

I. Assignment 1: read Student-centered Classroom & reflections, due by 8AM, Wednesday, 06/19

Student-centered classroom means in a class, students do not wait for the instructions of their teacher, and, instead, they can work on course contents with certain independence or autonomy, such as reading, discussing, and summarizing a section of an article assigned by the teacher. In such a class, at different times, students may be working alone, in pairs, or in groups.

Student-centered classroom could be an effective teaching method, and the author made a thorough discussion on how to implement it. I will review what I have learnt from this article, in particular, Sec. 2, Classroom Management, and Sec. 3, Motivation, and make discussion with my point of view.

Section 2 Classroom Management

Large class --- The author argued that the ideal size for a student-centered class for language is 12, since 12 people can be divided into several groups that can be easily managed by the teacher. Nevertheless, a class is frequently larger than 12, which is true for most of my classes in our school. In a larger size class, it is more necessary to have a student-centered class teaching because this can be an effective way to get all students involved in the contents of the class. In managing such a class, it is important to hear and watch what each group is discussing, if they work in groups. My comment is that, since the size of the class is big, division and management of the groups become crucial if group study is made.

Mixed-ability classes ---- Frequently, students in a class have different aspect and level of capabilities. In this situation, as the author puts it, we don't want our better students to be held up by the weaker ones, or the weaker ones to feel intimidated by the better ones. As a result, we should make sure all people have chance to learn, practice, etc. by carefully arranging groups; sometimes putting weaker and stronger students in different groups, sometimes mixing weaker and stronger students. My comment is that while it is important to ensure all students to participate, it is usually not a good idea to enforce that each person has exactly same chance. For instance, in a group discussion, it is better just let each person has a turn to talk rather than talking for exact certain amount of time, say 5 minutes. Make those who have an interesting talking speak a little longer, and let those who do not have much to say talk less. It is important to keep the discussion to be interesting and stimulating, and make all people think. I would assign one or two people as leaders for discussion (I can assign different people as leaders each time). Otherwise, the group discussion can be boring

and some people may get distracted by surroundings such as the discussion of a neighbor group.

Seating --- Definitely making all chairs and tables in a position to facilitate the discussion and group work is important. In my classes, grade 6–8, all chairs and tables are easily moved, and this seems not an issue in my teaching.

Sec. 3 Motivation

High-interest topics --- The author states that if students are introduced to topics that interest them, they're more likely to be motivated. I would reinforce the statement as giving interesting and appropriate topics to students is the most important thing in student-centered teaching, because good topics can attract students in a most effective way and stimulate them to learn and focus and thus helps class management. In order to find an interesting as well as appropriate topic, we should follow our teaching plans but also consider the level and background of students. Therefore, it is important to know the students and get familiar with their interests. In addition, besides our effort, this also depends on student bodies.

Developing confidence --- In order to help students to feel confident to talk, we can ask some questions are familiar and stimulating to them. More they talk in front of others, more confidence they can develop. However, this may not work easily for a student who has psychological problem, which arises from his/her family backgrounds, and special attention is needed to help the student to overcome the difficulty in front of them and become more talkative in front of others.

Overcoming resistance --- This is an important item and I would like to say it is related to the previous “developing confidence”. If one is resolved, the other has been, too.

The central idea for a student-centered teaching is to stimulate the interest of students and motivate them to effectively learn. I would like to say that items listed in this article are general and principles only, and if and how we practice them depends on the experience of instructors as well as student bodies' situations. The situation of students include, among many others, the image and vision of students' parents on the language, that is Chinese in our case, and its related country, that in China. Efforts to make improvement can help a student-centered classroom to be more fruitful. In addition, exposure of students to activities and culture of the languages they learn will definitely improve the student bodies' motivation.

II. Assignment 2: read Epilogue: Implications for Teaching & reflections, due by 8AM, Thursday, June 20

Part 1: About reading < Epilogue: Implications for Teaching >

In this epilogue, the author lists a few items from different angles to help the readers to improve their language teaching abilities, and better convey the stuff to students in their acquisition of languages. The opinions listed in this section are interesting, although not new, and can be effective and helpful. Nevertheless, I do not agree with every point of what is presented. Maybe I have not understood precisely the meaning of this section, or I have different opinions, or both. In the following, I would focus on one point of view in Implication 1.

