

## Reflection 1, Day 1 June. 29

It seems like that every foreign language teacher in U.S. knows the 5 Cs. However, how many can bury them in mind and embed them in the lesson plans as if they are a part of our intuition? And how many of us can translate the standard into accurate Chinese? The 2010 Startalk training started with the review of 5 Cs.

Today, we went through the three modes of communication, products & practices of culture, and other small points by looking at one huge thematic unit lesson plan. To my surprise, more than half of the teachers use the national standard daily base when planning their lessons, some of them even use the 5 Cs to assess their own teaching. Compare to those teachers, my understanding of the 5 Cs is really superficial. I know about it, but don't bother to design my class according to it every time.

However, even being frequently used in the lessons planning, there still exists some grey zone in terms of how to present the 5 Cs. For example, during our discussion today, some teachers thought "The Moon" could be the culture product of Chinese Mid-Autumn Festival. But some other teachers said the culture product should be something unparalleled, something only exists in the Chinese community. "The Moon" is a universal physical exist, therefore, it can be considered as a cultural product. At last, one of the teachers said maybe we should put the moon and the jade rabbit together as the culture product, and then it can really become unique.

Today is definitely an excellent start. I saw that every teacher brought their experience and willing to contribute. I'm sure that we are going to have more interesting and insightful discussion in the future.

### Reflection 2, Day 2 June.30

The theory class could be fun and engaging. We went through all the major theories along the timeline, stopped when somebody has something to share. During the process, I learnt a lot.

The affective filter hypothesis seems very interesting to me. Because in my class, I do have some student get nervous towards teachers' question even he or she knows the exact answer. While others can keep an open, positive attitude even he or she doesn't well prepare the class. Now I realized that there's many facts affect students' level of the filter: their personality, learning style, previous learning experience, and emotion, etc. The theory offers me a new way to view what's happening in the real classroom, and the solution to deal with it.

In the afternoon, our discussion went into the topic of error correction in Chinese class. What I did before is correcting the students who are cautious about their pronunciation, while letting go those who don't care about the pronunciation. But nearly all the other teachers disagree with my opinion. Both theory and practice tell us that it's very important to correct the error from the very beginning, because the language learning is a life-long-issue. We'd better start and keep our students in the right track. All we need to concern is how to correct the errors in a scientific way. To me, it feels good to see my error is being corrected.

### Reflection 3, Day 3 July.1

Today we met a Brain Lady. Dr. Ruth Ferree gave us a wonderful speech on the topic of Human brain and SLA. The speech started with an experiment. The professor read aloud a group of vocabularies and asked half of the class write down the number of the vowel, while the other half of the class symbol positive or negative according to the word's meaning. After reading aloud all the vocabularies, the professor suddenly asked us to remember what those words were and spell them as many as possible. As a result, the half of the class who marked positive and negative remembered more vocabularies than the half of the class who only paid attention on the vowel. This experiment was a great start. It told us that by knowing the meanings, man's memory will get a huge boost.

After that, we looked into the neurons; see how the learning and memory actually happen physically. The professor used a picture of Mona-lisa to illustrate that learning means establishing a pathway, a pattern of neuron firings, that when repeated is recognized. Here's the big lesson to our teachers.

Meanings and the emotions towards can help us learn of interfere with our learning. To find a way to stimulate students' emotion and bridge a pathway can certainly makes the language learning more efficient.

Later in the afternoon, Tseng laoshi's demo lesson proved that to learn in a meaningful content could make the learning process more student-centered and efficient. We learnt five objects and five direction and two grammar structures in Minnanese within 30 mins.

#### Reflection 4, July. 2

In my master program, I wrote a thesis about culture-language connection. At that time, I simply talked about it's important to embed the culture into language class. But how to embed it? Today's Professor Tan's lecture gave me a new inspective of view of teaching language through culture. For example, instead of teaching color, stationeries and motion verbs separately, teacher can throw a "paper-cut workshop" to the class. During the workshop, teacher use the target language to introduce the process of paper-cut, the necessary material, and then let students describe their paper-cut work, etc. By the end of the class, what students learnt are both culture and language. What's more, they practice the language through culture activities and made meaningful connection.

After knowing the theory, all the teachers began to brainstorm how to develop the culture related vocabulary into a doable task. We developed a lot of interesting ideas of teaching idioms, culture slangs and daily expressions. From the basic "早安, 你几岁? 您贵姓?" to the advanced "夸夸其谈, 书香门第" etc.

Surprisingly, every single expression could be explained from a culture perspective. What's more, they are very friendly to the novice level. I know an American guy who can speak fluent Chinese however he doesn't show respect to Chinese culture. The root of the problem could be tracked back to how he learnt the language. Is that in a language oriented way? Or a culture oriented way? I chatted with a teacher regarding the same topic. She said that most college students learn Chinese without the culture background. As a result, some of the college students gain the language without a proper attitude towards the home country. I believe that there's no language teacher like to see the result. Therefore, it's really a crucial thing to embed the culture into language class from the first day.

#### Reflection 5, July. 3

Too many good things to learn today! It's just a 6 minutes micro-demo, but all the teachers put so much time and effect in preparing the demo lesson.

I like the Mr. Bean video so much, it naturally connects with the teaching topic

“一边……一边……”。The class is so engaged when watching the video; meanwhile, everybody starts to predict that what he's going to do next. It's such a communicative student centered activity. Teacher immersed the grammar pattern in what happened to the Mr. Bean. However, it seems so nature for students to acquire what's the point. I'll definitely steal this idea and use it in my classroom.

I like Ms. Lee's idea of teasing the seasoning so much. While teaching sugar, salt, pepper, and soy sauce, Ms. Lee gave each of us a small package of seasoning. She marked both characters and pinyin on the package, and she asked us to taste them! Oh, my god, I've never thought of the idea. We can feel taste the authentic material! Therefore, we saw the seasoning, tasted their flavor and make meaningful connection with our experience in the real life situation. I bet the American students are going to love her class so much! Communicative, hands-on, student-centered, etc, we can found nearly every single scientific teaching method in her class.

In the afternoon, we discussed the good points and the short comings in the observation forms upon those videos. We found that it's super easy to tell if a teacher is showing or teaching, and it's very obvious to identify whether the students' learning process is happening. In other words, the communicative class activity stands out itself and makes the students' learning process efficient and remarkable.

#### Reflection 6, Day 11 July.9th

Today our group taught the second practicum. We felt much more confident and relaxed than the first time. The class theme is hobby and sports; it's easy and interesting to make real life connection for the learners.

I taught the second part of the class ---- sports. First of all, I category the vocabularies by hand motion, foot motion, and traditional Chinese, then I use real size sports facilities to address those new vocabularies to the students. For example, when teach the word “球”, I passed down a ball, let student touch it when making the “q---iu” sound. After five/six new vocabularies, I summed up by one activity. Due to the nature of sports, I use some competition games today. Activity also includes “looking for exercise partner”, “Wii Fit Kung Fu”, “weekend date information gap”, the class atmosphere was active and inspiring today.

Through today's experience, I found that it's easy to teach concrete objects, but it's hard to make students remember those vocabularies and use them in as many situations as possible. Teachers still need to spend time and effort to address those abstract words like 常常, 有时候, 那么, 先...然后..., etc. Maybe

I should steal more strategies from the teachers who deal with the topic of itinerary, time & dates, money. See how they make the vague idea crystal clear.