

## **Selected Daily Reflections**

06/29

Professor Tseng introduced many useful and meaningful materials to us, and I think I learned a lot today. Although I've known the five national standards of the foreign language education before, it is not very clear for me what each standard really represents. Sometimes I am confused with standards 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3. However, I totally understand them today. The interpersonal communication is two-way negotiation, and interpretive communication and presentational communication are one-way negotiation. Interpretive communication focuses on listening and reading, and presentational communication focuses on speaking and writing. When I designed curriculum before, I always thought how to add Chinese culture in each unit, and sometimes thought it's too hard and felt frustrated. Today I know I unconsciously used culture in my teaching. For example, I told students that Chinese people say last name first, and then say first name. Today I know it belongs to practices of cultures. When I assigned students homework, I asked them to circle the last name and first name on a person's business card. Today I know it belongs to products of cultures. I also learned communication and cultures are important parts in 5 standards, and will use them as much as possible in my future teaching practices.

In addition, I learned two new things today. One is LingoaFolio and the other is Backword design. Both of them are useful in my teaching. LingoaFolio can record and reflect on students' language learning and cultural experiences. Not only is it a good tool

for students to know what level they are in, but also a good tool for teachers to know how to design the curriculum according to the required skills. Next school year I will ask level 2 and level 3 students to use LingoaFolio to check their proficiency levels for each skill in the beginning and at the end of each semester, and redesign the curriculum after receiving feedbacks.

It is the first time for me to hear the word Backward design. Now I know it is from top to bottom in designing a curriculum. Although I didn't know this method, I've already used its idea in my teaching. In the beginning of each year, I set up a goal for each level. After writing down the pacing guide for each trimester, I have lesson plans for each week and each day. Therefore, the concept of Backward design is new for me, but I've used the information of Backward design in my teaching before.

Through Professor Tseng's teaching and classmates' interacting, I found that some classmates have more experiences in teaching, and have new and good ideas in teaching. I think that we've learned a lot in the class.

06/30

It is usually boring to learn the theories which I have had some knowledge before, but I changed my mind through today's learning. Professor Tseng organized theories and approaches in foreign language teaching for us, and I have expanded my knowledge in theories of teaching through Professor Tseng's teaching and discussion with my

classmates. There is an old saying in China “Theory should be connected with practice.”

Therefore, not only should a good teacher know how to teach students, but he/she should also know some theories as the foundation of his/her teaching. Although my Principal and students think that I am a good teacher, I know I am poor at teaching theories. I appreciate Professor Tseng’s lesson on teaching theories. I learned that teaching theories experienced four phases, which include behaviorism, innatist perspectives, psychological perspective and the social cultural perspective. There are specific characteristics and teaching approaches in different stage of teaching theories. For example, behaviorism focuses on the form, and audio-lingual method is a representative teaching approach in this stage, while innatist perspectives focuses on the meaning, and communicative language teaching is its representative teaching approach. The social cultural perspective is currently popular because it focuses on the communication among students. Although there are five communicative approaches in this stage, task-based language teaching (TBLT) is very important because it is a meaningful, communicative and authentic task. Teachers should try their best to design their curriculum with the definition of a task given by Rod Ellis. TBLT is totally new for me. I will revise my curriculum according to requirements of TBLT after going back home. I agree that TBLT is a good teaching method, but I don’t think all assignments can be designed with this method. When students learn new grammar, teachers need to use audio-lingual method to ask students to practice so that students can quickly master the new grammar. Therefore, each teaching method should not be isolated. On the contrary, it should be combined with other teaching methods in order to make the teaching successful.

07/01

I feel a little bit proud of myself after finishing today's class. I have unconsciously used the approaches Dr. Ferree and Professor Tseng recommended to teach students Chinese, although I didn't know any theories and the results of research before. Dr. Ferree recommended adding physical actions to help students hear tones. I asked students to practice tones with gestures, and they are very interested in such practices. Dr. Ferree also suggested teachers to put new character on the left with Pinyin and English with different colors when presenting new information. I separately taught students to speak and write characters. When teaching students how to speak Chinese, I usually use pictures to present the meanings of Chinese words, and use red colors and big fonts to present Pinyin, while use black colors and small fonts to present the Chinese characters and English meanings for the words. When teaching students writing characters, I use red colors and big fonts to present the characters, and use black colors and small fonts to present Pinyin and English meanings. This approach is the same as what Professor Tseng emphasized in today's class. She thinks that listening and speaking are the first, and reading and writing are the second when teachers deliver the materials of the textbook to students. Students often spend most of time in my class in practicing listening and speaking. Therefore, most students in my class are very good at listening and speaking. However, I sometimes feel frustrated because a few students couldn't use pair work or

group work wisely, and I don't have any good ideas in how to help them.

Today Dr. Ferree opened my mind and let me clearly understand why repetition and summary are important for people to learn a foreign language from the point of view of science. Since scientists think that the most effective state of mind for learning is relaxed and alert, teachers will use this rule to create an environment to encourage students learning. Through Dr. Ferree's teaching, the question in my mind has been resolved. Before I know Chinese is hard for people to learn because it is in the different language system from English, Spanish, French and German. Today Dr. Ferree explained that speakers of Chinese use left hemisphere, which is language area, as well as right hemisphere due to the tonal processing.

