

1st week Day 4 Reflection

Using authentic material in language classrooms has proved to increase student motivation. One of the reasons is that authentic material is a great way to bring location to classroom when it is not possible to bring the class to locations as much as we want. To maximize the benefits of using authentic material, teachers should be able to ask the right questions and assign meaningful tasks. When choosing authentic material, it is important that the material that you choose is level-appropriate so that the learners get comprehensible input. Interpretative activities should be designed to help students make the most of authentic material. Techniques we learned at the workshop serve this purpose very well.

Integrated Performance Assessment (IPA) aligns performance tasks with three communication modes. The prototype and the modified procedures of IPA are both introduced and demonstrated with multiple examples. The hands-on activities where small groups design interpretative, interpersonal, and presentational activities for IPA put theory into practice. The sharing of Ms. Huang's class IPA project solidifies the theories, and provides a great sample project for my class.

As we have stressed the importance of giving timely and effective feedback to the students, today we compared six strategies to correct errors. Different strategies can be used for learners of different levels in different contexts and topics. Recast, elicitation and metalinguistic feedback are error correction strategies I use the most.

A long-time aspect of language teaching I have been working on is how to teach and reinforce grammar. The idea of teaching grammar in context with meaningful and

communicative activities was what I have been trying to do in my upper-intermediate level class. The strategies and activities Dr. Tseng demonstrated will be useful and applicable in my class.

Hua Ma Saturday Mini Demo & Technology Session Reflection

To demonstrate three 50-minute sessions in 10 minutes is demanding on the teachers' part. However, it's proven to be an effective way to encourage teachers to design comprehensible and straightforward models by which students learn the best. The mini demo served its purpose to give all teachers a chance to go through the curriculum and put their instruction design into context. The constructive feedback from Dr. Tseng and colleagues further helped the teachers to clarify learning goals and set plans to reach these goals.

The afternoon session dealt with a burning topic in education, that is, technology integration. As Chinese language education grows, educators have more digital tools at their hands to enhance student learning. A software, NJ Star, introduced at this workshop can cut planning time substantially for those teachers who prepare lots of supporting documents for the students.

Neural Science & Language Teaching

Day three fires up with neural science research findings and instructional applications in language classrooms.

A hands-on word recall experiment brings readings to life. Patten (2002) argued that maximized meaningful and communicative input promotes language acquisition. The word recall experiment showed first-handedly how meaningful and emotional connections make it easier to retain and recall information (compared to input that is not meaning-loaded and communicative). It is also worth pointing out that studies show that optimal performance is achieved when

learners are relaxed but alert. The practical implication for teachers is to create a relaxing but reasonably challenging learning environment. A bonus point in the activity is an effective attention getter Dr. Ferree used, that is, clapping hands twice in front of a noisy class.

An analogy between UPC bar codes and the neural networks in human brain brings the importance of repetition to our attention. Teachers need to create enough repetitions throughout instruction and practices to help students establish patterns. Learning means establishing a pathway, a pattern of neuron firings, that when repeated is recognized. Repetition here does not mean mechanic drills of the form. Rather, it refers to meaningful input in different communicative ways. These include but are not limited to multiple modalities of input (auditory, visual, and etc.), Total Physical Responses (TPRs), etc.

Research findings on the order of development of human brain provide evidence for educators to take advantage of emotional connections by provide sensory input. The fact that human brain is highly adaptable and what we remember may be linked to our emotional and physical sense of the moment heightens the importance of differentiation. This provides a theoretical support for providing differentiated presentation of information, multiple methods of instruction, personalized assessments and other practices that give regards to the individual differences of each learners unique learning style.

Meaningful and communicative input should lead to meaningful and communicative output. Teachers need to design activities and task in such ways that students are reasonable challenged to produce meaning-based output. Student output should be authentic which means it carries a communicative purpose rather than utterance for its own sake.

