

## Selected Daily Reflections

06/21/2011---

Epilogue: implications for Teaching & Reflection

### Post-Commentary and Application

Van Paken is the author of <<From Input to Output: A teacher's Guide to Second Language Acquisition>> and "Epilogue: Implications for Teaching" is one chapter of the book. In this chapter, the author talks about some acquisition-oriented general implications which are to be suggestive and to stimulate thinking for language teaching.

In this Epilogue, there are five implications of Second Language Acquisition research for the development of L2 curricula. They are:

Implication 1: the more input, the better (the more meaning-based the class, the better);

Implication 2: the more interaction, the better;

Implication 3: all learner production should be meaning-based or communicative;

Implication 4: focus on form (or grammar instruction) should be meaning-based and tied to input or communication; and

Implication 5: we should watch for what we expect of learners.

These implications can be considered givens for any curriculum that aims to develop acquisition (and communicative abilities as a co-product).

These givens are actually guidelines which are useful for teachers who explore a range of options and to identify materials and practices that not only fit the guidelines but also fit their own teaching styles and contexts of learning.

The five implications reminded me of the three most important things I must do in my classroom.

First, I need continue to keep immersion setting and content-based instruction in my classroom. I also need to keep using Natural Approach teaching strategies which include total physical response, particular kinds of vocabulary presentations, picture-files and their use in making students to get acquisition easily. I need to keep in mind that input intent can slip into more language practice-without a meaning goal, and communicative.

Second, to foster acquisition, my teaching must focus on meaning and be level-appropriate for learners. To reach this goal, I need to design task-oriented activities in which the task has a particular communicative or informational goal. For example, task for beginners needs to be produced based on a model and the task may be heavily structured with

lots of linguistic support built in; tasks for more advanced learners could be less structured.

Third, structured output means that learner use one form throughout the task to create meaning to be useful of promoting output procedures and skill if the learner is at the right stage. Learners can produce meaningful sentences not only in interactive tasks but also in tasks with a grammatical focus.

All above three implications will improve my teaching in the future.

### 2011 STARTALK Training in Virginia-Day1 Reflection

Day 1 was to review the ACTFL National Standards, Backward Design, Thematic Units and LinguaFolio (Can-do). By reviewing, I learned something new.

First, I understood more about LinguaFolio and how to use it for designing lesson plans. I heard about LinguaFolio before and knew it was for STARTALK students' pre and post self-assessment checklist to determine students' proficiency level for each skill, but I never realized this document can become my design lesson plan guideline. LinguaFolio checklist from Novice Mid to Advanced Mid/High shows me clearly what students "Can-do" in the four language skills which are listening, speaking, reading and writing by three modes which are interpretive, interpersonal and presentational. Based on LinguaFolio, I can use backward design to design my lesson plan to make learning objectives clearly.

Second, I also understood more about the practice of "contextualized teaching". Dr. Tseng demonstrated her "School Life" ppt which is research-supported best practices in this afternoon. Using her demo, she showed us how to teach vocabulary and grammars in contextualized output, how to ask questions related to students' real life experiences, and how to produce quality and quantity output. The "contextualized teaching" will help me to improve my vocabulary and grammar teaching.

Third, peer share is the best way I learned from other teachers. Today is our first day of training and everyone stayed on track and shared their teaching experiences by discussing questions which were related to national standards, backward design, LinguaFolio, research-supported practices, input strategies, etc. to make fuzzy areas clear and solve puzzles.

Today was a good start and I really enjoyed the class time.

06/23/2011

### Day 3 Reflection:

I was excited about today's learning topics. I got some new ideas of how to apply authentic materials in classroom. I also learned how to turn exercises to tasks. The newest teaching strategy I learned today was the Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) which I will apply in my Chinese AP class.

