Day 1 Reflection, June 29th, Xia Li

This is the first day of the training. A lot of old and new theories reviewed and explored. Dr. Tseng is an exceptional professor, knowledgeable and well-organized. Everything is very systematic and logical.

I felt this is a caring and energetic group. Hopefully I can learn a lot from them.

I have been several workshops that talked about the 5C standards. But in my head there are 5Cs floating around, sometimes, I am still not sure which one is which. Through today's lecture, discussions, and class activities, I felt I start to truly understand which C is which, even the 11 small Cs. I think the discussions and practices truly made a difference. Not like other conferences and meetings, Dr. Tseng really wanted everyone to understand and internalize the 5C standards. As what she said, we want everyone know them inside and out, so it becomes the second nature and does not need to think about anything when creating thematic unit and lesson plans.

Day 2 Reflection, June 30th, Xia Li

This is the second day of the training.

Language Learning Theories and Development

Through today's lesson, I start to have a clear picture of the history and development of the language learning theories. I am amazed by how fast the language learning theories and approaches evolved. Brooks and Lado's audio-lingual approach (1970s) only existed for 10 years, then it was improved by Krashen's meaning based teaching (1980s). Another 10 years, the communicative approaches appeared. This led me think about the traditional Chinese teaching philosophies and approaches. I wonder why there is constant development of the language teaching theories in the west, but in china, it seems stand still.

Task Based Language Teaching

The challenge of switching to Task Based Language Teaching (TBLT) is how to do it. It seems is a huge task. There is almost zero TBLT in my previous teaching. How to find time and resources to create enough for me to use for the next school year? It seems impossible to me.

Corrective Feedback

Even though I have been using many of the corrective feedback approaches, knowing the reason behind it and the research data do bring a lot of confidence and shed a light on what

should be used more. I would like to try more the Recast feedback in my teaching as it is the most effective way to correct the students' errors.

Day 3 Reflection, July 1st, Xia Li

The thing that struck me most today is the demos Dr. Tseng did. When I watch it, I thought it is very logical and reasonable. But at the same time, I am wondering if I can apply it in my own school.

   The school I worked is a neighborhood high school in south Philadelphia. Our student body is composed of about 47% African American, 8% Hispanic, 31% Asian, and 12% European students. Most of my students are from economic under privilege families. Their problems include discipline, motivation, and attendance. This is the best year but I usually get average 80% attendance every day.

   After watching the demos, I image my students sit in the classroom and I am using the same teaching methods with my students. I cannot image what the outcome will be. If there are 25% students follow me, then I will be the luckiest one. Because of their discipline, motivation and attendance problems, most students don't have enough knowledge base to follow the instruction.

   When I see Dr. Tseng's demo, another thing that struck me is that every minute of the class time is well spend on teaching. In my school, I have to spend a lot time to think of the games that can attract the students. I am wondering if the games play any role in the college.

   How to apply the principles of the communicative approaches to my students? I am still pondering…

Day 4 Reflection, July 1st, Xia Li

Dr. Tan Dali gave us instruction today. The first thing she talked about is to teach language using the "Culture as Core". This made me about the thing that happened not long ago. A Spanish student teacher at my school went to a job fair one day. She came back and I ask her how it was? She said that she went to a booth and the principal told her that his school is very hesitate to hire the world language teacher. The reason is a lot of world language teachers only know how to teach culture.

I personally do not think the language class should focus on culture. Culture should be a part of language classes but not the core of the language class.   Off course I will teach the culture. I think most of the stuff we mentioned today I will teach in my class, but the culture will never dominate my classroom. I am curious to learn more of the "Culture as Core" theory.

I wish we will have slower pace to go over things today. "Culture as Core" is a new concept. But how to do it? We only learned how to do a specific task such as how to find the culture meaning for the phrases we teach. But how to create your curriculum based on this principle? How to arrange your time so the teaching can reflect the "Culture as Core" concept? How to plan your semester, school year?

Day 5 Reflection, July 4th, Xia Li

Today, each group did a micro demo. What a wonderful job every group did. I learned so much from each group, each person!

I especially like the "一边。。。一边。。。" structure teaching demo Naiqi and Zoe did. It is amazing that they find such appropriate video to go with the structure in such a short time. I also like Pingping's teaching – the teacher solicit questions in such precise language. I like Shannon's homework drawing – a wonderful technique make students to focus the listening while have fun.

Daphne's Demo is exceptional. Everything she did is the model. What a perfectionist she is! I am amazed!

Reflection #6, July 10th, Xia Li

After two days' teaching and three days' observation, I am definitely convinced that immersion is a way to go. Students are very engaged and interested in the content and they have reached an extraordinary level in a short 5 days.

The advantages of the fully immersions are:

1. The students have much more time to be exposed in the Chinese language.
2. The role of the teacher changes from explaining the language vocabulary and grammar points to performing the language vocabulary words and grammar points.
3. Because of the point #2, the class becoming a little drama stage, thus make it more fun and the students are more interested and engaged.

Beside the paradigm change, another key to the success of the immersion is how teachers scaffold the students. In the classroom, when students just begin to learn the language, teachers must always remember to make the input to be the "i+1". So in the beginning, the teacher has to use a lot of body language to scaffolding.