

## Wei Gao Study Reflection

### 1. Day 1" 沟通式教学法“ by 曾妙芬教授。

In this article, Professor Tseng offered theoretical basis for the advantages of communicative approach over the traditional Grammar Translation approach and Audio-lingual Approach in foreign language learning. Even though it is commonly accepted that communicative approach can increase students' comprehensible input and output skills, it is still very important for teachers to follow certain guidelines in order to achieve the desirable results. The highlights of Professor Tseng's article is that she not only provides the principles to follow, but also concrete case studies for Chinese language teachers to exam and learn from. As a teacher who was trained in the traditional approach in second language acquisition, I found this article very instrumental and practical. Here, I want to comment and highlight on the following three guidelines that Professor Tseng brought out in small group work activities that I find to be extremely helpful to me as I'm learning to utilize more student-centered learning activities in three stages of a student-centered small group activity:

**Pre-activity preparation:** preparation is very important in carrying out an successful student-centered learning in communicative approach. Students centered learning is not letting students to decide whatever they want to learn or to do, especially when the students' grasp of target language is still in the beginning or intermediate stage. Teacher's guidance and instruction is still critical in making sure that the students can produce comprehensive output. Before student's small group work activity, teachers need to give students enough preparation time and guidance in term of vocabularies, sentence structures and information collection. In this way, students are becoming familiar with the required tasks and can improve the chances of correct output.

**During the activity:** Give students enough repetitions in order to help them improve and correct their language output. Professor Tseng listed 12 activities that the teachers can use, which includes information exchange, role plays, Bingo games and information gap etc.. I found that that all these activities are designed for the students to have multiple partners to strengthen their interpersonal ,interpretative and presentational skills without letting becoming bored with the same routine and setting. Since one of the advantage of communicative approach in foreign language learning to allow the students to

become active in negotiating meanings, this change of partners and settings can stimulate students' active learning. Further, it helps the students to learn from one another, which is also a goal of a student-centered classroom.

Activity follow up: After the activities, it is important for students to present and to report. Here, teachers can provide corrections and instructions based on the performance and evaluation. Since during the activity, teacher should try to avoid unnecessary interruptions to the communication between students in order to encourage students to have more control over an authentic language environment, however, teachers can provide immediate response or corrections, which are important in achieving the learning objective.

Among the 12 activities that Professor Tseng listed, I'm particularly interested in the Information Gap and Jigsaw activities. I think both of the activities can stimulate student's interest in solving problems collaboratively. I can't wait to try them in my classroom.

### **Day 2 homework: Van Patten Epilogue: Implications for Teaching**

This article focus on the five implications of Second Language Acquisition research on foreign language teaching. Author Van Patten argues that if we assume that acquisition of a target language is the final goal of language learning and main function of language learning to communicate, then the following five principles can help teachers in promoting comprehensible output:

1.comprehensible input plays a critical role in language acquisition. The more input, the better acquisition.I once heard a language teacher calling his way of teaching Chinese as Suzuki method of Chinese learning. Here, Van Patten mentioned it as the Natural approach. For teachers, it means that we should use all means to give learns maximum exposure of the targeted language. However, the materials should be level-appropriate.

2.The More interaction, the better. Here, Van Patten points out that all the classroom interactions should be focused on creating meaning through level-appropriate task. I think it is very important for teachers to pay attention to designing level-appropriate task since I had students who got turned away from

learning Chinese because of these difficult tests focusing on sentence patterns and forms, and after suffering through all these, only to realize that these forms didn't help them to finish meaningful tasks in day-to-day situations.

3. Students' output should always be meaning-based or communicative. Here, teachers can help to structure the output so that students are not required to say something for the sake of saying things, but instead, they are guided to express things with meaning to finish assigned tasks. I think so often, teachers expect students to remember and know how to express ideas in certain forms that don't make help students to communicate in real life scenarios.

4. Grammar instructions should serve the purpose of better communication. Teachers shouldn't treat the forms as a separate learning goal, instead, explanations of the forms should always serve the goal of better communication of meaningful tasks.

5. Teachers need to set expectations right. It is not reasonable to expect students to produce output that they are not capable of, especially during the beginning stage. However, teachers should strive to adopt curriculum with the goal of enhancing comprehension and acquisition.

