

1. Reading Materials on Student-Centered Classroom

After reading Chapter 5, 6, and Conclusion (Part2) of "The student-Centered Classroom" by Leo Jones, I have much better idea on cooperate learning and what a student-centered classroom is. I think it is very inspiring and would like to share with you.

What is the basic philosophy of classroom teaching? What are the roles of a teacher, student, and others? The answers to those questions are the theoretic foundation on how to carrying out the teaching-learning tasks in a classroom. Leo Jones states that the students are the center of the learning in a class. Students can't be "taught" - they can only be helped to learn. They will be offered opportunities to all kinds of learning activities but they won't depend on their teacher all the time. They value each other's contributions; they cooperate, learn, and help each other. When being in difficulty or in doubt, they do ask teachers for help, but only after have they tried among themselves.

Leo Jones defines the teacher's role as more that of a facilitator than an instructor or an actor. We teacher are responsible for helping students get prepared to work independently, monitoring students while they are working together, and giving feedback afterward. He discussed how the philosophies could be implemented in details in those chapters and showed many possible activities as examples.

First, how can we teachers prepare students before they work together as a learning community in a class? Introducing relevant vocabularies, useful phrases or sentence patterns are very necessary, but it is also very important that we teachers know the students personality well and know exactly the students are supposed to be doing and why, as well as how long they have for the activities. It will help us structure the activities that best suit to their needs and group the students for their best learning outcome. For examples, we may show less confident students how to begin the activity; act out a conversation by playing both roles; demonstrate a conversation in front of the class, using a confident student as a partner; have students prepare talking points before beginning their conversations; and remind students that this is a practice, not a test.

Second, how can we teachers monitor the students working together? We are in control of student learning. We should be busy moving around the class listening to different groups. We may choose to sit with or stand beside a group for a few moments, or listen in more discreetly. We may join a group that needs help or encouragement and guide them for a few moments. We should not correct students on the spot, but take note for feedback in the follow-up session later. We will also be keeping an eye on any off-task students and the timer to warn the time limit. When time is up, we will ask students if they need a little more time.

Finally, when time is up and everyone has stopped talking, a Q&A session will be immediately followed to deal with any questions students may have. Then, give feedback on common

mistakes during the conversation. The last but not the least encourage and praise students for their hard work.

The book also discussed different kinds of activities that could be applied in a student-centered classroom, such as, reading, listening, discussions and sharing ideas, role play, information gap activities, and writing tasks, etc. I personally very much like the working together model of pair-join another pair- group report- whole class discussion. At the end of the book, Leo Jones emphasized the balance between leading the students and letting the students have control of their learning. I was totally convinced the advantage of working together and I fully agree that there is no substitute for pair and group work in student learning. I have done some of the activities, but far not enough. Hopefully, I can implement more of the ideas into my actual practices in the future.

2. Reflection on Observing other's class

I have to admit that I have never seen such detailed classroom observation as Ms. Liang' s article described. She gave five spheres,namely, 1) teacher 's body language, 2) how the teachers achieve the teaching objectives, 3) how the teacher tried to control the class time,4) teaching techniques , 5) the interaction between teachers and students in the classroom. If we do check ourselves with the 5 spheres more often, we should become a better teacher sooner.

Personally, I focused more on 2 and 5, need more conscious on 1, and improve 3 and 4. Today, I learned the scientific research supported meaningful comprehensive input techniques from the invited guest speaker. I realized that I need to check student understanding more frequently, I should learn more proper error correction, and more frequently give students invitation for pushed output. I was also convinced that meaningful and emotion connections do matter. Learning means establishing a pathway, a pattern of neuron firings, that when repeated is recognized. " what fires together, wires together." Multiple modalities, motor as well as verbal activation helps the learning process. What we remember may be linked to our emotional and physical sense of emotional and physical sense of the moment. It takes at least 12 times to meaningful input to have the word learned. t was very interesting to see the clip of " Secret Life of the Brian" and the photo of the comparison among Chinese, English, and Spanish.

The group teacher' s demo and modeling in the afternoon was very helpful. I learned how to start an activity with clear instruction in target language, modeling step by step, and finally giving the handout. After watched Xu laoshi and Zhongqiu laoshi short but detailed step by step guide on the mini demo lessons, I felt more confidence to do my lesson for next week.

3. Saturday Demo and Technology Workshop

It was another day that I found out how much I still need to learn in a hard way. We thought we had spent a lot of time to prepare, but we did not do the best we could. Also, I realized how important the minute by minute plan, word by word rehearsal is. It will take time and a lot of practices for me to apply the theories we have learned in the past 5 days into my actual daily teaching. I am willing to try my best.

I need to focus on the following area:

- How much can I teach in a 50 minutes period? How will I arrange the activities?
- How can I give I+1 clear instruction?
- How can I clearly model each activity in a more effective way?
- How can I get more pushed output?