I am glad to see the knowledge water in my teaching bottle is filled up, and becoming more pure and healthy at the same time. Today Professor Tseng added some "fresh water" in my teaching bottle again. I understand what the mechanical, meaningful and communicative teaching is, and will use it as much as possible in my class.

07/02

It is the first time for me to hear the idea "culture as the core" when teachers teach a foreign language. Usually teachers teach the language first, and cultural introduction serves for the language. However CARLA suggests teachers to consider introducing

cultures first and language second. I don't think it is easy for teachers to do this because teachers need to search and find a lot of authentic materials to design lesson plans. It will take too much time to make it happen, but I will set it as my goal. As Dr. Tan said, in order to reach the goal "culture as the core" in teaching, teachers should use contextualization of language instruction. The basic purpose of contextualization of language instruction is that students are able to use the language in daily life after learning Chinese. Therefore, teachers will design more meaningful and communicative lesson plans for students. In the lesson plans, authentic tasks will be the best choice. In my mind I always think tasks must be a big project or include a lot of information. In fact, tasks can be big and it can also be small. For example, teachers can show students a picture of bathroom in China where there is a character 女. It is a small task. Of course, it is a big task if teachers give students an authentic prompt and ask students to do a project.

Dr. Tan also introduced to use Chinese songs as authentic materials. Using Chinese songs in teaching is my strength. I made many Chinese songs to help students remember the materials we learned, and I found that it is a good way to improve students' interest in learning Chinese. I will share my ideas on how to use Chinese songs in teaching with my classmates in next two weeks.

During my teaching I found that the biggest struggling for students is to write Chinese characters. Some students gave up learning Chinese due to the problem of writing characters. One of my students told me, “You are my favorite teacher, but Chinese characters are really hard to write, so I don’t want to continue to take Chinese class.” I felt sorry when hearing such words, and always think whether or not I should teach students to write characters in my class. Even if students are required to type characters in the level 2 class, it was not easy to book a laptop cart every day in my school, and it wasted too much time to distribute and run computers. I ask myself, “Is there another way to improve students’ interest in learning how to write characters?” I am so excited that I found an answer today. A new way to teach student to write Chinese characters is to use PlamOne Palm Treo 600 sprint PDA camera phone. I swear that my students must love this way very much. Such a technology enables students to input Chinese characters on a cell phone and it is easy for students to learn how to use it. Inputting characters and other functions on the cell phone will make students feel fun. This is the same as the Chinese proverb “Placing fun and happiness into learning.”

Besides learning an easy way to input Chinese characters, I also learned some teaching strategies from other teachers. Teacher Li made “fruit song” and another song to introduce “first..., again..., then..., at last...” I also like her idea to play a movie “eat drink man woman” when introducing the topic “restaurant”. I think that I will use them in my teaching too. Another group played a movie about Mr. Bean’s “getting up late for the dentist” to introduce “at the same time”. It is an extremely good idea, and I think all the teachers should use this movie in their teaching.

There is an old saying in China, “There must be a teacher for me among other

three people.” I admire that my ancestor said such brilliant words two thousand years ago. Everyone in the workshop has his/her strengths, and should be my teacher in some areas. Learning from other teachers makes me feel more confident in my teaching. I love Startalk UVA.

07/04

Today technology plays more and more important roles in teaching. Using technology adequately and appropriately can improve students’ interest in learning, and will have an unconsciously teaching result. Any language teaching should include listening, speaking, reading and writing. Today Teacher Zeng introduced several useful websites and software to us including the 4 aspects of teaching a foreign language. I like the chatting website [www.livemocha.com](http://www.livemocha.com). It is a good way for students to practice listening, speaking and writing. After setting up an account, students can find people who are Chinese native speakers online, and talk to them. Through talking and typing in Chinese, students’ Chinese skills will be improved. I also like the website <http://ecl.iflytek.com/ListenToThis/>. This website helps students practice listening and reading. After inputting Chinese characters, students can click different keys to practice



listening and reading students' input. I extremely love the website <http://www.voki.com/>.

I think that my students will love it, too. The website asks students to create their own Cartoon speaking characters and add their voices. I will definitely use it in my class next semester and show the parents how their children did on the curriculum night.

<http://www.toondoo.com/> is another funny website to allow students to create their own comics, and practice writing at the same time. Some students may pay more attention to create comics and ignore the purpose of writing Chinese characters when using this website. Therefore, teachers should give students clear rubrics to grade them.

I think ChinesePlus is also good software for teachers to use in teaching. It is convenient for teachers to prepare their lesson plans and correct students' homework.

Although technology can help teachers achieve more teaching effect, it must be balanced to be utilized in classes. If teachers use too much technology, students may focus on the technology and ignore the Chinese language and culture. So how much technology usage in teaching is what teachers need to think about.