As I was reading this article, it reinforced my understanding of the importance of creating an immersion classroom and using the communicative teaching method which we have discussed during class today. Professor Tseng exemplified a student center classroom through a jigsaw activity in the beginning of the lecture. Then we are guided to rethink if we have been doing well in implementing a student-centered classroom ourselves. I think even though I did pay some attention in giving students individualized instructions and assessments, I have been doing a poor job in utilizing strategies to create task based communicative activities. Also, I used to be skeptical about the possibility of using 100% target language in beginning level classroom. Now, after this afternoon's demonstration and exercises, I felt that I am becoming more confident in being able to do it after proper training in this workshop. As I have read in Van Patten's article, an immersion classroom maximize the students target language input and therefore

it enhances the language acquisition. During today's presentation, Professor Tseng also shared level-appropriate authentic materials to enhance the target language input. I also has gained better understanding about how a teacher can design activities that are task based and goal oriented.

### **Day 3 Reading reflection on How to learn Teaching Techniques from Classroom Observation, by Hsin-hsin Liang**

Our school has used classroom observation before on every teachers every year. However, we were not given detailed instructions as to what to observe and how to evaluate what we saw. We would normally contact the observed teacher to make an appointment and then walk in to be surprised with the topics or lesson objectives. Neither do we know how to give helpfully and constructive feedback to the teacher being observed afterwards. Now, after reading Liang's article, I learn that we can focus on the five areas: 1)teacher's body language 2)how do the teacher achieve teaching objectives 3)class time control 4)teaching techniques 5)interaction between students and teachers. This article gives me a lot to think about which has never come into my mind before, for example, I have never given any thoughts out what kind of impact my hand gestures might influence my students' responses to me as a teacher. Now, I should be more conscious about it.

Reflection of today's lectures:

Even though Dr. Ferre's lecture has a lot of scientific terms that I'm not very familiar with, and thus couldn't comprehend fully in a short period of time, I got two exciting ideas : the first is being is that Dr. Ferre's lecture confirmed the benefit of 100% immersion in foreign language learning from the aspect of brain science. "What fires together, wires together" confirms the theory of making input meaningful and emotionally connected in order for the learners to produce comprehensible output. Secondly, she points out the unique Chinese language characteristic: while Spanish and French speakers are using most of their left hemisphere of the brain, Chinese language are using more right hemisphere. I have never heard of this research and it gives me more understanding about the unique and challenges that my Chinese students are facing. Dr. Ferre's emphasis on using multiple modalities in language teaching is also very confirming as well.

In the afternoon, we have learned both the guideline of creating an immersion classroom and practiced a mini-demo in small groups. It was a good opportunity to collaborate with teammates and then got a taste of what is going to come in the next two weeks. Teacher Lin and Teacher Hsu are both wonderful in providing us with teaching demos. Now, I have a better idea about what to do with my own teaching assignments.

#### 4. Reflection and class observation

Today we got a very interesting trait when Tseng laoshi used authentic materials to show us how to create a communicative learning experience by using 100% target language. In small group, we designed activities which aligns with our task-based learning objects. Then, we got to see how Professor Tseng was doing with the same materials and learned more about how to design learning objectives and activities effectively. The practice is very helpful to me since I learned how to use all opportunities to maximize input. Like she said, Input Flood and Pushed Output is our goal in each and every class.

Mrs. Huang and Professor Tseng's lecture on IPA is also very inspiring as well. Professor Tseng led us designing several sample IPA activities. We analyzed together how to design interpretative activities, interpersonal activities and presentational activities to enhance students' comprehensible input. Then Mrs. Huang showed us that teacher shouldn't be afraid of talking Chinese to students of various level in 100% target language. Even though they might not understand every single word the teacher is saying, teacher can help them understand by using other teacher tools and instructions. I'm particularly intrigued by the following principles that Professor Tseng brought out:

- Teach grammar and vocabulary in communicative and authentic contexts
- Use different error correction techniques. Sometimes, some works better than another, but the guideline is to give students correct input
- Turn mechanical drills into communicative drills.
- We can teach grammar in 100% target language
- However, when teaching grammar, the less the better.