One of the reasons I attended this workshop was to learn how to use authentic materials in target language teaching. Ming Juan Laoshi demonstrated the ways of how to change pedagogical task to authentic task. It looked like she opened a window in front of me and brightened my mind. From Ming Juan Laoshi's demo, I realized that when we use authentic materials in teaching, we can design more extended activities which are based on 5Cs at students' level to reinforce students listening, reading, speaking and writing skills. For example, when Ming Juan Laoshi taught Chinese III and IV students the topic of environmental protection, she showed students three related videos first, and then students in small groups discussed how to protect our earth and each group needed to create their public service advertising. The class needed to vote the best one. To encourage critical thinking, the "how?", "why?", and "if" questions were the following up activities. Ming June Laoshi reminded us that authentic materials used in teachings should be more than a textbook. Authentic songs, children's books, cooking videos, and printed receipts are also valuable resources that we can use to complete the authentic task.

I also learned several strategies from Dr. Tseng today which will help my future instructions. The first one was the ways of turning exercises to tasks. It is very important to guide students in a meaningful context to complete task and a teacher's modeling also plays a vital role in guiding students to complete the task. The second one is the 5 steps of designing quality and quantity activity to enrich students language output. The third one is the task-based teaching I will apply in my AP level class, which is learner-centered and motivating students to stay on task.

In summary, the main strategies that I need to remind myself in future teaching are to use more authentic materials, to design more meaningful context and to do more modeling.

06/24/2011

#### Day 4 Reflection:

Every day is a happy day because every day's lessons are so joyful and I have been putting more effective teaching strategies into my pocket. J More resources of technology in Chinese teaching and reinforcing the skills of TPRS were the two things that I learned today.

I integrated technology in my teaching such as ppts, videos, smart slate, black board, etc., but I felt that I should have more technological resources to help my students. However, I had no idea where I could have found these related resources before today. Zeng Laoshi, who is an expert in technology, shared his resources today. I felt "Wow! It is a great world that I need to take an adventure in." He introduced the technology devices and software that can help students in class activities such as "文林", palm system, QQinput, googlecocs, voki, gochinese, Ifly, Livecocha, etc. All of these resources will play a positive role to motivate students and will make my teaching more effective.

I used to think that TPRS stands for Totally Physical Response Storytelling, but today I realized that it was a misunderstanding and that it stands for the Teaching Proficiency Reading and Storytelling. TPRS strategy is not a new concept to me and I applied this teaching strategy in my Chinese I and Chinese II as comprehensive input for several times, but I couldn't apply this strategy smoothly and well. Today's training made me experience my students' feeling when they are frustrated in learning Chinese and I got more ideas about how to fill up the lack of the TPR strategy by the practice of speaking and writing skills. Today, TPR class built up my confidence to continue to apply this strategy in classroom.

06/25/2011

#### Day 5 Reflection:

Teachers in 5 groups demonstrated the mini practicum in 5 topics this morning. After each group demo, all the teachers provided feedbacks and suggestions. It was a great time we shared with each other about the learner-centered fun class activities and teaching strategies. It was also a joyful time to cooperate with other teachers in teamwork.

By the demo teaching, there are several things that I need to keep in mind in my future teaching:

1. The time of teachers' comprehensive input is less than 10 minutes. The shorter, the better.

2. Students are the stage performers. If a teacher gives input for 2 minutes, it is necessary for teacher to provide students practice time for 3 minutes. If teacher gives input for 3 minutes, it is necessary for teacher to provide students practice time for 4 minutes.
3. Teacher does the modeling, modeling, and modeling; Students do the practice, practice and practice.
4. Tasks are meaningful, meaningful and meaningful
5. Keep scaffolding step by step
6. Keep recycling consistently
7. Control your teaching time.

All of these reminders will help me to plan my lesson plan and make my teaching more effective.

06/29/2011

Day 1 Practicum Reflection:

Teaching topic: Date

It was my first time to teach junior high students. It was also my first time taught in a 50 minutes session class which pace was faster than that of block schedule class. Before I taught, I doubt about the possibility to teach so much information in an immersion classroom during a short time. After the first teaching, the answer was "yes!" and I felt more confident to teach in an immersion classroom without saying a single English word.

In my first teaching, I did well in the following parts:

1. My teaching steps were clear. My PPT helped students to know their learning objectives clearly in the beginning of class. My teaching procedure went smoothly with setting stage, comprehensive input, guided practice, pair or group practice, assessment and closure.
2. Use authentic materials such as calendar, family picture, etc. to help students to understand the content.
3. Apply different teaching strategies such as realia, sign language, TPR, SDAIE, pair work, ppt etc. to meet individual's needs.
4. Design more activities to provide students to practice more communicative skills.

