Section: ESAL 045-02 Date/Time: Wed. June 10/09 Evaluator: Kathy Felton
8:30-9:20 a.m.

INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITIES	
Instructional Skill	Comments
How does the instructor meet the class?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - talked about a project a student was involved in outside of class - assisted students with pronunciation
Outline/objectives/overview for session given?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - before class: wrote the outline of the lesson on the board

PRESENTATION	
Instructional Skill	Comments
Is the instructor well prepared?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - had chairs organized in 3 groups of 6 - helped people move into circles - had groups organized before class on lists of paper (cultural mix in each group)
Is the instructor organized and logical in the presentation?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - clearly stated goals of the activity - used one word "Hello" to illustrate importance of intonation to convey emotion - said they'll use this skill in future project
Are key concepts/important points emphasized and clearly explained?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - emphasized importance of intonation - used her voice and body to emphasize key concepts - gave examples on board to show how to organize and write skits
Speaking skills/eye contact/mannerisms.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - looked at all students during the lesson - spoke clearly - body language expressed energy and confidence
Use appropriate aids.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - whiteboard - lists of groups - hand-outs - time rattle (or drum)
Use appropriate elicitation/technique. "Tell me what it is and I'll help you." "Other questions?"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - asked students if they heard differences between responses - asked if they were okay or if they needed more help - asked many questions to draw information from students
Response to student questions or performance. "That's a good story." "I know you can do it."	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - walked around room and asked in small groups - students to share personal experiences - assisted with pronunciation and vocabulary - asked Q in small groups: crouched down to see students at tables
Appropriate pace of presentation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - timing was good - activities flowed smoothly - allowed sufficient time for each segment of the lesson - gave a 1-minute warning
Confidence/enthusiasm of instructor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - clearly showed enthusiasm and energy with voice

Teaching Practices Colloquium 2010

Emma Bourassa- Why Question

Do you think you will try either of these activities? Y N

Comments/Questions

Appreciated interaction & modeling of tools that we can use.

Teaching Practices Colloquium 2010

Emma Bourassa- Why Question

Do you think you will try either of these activities? Y N

Comments/Questions

I really enjoyed the 4 part questioning interview task.
This was a great hands on workshop activity. I appreciated being placed in the student role.

Teaching Practices Colloquium 2010

Emma Bourassa- Why Question

Do you think you will try either of these activities? Y N

Comments/Questions

Excellent / participatory / well organized.

Emma Bourassa- why Question

Do you think you will try either of these activities? Y N

Comments/Questions

Great thought provoking!

Emma Bourassa- Why Question

Do you think you will try either of these activities? Y N

Comments/Questions

I wish we had more time.
Very effective learning

Teaching Practices Colloquium 2010

Teaching Practices Colloquium 2010

Emma Bourassa- Why Question

Do you think you will try either of these activities? Y N

Comments/Questions

Will help me as an instructor to formulate my classes based
on the questions the students come up with.

Teaching Practices Colloquium 2010

Emma Bourassa- Why Question

Do you think you will try either of these activities? Y N

Comments/Questions *very interactive & relevant to my teaching - simple yet structured*

Teaching Practices Colloquium 2010

Emma Bourassa- Why Question

Do you think you will try either of these activities? Y N

I like both the cards and the worksheets

Comments/Questions

EXCELLENT SESSION!

Teaching Practices Colloquium 2010

Emma Bourassa- Why Question

Do you think you will try either of these activities? Y N

Comments/Questions

This was an excellent example of teaching "questions" 😊

Comments/Questions

This type of activity builds engagement: everyone has to participate.

Session Evaluation Form

Please comment on the session you attended

Name of presenter (or presentation) James P. S. Carter

What did you find useful in this workshop?
Our group was all lab related

What suggestions do you have for improving it?

—

4th Annual
TRU Teaching Practices Colloquium
February 18, 2008

Session Evaluation Form

Please comment on the sessions you attended

Name of presenter (or presentation) Emma, Rob, Crystae.

What did you find useful in this workshop?

- the note taking song -
- having Marty Wall in our small group.
- a variety of ideas and offer of resources

What suggestions do you have for improving it?

- group discussion didn't work for me -
 ~~is~~ sorry, probably my needs were different
 then what was talked about
 I wanted more ideas for lecture experiential learning →

4th Annual
TRU Teaching Practices Colloquium
February 18, 2008

Session Evaluation Form

Please comment on the sessions you attended

Name of presenter (or presentation) Emma, Rob, Crystal

What did you find useful in this workshop?

- The last portion where the role taking exercise was demonstrated was powerful.

What suggestions do you have for improving it?

4th Annual
TRU Teaching Practices Colloquium
February 18, 2008

Session Evaluation Form

Please comment on the sessions you attended

Name of presenter (or presentation) Emma Bourassa, Hoad, Huscroft

What did you find useful in this workshop?

Most excellent. Enjoyed the "hands on" & discussion. Very interactive + experiential.

What suggestions do you have for improving it?

4th Annual
TRU Teaching Practices Colloquium
February 18, 2008

Session Evaluation Form

Please comment on the sessions you attended

Name of presenter (or presentation) Ali Otha Gopenina of Learning

What did you find useful in this workshop?

Ways in which people have incorporated experiential learning in their classes. I've taken away a number of ideas. I'm looking forward to trying.

What suggestions do you have for improving it?

4th Annual
TRU Teaching Practices Colloquium
February 18, 2008

Session Evaluation Form

Please comment on the sessions you attended

Name of presenter (or presentation) Rob/Emma/Crystal

What did you find useful in this workshop?

Lots of good teaching suggestions

What suggestions do you have for improving it?

None - it was excellent, entertaining + informative