I believe the learning I have learned will go along way in my future teaching.

#### 5. Reflection on first teaching demo

Today we are like new soldiers who finally got a taste of the battle field after being trained and equipped with the newest armors! Each one of us work with our assigned group and did our mini-demo session. It is a nerve-breaking as well as exciting experience. I have learned so much through other teachers' exhibition of talents and skills. Here are some lessons I have learned:

1. **Time management:** it is every teacher's intention to give the students as much as possible. However, it seems that if we are too anxious to give and input, it might confuses and exhaust the students, and therefore, might not get the result we intends to. Therefore, I need to remind myself that I need to **Talk Clear and Loud! Push but not Rush !**
2. **i+ 1 principle:** As a teacher, we need to strive to make every word and sentences meaningful. It's hard since Chinese teachers are used to be in

the central role in the classroom and therefore, might not have the need to monitor our speeches as carefully as we should. On the other hand, if we are too anxious to push students, we might tend to give input that is too complicated and difficult for our students.

3. **Teacher's body language:** It is so energetic to the students when the teachers are energetic and encouraging. I felt that it is a very positive to use in classroom if the teachers are comfort in acting and performance. However, if the teacher doesn't naturally have an outgoing and dramatic personality, I feel that there is no need to force the performance or even to fake it. Instead, teacher can strive to engage the student in other ways , such as well-planned activities and effective teaching materials.
4. **Pushed Output:** I think it is a skill as well as a habit for teachers to develop and get better gradually. I have to admit that I even have a tendency to pick up the other Chinese speaker's train of thought unconsciously. While I was teaching, I tended to jump in and help the students to finish up his ideas. Now, I need to learn how to push my students to finish their thoughts and ideas as much as possible.

In the afternoon, we learned how to use Dropbox and Quizlet by sharing our resources and collaborate on projects. Both are very useful in giving us useful resources after leave campus. I think it can give us great post program assistance.

## 6. Reflection on the first teaching practice

Since we had an opportunity to observe two master teacher's model teaching, before I talk about my own teaching practice, I want to first comment on what I have learned from Ya-Ching, since I have been reflecting upon my own teaching with Yaching to find areas for my own improvement: It is so enjoyable and fascinating to be in the classroom of a dynamic teacher. She designed a packed classroom full of active learning and communicative activities. Here is something that is very beneficial to me as I'm learning how to conduct an immersion style teaching:

Push for comprehensible output all the time: after she introduced each new concept, she immediately push the students to produce output. She uses

every opportunity to ask student use Chinese.

Show and tell instead of teaching: She doesn't necessarily teach all the vocabularies before she assigned tasks. She just put the students in the environment to reinforce the knowledge acquisition.

Just do it, not teach it: she constantly stimulate students' active learning by assigning tasks at i+1 level.

On Tuesday, after observed two master teacher's teaching in 100% target, we started teaching on the second unit on Family. We were very nervous of course, plus, we were all sleep-deprived from working late into the mid-night working as a group. I have also suffered from bug bites that made it very uncomfortable to either rest or study. However, these difficulties didn't stop me from trying my best.

On the positive side, I think we have achieved the following teaching objectives:

1. I have used 100% target language instruction. It 's something that I personally felt amazing since I used to be a doubter of 100% target language. When I look back, even a few days ago, I have been asking for the possibility of explaining some grammar points in target language. Yet, from the response of the students, I found that I have been under estimating the intelligence of our students.
2. In general we have achieved the teaching objective for the day as a group. Students reviewed curriculum from the previous day and achieved planned goals as a team.
3. I have gradually learned and practiced how to create a student-centered classroom by giving students more opportunities to do communicative activities.
4. I have become better in planning communicative activities and work on output pushing.

On the areas that I need to continue to improve:

1. First 5 minutes is the crucial in getting students attentions. I felt that I haven't grasped the opportunity to create a more dynamic enough environment.
2. I need to improve on modeling and clear instruction. I have been improving, but need to work more on this aspect.
3. I need to become more skillful in paying attention to student's comprehensive response and adjusting my timing and patience.
4. I also need to become more creative in grouping students together so that they have more chances to interact with others.

