LTS502 OTS3 Teaching observation report

Teacher Jason But	**Date** 4/10
Subject - Computing	**Observation # 3**
Topic Unix for Communications	**Duration 1 hour**
Observer Kay Salehi	**No of participants** 16 approx

ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS Begins class on time in an orderly, organized fashion Previews lecture/discussion content √ Clearly states the goal or objective for the session √ Reviews prior class material to prepare students for the content to be covered √ Provides internal summaries and transitions √ Does not digress often from the main topic Summarizes and distils main points at the end of class Appears well prepared for class √	Class starts around 11.40, by the time the computer is set up and most students have arrived. While students are waiting, I notice that they are quite chatty – which suggests to me that students know each other and there is a friendly feel in the room. You begin with bringing up a Swinburne website advertising for students to apply for – summer internships – you let them know about this and encourage them to consider applying suggesting that these will involve them using skills they are developing. ***(this is great as you are encouraging them to broaden their learning beyond class learning)*** By 11.45 you gave an introduction on what the tutorial will be about – cgi scrips. At times you refer to previous weeks work e.g. "we did this in week...." or "you remember in week 3 we…" ***this is helpful to them to remind them to make connections with previous learning with what the focus is on in the current session***. Using student examples of work provided in class, gave you an excellent opportunity to question the how and the why of the different types of solutions students have devised.. ***linking real projects to the theory in a very interactive and engaging way***. (much better than you just telling them) ***– this was well executed*** Looking at your plan learning objectives, students are expected to: • Identify a problem that can be solved with a simple application **(this was done by the first two presenters, third was presenting a major project he was working on, however did demonstrate an application)** • Implement a web-based service… **(all three students demonstrated this)** • Demonstrate their work to others **(as above)** • Improve their communication skills. (**Some students appeared uncomfortable presenting, however they were confident in what they were presenting and their communication was clear. Other students were required to respond to the projects and answer your questions and many of them responded well and initiated comments too.)** • Critique the work of others and offer suggestions for improvement **(while they didn't appear to initiate suggestions for improvement, they responded to your comments or questions, so**

	perhaps you might need to provide them with a framework for critiquing or ask them to come up with a checklist for critiquing these draft projects??) Using the live web for demonstrations worked really well and made the whole process so much more authentic and engaging.
PRESENTATION Selects teaching methods appropriate for the content √√ Responds to changes in student attentiveness Print/writing is large and legible Speaks audibly and clearly √ Communicates a sense of enthusiasm and excitement toward the content √√ Uses positive and appropriate humour √ Uses a presentation style that facilitates note-taking where appropriate Speech is neither too formal nor casual √ Establishes and maintains eye contact with students √√ Talks to students, not the board, windows, etc. v√ Uses media effectively √	This was a tutorial that required students to demonstrate their draft projects. It was not compulsory and unfortunately only three students (groups) presented their draft projects. The presentation was to demonstrate Cgi scripts – that were dynamic and interactive You have a good strong voice, and you communicate your own enthusiasm through your voice. You also use plenty of eye contact and body language (move around, hand movements etc.) There is also a sense of humour and friendliness that the students responded well to. You prepared them to present by talking about what you did in week 3 and then talking about the purpose of them presenting to their peers, "to see a demo of what your script does, why you did it and how you did it, but not the look and feel.." **Presentation 1** The class was slow to volunteer, however with persistence you got your first presenter. You provided assistance and advice when setting up for the1st presentation - using your computer that you had pre-prepared for presentations of live sites. You then asked the student to demonstrate their site The student explains that he is using Perl and demonstrates it….(shows script and explains how it was done) You then said: "Basically we have a webpage … so… comments on the usefulness of this script" There were some comments "Nice – obviously you would use it .." You then went on to ask – "what were the advantages of using Perl?" which again initiated comments "need a browser, don't need an email client – more generic" students provided good reasons for using Perl. One student suggested that it was easy to change, another student provides an idea ("yes" you agreed and repeated the student's idea to the group) ***What you were doing worked really well. You often rephrased the student responses to recognize their ideas but also to make it clearer to the class. Students responded really well to your prompting – it looks like they are used to contributing in class – very responsive class. Engaged in the learning process – great to see. You then summarised and asked for anymore comments before moving on to the next presentation, thanking the student for their contribution.*** **Presentation 2** You had trouble getting the next volunteer. "I will pick names out" you then targeted a girl at the back. ":you haven't got a script? No, ?" she was not prepared. At this point you reminded them that they really

