

Cross Cultural Field Experience Journal
(58 hours)

10/12/06 (1.5 hours)

Tim Stanton introduced me to his ESL (English as a Secondary Language) class at CVTC as a volunteer. My name was written on the board along with other students from countries such as Thailand, Mexico, Russia, Egypt, and Mongolia. Many of these students I had recognized as employees of restaurants and other businesses around town. The names of these students were so foreign to my own language, I wasn't sure how I was going to be able to figure out who was who by name, and how to pronounce them. I spent the class period looking over take-home workbook assignments and getting to know the class and their levels of competency with the English language.

10/18/06

Due to class conflict I was a half hour late for class and found that my ESL class was missing.

10/19/06 (2 hours)

I had discovered that the class took an in school field trip to the library the day before. Tim was showing the students how to use the library and the different services the library had to offer. He had taken pictures of students doing various things, and printed them off in a packet. I helped the students write short explanations of what they had done in the photos the previous day. Most of the time, I worked with a mother and son from Egypt. The mother was very anxious to learn and the son has a hyper attention deficit disorder, so it was difficult to keep him from rushing me along.

10/26/06 (1.5 hours)

We spent time in a computer lab. Tim was showing me how to help the students log into a computer program called Rosetta's Stone. He demonstrated all the different features such as going through activities in reading mode, listening mode, visual mode, reading and listening mode, and speaking mode. When I went home, I looked up the software on line and played with a trial version in which one has to stay online for, but could select any language to learn. I was curious to see whether I would get frustrated learning another language with the same software we were asking students from another country to use to learn English. What I liked about the software is that it starts at the root of the language and builds on slowly as a child would learn at an early stage in life.

11/2/06 (5 hours)

Tim and I had started a conversation about another class he was teaching in Plum City. He and his wife advertised English lessons for the Mexican population working on the farms hosted by their public library. I told him that I knew a little Spanish and I would like to go observe and participate. My fiancé went down to Plum City with me and she loved every bit of the experience. The family that we tutored was easily entertained and they put forth so much effort regardless of being exhausted from a long day of work on the farm.

11/8/06 (4.5 hours)

I started to realize that learning the names of these students and the countries they were from was not as difficult as I thought it would be. Tim thought it would be fun to offer prizes for the games played in class to help them learn vocabulary. I had suggested that these fun prizes he had picked up at a dollar store be numbered. The students would have to draw a number from a bowl and would have to practice saying the number. The number would correspond with a particular prize he had kept in a box.

Later that evening, my fiancé joined me again in Plum City. We played similar games such as Word Bingo. I found it interesting that the younger members of the family was more comfortable with English than the older members. The grandmother had struggled but impressed us all at how much she was learning.

11/15/06 (4.5 hours)

The ESL class spent time in the computer lab learning how to communicate using e-mail. Tim wanted every student to e-mail him with a question that he would respond to. While other volunteers assisted the students, I requested a list of students and their e-mails from Tim. I then e-mailed the class and other volunteers with a list that the students could use to communicate with each other. After that, I spent time sending messages to different students, so that they could practice replying.

In Plum City, we had taught the family how to fill out applications or forms. They learned the vocabulary necessary to fill out names, dates, addresses, phone numbers, and other requested information.

11/16/06 (4.5 hours)

The ESL class had a potluck lunch. I brought a Norwegian dessert called Kransekake. I was willing to try any dish that didn't have seafood, and I was impressed by how good everything was. The purpose of this activity was to get the students familiar with different ingredients. Each item on the table had a name, description and a list of ingredients. The class had fun and they were able to share their heritage with the class and other CVTC faculty who poked their head in.

11/29/06 – 11/30/06 (3 hours)

The ESL class reviewed fire safety. We discussed terms to know and procedures that need to be taken during an emergency. The most important information we stressed was that everyone knew how to call 911 and be able to tell the dispatch their address. After that, we had the students practice drawing escape plans for their house by using the CVTC facility. All fire extinguishers, alarms, and exits were marked on their diagram of the building. The students also wrote down questions that Tim could pass on to the fire department so that they knew the most important information to cover on the upcoming field trip.

