

English Communication I Lesson 2 Curry travel around the World

~A Cross-curriculum class including biology, world history, home economics and English communication~

English department

○The aim of this Cross-curriculum class

In the previous cross-curriculum lesson, Basic English Communication Lesson 5 Super Cool Biz Project, our topic was “clothing”, we learned about several countries’ cultures, history and climates through understanding their clothing. In this lesson, our topic is “food”. We are going to consider about each country’s curry from many viewpoints.

○The outline of Lesson2: Curry Travel around the world

We learn about curry’s history, how it was brought to Japan and Japanese original recipe. After learning these things, students give their presentations about world curries. We are going to show the contents of our cross-curriculum classes below.

○Collaboration with World History

Students have already studied about the “Age of Discovery” in world history classes. Therefore, the students were able to answer the questions, “What is the Age of Discovery?” “What happened during the period?”. They could review the information from the world history class to answer these questions. Through the interaction with our students, we made sure that they understood that spices were worth their weight in silver. The students thought about why spices had high value at that time and shared their opinions with their classmates.

Some students said that “They are good for health.”, “They were useful in hot countries. People could sweat when they ate hot food and feel cool.”, “People could change the taste of the food when they used spices.”, “Meat didn’t go bad.”. We discussed these ideas and focused on several spices and herbs which people often use when they cook curry.

○Collaboration with Home Economics

Mrs. Ishikawa, a Home economics teacher, gave us herbs such as sage, thyme and rosemary from her home garden and spices such as cumin, coriander, turmeric, black pepper and cardamom. We could show the students these herbs and spices directly. Last year I showed only pictures to my students. Compared with the last year’s class, the students became more interested in the herbs and spices. Through the viewpoint of home economics, the students could understand that people could adjust the seasoning, keep ingredients good or bring out the flavor if they use spices and herbs.

Because of Covid-19, we couldn’t smell herbs and spices directly and pass them around to the students. Next year we are going to smell



and touch them, if so, students can understand their effects more deeply.

○Collaboration with Science

In English, we explained the effects of spices (cumin, coriander, turmeric, pepper, cinnamon and cardamom) and herbs (sage, thyme, rosemary and lemongrass) which they usually used cook curry.

Students could understand the phrases such as “an anti-bacterial action”, “preservative effects”, “an effect of insect repellent”, “the promotion of appetite and digestion”, “the promotion of blood flow and metabolism” and so on. They could also understand the effects of spices and herbs in detail English.

These spices and herbs’ effects are versatile. In this lesson, we consider choosing their effects when the students need to give their scientific presentation and speech in the future. We told the students to introduce the effects when they gave their presentation. We also told them to remember the effects when they are asked questions after their presentation. If so, the students will memorize English phrases about the spices and herbs effects.

○Considering the cross-curriculums classes as an English department

Students had their presentation in pairs (10 countries * groups of 4: 2 students are a presenter, 2 students listened to other groups’ presentation and asked some questions. After listening to the presentations, listeners came back to their own groups and retold other groups’ presentation to their members.

To summarize the activity, students chose the curry they wanted to eat the most and wrote about the curry (This is their summer vacation homework). They wrote the reasons why they chose the curry. Through this writing activity, the students will be able to arrange the information they heard.



↑ Students explaining Mexican curry and taking note and asking questions

●From Students’ summary (some instances)



- Curry has a lot of spices and herbs, in both hot and cold countries. I think that spices have 2 effects: making our body hot and making our body sweat and cool off.

- Even in hot countries, some curry doesn’t have a lot of spices. People can increase and decrease the spices as they like and adjust the seasoning.

↑ Students retelling other groups’ curry to their group members

○The reflection on the cross-curriculum classes

In the middle of June, we learned about 10 countries food (Basic English Communication: Joyful Lesson 2 World Food). Students read handouts about world food and summarized the contents and gave presentations. This time, they researched each countries' curry by themselves, made their materials and gave their presentations. The number of the students who searched for English websites has increased. We think that students' English reading comprehension and information processing ability has improved. Their presentation also improved. They took care of eye contact, voice and gestures. Some groups made use of pictures and maps when they gave presentations. There are individual differences, but some students paid attention to regional characteristic and summarized the features of each curry. Others could find out some original pattern from collecting information by themselves.

Most students aren't familiar with spices and herbs but they learned about them. They learned not only how to adjust the seasoning but also keep us healthy and keep ingredients good. The students could understand the important role of spices and herbs and they introduced their effects to other students. Topics about food are common topic in English class but students are apt to only think "I'd like to eat it," "It sounds delicious." However, in this lesson, thanks to the viewpoints from World History, Home Economics, and Science, the students could focus on the topic and give their presentations.

Each group had 6 minutes to present including Q & A. Two students were presenters and 1-3 students were listeners and questioners. Therefore, every listener had to ask 2 or 3 questions and every presenter had to answer them on the spot. At first we thought that it was very hard for the students to interact with each other but many groups could continue Q & A after their presentation. Compared to this May, we were sure that the students' listening skills, thinking of questions, expressing their questions, and answering have improved. We are going to continue the cross-curriculum classes and develop students' enhancement of information.