

Startalk 2013 Reflection by Wen Bin Lu

Day # 1 June 18th

We started with icebreaker activities. There were about 10-12 items displayed on the table (most of the items were authentic Chinese items). These items were: an abacus, a shuttlecock, a badminton racket, a panda, a baseball...etc. Each teacher was asked to pick an item and tell a personal story to a classmate. Dr. Tseng picked an item and asked someone to retell a story that you have heard from your classmate. This was a great way to make a connection with your classmate. The second activity was to break into a group of four: to discuss and share various activities that were instruction related in the classroom. Our group picked teaching a Chinese song. Other topics were how to teach vocabulary, shopping, hobby, and family. Afterwards, we practiced on 5C which was the critical part of lesson planning. I enjoyed these hands on activities and shared the experience with other colleagues. We filled out the lingua folio at the end of day. Even though, I was tired on the first day, the time went by fast. I did not realize it was 5 pm already; I was so excited about learning new things. What a great first day!!!

Day # 1- homework

Pushing and Professionalized AP Chinese in Mandarin Chinese Teaching Method by Dr. Tseng Miao-fen

In the past, the teacher was limited by using grammar translation and audio-lingual approach to learn a foreign language. Since 1980 until now, the communicative approach teaching method has emerged.

Based on Sauvignon in 1998, the communicative approach emphasized mainly expression, interpretation and negotiation skills. The communicative approach overcame the rote-memory but focused on asking questions, explaining, clarifying, and translating. Teacher-led role turned into student-led role. The teachers became a facilitator to help and support students in learning. The students worked in pairs or in small groups. The students took an active role in learning. They became more confident in mastering learning.

Dr. Tseng discussed various communicative approach methods in the following:

1. Emphasizing fluency instead of accuracy
2. Considering functional communication by using techniques such as: asking questions, clarifying, answering, and extension of vocabulary and phrases
3. Increasing student-led center learning
4. More on context meaning instead drilling on grammar
5. Using target language
6. Using authentic material
7. Practicing target language instead discussing using it

8. Promoting students to speak more instead of the teacher
9. Promoting personal creativity
10. Learning from performance –based activities

Dr. Tseng continued to discuss the advantage of communicative approach and key factors of the activities. Comprehensive input and output are the key factors to help students have a meaningful communication (Krashen's 1982, 1985) (Swain 1985).

Rulon and McGreary (1986) did a research on comparing small group work and teacher-fronted activities. The research showed that students spoke more in the small group. In addition, Lee (2000) also did a similar research and found out that students remembered more in working in the small group. During spring 2006, Dr. Tseng recorded her findings on an activity which used the communicative approach method. One group of students was aware to seek they could seek assistance. The other group did not, but the teacher monitored closely and was able to provide guidance.

Under frequently used activities in the communicative approach method, Dr. Tseng provided activities with procedure, guided questions, grammar structure and tips for each activity. These activities are:

1. Information exchange
2. Bingo games
3. Role play
4. Inner circle / Outer circle
5. Information Gap
6. Jigsaw
7. Interview
8. Survey

Clearly, using the communicative approach method promotes an actively engaged confident learner. It forces students to ask question and answer in complete sentences (not just in single word). It emphasizes communicating through questioning, explaining, clarifying and negotiating in a meaningful way. I have implemented some of the activities such as bingo games, jigsaw, interview and survey but not in the communicative way. I look forward to implement additional activities in the classroom with the communicative approach method.

Day 2 - June 19th

We discussed our homework by breaking into 3 groups. The homework was to read "Student-Centered Classroom". Each group took part of the reading assignment and discussed and summarized the reading among the teachers. After that, we broke into different groups by numbers and reported about your reading to that group again. On the third time, Dr. Tseng

picked a person from each group to give an oral report to the class. When a teacher finished giving an oral report, Dr. Tseng would ask if someone else from that group would like to add to the report and then she would point out the key points and reinforce them. She has demonstrated herself as a facilitator; who guided us and showed us what and how “an effective successful student-centered classroom” should look like. We filled out a self-assessment checklist instruction. Dr. Tseng took the checklist and asked us what skills we wanted to work and she would cover these topics later on this week. We talked about authentic material and the challenges of finding authentic material in an appropriate level. Dr. Tseng showed us PowerPoint (ppt) on how to teach a unit lesson. My favorite part was on “how to teach singing a Chinese song”. I can go back to my classroom, not only with list of songs but also know how to teach them with the students’ comprehensive input & output in mind.

Homework on Day # 2 Epilogue: Implication for Teaching. From Van Patten (2002) From Input to Output. “A teacher’s guide to second language acquisition. “

There were 6 implications discussed in the paper:

1. **The input needs to be meaningful with communication intent in mind.** Immersion and content based instruction are two ways of language –teaching curriculum.
2. **The more interaction the better.** Student interaction will foster language acquisition. The task needs to be structured for the novice learner with linguistic support.
3. **The Output needs to be meaningful with communication intent and structured output.**
4. **Grammar instruction needs to be meaningful with communication intent in mind.**
5. **We should watch out for what we expect of the learners.** The teacher needs to set a clear expectation based on the students’ input and output abilities; because at the end of acquisition, we want our students’ abilities to be fluent and strong.

