

Observation for: Hongyi Zhu
30 October 2017
MIS 373: Basic Operations Management (Video Recorded)

Dear Hongyi,

First off, thanks for giving me the pleasure of observing your class. I thought you were very effective as an instructor and I think you did a wonderful job covering the topic of Inventory Management. Initially, upon observing the class I noticed the classroom to be a lecture classroom with seats set up in stadium-style half circles with the lectern at the lowest level. While this is a great set-up for teacher-centered learning, it does allow for good teacher-student interaction and some student-student interaction of adjacent students. This seating arrangement made it easy for you to get the student's attention and begin the class on time. In addition to a projection screen, the classroom also had a whiteboard, which can be a useful tool for learner-centered approaches to teaching.

In your introduction, you let the students know what was going to happen during the current class period. Having an agenda that clearly lists learning objectives show the students that you are organized and allows them to get in the frame of mind for the material and activities that are to follow. I thought that your use of slides was very appropriate in discussing the topic as well. They had pictures and diagrams where appropriate and avoided the common occurrence of putting too much text on a slide. Also, while discussing your slides, you demonstrated skillful use of hand gestures which can sometimes be distracting if not done correctly. I also liked how you broke up your lecture by engaging the class with questions and short videos. It can be very difficult to keep students' attention, especially in a long class like yours, and you did a fantastic job at this. You also moved around quite a bit without being a distraction to learning.

While I found your lecture to be well structured with a good flow, you were really able to turn the class into an active-learning environment with your use of think-pair-share. One example, was when you asked students to identify inventory types related to their jobs. I believe you gave them 4 minutes to discuss with a peer, which appeared to be an adequate amount of time, and afterwards share their thoughts in front of the class. Then, what I really loved was how you drew pictures on the whiteboards of where the student responses fell in the grand scheme of Inventory Management. This really promoted visual learning and delivered the information in a new, effective manner. Your examples and explanations throughout the class were well thought out and successfully aided the class in understanding the material and I must highlight again, the pictures you drew on the whiteboard were very good, so you should never stop using those visuals when you can. While some of the students were a bit confused by the optimal service level equation, you cleared that up with your use of graphs and diagrams.

As the class was coming to an end, you presented a final problem to tie everything together. You then facilitated a discussion and talked them through the problem, which worked very well. Based on some of the readings and discussions I have had in the past, I can't stress enough how important it is to tie things up at the end of a lecture or topic. I would say that you are very good at explaining and facilitating and I thought you had gained the respect of the students. Your feedback to students throughout the lecture seemed positive and I thought the class kept on task very well.

Overall, your lesson was very engaging and I felt that I learned quite a bit without having any background in MIS. You made effective use of all the class time and appeared to meet the learning objectives you had set in the beginning of the class. You also did a good job of keeping a positive demeanor throughout which is another way to keep your class engaged. Again, thank you so much for the opportunity to observe your class and best of luck in your future teaching endeavors.

All the best,

Rex

Matthew "Rex" Recsetar
PhD Student
Agriculture and Biosystems Engineering
University of Arizona
msreecs@email.arizona.edu