

20: 7th WorldLanguage Salsa PostInterview

Teacher: Honestly for this lesson I don't think I was that effective. Sometimes beyond of just cooking and getting an experience with the culture, that's pretty much why we cook. I try to remind them again and again this is what we've been working on. Yesterday we used "ir" to say to go as in a direction and this, when we started class today, we're going to use it in a different way. We're going to use it in the structure of saying we're going to do this. We're going to cook. We're going to add. We're going to mix. I think just giving the students a bigger project where they're really focused on the cutting, the cooking, and then all of a sudden... I do hear them saying, "No that's [inaudible 00:00:59]." At least they were trying to begin to mix the English and the Spanish.

Just making the area more comfortable. I think having a cooking day usually will lessen their anxiety about the focus of speaking. In some research that I've read in the past that's one of the biggest issues that hold language learners back; is the level of anxiety that we kind of forget how scary it is to then all of a sudden pronounce these sounds that are foreign because we're not used to doing that but cooking can help lower that expectation. Getting them to do their vocabulary, to just use these phrases, is a big part of the lesson.

I think that starting them together in a circle and then just having them notice, take a look [00:02:00] at what do you see, having them be aware and really think about what they're looking at, that is a great way to start because that was the purpose of the lesson. That they know these are the ingredients in salsa. As I walked around, I think only two groups today were kind of... One was like, "I think that salsa's supposed to be a lot of liquidy. This doesn't look like salsa to me." I was like, "No, actually there's hundreds of ways that you can make salsa. Your family must make it that way, but this is an actual style of salsa. Maybe you know it more as pico de gallo." That was kind of important to me.

Even I was surprised this class did say, "Oh, it's a pepper that we see." But no it's not a pepper, it's a jalapeno. Those two are different items. One of the girls also was in the corner. She was like, "No, I'm sure that this is not a jalapeno. It does not smell like one to me." Her family is of Latino descent. I know the mom cooks at home. I was like, "No, this is a jalapeno." Finally she realized, "Oh, you took out all the seeds, or they had all fallen out." I was like, "Yeah, I tried to get some of those out of the way because it can get kind of hot."

Huge role. If I had not have organized this cooking day, or any other cooking day, it would be a disaster. From the very... From having your recipe, breaking it down. I pre-planned the amount of groups that each class would have; the amount of kids at each station. I like to cook in tripods; groups of three, but another class is actually cooking in groups of four because otherwise it would have gotten too big. There was a lot of thought put into this lesson. I think sometimes that's a discouraging part of teaching. In order to make [00:04:00] a great lesson, or something successful, a lot of that behind the scenes work goes unnoticed. Students I don't think fully realized that I had washed all of the vegetables. A lot of the pre-cutting had gone into it already. The measuring;

we didn't bring in the measurement. That is a great way to also introduce other types of... The metric system, right? In America we'll measure with the cup and the tablespoon instead of liters. That is one thing I like to do, but I've noticed it kind of takes a while in forty-five minute classes. A lot of pre-panning had gone into this.

Definitely starting off the class doing some of those, "Okay, lets do a temperature check. Put your hands up in the air." I had told another class... I usually tell them, "If you can hear me touch your head. If you can here me touch your nose." My other class said, "We just washed our hands, that would be dirty!" I was like, "Oh, caught you. You're keeping clean." Just doing those temperature checks throughout the class.

I think setting the agreements up, and guidelines up, clearly so that they know how they can meet the expectation really from the very beginning will eliminate a lot of behavior issues. Overall I don't believe that kids come in wanting to have an attitude. I do believe that they come in wanting to learn and sometimes they're just like, "How?" Everything has to be explained to them. Exactly how you teach them to stand behind the desk. Sometimes get in trouble when they truly not been taught the expectation. If I would have scolded kids that they weren't standing behind the desk in the position that I wanted them that would have been totally unfair to the student instead of just reminding them, "Nope, we're behind the desk today."

I think insubordination comes in a different form [00:06:00] when after repeated times of saying, "This is exactly where you stand; how you stand. That's where you're going to stay." Then they continue to break that agreement, then that's when we can finally call it a behavior issue. I think trying to set those expectations from the very beginning, from simple things such as even cutting with scissors, I know the first week of school I will explain to them and be harsh on them about how are you using scissors in my classroom, instead of expecting at middle school you should know this.

I think the lesson that the activity itself, just cooking keeps them entertained, focused. As well as doing those reminders like, "Oh, we need to make sure if you're cutting too much you need to share." I did have to go, I think, and speak to one group. One girl has a strong personality and I think she would have cut the entire time. So just those reminders.

They do enjoy cooking. Being able to experience the vocab is a lot more meaningful then just seeing a picture about it or hearing me tell them my experience with it. They finally got to experience it for their selves. I think sometimes a lot of learning could be bettered if kids in the classroom got to have some of these experiences and life experiences. They just come at all stages. Some kids are really good at cooking already because their families are telling them, "You need to cook." Other kids are like, "No, I'm not allowed to do that yet." I think they find it meaningful with bringing the experience to them in the classroom instead of just reading about it. It's better to go to the country than look at it in a book. [00:08:00]