

Selected Daily Reflections

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Day 1, June 22

Today in class, we reviewed the 5C's and 3 modes. It was nice to review since the 5C's guide me to make lesson plans.

Interpersonal: speaking, writing

Interpretive: listening, reading

Presentational: Speaking/listening, reading/writing

Some teachers shared that we taught 4 skills all at once. I do the same at my school.

听说读写同步教. I am glad that to know other teacher also agree to teach the same way.

只教汉字, 不出拼音, 效果好. Chinese characters are different and unique. It is different from other

languages. The website www.learner.org

shows video to teachers.

Some possible authentic materials include newspaper, magazines, fashion show, songs, poems and articles. I like to use songs to teach in my classes. For the reading: Epilogue: Implications for Teaching, I agree with the author's idea. There are some effective ways to introduce new lessons to students, such as total physical response, particular kinds of vocabulary presentations, picture files. Some other teaching techniques that the paper mentioned I have seen Tseng Laoshi present in class during the day.

Day 2, June 23

I try to memorize the feature of the task with MORE: Meaning, Outcomes, Resources, Experiences/situations. The MORE helps me to remember the features. Hope this helps you too.

I also like the preview that we discussed today. I plan to use it in the Fall in my class. I will post the

new lesson online and have students preview before they come to class. When students come to class, I will have students dictate what they have learned from their preview on a piece of paper, and then peer-review.

It was great to have a quick review on the theories from the past to the most current. The review helps me to understand the greatest about the current theory, MTBLT. But I am afraid that I might be challenged to memorize all the theory names.

The paper gives out five guidelines when we observe a class. The five guidelines are teacher's body language, how the teacher tries to achieve the teaching objectives, how the teacher tries to control the class time, teaching techniques, and the interaction between teacher and students in the classroom. What I really like is that the article lists what we should observe in details. Those details help me to picture what a great classroom looks like and a classroom that needs to be improved look like.

Day 3, June 24

I like the idea of using movie/song/advertisement/cartoon as authentic materials in a Chinese class.

But it takes time for a teacher to find an appropriate one. It would be great if there is a resource available to all the teachers, including elementary school level.

After today's discussion, it seems to me that task-supported instruction might be more appropriate than task-based for elementary level. I would like to know what other teachers think about it.

I hope that I will have a chance to work with other elementary school teachers to develop a do-able lesson plan with task-supported or task-based for Foreign Language Elementary School (FLES) programs so I can use it in the Fall. I am interested in applying what I have learned in the last three days because it seems to me that those methods highly motivate students to learn.

We also reviewed Task-based Language Teaching. Although I and other two teachers from California had learned from Prof. Tseng about TBLT last month, I still gained a lot from today's lesson. I memorized the four features of authentic tasks which are MORE.

M: primary focus on meaning

O: clearly defined communicative outcomes

R: self-determined language resources

E: real-life experiences/situations

Day 4, June 29 First Time Teaching

After the pre-teaching demo, I summarized feedback from myself, teachers and classmates as follows:

1. I should be careful to use colors according to Chinese culture. I should not color my name in red.
2. Connection was not strong between two activities.
3. Students do not need to memorize the 12 zodiac signs in this class. The learning objective was students will be able to say the sentence, "My zodiac sign is...".
4. There was too much English in slides
5. There should be no translation in teaching
6. I should change activities to meaningful communicative tasks.
7. Photos that I used in PPT should bring in meaning and culture.

After having learned a lot of theories I would like to apply what I have learned in my first practicum lesson, I know that I still have a lot more to learn. Below is my own and other teacher's feedback.

I did not assign students a meaningful task. Students did not have enough chance to practice Chinese in a communicative environment.

I did not keep the target language simple. I brought in some new Chinese words/phrase that were not relative to the learning objective.

Teacher modeling was needed more. Activity instructions were not clear.

I should use real people's picture to show their zodiac sign. 3 people's pictures on one slide should be good.