Personal thought:

Yesterday we read about student-centered classroom. Teachers need to create a learning environment based on students’ needs and abilities. Today we read on how to foster students’ second language acquisition. My instruction has always provided interaction among the students but lacked meaningful context and insufficient language support; therefore my students’ language output was limited. My goal is to revisit my lesson unit plan and to address two important questions: 1) Does the activity have meaningful context? 2) Does the assessment allow the students to perform comprehensible output based on their abilities?

Day # 3 - June 20th Brain and Second Language Acquisition. – Dr. Ruth Ferree

We have gained insight about the functions of the brain. Student acquired the second language on the left side of the brain but also used the whole brain to process information. Emotion invokes neurons firing then established synapse network pattern. Research showed TPR (Total Physical Response) , personal stories and multiple modalities promote strong neuron firing to make connections.

The brain processes and mimics what the environment provides. Students can learn without a conscious effort. For teaching practice, we can immerse our students with our target language and culture in the class. The learning can only occur when students make sense or make connection with our language and culture. The more meaningful input the better. When teaching vocabulary, it is suggested 8 words at the time is enough. Repeat the usage of vocabulary at least 3 different ways.

Language instruction must provide significant levels of meaningful communication and interactive feedback in the target language. Using 90% of the target language at all levels of instruction.

I need to work more on providing more meaningful input with the students in the target language. Comprehensive input is just as important as comprehensive output.

From Long's (2000) Interaction Hypothesis offered various comprehensive input strategies:

1. Body language
2. Visual aid
3. Language modification - 饮料 – 喝的东西 , 食物- 吃的东西
4. Contextual clue

Day # 4 June 21st

What an eventful day! I have always wanted to teach Chinese using the Chinese video but the results were not productive or meaningful. Dr. Tseng had shown 3 different Chinese commercial video on Pepsi, Coke and McDonald's. They were short but full of language context and they are best shown to Chinese I students.

We learned about IPA (integrated performance assessment), which is very similar with STAMP. My Chinese II students have been taking STAMP. The STAMP includes an assessment on speaking and writing just like the IPA. I have been to numerous workshops, professional developments, and summer programs. This program is the best so far. Each class is full of tips

for teachers on how to teach by using target language. Dr. Tseng explained the what, the why and the how on the teaching method that would work in the classroom.

First Day Teaching reflection -Wen Lu

It is critical to self-reflect on my own teaching, and figure out how can something so simple have gone so wrong? I started with lesson objectives: 1) students can give and exchange their ages, birthdays and Chinese zodiac. I had typed the dialogue in Word document but after editing numerous versions of Power Point; it got left out on the final PPT. I got caught up in the excitement of creating a celebrity profile. It was a great idea, but poor implementation. I often got caught on the small detail but miss the whole picture. The good part was I was able to deliver my lesson in target language (Mandarin Chinese). As I go on to the next lesson, time management will be my biggest challenge. I need to utilize the time wisely, double check if my assessment is designed to fulfill the learning objectives.

Second Day Teaching Reflection – Wen Lu

My second day teaching topic was Dining. The learning objectives were: Student can: 1) order Chinese dish, 2) Pay the bill and get the exact change. The lesson started with review numbers from 1-10 then 20-99 and then 100 , 200. We moved to introduce money, 1, 5, 10, 20, 50 , 100 Chinese RMB .

Activity # 1 Each student has paper money to identify the amount of money he/she has.

Activity # 2 Review Chinese dishes with measurement words. (Using paper plates and bowl)

Activity # 3 Based on the amount of money, the student can order Chinese dishes.

Activity # 4 - Order multiple Chinese dishes with 350 Chinese RMB budget.

The good part of the lesson was that authentic material was well prepared. Each student can identify money and buy Chinese dishes. In the second activity, students ordered a Chinese dish and paid with RMB money. I spent too long on identifying RMB money and I somehow altered the sequence of the PPT and I lost my footing. The instruction was rushed toward the end. The students did not get enough practice on ordering Chinese dishes; therefore the desired language output was not achieved.

Thoughts for next lesson on improving the following:

- 1) More clear learning objectives, what can the student accomplish?

- 2) Sentence structure needs scaffolding, how many times did I have the students practicing speaking with partners?
- 3) How many dialogues can I provide to help the student get speaking practice?

Third Day Teaching Reflection – Wen Lu

“I did it! “ I was able to deliver my instruction in Chinese and the students were able to understand the instruction and able to meet the learning objectives. My third day teaching topic was sightseeing in Beijing. My unit lesson was transportation. The learning objectives were to identify modes of transportation and to express how you get to tourist spots in Beijing. A good part of the lesson was that I used Total Physical Response (TPR). The students were engaged and understood and we were able to achieve the learning objectives. I had enough language input, so the students were starting to respond in the target language. I have planned enough sentence structures for the students to practice. It was exciting for me to hear students to speak Chinese and achieve the learning objectives.

Things to consider in the future: think about the transition between each activity. There could be some activities that could be shortened and moved on to the next activity. This could allow students to practice more.

This is beginning of my new chapter for teaching Chinese. I am so excited that I can use all the practicum experiences back in my classroom. My students will have more language output in the communicative mode.