Learning from our peers, I like the way of teaching “to have/not have” by Shanhui laoshi; I like the way of teaching “How to get there” by Yanhong laoshi; I like the ways of teaching Measure words by Yuanwei laoshi. I would like to have the color song used by Gaowei laoshi and the Calendar by Wulaoshi into my future teaching. Although I have been using Quizlet and Dropbox, definitely, I will try Wenlin and Nanji xing after Zeng laoshi’s sharing. I could see the excitement when students get the palm phone. But I doubt myself if I have the ability to manage the system with busy daily teaching.

4. Reflection on my first day of practicum

Nothing is more important than team work. We had 3 times group discussions before the teaching. Every time every member contributed. We agreed that we should be open-minded and straight forward to each other. It is better to lose face within our group than to do it in front of our students. We fixed our idea and PowerPoint immediately based on our discussion. We felt each time is much better than the previous. Each member clearly knew what is the focus of his/her own lesson and what should be reviewed before the lesson. We, as a group, also discussed how to teach each lesson smoothly through segment by segment and make sure it is a united lesson with connected steps. After teaching, we all agree this is the strength of the unit.

Personally, I had become more confident after each group discussion. I was so ambitious and wanted to be a totally new “teacher” armed with the most advanced theories and different practices. However, I was so tired and could not find the right feeling when I was doing the 10 minutes lesson in front of the teachers. At the night before teaching, Tseng laoshi gave a lot of ideas and comments on my lesson and I couldn’t find better ways to implement. It was after 10pm. I was so sad and thought I wasn’t able to teach next day. Master teacher, Xulaoshi, went through my PPT slide by slide to clarify my confusion. Ma Laoshi immediately came down to the cafeteria helped me with my PPT until 12am. Another group member, Chen laoshi, was with me there until 1:45am. We left with complete work and a lot of confidence and friendship.

I found the right me when I was standing in front of the students. I started my lesson with joy, confidence, and well planned activities. The teaching goal was fulfilled. I felt I could have a good sleep in the evening.

After a long nap in the evening, I spent a good amount time to watch the two first lesson videos of master teacher zhong laoshi and xulaoshi. I also took more than 2 hours to watch my videotape of the lesson with xulaoshi's comments in mind. I watched my tape segment by segment.

It basically was a good lesson. I like the interaction between me and the students. The students were very happy and relaxed, yet alert during my teaching. I created a positive, natural immersion learning environment. I like the pace of the lesson and the rhythm of my communication with students. My body language was appropriate. There were some authentic materials, visual aid, such as birthday song, a chain of 12 Zodiac, gift boxes visible around the classroom. However, there are some areas that I need to work on as following:

1. Correct the habit of speaking English. I said, OK, Sorry, and All right.
2. Need more scaffolding before letting student practice. Whole Chorus and individual drill are necessary sometimes.
3. Clear instruction or modeling on details. For an example, if I ask students to write down the information they need, I should show them the pen with writing gesture. I didn't realize it until I watch my video tape.

5. My 2nd practicum teaching is Meeting Your Hosting Family period 2. The class was carried out beautifully from beginning to the end with joy. I enjoyed teaching and students had fun to learn.

Based on the feedback of Day 1 practicum, our group had a good discussion on the story line. Personally, I need to scaffold more before students'' pushed output. I carefully planned every stage of the 50 minutes teaching with communicative and meaningful in mind, 3 activities were one followed another smoothly. This was the first time I would teach ChangCheng class, I sat in the class a day before to get to know the students. I rehearsed the first 5 minutes many times to make sure I could start the lesson in the way I really wanted. During the lesson, I felt I had no distance with students. It was more like conversation with students, naturally, and exciting. After review the period 1 materials, First, we learning 是谁? 欢迎, 请进, 请坐 with pair work and role play. Then, my students and I met my friend at her house. Students learned how to comment on other's house. Finally, we learned how to give and accept gift in a culture appropriate way. When one of the students tried to take off the bow of the gift box, I said, "喔, 我的礼物!" Everybody laughed. While another student tried to fix it, I didn't waste one second. Instead, I used the time to teach the lyric of Happy Birthday song. Finally the lesson ended with happily singing.

After the class, I was so released. I felt I found the better way to teach Chinese class. I could be a better Chinese teacher. Thanks, Startalk!, Thanks, Tseng laoshi, Zhonglaoshi, and Xu laoshi!. Thanks, My Team!

6. Today is the last day of Practicum. It has been dragged so long. After the 2nd teaching, I felt I understood how to design the lesson and activities. There was not much anxiety before teaching. My mind was on all other stuff of my family and school I thought I should take care. The detailed preparation and hand note were omitted. At the same time, I had been so tired from all those late working hours and couldn't put myself together. Even though the lesson has been carefully designed and the activities were very well planned, I just couldn't find the excitement to implement it on spot. The teaching objective was fulfilled and the students learned as they should. But we were kind of disappointed according to the high expectation after 2nd teaching. I think I could do much better job with the same lesson when I am back to my school. It also reminded me that focusing on what we should do and be fully prepared is very important for a successful lesson. I learned it in a hard way today.