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Seoul National University  
Aug 5, 2022  
Teacher Assistant - Advanced English: Presentation

## **General Observations**

[FN 1] The fieldwork I was set in was Seoul National University, South Korea. I am a teacher assistant for an Advanced English Presentation class in the business division. Many students were set on improving their marketing skills, conference skills, and overall international skills gave that many students wanted to work globally. At the beginning of the fieldwork, students were set to give an overview of what they wanted to do and what they wanted to work on throughout the course. Many students said they wanted to work in marketing or raise their own business. This class seemed to be a good fit for their goals as one of the upcoming projects was to pitch a new, original project and sell it to the class.

[FN 2] To get ready for an upcoming project, students were set to come into class with a prepared resume and questions that they believe the interviewer would ask. This would be a way to assess where students were at when it came to the interviewing process. It would give a different perspective of their performance without the added pressure of the performance being harshly graded (OC). Students were set to get in groups of three to four students, making the class have six groups in total. The desks were moved so students could face each other while having enough space from each other to properly discuss without interruption. [Update] Students were instructed to set up the desks in a 2-3 by 1 formation. This means having two to three desks face one desk so students can practice their interview process. One student would record, and the other students would ask five questions each. This process took 10-15 minutes for each student as students were instructed to quickly read the interviewee's resume and job description and then ask field-appropriate questions. As we are getting ready for the midterm performance review presentation, we want students to peer-assess and self-assess where they are in this preparation process.

## **Focused Observations**

In the second week of working with the students, I ended up proctoring three groups out of six. After the last class's preparation section, students were able to get a clear understanding of what was expected out of the graded in-class activity (interview). They prepared a resume and job description on their laptops or tablets and gave their devices to their interviewers. We provided the students with a set of thirty questions where two student interviewers were to pick five each.

Some students came more prepared this time. Some students even wore formal clothing. Two students wore a colored white shirt with a cardigan along with jeans, leaning in between

casual and semi-formal. Another student wore a turtle neck along with slacks. One student wore their usual slacks and long brown coat. Many students came well-prepared and more formal than usual.

To note, in Korea, people usually cover their chest and arms due to respect for elders and the public. Their fashion sense is typically more formal than what you would see in America (OC). They would typically lean towards coats, shirts that would cover their overall body, and wear straight-cut jeans or slacks. Generally, showing too much skin is not common. Thus, students usually come into class with these types of outfits. When it comes to graded assessments on presentation, students seem to be a bit more formal, switching their sweats or jeans for slacks and a t-shirt.

As students were arranged in a 2-3 by 1 desk setup, I assessed three groups and saw that they were all doing quite well. Although some of them stumbled and took some time to think, this was a good sign that they were taking the assessment seriously. It was also clear that they prepared to answer the questions before class, especially when some students were whispering to themselves before sitting down in their respective group seatings.

One student was asked “What makes you a good leader” for a product manager position. Their answers were very similar to the prompt that the professor gave, however, they incorporated the templated phrase well with their specific job description. They said they were a computer science major where they led group projects and also “time-managed and delegated tasks to meet class deadlines.” Another student was asked the same thing for a manager position and answered that they were “student council president in high school and managed class activities for two years.” Although their experiences didn’t extend to the outside-of-school activities, they were able to utilize their high school experiences as strong candidate qualities.

## **Reflections**

The “English Language Development: Acquiring the Language Needed for Literacy and Learning” by Lily Won Fillmore connects well with the professor’s adapted lesson plan. In the texts, Fillmore talks about how students develop literacy. In one of the sections, she analysis how instructional conversations are the most effective way students learn complex structural properties. In this class, due to students being unprepared last class (not having their resume or job description ready), the professor pointed out resources given in the guided packet that could be considered conversational starters. It was instructional conversations that students could use when responding to their interview questions. Phrases and templates such as “I adapted...”, “I supported...”, “I led...”, and much more were given along with phrases such as “I managed the team to meet certain deadlines.” These were all given out and helped the students prepare for the graded in-class activity. Without using the conversational starters that the professor prepared, students proved that they did not know where to start in the last class. Thus, having this structure allowed them to become more literate in the interview process.