The author states that the input plays a fundamental role in acquisition. Curricula should emphasize more on communication rather than form (e.g., grammar, etc.), and, as a consequence, they are more likely to be effective in helping students to learn languages. There are two ways to incorporate the input into a curriculum: immersion and content-based method. In curricula written according to the two methods, the focus is how to convey or teach a subject rather than a language itself.

I believe above point of view makes a good sense. In classes, while teaching fundamentals such as Chinese vocabulary and grammars, we should put a good amount of time and let students to utilize the fundamentals to convey ideas and communicate to other people. This will stimulate students' thinking and their interests in the language. This is a method from top to bottom, from abstract to concrete. We can promote students to constantly ask themselves how the vocabulary, grammar, etc., the form, they are working on fit into communication and usage of the language, a large picture. More communication of ideas using the fundamentals is useful to prevent this happen: losing the forest for the trees (只见树木不见森林).

Nevertheless, above opinions and approaches have limitations. We cannot skip “树木”, or fundamental and form, and directly reach “森林”, or communication and ideas. I see lack of practice on fundamental and grammars and boring drills in schools, and this puts a big huddle for a big progress in acquisition of students. Students are likely to be motivated by communication, more interesting than form and fundamental, and become interest-oriented. And, it is hard to push students to learn grammar and fundamentals. Interest is a good teacher but cannot be all for a good learning. I believe this situation has something to do with the environment and structure of our schools and society. I suppose the relation between fundamental and communication is like that between brick and building, and we cannot emphasize one and ignore the other, and have to emphasize the both, in particular, the well combination of the both. We have to help students to be able to recognize both trees as well as a forest: 既见树木又见森林.

Part 2: Today study reflection

1. Group information sharing about “ Student-Central of Classroom”

We followed “ Jigsaw”group discussion (拼图式小组交换讨论/分段式) to

Summarize the article “ The Student-Central of Classroom”. In this activity, I understand that group work should separate three steps: Mechanical drills / Meaning-based / Communicative task.

2. Dr. Tseng demoed “Authentic materials teaching”.

“What are authentic materials? “ They are real life and materials. For example: abacus, pictures, clothes, magazines, newspapers, receipts, tickets, movies, songs, food ...

“ Why should we use authentic materials in teaching?”. Authentic materials not only help learners develop a more positive attitude towards learning but also increase learners’ involvement and interest in the subject matter (for example, Gonzalez, 1990). Authentic materials are perceived by learners as useful, lifelike, and interesting.

3. Dr. Tseng demoed : Teaching Chinese language and culture with Chinese song.

During the teaching Chinese song, teacher should plan for tasks for the interpretive mode. That are: listen with visuals; fill in graphs, charts, forms, graphic organizers; follow a route on a map ; check-off items in a list; draw what is described; put sentences in correct order; listen for the gist—identify main idea; guess meaning from context; identify/categorize/classify thematic vocabulary; identify/categorize/classify authentic material; create questions from info in the piece; identify specific information found in the piece; compose a title or headline; paraphrase in native language/target language; brainstorm and categorize synonyms

4. Self- assessment Checklist for Student-Centered Instruction. After I checked the list, I know exactly which aspects of my teaching curriculum and implementation I can do or I set it as the goals in my plan for next year.

III. Assignment 3: read 如何观摩课堂教学学习教学技巧 & self-reflections, due by Friday, June 21

Part 1: [Read “如何观摩课堂教学学习教学技巧,” by Hsin-hsin Liang.” 1/2 page of commentary on this article along with your daily reflections]

The article < How to Learn Teaching Techniques from Classroom Observation> lists five spheres: 1) teacher’s body language; 2) how the teacher tried to achieve the teaching objectives; 3) how the teacher tried to control the class time; 4) teaching techniques; and 5) the interaction between teacher and students in the class.

It also presents a successful observation should take three section: before the observation (do survey and get information); processing of the observation (teacher

side, student side and classroom environment); ending of the observation (conversation and organize notes).

The article is strong empirical evidence regarding a variety of teaching practices that can, and should, be the focus of classroom observations intended to measure and enhance teacher performance.

According to the article aspects, Dr. Ruth Ferree', master teacher Hsu Ya-Ching and Lin Alice, their teaching demonstrations have been very successful.

Part 2: [Your reflections on the content of today's workshop.]

Today, we observed four teacher's model teaching. I really learned and got.

1. Dr. Ruth Ferree' taught us < Brain and Second Language Acquisition>.

I am very impressed of her enthusiasm and passion in teaching. Her positive emotion's mobilized our motivation and interesting in learning.

