

I have a very positive learning experience today. The two practices that I enjoy the best about training today were memorizing the national 5C's standards and six STARTALK governing principles in a concise format, and identifying embedded 5C's standards and communicative modes in various instructional activities.

Although I have designed and implemented standards-based curriculum and daily lesson plans for the last six years, I have not challenged or tested my ability to recite the eleven c's standards. It is quite refreshing for me to reiterate all standards systematically without referring to my book. Reinforcing, clarifying and reviewing my understanding of the three communicative modes, backward design and OPI through concrete examples definitely helps, too.

Dr. Tseng also modeled a student-centered classroom through delivering an exemplary instruction today. An icebreaking activity built up a dynamic classroom atmosphere. I personally like to work in pairs and in groups. I strongly believe that it is so much easier and more effective to retain knowledge with a solid foundation through sharing, brainstorming and exchanging opinions among learners.

My school district started to utilize "I Can" statements at the beginning and at the end of this past school year to measure students' growth. Dr. Tseng imposed an intriguing question as to how "I Can" statements were organized and categorized. Through discussion, I realized that I mistakenly used the complexity of language function and form as the criteria. Meanwhile, I know when I guide my students through the process of self-assessment next year, I can explain the structure of "I Can" statement better.

Two implications for me from the lesson today are: 1) good review strengthens understanding, and 2) mistakes facilitate learning. I am looking forward to receiving more stimulation for the next seventeen days.

Based on the theories of second language acquisition, the author, Van Patten, poses his findings with five implications. My digest is as follows. First of all, the quantity and quality of output is correlated to the quantity and quality of input. Secondly, two-way interaction paves the path to successful language learning. Lastly, teachers have to set realistic and reasonable expectations of their students. The most essential and critical point that hits me is that if we, as the solely immediate source of human stimulation in the classroom, cannot provide enough meaningful input opportunities for the students, how can we anticipate them to generate productive output? We world language teachers have to stick to the aim of teaching 95% of the instruction time in target language.

As for training sessions today, there are a few components that I particularly like. I love the activity that we self-assessed how frequently we incorporated the best practices of student-centered classroom. A few target areas such as differentiated instruction to accommodate all learners' needs and employment of strategies for i+1 concept to advance students, continue to be the goals that I strive for next year.

I see myself as an emerging teacher in the field of world language teaching. I am at the initial stage of using authentic materials effectively in daily instruction. I have collected and accumulated quite some authentic materials and realia as my teaching aids over the years. One thought-provoking question for me is: how to effectively integrate these authentic materials into daily instruction beyond my routinely showcasing and circulating variety of artifacts? I can wholeheartedly piggyback Dr. Tseng's comment on how time-assuming it is to search for and locate ideal and perfect authentic materials for teaching. "Change the task, not the text" is the principle that enables us to make use of same authentic materials in the classroom for various

proficiency levels of students. I greatly appreciate several creative activity ideas from Dr. Tseng and Hu Mei lao shi. The willingness to adapt and experiment new approaches will gradually and eventually broaden the scope of every teacher's reservoir of teaching tools.

I am an advocate of multisensory instruction. Multi-media instruction is the current trend to prepare students for the 20th century work place. Music is an innate human nature. Inevitably, video clips and audio recordings (songs) are two indispensable and integral parts of my teaching. Sometimes it is overwhelmingly intimidating to admit that there is so much to learn in order to keep up with technology nowadays. Unfortunately, as an immigrant to this e-generation, I feel clumsy and inadequate quite often. Luckily, I know how to designate my students to problem-solve the situations. It is absolutely true that the roles of teacher and student can be reciprocal easily.

Dr. Ferree presented many pragmatic research-based best practices to teach American learners this morning: 1) having meaningful repetitions (at least 12 times) so that students can retain new vocabulary or form by having multiple exposures to the same knowledge, 2) using multimodality by including other sensory activities, 3) creating a safe and risk-safe environment to ensure that learners apply their full potentials in their zone of proximal development to reach maximum effect, and 4) providing ample meaningful input to output.

Some other interesting instructional techniques consist of 1) activating students' prior knowledge to make meaningful connections, 2) using personal experiences to motivate students' interests and engage in classroom activities, 3) conducting frequent comprehension check because people construct meanings in multiple ways, 4) setting up a student-centered classroom to promote peer interaction, and 5) applying an effective way to present Chinese characters (color-coded characters and pinyin, or radical and pronunciation, and creating a story for each character). I am grateful that Chen Hui lao shi and Li Xiwen lao shi talked about making a word wall and playing background music in the classroom to increase the frequency of exposure. The sound bite of "What fires together, wires together" and Van Patten's 5 implications surely have ingrained in my mind from now on.