	benefit from this process, that it is important to have a go at demonstrating your idea (my words) Another student volunteers asking "Does php count?" you were happy to accept this student's work and the Student starts – you spent some time getting the set up to work. By 12.00 the student is starting to demonstrate his website with the php script – he speaks in a clear voice and explains how it is used (12.05). He provides a very clear explanation, speaks loudly and slowly – very easy to listen to. When the student was demonstrating the IP interface he talks about vakai (?)– gives some details about what it can do – how many hits .. how many… At this point you define what type of solution the student had provided "So what we have is a system that will provide the current status…" Student is now explaining the site – for creating new ip addresses – student cheekily asks you "perhaps you could help me (looks at you)" and the class laughed at this and you suggested you "don't charge much" – ***great to see humour in the class – great rapport between you and the students***. The student shows the script and explains it, the class is very quiet and really taking an interest in the student's work. You then explain something about function, and ask the class what are the advantages There are a number of comments from students: modularity, can re-use it in different….and so on. You appear to be quite satisfied with the interaction and students' comments. You comment that it is good to see something "a bit different.. " and ask the class "where might this be useful?" You then refer to the assignment, and ***it appears to me that this presentation provides a good opportunity to talk about the requirements of the assignment*** – there is mention of on a router, cable modem – you explain where you might see this (theory) "How could it be used in your assignment" "If it has proper permissions…?".. a student responded "Yep, if you remember the assignment….host email and web host…" here you make links to the assignment and suggested there are bonus marks in the assignment if they set up script….. ***Making links to the assignment as you went provided you with a great opportunity to invite questions from students – provides added support when it is relevant*** **Presentation 3 (12.13)** Another student has something to demonstrate – You are quickly able to set up the computer to prepare for final student presentation – who shows a very advanced website (his major project) Student has used AJAX to create the interactivity (??) Your comment here is that you are not going to go onto the scripting languages (***showing that you are maintaining focus on the purpose of the session to look at scripting, not programming languages***) and begin to ask the class "What are the disadvantages of using AJAX rather than Perl" Students make a variety of responses, relating to the restrictiveness of using AJAX e.g. "if you don't have java script setting", "another technology on top of technology", you then target the front row students: (no response) – you then aksed: "Why wouldn't you want something that is this cool – you're a purist!" there is a bit of Laughter – ***humour is easy and natural in this class***. Again you try to get a response from students sitting in the front – "why wouldn't you want to be cool" and

	you are able to get some responses: "Compatibility?" , "Is there a browser problem?" – student response: "yes doesn't work with all browsers.." "Security?" ***unfortunately a student said something here, but I could not hear what the student said – perhaps repeat answer or ask if all were able to hear what was said*** There was quite a bit of discussion around the use of AJAX , and you admitted you were not that familiar with it, - no concern here, some students were able to step in here and provide some explanations – ***this is great to see students doing this – as a teacher you are confident enough to let go the reins and show that you don't have to know everything – that is the reality of the workforce (I assume in Programming)*** This completed the final presentation, you left the class with a final question from this presentation: "Is it worth it? Then thanked the final presenter **End of class early as no more to present 12.20** Any questions? Student asks (***I could not hear the question and assume there might be others who were unable to hear it as well - suggest you repeat question***) You then provides a detailed answer (***I suggest that you might consider asking other students if they could answer the student's question first – get a double benefit, helps the other student to practice explaining and it will also identify misconceptions – which you can clear up at the time) also it makes it less teacher-centred, students get to see their classmates as a resource as well as you.*** After your explanation you asked "Does that answer the question?" Student responds with more questions; ***Good interaction, and even though you had more or less finished the class, the students were keen to hear the answers and did not leave – always a good sign of student engagement…***
RAPPORT WITH STUDENTS Solicits student feedback √ Requires student thought and participation √ Listens carefully to student comments and questions √ Tailors the session to help many kinds of students √ Recognizes when students do not understand √ Responds to distractions effectively yet constructively √ Responds confidently to student inquiries for additional information √ Uses authority in classroom to create an environment conductive to learning √ Is able to admit error and/or insufficient knowledge √ Respects constructive criticism	Students are a not keen to present but are good at asking questions and answering – ***looks to be a good rapport in the class. You have a casual but authoritative presence.*** You expected students to be prepared and found either many of them were not, or were not prepared to share their work. ***You provided good feedback to students and encouraged other students to contribute to learning of others. You provide clear explanations, not too fast and presented in a voice that was easy to listen to.*** Students are engaged and listening. ***You use friendly and common language to encourage participation***: "Come on guys, you have had 3 weeks you be ready!" and "Why hasn't anyone done this???" Your disappointment with the class is obvious, however you provide further encouragement by: "the point of doing this is to see a range of demos for your benefit, while it is not assessable it helps you."