I also learned from my mistakes and I will improve my teaching skills in my

next topic teaching.

1. Slow down my teaching pace. I taught the first period class of three. In order to complete my part so the second period teacher had easy time to follow up, my pace was too fast. I need to focus on the main content to make my lesson plan more flexible.
2. The class should get more motivated and cheerful if I taught students the "Birthday song" and sing the song to Ming Laoshi in the beginning of class rather than at the end of class.
3. I need to improve the circling pattern of the "solo" and "sing together" part when I did the teacher-lead modeling.

In my future teaching, I will apply the pattern of "solo" and "sing together" teaching skill in teaching pronunciation, new vocabulary and sentence structures to prepare students to do performance; I will also reduce teaching moments and increase students performing moments;

07/01/2011

Day 2 Practicum Reflection:

Teaching topic: Drinks

I felt more comfortable in today's teaching because students have reached their learning goals and they had much more language output than my first day teaching. Although it was my first class for this high school group, I built up a closed relationship with them at the end of class. I enjoyed my today's teaching, and my students too. I was so glad to see their shining happy faces when they walked out of the classroom and said "See you tomorrow" in Chinese to me.

1. I did better in the teaching-led "solo" and "sing together" part than I did last time. I found that it was very effective teaching strategy to teach pronunciation, vocabulary and sentences.
2. My activity instruction on ppt was clear for students to follow
3. Realia was powerful in teaching this lesson. I used eight kinds of drinks for students to look, to say, to touch and to drink. When they played visitor roles to visit teacher's home, their language output reached my expectation. They could express themselves what they prefer to drink with appreciate measure words and manners based on Chinese culture.

In my next class, I will

- 1 focus on students' production function to provide students more chances to produce more language output.

- 2 design realize communicative activities to make student do more student-centered performance which is related to their real-life communicative skills.

In my future teaching, I will design more realize communicative activities to reduce my teaching moments and increase students' performing moments to increase their language quality and quantity. I will also prepare more realia which is related to students' daily life and is powerful in teaching.

07/06/2011

Day 3 Practicum Reflection:

Topic: Sightseeing in Beijing

Today was my third practicum and it also was my last one to teach in this STARTALK program. I felt that the immersion environment was very powerful. I could see students' language output were much more effective than a week ago.

I did well in the following

- my teaching plan floated smoothly and students' language output reached my expectations
- the teacher-lead "sole" and "sing together" interaction
- Visual aid in the comprehensive input

However, I didn't do very well in the ending assessment because the "Role Play" instruction I gave to the students was not clear. I tried to use target language to explain the instruction without the English instruction aid on the board. I played the scenario by telling a story about an American student who got lost in a Beijing subway station. He asked a Chinese student who passed by for help. The Chinese student showed him the way to get to王府井(Wangfujing). After I told the story by TPR, it seemed like everyone understood the task, but when they came on the stage to play it out, I found out that not everyone understood the point to play it out correctly. Several of them also needed the English instruction aid. I need to improve on how to make instructions clearer for students to understand.

I have learned a lot in this 100% immersion program which I never tried before. It is amazing to see students' language output from novice low to novice high in only a 24 hours immersion program. In the beginning of STARTALK, I doubted if students could grasp so much

information and appropriate language output in such a short time which was three hours a day and five days a week. Looking back on the past two weeks of teaching, I realized that the research-supported best practices which included teaching target language in target language, applying authentic materials, creating student-centered learning environment, designing meaningful and communicative activities and assessing student in a task-based performance. All of these are a powerful way to excel in a foreign language classroom. These great practices will help me improve my teaching skills in my own classroom and in the coming school year. After this STARTALK training, I'll apply the teacher-lead "solo" and "sing together" strategy to correct students' pronunciation, learn vocabulary and sentences. I'll also reduce teacher-centered instruction time and increase more meaningful and communicative student-centered activity time. Authentic material application and authentic tasks are another goal I need to pursue in my future teaching.