

Selected Daily Reflections

QiangChen

06/29

At the end of the first day of our training, I feel that I have learned many new things. The instructors' presentation reinforced my understanding of some new concepts.

1. I heard about 5cs and 3 modes before. But I did not know their relationships and functions. Now I clearly understand each five National Standards and three Communication Modes and their functions in language teaching. Through the practice in the class, I can identify them in the contexts. I will continue to learn about the 5 standards and 3 modes, and try to apply them in my instruction.
2. Oral proficiency Interview (OPI) is similar to the ESL oral assessments. Both of them are based on the different stages of the second language development. The difference is that OPI is a criterion-referenced assessment, while the ESL assessment which I conducted before was norm-referenced assessment. This reminds me to combine my previous experience and newly learned knowledge to improve my teaching.
3. I really enjoyed the instructors' presentation, and interaction and discussion with my classmates. Today is very productive for me. I am sure I will learn many theories and strategies through this program, which I will apply in my teaching in future.

Question from the instructor:

Would you or any other laoshi please help us understand the difference between criteria-referenced assessment and norm-referenced assessment?
Thanks!

My reply:

The essential characteristic of *norm-referencing* is that students are awarded their grades on the basis of their ranking within a particular cohort. Norm-referencing involves fitting a ranked list of students' 'raw scores' to a pre-

determined distribution for awarding grades.

In contrast, ***criterion-referencing***, as the name implies, involves determining a student's grade by comparing his or her achievements with clearly stated criteria for learning outcomes and clearly stated standards for particular levels of performance. Unlike norm-referencing, there is no pre-determined grade distribution to be generated and a student's grades are in no way influenced by the performance of others.

As our instructor mentioned in the class, In OPT (criterion), questions are chosen according to students' answers to the previous questions and their performance, while IPT (ESL assessment, Norm) all the students are given the same questions.

07/01

Today we learned the eight intelligences classified by Gardner. Those different intelligences determine students' learning styles. To know each student's learning styles and intelligences is crucial for the success of our teaching, because the lessons designed according to students' learning styles can motivate them. They can actively participate in the activities that they like, and they can perform well when their intelligences are used. Thus, their self-esteem, motivation and confidence can be increased.

We all enjoyed the demonstration of the total physical response (TPR) strategy. We were all engaged in learning German through TPRS activity. This proved that TPR can be a very effective teaching strategy. Each language teaching method has its advantage and disadvantage. I think TPR is more effective when we teach young students of novice language proficiency vocabulary such as action words and stories with more actions. The students can be engaged and the actions can help them remember what they are learning. As our instructor mentioned it can not be over used. It should be combined with other strategies and used according to the students' diverse needs and teaching content.

07/04

I really like the micro-teaching demonstration which provides us an opportunity to apply what we have learned so far in this teacher training program. I am impressed deeply by our classmates' teaching which is full of creativity. I have learned so many strategies and techniques from those talent teachers that I can apply in my teaching.

All group used a variety activities to teach vocabulary and abstractive language concepts. For example, group 1 used authentic role-play to introduce the grammatical key point 除了.....都 pattern. Then the teacher used questioning technique to elicit and explain the grammar with the vivid pictures in the PowerPoint. The presentation was clear and brief. Students were actively engaged and followed the teacher to practice the drills. The student-centered activities were even impressive. Individual response, pair work and group participation were integrated to enhance and practice the newly learned skills and concepts. For example, group 3 used real object to practice passive voice 苹果被我吃了。 . Group 5 used a game for students to practice possessives 谁的? 我的...etc。 Both teacher centered and student activates integrated the five national standards (5CS) and three communicative modes so well. Students had many opportunities to conduct interpersonal, interpretive and presentational communication.

I also like the comments and feedback at the end of each group's teaching. The students who practice teaching first did the self assessment. Then the peers commented and asked questions. At last the instructor gave the feedback. This is a very good example for the learner to find their weakness to improve.

From the teachers' feedback, I notice that our language presentation needs to be improved. This reminds me to think about if we were really 100% clear of that language point at the time when we were teaching. Even though we are Chinese native speakers, we need to prepare the language. It is possible

for us to miss-spell Chinese words in class, because we are living in an English speaking environment and the opportunity to use our native language is quite limited. But we did well in using the target language to teach to create an immersion environment to learn the target language through meaningful context.

The teaching demonstration has proved that we have learned a lot through this training program. It is very productive.

7/10

Today I observed Wang Yu Li Lao Shi's teaching. The instructional theme was "Traveling in China. This was the last lesson of the unit, which was well prepared and the instructional flow was smooth. Throughout the entire lesson, the five National Standards were implemented. A variety of activities such as teacher fronted presentation, student-centered pair-work, pair work and the whole group thematic play, provided students abundant opportunities to conduct interpersonal, interpretive and presentational communication. Students learned the Chinese culture by visiting different famous places such as the great wall and Quochao-the Olympic site, comparing different currencies, connecting the Chinese culture with their life, etc. The play was the climax of the lesson. The students were fully engaged in preparing the transcript, dividing roles and performing. Each role acted creatively. At the same time, the teacher walked around facilitating the students. The students practice the four domains of the target language, and reinforced the content learned in this unit. The realia and technology were used to support student's learning and meet the diverse needs of the students. The three teachers of this group showed a very good example of team work.

I enjoyed this lesson and learned some techniques which I can apply in my teaching.

7/14

Thanks to our practicum. It provides us such a valuable opportunity to apply what we have learned in our teaching and observe other teachers' classes. Through the observation, I have learned many good ideas and practical strategies from those creative, talent teachers. Generally speaking, all the teachers that I have observed are doing so well in implementing of the five National Standards. In content based thematic units, five Cs are expressed and connected in the communicative authentic context. The authentic materials such as PowerPoint presentations and video clips are so impressive and inspiring; the students are fully engaged in both teacher fronted and student-centered activities. Students learn and reinforce the newly learned language and knowledge in a real life situation. The communicative approach will help me improve my teaching style and quality.

During the practicum, three of our team members worked together to prepare our lessons and support each other during the teaching practice. This is a good experience of team work. It is crucial for the success of our teaching to collaborate with other teachers.

This evening I also attended the International Market which was well organized. I was really amazed by the atmosphere of this international community. The students were so enthusiastic that each of them used the target language to sell their cultural products or serve the customers. This is a good opportunity for students to practice the languages and share different culture. I will organize this kind of activities in my school, too.

7/17

I am grateful for having the opportunities to participate in the 2009 Startalk Chinese Teachers Academy offered by Virginia University. The three week's training reinforced my understanding the needs to promote Chinese language and culture in American schools, and the necessity for me to learn the current language teaching approaches and technology to be a qualified language teacher. It also enhanced my teaching competence and motivation to continue my teaching career as a Chinese instructor.

Upon reviewing my accomplishments in this program, I realize that I have learned many new theories, concepts and practical strategies, which will help me establish positive culture-rich Chinese language classrooms. I understand clearly the national standards for foreign language learning set by ACTFL. The five Cs and three modes of communication will guide me to plan my thematic units and lessons. With the knowledge learned through this program, I know how to recognize students' diversity and I am able to design appropriate lessons and learning activities according to the unique, diverse needs of my students of different intelligences and learning styles. Backward design, thematic unit mapping, and task-based and student-centered class activities will enable me to design successful curriculum and teach more effectively.

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2009 STARTALK Chinese Teacher Academy
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