

Day one's Self-reflection Paper

by Huayi Zhang

In today's class, I reviewed national standards-"5C", three communicative modes, backward design, OPI. And I got to know the concept of LinguaFolio and STARTALK Instructional Principles. Besides, I got many information regarding Chinese teaching from my classmates-experienced Chinese language teacher form all over the US.

As for the standards, I have been learning for a very long time, but this is the first time ever that I consider how to link the theory with practice. It's useless to just understand the theory if we do not consider putting them into teaching process. In the process of class activities design, we must clear about which activity is link with which standards, we must make sure the activities we designed are linked with the standards.

For example, comparison between a certain Chinese structure and English structure is related to 4.1 Language comparisons. Similarly, the vocabulary comparisons, culture comparisons can be also widely used in teaching. But in what way can we put them into practice? We need to pay attention to the similarities and dissimilarities between the two languages and cultures. Not everything can be compared. Another example is that we often take students to China town or Chinese restaurant to experience Chinese culture. We need to know why do we do this, it's because of 5.1 School and community. In order to put 5.1 into practice, we can also take students make a trip to China or participate any contest, Chinese Festival Celebrations or any other activities.

Reflections on today's workshop training

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Student-centered classroom

The groupings should take different abilities, ages and languages students into consideration.

To avoid the reluctance of the students participating in group works, it is important to explain the importance of group work. After the group working, "follow up" is necessary, like Q&A, students making presentation, teacher correcting mistakes systematically.

Using Athentic materials as much as possible.

Authentic materials not only help learners develop a more positive attitude towards learning but also increase learners' involvement and interest. Authentic materials are perceived by learners as useful, lifelike, and interesting.

In addition to authentic materials and structure-based proficiency-oriented instruction, communicative competence can only be developed and maintained through exposure to a wide array of authentic texts, either oral or written, which illustrate a full range of genres and social contexts.

Non authentic text materials give learners a false impression of the use of frequently used words and phrases. Learning is enhanced by the use of texts of particular interest to a class.

Commentary & what inspires you and reshapes your teaching philosophy

5 implications for teaching

Implication1, The more input, the better.

The input is not only come from teachers, it can also be incorporated into many other ways. Immersion and content-based instruction are two. This is consistent with the communicative teaching. Language acquisition are completed in the process of communicating with others.

Implication2, The more interaction, the better.

Learning language is meaningless if it cannot put into practice. Interaction promotes acquisition. In the class, the interactions should focus on meaning. Teacher should make the students do some task-oriented activities which have a a communicative or informational goal.

Implication3, All learner production should be meaning-based, or communicative.

Learners can produce meaningful sentences through "Structured output". They use one form throughout the task to create meaning.

Implication4, Focus on form should be meaning-based and tied to input or communication.

A focus on form should happen through a communicative interchange or through some kind of comprehension task. The absence of meaning make the students losing interests and attention.

Implication 5, we should watch out for what we expect of learner.

It takes tremendous patience in teaching language, especially teaching the novice. The question starts with “why” should not be asked to the novice learners.

Reflections on today's workshop training

6/19/2014

By Huayi Zhang

Through observing Dr. Ruth Ferree’s class on brains and second language acquisition, I not only learned some interesting facts about brain, 5 second language implications, but also got some class management techniques on observing her teaching itself for she herself is a experienced language teacher.

She did three things that I think can be used in my class. One, she listed clearly the things she will teach in the class. Second, she used name tags to remember students’ name. Third, before each activity, she told the students the purpose of the activity and give example on how to do it. Forth, she asked students to shut down their laptops so they can focus on the teacher.

What interests me most is the two experiments she performed in the class. The first experiment showed us that language acquisition is connected with meaning, one of the most important jobs for the language teacher is that make students pay attention to the meaning rather than the “surface forms” of the language. The second experiment reinforces the TPR theory, which believes students tend to learn the language effectively if the body movement is involved in the learning process. Teacher should make the students get to move in the class rather than make them just sit there and listen.

In conclusion, research showing that what we remember may be linked to our emotional and physical sense of the moment. According to this theory, our language teacher should make students as active as possible, make the sensible input as much as possible.

Reflections on today's workshop training

6/20/2014

By Huayi Zhang

This morning, Ms. Zeng inspired us to design some tasks based on some authentic material, like a website on climate, a song or an advertisement. It is a very good way make the class interesting, by involving all the students into the class. But it takes so

much time and effort to design the procedures of the activity. But we can design it by the 3 rules: interpersonal, interpretive and presentational. Keeping these three rules in head when we design the task, it might be a little easier.

This afternoon, I observed all the teachers' demo teaching, I am really impressed, I benefited not only by absorbing their brilliant ideas but also learning from the mistakes they made, for example, do not focus on the words which are not very important, like measure words and adv. “很”, these words students can pick them up really quickly. Teachers do not do the “heavy lifting”, they should give the task of presenting the meaning of the words to the students, for example, pair the students up to make them presenting different words to the entire class. And get the students moving is always a very good way to learn.

As for my demo teaching, the other teachers points out 3 major problems I have. First, sentence pattern should be added. Second, in the activity, it should be student-centered not teacher-centered. Last but not least, the content of the conversation between the students and teacher should be meaningful, should be used in the real world communication. I will work on these problems.

Reflections on today's workshop training

6/22/2014

By Huayi Zhang

How to be an attractive teacher?

To be a “lazy” teacher

Technology is supposed to make our life easier. It can make the language teaching more efficient while making the teacher's life much easier. But in the beginning it takes a lot of work to learn to use the different kinds of apps the teachers themselves. Besides, the teacher who is good at using all the tools could always whoa the students who are the generation of high tech. I learnt many useful apps and internet websites to facilitate my future teaching. It seems easy at first, but the point is to put them into practice or it will soon be forgetting. I also learnt the apps on ipad. It seems pointless at the moment because most of the schools cannot afford to buy ipad for every student. But we need to get prepared in case the day comes which will come sooner or later.

To be a “mysterious” teacher

Teacher is considered to be the most generous person in the world, but the teacher who can keep the students interested is the one who keep something for the next time. I got inspired by Prof. Zeng's husband, who was also a teacher. In

his opinion, in order to make the students continue learning the teacher should always keep something for the next time or next class.

It seems weird. How a “lazy” and “mysterious” teacher can be a good teacher. But to some extent, the “lazy” and “mysterious” teacher can be very attractive.

Reflections on today's workshop training

6/25/2014

By Huayi Zhang

The things I have done right

1. I didn't speak one single English word in the class.
2. I use my own family to tell students taking out their family photos.
3. I offered the students enough opportunities to practice the pattern they just leant.
4. I choose to use the family photo of Dunkin family (from the TV show” Good luck, harlie”), and the one from the movie “the sound of music” which the students are familiar with.
5. I incorporated technology into my teaching. I used “lottery” to ask students answer my question so that they have equal opportunities to practice in the class.
6. I offered the sample dialogue in the working sheets so they know what to ask and how to answer group mates.

The things I did wrong

1. I did not give the sample report format in the working sheets. So the students got confused as to what to say during the report.
2. I did not say clearly about how the difference between “这” and “那” , I should have offered more examples to differentiate the concepts.
3. The inner circle and outside circle did not work out. Students did not get the idea of grouping.

Question:

How to make the students not just practice with one group mate but with multiple group mates in the same time?