12/7/06 (3.5 hours)

The ESL class took a field trip to the local fire department in Menomonie where firefighters did their best to give the ESL students an idea of how they operate. They too stressed the importance of being able to comprehend a street address over the phone. I believe that most of the students enjoyed their visit and learned many useful things to appreciate a fire department's responsibilities. I gave some of the firefighters a little background on the class and its purpose. They were surprised to see the number of volunteers who help tutor in the class. Our visit made the front page of the Dunn County News, so both the fire department and the ESL class had an opportunity to show the public what is offered.

1/18/07 (2.5 hours)

I returned for another semester as the only volunteer at the time. Half of the students had returned. Tim and I had a discussion about the Hmong language and calendar and how they have a very limited vocabulary which doesn't include calendars and time. So, he said that it is very hard for them to understand when assignments are due and when to show up for appointments. We live in such a fast paced society where everyone depends on a schedule.

1/24/07 (3 hours)

Today, I worked with a substitute teacher. I helped the students learn math skills, particularly fractions. The teacher didn't do a bad job of teaching, but I jumped in because I thought he was confusing a class who didn't understand his terminology. Using pictures I helped explain what addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division were. After that, I helped an elderly student from Norway with reading comprehension. He needed to be able to understand the text that went along with the pictures and then write a summary of the events that occurred. We had a discussion about printing uppercase and lowercase letters because he found that it was easier writing in all uppercase. I told him that it wasn't formal, but even U.S. residents will write that way from time to time informally.

1/25/07 (2 hours)

In the ESL class, I helped Tim teach students about clocks and how to tell time. We used overheads and the dry-erase board to quiz the class on how to tell someone the time using different terminology. I helped a Mexican student with a workbook on vocabulary with items of clothing.

2/7/07 (3 hours)

In the ESL class, I helped Tim teach students vocabulary pertaining to weather. We drew pictures on the board and taught the students how to describe the weather. I helped a Russian student do a cross-word puzzle worksheet in which he had to fill in the squares based on the pictures of weather on the side.

2/8/07 (3 hours)

I helped an Egyptian student who had failed her behind the wheel driver's test. We went out early in the morning, and I explained each of the violations she had failed. I asked her to repeat all of the maneuvers the way the DOT wanted them done. Most of her mistakes were not looking both ways and over the shoulder before changing lanes or moving into traffic.

2/14/07 (4 hours)

I helped an Egyptian student who had failed her behind the wheel driver's test. We went out early in the morning, and I explained each of the violations she had failed. I asked her to repeat all of the maneuvers the way the DOT wanted them done. Most of her mistakes were not looking both ways and over the shoulder before changing lanes or moving into traffic.

In the ESL class, we learned about Saint Valentine and the history of Valentine's Day. Then we had the students write out a request for supplies in order to create their own valentines. I helped a couple Mexican students write poems that they later put on the valentine in which they created.

2/21/7 (3.5 hours)

The ESL class learned about adjectives and how to order multiple adjectives in a sentence. I then worked with a Hmong student with plurals and possessives. We also worked with pronouns and how to replace them with other nouns.

2/22/7 (4 hours)

I visited a farm in where a Hmong student lived. This student didn't have a ride so I offered the lift to and from. I was surprised at how long of a commute this student had in order to make class. I then worked with this student on English skills in a workbook. While the rest of the class played a game of Go Fish, I offered to familiarize an Egyptian student's husband with AutoCad using my laptop because he was interested in taking a class at CVTC in which he had late registration with.

3/29/7 (3 hours)

I visited the Egyptian students' home to fix some computer problems they were having and getting software loaded so that the husband can work on homework assignments with AutoCad at home. They were nice enough to make me fish for lunch and it was so good, I didn't even need to put sauce on it.