	You are encouraging for those who are to present – giving them time and supporting them up the front to get them ready. While you are waiting for them, you have a discussion around some of the uses of scripting. Students respond well to your prompting, and in some cases initiate comments You ask: "Ok, so you use the interface to …." You look around the room "Someone else?" Student responds – then you say to the student presenter "well you can answer that…" and then a student explains something about the program. When it came to something you were not familiar (AJAX) you admit "I don't know much about that…" When the student explains that it is programmed in AJAX… the students are now discussing this and this results in quite a good discussion about the pros and cons of the programming language
ACTIVE LEARNING Clearly explains directions or procedures √ Clearly explains the goal of the activity √ Has all the necessary materials and equipment readily available √ Gives prompt attention to individual problems √ Provides individual constructive verbal feedback √ Exercises careful safety supervision Allows sufficient time for completion and clean-up	When initially asking for presenters: "Who wants to be first ?"– looks around, no response, waits (***good – you did not let them off easily and it works***) someone volunteers I did not notice that you used student names – ***better if you can try to use names*** – might get a better response. Active learning was demonstrated by the achievement of the objectives you developed – • Identify a problem that can be solved with a simple application **(student presenters (3) were able to demonstrate this)** • Implement a web-based service**…(demonstrated by 3 students)** • Demonstrate their work to others **(demonstrated by 3 students)** • Improve their communication skills **(this was done by the presenters and also individual class members who were initiating comments, discussion various elements of the examples shown and making suggestions and asking questions)** • Critique the work of others and offer suggestions for improvement **(class members were able to discuss the pros and cons of the various solutions and answer questions relating to them and provide their opinions about the usefulness of these examples)** While there were only three presenters, I think that most students would have gained much from this lesson and hopefully you will continue to develop this process in future classes. Students were actively engaged by asking questions, answering your questions and initiating suggestions – ***while not all students contributed, this could be encouraged by starting early in the semester where individual contributions are expected and valued – giving confidence to the quieter members – perhaps in small groups – even demonstrating or explaining the pros and cons of a colleague's solution (might be less threatening)***
CONTENT Selects examples relevant to student experiences and course content √ Relates current course content to past and future subjects √ Presents views other than own when appropriate √ Seeks to apply theory to problem solving √ Explains difficult terms, concepts, or problems in more	n/a

than one way √ Presents up-to-date developments in the field √ Relates assignments to course content √	
INTERACTION Encourage student questions, involvement, and debate √ Answers student questions clearly and directly √ Gives students enough time to respond to questions √ Refrains from answering own questions √ Encourages students to answer difficult questions by providing cues and assistance √ Allows relevant student discussion to proceed uninterrupted √ Presents challenging questions to stimulate discussion √ Respects diverse points of view √	Plenty of interaction between yourself and the presenter, between presenter and class and yourself and the class. There was also some discussion between class members, however this was very minor. You challenged student thinking by posing many challenging questions for them to consider during the class. Most was said above – very interactive class.
LEARNING STRATEGIES USED TO DELIVER CONTENT	The student presents to the class a programming solution to a particular need – this is used by you to review the choices made and various approaches used by the student presenters. This provided student presenters with an opportunity to explain their reasoning, and you were also able to see the level of application these students were able to demonstrate. This strategy also allowed other students to comment and demonstrate what they thought and understood about the use of various programming solutions. This could have been done as a straight lecture, however you chose to work with student generated examples – in a live (authentic) programming environment – which added to student engagement which was very evident in this class. Very student-centred approach.

Observation based on good teaching criteria

Criteria	Observed behaviour	Other comment
Overt enthusiasm for the subject and sharing it with participants	Well prepared, live sites were able to be demonstrated in class – this encouraged and enriched the learning experience for students	
Making the material taught stimulating and interesting	As above – having "live" sites gave authenticity to the presentations	
Making learning expectations clear	Not sure what they expected to learn, except that you were asking them to "have a go" and be prepared to present it to the group for feedback – You suggested that there would be worthwhile learning through this experience	
Showing concern and respect for participants	Students would have felt well supported and you were very responsive to their	

	questions and provided guidance	
Engaging with participants at their level of understanding	Working directly with student-developed projects, is a great way of working at the one-to-one level and also to provide a forum for students to learn from each others work – learning is being socially constructed in a safe and supportive environment	
Building on the participant 's existing knowledge and confronting misconceptions	The whole class was a demonstration of building on existing knowledge, and allowing for mistakes and misunderstandings to made visible in order to construct improved learning outcomes	
Requiring participants to learn actively, responsibly, and cooperatively	Yes, this strategy allows students to learn by doing, working together, sharing and critiquing and building on feedback provided by experts (you) and colleagues	
Challenging participants to reach their full potential.	For those who presented, they were challenged to present, defend and review their own work	
Giving ongoing quality feedback on student work	In a way this was done by using a Q&A approach with presenters and others in class	
Using valid assessment methods		
Explaining the material plainly		
Improvising and adapting to new demands	Presenters were volunteers, you had to be prepared for no volunteers, fortunately you had 3 very different ones and this allowed you to discuss 3 very different kinds of use of programming scripts. You had to be prepared to work with a variety of scripts and have your computer set up ready for this.	

Comments

Teaching from “live” examples brought in by student volunteers was potentially a risky strategy as you may have had no presentations to work with, however this worked extremely well (from my perspective) as students were able to see a variety of solutions – with different types of programming scripts demonstrated (***you might need a back up of past examples for them to critique if you do not get volunteers***). You were able to weave their presentations into your teaching, as they became the way the content could be illuminated. Student presenters would have benefited greatly from the experience, and hopefully in future you will get more students preparing to present and reap the benefits as well. ***(I hope you will be evaluating the presenters and the others on the experience of having the live sites available to them)***

The strategy was an appropriate one as it allowed flexibility, worked around the interests of the students and provided more than a demonstration of content, it demanded students to evaluate the various solutions. The learning objectives were realistic and could be demonstrated by those who contributed to the session.