2. Dr. Tseng addressed <Comprehensible Input Strategies>. She elaborated ACTFL position statement: " Use of the Target Language in the Classroom."

I understand the Comprehensible input strategies are: a) body language, gestures, facial expressions. b) Visual aids: photos, images, regalia /concrete objects. c) language modification. d) contextual clues. Comprehensible Output Strategies are: a) frequent comprehension checks. b) proper error correction. c) Frequent invitation of student's responses.

3. Two master teachers Ms. Hsu Ya-Ching < Greeting> and Ms. Lin Alice < Hobbies> demoed model teaching. Both of them have prepared enough materials, activities and they used 100 % Chinese.

I have gotten observation, comprehensible input and output strategies experience.

IV. Assignment 5: self-reflections on Saturday's mini-teching demo, due by 8AM, Monday, June 24

As student performs skit, we did mini demo today. Each group had to be concentrated their three hours lesson to thirty minutes. Every teacher is to be versatile and all of them have great talent.

I am very impressed by “Sightseeing in Beijing” group, Wu Meiyao aoshi, li yanhong laoshi and Lu wenbin laoshi. They have great enthusiasm with youthful vigor. They used very appropriate body language. Teacher as great facilitator can mobilize the motivation of the students. They did different kinds of activities follow by student centered classroom: solo and chorus, listening and reading, pair work and group work. I have learned some good idea of activities from them.

Our group demoed “Shopping”. Huang shuijun laoshi used real clothes and power point at same time for materials. Gao Wei laoshi taught color with wonderful movie and song, they leaded students to do various activities. I am the last one in the group, the time was tight, I was forgetting my teaching processing. Dr. Tseng’s said to me “Self-directed, self-showed”, that means the lesson was not following student centered classroom. I love Dr. Tseng, she is a very knowledgeable, rigorous, kindness professors. I am luck to learn from her in three weeks.

Zeng yanyu laoshi taught us how to use high-tech and modern technology in teaching. This is a very important methods, if we don’t use the technology in teaching, we will be eliminated. I appreciate Zeng laoshi.

V. Assignment 6: self-reflections on my 1st teaching practicum, due by 8AM, Friday, June 28

This class is a precious opportunity for me to demonstrate my teaching, and audiences are many experienced teachers. My topic is the second part of “Family”. With a continuation of “Family Members” by Teacher Gao Wei, my task is to teach students to use “大, 中, 小, 大学生, 中学生和小学生, 有, 没有”. First I thought it was easy since these were just a few characters, but found it difficult; it was required to only use Chinese to teach students and make them understand and know how to use these characters, with skills involved. This was really challenging.

Luckily, Teacher Ya-Ching Hsu-Kelkis provided excellent instructions, my team members Gao Wei and Huang Shuijun did good job, and our team cooperated effectively.

At the end of the class, Dr. Tseng said: really good! She sent an email to me shortly after the class: “您好棒! instructional sequence is very clear and each step was carefully thought and developed. Instructional goals accomplished!” I was really inspired.

Items to be improved:

1. Time for students to practice is limited. How to improve: the teacher just introduces one picture briefly, and let students to practice themselves, and among them also.
2. The pace is a little slow. How to improve: practice myself while preparing a lecture, not only in writing, but also speaking.

VI. Assignment 8: self-reflections on my 3rd teaching practicum, due by 8AM, Thursday, July 4

The topic for my 3rd lecture is “Shopping in Beijing”, and my task is to find what need to buy, ask about price and bargain. I spent a quite amount of time and prepare a good deal of materials. Teacher Zhong also designed a flow chat for my lecture on the night before the class. Coincidentally, an native American girl who can speak Chinese was in the auction in the previous evening for a modeling skit. I invited her to be the customer, and made a video for her shopping, which is vivid and well matches the class contents of the day. I should say this is an attracting part of my lecture. Another feature of my lecture that is interesting students is a ppt presentation on cloth of celebrities. I talked their cloth part by part, first on names, colors, etc. and then on price. It is effective that I used samples of real cloth, and students participated actively. This is a successful lecture using ppt presentation.

Before the lecture, Dr. Tseng reminded me on a well organization, correction of pronunciation of students, and a clear presentation on the point to be made. I tried but still did not do well on them. After the class, the teacher commented and I watched the video and found the following to be improved:

1. Although the video is excellent, I should but did not give students to practice accordingly-comprehension check.
2. I talked too much. More time should be given to students to practice.
3. The instruction for students to bargain is unclear.
4. This is a mismatch between a cloth on ppt and what I called it.