Besides all theoretical frameworks, research findings, the class shared some easy-to-implement teaching and classroom management techniques that could enhance emotional and meaningful connections. “What fires together, wires together.” This is true about learning and forming learning communities.

Second Language Acquisition Reflection

在今天的培训中，曾妙芬老师通过课堂演示（信息拼图活动 Jigsaw），融会贯通地讲解了如何运用以学生为中心的教学方法。指出运用这些教学方法的基本原则，亦即是，在确定学习目标后，根据学习者的水平以及其他课堂因素，灵活设计、组合并使用各类以学生为中心的课堂活动，已达到理想的教学效果。所列举的以学生为中心的课堂活动紧密结合理论研究，并通过了实证教学的检验，为我在今后设计沟通式、以学生为中心的教学活动提供了启发。

使用真实语料教授语言已经逐渐成为各个语种教学发展的重要方向之一。什么是真实语料？为什么要使用真实语料？如何收集合适的真实语料？如何有效的利用真实语料？这些是目前困扰广大语言教师的现实问题。曾妙芬老师巧妙地将真实语料与沟通式教学结合起来，展示如何寓教于乐，通过唱歌来学习中文。随后延伸探讨如何运用其他手段有效运用真实语料，解答了我心中的一些疑问，为我使用真实语料教学提供了参考。

Acquisition-oriented Language Classes

By Patten’s definition (2002), input is meaning-loaded information learners obtain through communication-intended listening or reading. Curriculum and instruction approaches such as immersion, content-based language instruction, and Natural Approach instruction take advantage

of providing comprehensible (level-appropriate) input. These approaches use techniques such as thematic vocabulary presentations to maximize input that is characterized by meaning goal and communicative intent. Informal assessments are built in communicative activities to increase teacher-student interaction, and student engagement.

However, effective interactions are communicative and meaning-based. Interaction with open-ended guiding questions is more effective than the ones with close-ended questions because interaction with open-ended questions gives students opportunities to communicate, and then manage and contribute to the input, pushing students to be “more active input processors” (Patten, 2002). Patten (2002) suggested that when designing activities with student interaction for beginner learners, teachers need to provide a more structured support and require minimum output that can be easily produced based on a model.

Output, or learner production, should serve some communicative purposes, instead of being merely mechanical drills. One practical application is how to design questions, tasks, projects, and homework assignments to stimulate communicative output. Instead of asking student to produce utterances for its own sake, teachers should encourage communicative output, such as a short response or a short essay on a particular issue that is relevant to the students. The example of structured output is an effective practice to incorporate grammar into meaningful communication.

Fixed language forms, including grammars or idiomatic expressions are not taught with mechanical drills anymore. Instead, they are designed into communicative activities. These language forms are heightened and addressed through conversational techniques such as recast, confirmation check, and clarification requests are used to sustain conversations, or to provide

feedbacks. Comprehension tasks such as text enhancement and structured input are also utilized to reinforce fixed language forms.

Communicative output ability, through either speaking or writing, is one of the main goals of language education. It takes mindful curriculum design and instruction, reasonable expectations, and time to build strong communicative output ability.

Student-centered Classroom

As an upper-level language educator, I find the overarching principles of the book *The Student-Centered Classrooms* relevant and inspiring. The book highlights benefits of student-centered learning and provides classroom management techniques and learning activities to enhance student learning. It also emphasizes the shaping of students' ability to communicate and collaborate through paired, grouped, and whole-class learning activities. These skill sets are critical 21st century skills that are needed in the current and future workforce. This career-oriented skill developing is one of the benefits the author kept stressing across different chapters. Successfully implemented student-centered classroom also helps students shape autonomous learning habits, which in turn, promotes life-long learning.

On classroom level, this book offers useful classroom management skills and practices including grouping, seating, monitoring and guiding student learning process, providing timely feedback, correcting mistakes, and etc. Personally, I am an advocate and practitioner of student-centered learning due to multiple reasons. First, as a student and an educator, I find that student-centered learning recognizes and respects different learning styles. Secondly, student-centered classroom addresses issues caused by unequal levels of knowledge, maturity and other factors within the class. Last but not least, student-centered learning, as its name suggests, put the

learner at the center of the learning process where the focus is not just to pass down knowledge but to form skills.