Sentence patterns were confusing.

Pinyin was needed for each character. In the last two hour lessons, students learned "What time is it now?", "What date is today?" pretty well. When I reviewed the sentence without Pinyin at the lesson beginning, students did not get it. I showed Pinyin, and then student started to read out loud.

A final game was needed to improve because students' language output was not enough.

Day 8, July 1 Second Time Teaching

Review: review yesterday's content: 你喜欢做什么? 日期,

Teacher centered time, the more, the better.

Sentence patterns need more time to practice.

Break dialogues down to 3 turns:

One teaching cycle:

teacher demo 2 times; teacher-student demo one time; pair work; present in class.

Comprehension check:

Bubbles are needed:

Procedure:

Work with partner

Practice dialogues

Take turns

Practice without handout

Presentation /peer assessment

Authentic material: advertisement on CCTV: phone call from Yao Ming.

Use two o'clock.

Review all topics that we learned?!

Tonight I was lucky that I had a chance to meet with both Ming Laoshi and Shi Laoshi tonight at our group “private library” and I got a lot after the one-on-one discussion. I understand our best-practice better after I discussed with experienced teachers. Peer teachers are nice, but when I have a question, they might be busy with their lesson planning, or not available, or they are also not sure about what we learned. I wish there are 3-4 “big laoshi” in this program.

I summarized what I learned from those two teachers tonight:

- Grammar is challenging
- I need to make a curriculum map at the beginning of the year
- Assessment is for a teacher to know how well/poorly a student learned and re-teach what a student has not gotten.
- When a teacher teaches in a class, s/he should focus on a student's performance.
- Make the whole year lesson plan in the summer and enjoy my teaching of the whole year.
- In class, the teaching pace must be fast. Practice right after teaching.
- For lower grade level students, songs are helpful.

My activity instructions were not clear. At the beginning of class, I tried to review with a new game: who said it fastest? But students did not understand what I want them to do.

I did not keep my TL simple.

I can not call out loud students' names when they came up to the front to do activity.

I need to rehearse my lesson sentence by sentence before teaching

Instructions were not clear; TL too much and did not keep language simple; needs more visual slides and teacher demo

Student needs more chances to output language; students' production skill is needed more than recognition skill; fewer teacher-led activities

Day 7, July 6 Third Time Teaching

I timed my activities well and I followed my schedule. I posted the schedule in the front of the class and I can see it but students could not.

My class went smoothly. I was calm and able to control the alternation between teacher-centered and student-centered. Teacher-centered and student-centered were alternated quickly and often.

After I rehearsed my lesson with a few teachers, I switched the order to teach vocabulary. It ended up well.

Slow down my teaching pace and include student-centered activities in teacher demo. I was able to have “Solo & Choir” often.

I stayed in the TL during class. Students were able to reach the learning objectives at the end of class. It was great!!!

I tried to use communicative conversation with students when I demonstrated new vocabulary and structures.

I assigned a lot of pair activities in class instead of teacher-centered.

I was happy with my teaching. Right after I finished teaching, a few teachers also told me that they liked my lesson. Their positive feedback gave me confidence. Thank you Tseng LaoShi, Ming LaoShi, Shi LaoShi and my peer teachers!!!! The demo teaching with many teachers’ feedback helped me to understand the teaching theories.

I also learned a lot from other teachers’ demonstrations, feedback and teaching. My team was a wonderful team. My teammates were great. We discussed the big structure, the sentence patterns, vocabulary and activities together. When I started to make my lesson plan, we also stayed together. My team not only helped me to finish my lesson plan, but I also learned best practices within group discussion.

This is a great program with wonderful setting/schedule, teachers and peer teachers!! I have learned a lot and I can apply what I have learned in my current school. I have not only learned theory, I also can apply the theory in my lessons. I have learned a lot from THIS Startalk!!! Thanks Tseng Laoshi and other Laoshi!!!