Dr. Tseng also listed extremely practical strategies for comprehensible input: body language, gestures, facial expressions, pictures, visual aids (photos, images, realia / concrete objects), language modification, and contextual clues. I have been using TPR and visual aids quite extensively to deliver my lesson plans, but I have rarely used language modification. It seems that my contextualized input is scattering and fragmental. I need to improve myself so

that the contextual clues used for an entire lesson can be more sequential and more cohesive. I am happy to figure out the areas that I can focus on in the future.

The introduction and definitions of three types of elicitation techniques (mechanical drills, meaningful drills, and communicative drills) help me to understand the fundamental differences among three approaches. This session triggers me to seriously examine the distribution and percentage of these three drills used in my own teaching. When I design and carry out lesson plans with closely interconnected activities, my students can show the evidence and ability to create a language by applying what they have acquired in the classroom.

It is certainly very encouraging to know that I am on the right track of applying accurate strategies in teaching Chinese and there is always plenty of room for me to enhance myself. I am aware that I am far from being an experienced or seasoned veteran teacher, but I am happy that I attend this workshop to hone my crafts in teaching Chinese.

I have been surrounded with so many world language professional jargons and buzz words such as authentic, contextualized, task-based, performance-based, standards-based curriculum, integrated performance assessment, etc. without a very clear cut understanding for the last six years. The ambiguity and doubt result in an inconsistent teaching philosophy and interfere with my lesson plan design.

I do not resist the current trend of implementing IPAs; I have hesitated and been reluctant to implement IPAs due to the nature of time-consumption in implementation and time-constraint in class. With Dr. Tseng's examples in class and the resources available in the field, I feel that I am nudged and willing to give it a try this fall.

After we have read so many research-based articles about teaching pedagogy, the next step for us is to put into empirical practice. It was a scary and frightening afternoon for everyone today—our very first demonstration teaching in class. We were full of anxiety waiting for our turn to complete our assigned task. It is easier to criticize, to notice or to point out others' mistakes; it is harder to demonstrate all desired best practices in five minutes.

The collected advice given by master teachers and Dr. Tseng are as follows: 1) model activity clearly, 2) model activity before passing out handouts to the students, 3) a minimum of 24 font size will look appropriate on projected PowerPoint slides, 4) all directions on handouts should be written in English, 5) characters should be paired with pinyin if they are shown anywhere in the handout for students' reference, 6) sentence patterns for both questions and answers should be present in PowerPoint slides and handouts to scaffold learners, 7) conducting a simultaneous group activity will maximize class time, 8) focus on meaningful communicative tasks to produce language output, 9) avoid isolated memorization games or drills, and 10) pay

attention to pacing and transition so that students have enough time to practice before they are able to produce output. Each and every of these insights is invaluable to me.

We were all eager to hear the critiques. A few were tough enough and well-prepared for the moment; several of the participants might feel hurtful to receive the comments that were not anticipated at all. I am hoping they were not crushed after the experience. It happened to me three years ago. I vividly remember that I felt like being punched with a blow right on my nose. And yet the emotional pain was temporary; the professional growth has been precious and priceless since then.

We do not get many chances to observe other teachers' teaching. Our colleagues may directly refuse or turn down our requests politely. Through peer observation, we learn from other teachers' strengths and we dig out the hidden spots that we unconsciously overlook in our teaching.

I want to encourage and urge all participating teachers to open to and welcome all types of constructive suggestions. If we consciously pay attention to tie all tiny pieces together seamlessly, we can deliver a fairly effective lesson. Keep in mind that the primary and ultimate goal of attending this STARTALK program is to build up our ability and confidence to be the best teacher as we can be. Butterfly undergoes the life stage of transformation. We will all get there triumphantly one day if we are persistent in pursuing our dream of and commitment to being a skillful teacher.

Henny is an amazing teacher! She is energetic, dynamic, enthusiastic, and passionate to share with people what she knows about using technology in enhancing Chinese teaching.