In my upper-intermediate level class, I use a student-centered approach to turn my class into a strong learning community where students feel relaxed to discuss, collaborate and share. Most of the techniques and activities this book introduced have been used and proved to be effective in my class. I will keep using these techniques to refine my teaching. However, I'd like to share two points that could be implemented to improve my students' learning experience. First of the two points is what the book calls "making progress" (p. 16). I would use more formative assessment techniques to show student progress. Linking to StarTalk content, I might use LinguaFolio or some kind of technology-supported portfolio to provide systematic feedback to promote student learning and track student progress. The second point is to create an immersion language learning environment where students are clearly guided and constantly encouraged to feel confident and relaxed to use the target language to communicate and collaborate. This second point can only be achieved through careful design and accurate execution of a student-centered classroom.

Hua Ma Practicum Day 1 Reflection

First 50 minutes in the three-lesson sequence took me days and nights to plan, design and get ready. What looked natural and easy during the 50 minutes came from solid theoretical support, mindful design, and countless rehearsals.

One of things that I appreciate the most is team work. It's hard to see one's mistakes and problems when you are so immersed in the project. My group established peer review mechanism in the early stage of our planning. We discussed the parts that needed to be

highlighted in each one's instruction. We worked together to figure out how to deliver the content in an engaging and effective way. We also draw from our newly-enlarged repertoire of theoretical principles to support our practice.

Taking strategies we learned in the first week, we made our classes student-centered where the new content is built on the students' prior knowledge. We designed our lessons in a spiral structure so that we could recycle what the students have learned in the previous classes. This whole idea of scaffolding enabled us to stimulate students to inquire. It also helped the students to stay in their Proximal Development Zone so that they could construct knowledge in way that is not overwhelming.

Our activities are mostly interactive ones with meaningful and communicative purposes. We don't deny the importance of mechanical drills in language acquisition, but we believe meaningful and communicative interactions are what drive the students to engage and to learn. We made our lessons relevant and matter to the students. We are rewarded with their engagement and desire to learn.

What worked really well for me in the first day's planning and instruction is using floods of comprehensible input to demonstrate authentic language use. We designed our activities with supporting materials and student-centered models to push meaningful and communicative output from the students. What I need to work on is to give students more time to practice before asking them to present.

Hua Ma Practicum Day 2 Reflection

Based on feedback of Practicum Day One, I planned to work on giving the students more time to practice before pushing them to present in class. Therefore, I designed my three activities in such a way that the students remain the center. Class time was truly given back to the students.

Our unit plan is designed along a logical story line where the content is delivered and recycled in a spiral structure. The story is used as the context to bring content out naturally so the students don't have to deal with grammar for its own sake. Student comprehension is constantly checked before the teacher moves to the next concept or activity. Students' prior knowledge is activated to connect to new concepts. Along the story line where new concept is introduced, students receive floods of comprehensible input in forms of listening and reading. Teacher demonstrates expected language product through modeling. Modeling could be done by the teacher alone, teacher with student, or student with student. Our modeling was successful because expected language output was clearly presented, and follow-up support is provided when students produce output in forms speaking and writing. The follow-up supports include written model on handout, overhead projector, and document camera as well as on-spot teacher feedback. Another strategy to encourage quality student output is to ask meaningful and communicative questions to increase interaction. The function of meaningful and communicative interaction is to support and push students to produce more comprehensible output.

Connecting content and pedagogy, we place instruction in a meaningful and communicative context. To support learning goals, and maximize instruction we used digital technologies such as MS PowerPoint, online video streaming, and document camera. These technologies are integrated seamlessly because each of them served a purpose without adding burden to the instruction process.