She started her lesson with an introduction of a very popular concept of flipped classroom. She then demonstrated how she implemented a flipped classroom through a learning management system (www.iknow.net) and many powerful, easy learning tools (screencast, Google MCQ—Google form, perapa add on, iPad apps such as educreations, Doceri, AirServer, TellaGami, Puppetpals, GoodNotes, iBooks). They were so incredibly fascinating; we all had fun playing around with various features and functions each tool offered. It is so promising and exciting to know that we can motivate our students to learn if we design engaging activities through making use of all these fun utilities.

Henny is vibrant and she had a great sense of humor. There was not a single moment of down time in her class; I laughed so much that my tummy hurt. While technology could be very unreliable and changeable, Henny was very patient in solving problems and handling all kinds of our requests due to hardware or software incompatibility. She moved around a lot to help incompetent teacher like me. She created a very safe learning environment for her students; she welcomed and invited us to ask questions. I believe she has modeled what a master teacher is like in the classroom.

Henny raised a good point to alarm and illustrate to us the significance of technology in current society. She quoted that technology would never be able to fully replace actual teachers in the classroom and yet teachers without technology would be phased out eventually. She encouraged us to explore and try because “practice makes perfect”. Technology is an area that I have to spend more time to work on improving my familiarity and proficiency. I absolutely agree with what she said. None of us can ignore or neglect the role of technology plays in the 21st century education. New technology has become more accessible and affordable for everyone nowadays. The breakthrough and advancement of technology has been phenomenal. Numerous cutting-edge educational devices have been created for accelerated learners and learners with special needs. Technology is supposed to make our life easier and more convenient. The combination of up-to-date knowledge about pedagogy, best instructional practices and technology will equip

us to be productive and accomplished teachers. We language teachers can then prepare our students for colleges and career, and become genuine global citizens.

I had my first teaching practicum this morning. The learning objectives for the students today were five-fold: 1) be able to ask for and give information regarding to age and birthdays, 2) be able to exchange information with my classmates on my and my family's Chinese zodiac signs in Chinese, 3) be able to sing "Happy Birthday" in Chinese, and understand cultural practices related to Chinese birthday celebrations, 4) be able to compare and contrast different birthday celebration customs in America and China, and 5) be able to review all learned and new sentence patterns through playing a board game. I tend to over-plan my lessons and I did not get to do my last summative activity (board game) this morning. There are things I did well and areas that I need improvements for my 2nd and 3rd teaching practicum.

The parts that I did well are as follows.

- 1) I could teach all contents in 100% Chinese.
- 2) I had sufficient comprehensible input to help students follow along my instructions nicely.
- 3) I was enthusiastic to keep all eight students engaged.
- 4) Fourthly, I made sure no students were excluded in question session.

There are several areas that I need improvements.

- 1) I need to give students enough time to get familiar with and practice new sentence patterns before they are able to produce pushed output. I made two mistakes in conducting a whole class survey activity this morning. I explained three sentences that I wanted students to ask their classmates, but I did not display the questions paired with their corresponding answer on the PPT slides. On top of this, I passed out the handout to the students right away and the students switched their attention and got busy reading the handout. They could not say and

answer questions fluently. No wonder this activity took longer than I anticipated and did not reach the effectiveness as I would like it to.

- 2) I need to make sure the contents of my PowerPoint slides are consistent with those of handouts. I revised my handout, but I forgot to update my PowerPoint slides to reflect the changes. No wonder students felt confused when they compared what I showed on the board with that of their handout.
- 3) I forgot to provide a word bank with all new Chinese zodiac animal vocabulary on handout to scaffold students. Students were mostly fine filling out the parts of age and birthday on the survey, but they had real trouble filling out the part of animal sign they belonged to.
- 4) When I corrected student's pronunciation, I should emphasize the right one instead of saying both correct and incorrect pronunciations to confuse students. They were not able to distinguish the differences at this stage yet.
- 5) I reversed the correct instructional sequence and called on a student before I asked him/her a question. I was supposed to ask a question and then called on a student to answer the question.

Overall, the practicum was a very good experience. Many participating teachers graciously shared with me their feedback so that I realized the blind spots in my lesson. Knowing how to deliver effective lessons with best practices and to create a student-centered classroom to fully make sure of precious instructional time continue to be my professional goals. I truly appreciate the advice and suggestions given by Alice Lin lao shi, Ya-ching lao shi and all teachers. I am hoping that I can design and implement better lesson plans for my 2nd and 3rd practicum.