

Daily Reflections: 2011 VSCTA Chinese Teacher Training  
CHINESE 5680: Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language  
#1 Reflection

Xiaoli Doty

June 20, 2011

Comments on Implications for Teaching

1. We all know that **THE MORE INTERACTION THE BETTER**, but doing is harder than knowing. Very often, found myself slip into the situation that do not look at all like the kind that facilitates acquisition.

Looking back, when students in my classroom disengaged, that would be the time that the activity we were doing is not meaningful.

Therefore, interaction should focus on meaning and are level-appropriate for learners will foster acquisition.

Design Task-oriented activities to promote interactions, e.g. practice particl "le" to express something already happened.

Step 1, have students interview each other by asking question: What did you do last week?

Step 2, each student what one student did last week.

Step 3, students report what most people did last week and what less people did last week and why?

2. All learner's production should be meaning-based, or communicative.

Reflect on my past classroom practice, I realize that a lot of my students' production are not always communicative, more often, it's language skills practicing (mechanical drilling) which always result in lose students' attention.

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

Providing immediate feedback is a very good way to help students develop their proficiency level, we don't want students memorize the sentence pattern with grammar error, so we correct it right away, and very soon, I found out that students were discouraged. So, instead of correct students' mistakes and ask them to repeat after you, what you should do is providing help via a corrected version, then student may rephrase what they said. Or **CONFIRMATION CHECK** or **CLARIFICATION** "What you means is..." "What did you say...?"

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June 21, 2011

1. Task-base instruction always can engage students, but not always true, when students figured out it's just for the sake of practice a sentence pattern or a grammar point, they will fool you by provided make-up information to complete their tasks, and that's what you don't want, so you have to design meaningful task, which will drive students to look for information instead of make-up information.

2. USING TARGET LANGUAGE IN THE CLASSROOM, the more students perform the better, this is very challenge and highly depend on well design lesson plan and classroom activities. It will take me a long way to get there.

3. LinguoFolio

Pre-program: have students complete self-assessment will help to get to know our students and set a clear goals, students will be better understand what they are going to learn and what they are expected to be able to do.

During the program, students can upload their evidence for "Can do" statement, monitor their own progress as a second language learning, students will take their reponsibilities for their studies.

Post-program: have students update their self-assessmen, both students and teacher will be better to understand where students are, what's their strength and what's their weak point? Any common weak point that we could adjust our teaching practice for next school year, etc.

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#3 Reflection

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June 22, 2011

### Student-centered instruction

#### 1. Students create question:

1.1 In the student-centered instruction classroom, the students will be more engaged when given the opportunity to design questions of their own.

1.2 Students share their questions with the class.

1.3 Interview each other with the questions they designed.

2. In Haiyan Fu's classroom, the class was routinely started with dictation. The class was divided by level, one student from each group will choose 10-15 vocabularies for dictation, students enjoy it, it's their choice.

#### 3. Task-based language teaching TBLT

In my past teaching experience, I was always struggling engaging my students, another challenge is to create an authentic environment to help students to develop their four skills. I used games or fun stuff for students to do, but students were not always buy it. Not I finally realize after "TBLT" session that when the classroom activities are not meaningful, it will be hard to get students attention.

Therefore, TBLT is the solution for having your students engaged, because it's student-centered.

#### 4. Confirmation check

Very often, I used to check if my students "get it", I always ask "you mei you wen ti?" "dong le ma?". These questions are included in the "Classroom Instructions" of OSU. But, these questions are waste of time, you know that you won't be able to find out if students "get it" or not. So, we need to as functional questions.

e.g. students are always making mistakes in the following questions: "wo qin ni chi fan xing qi liu." after you give them several example and ask them "you mei you wen ti?", they will respond with "mei you wen ti." but you will see the same mistakes again here and there. So they didn't "get it."

If you ask functional questions: "ni shenme shihou qu to shu guan?", then you will find out if students can put the time in the right place in the sentences.

## 5. How to learn teaching techniques from classroom observation

Set a clear goal(s) is very important, you have to know your students well, so you can backward design your lesson plan.

How to achieve your goal(s)?

Task-based language teaching is the key, student-center is the key, time management is the key, using target language is the key...

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#4 Reflection

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June 23, 2011, Thursday

### Authentic Materials with Authentic Tasks

- we need more "real life" curriculum, e.g. Chinese calendar, air ticket, bus ticket, food package, online articles, newspaper, magazine, novel, Chinese Map, songs, movies, calligraphy, Chinese holidays, menu, poster, handwritten memo, post card, flight schedule, train schedule, commercial, mailed envelopes, yellow book, we can keep this going on and on...

Using authentic materials for Task-based instruction:

Commercial: short, effective, visual support, good for interpretive reading and listening, e.g.

"jiu shi she bu de"

1. students watch McDonald commercial;
2. students express what they see with sentences; e.g. wo ai ni, bu yao zou; wo e le; wo ai ni, wo ye ai mai dang lao"
3. group design skit with narration;

"ma ma de", "na na de" "hao xiang a"

Another McDonald commercial, students got to know "mum", "spicy" and "smell good".

Turning Exercises to Tasks

I like this part very much, this helped me out of box, it's very creative and challenge.

When design task, we also need to think about the quantity and quality for students practicing language.

The exciting part Task-Based Language Teaching TBLT is that students can find resources and involve in choose the theme of the unit. Students are high motivated. But, students won't get chance to repeat what they learn enough to remember.

Therefore, task-supported will be a very good starting point to start to try TBLT.

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#5 Reflection

Xiaoli Doty

June 24, 2011, Friday

Another fulfilled day!

Here's what I enjoy today.

Education Technology

We are now in the e-time, computer, cell phone, internet, mp3, ipod, ipad, iphone, itune... We, the language teachers are opened to more opportunities to use more technologies in our instructions.

The Chinese input system, vokie, and GoChinese, etc that Mr. Zeng introduced are really amazing. I can't wait to introduce them into my classroom and watch my students enjoy it. On top of that, we got chance to know a lot of free resources.

TPR - Total Physical Respond

I've always love to include TPR in my classroom, but my high school students mostly not really like it, it's challenge to think about when, what and how much to apply TPR in my classroom.

The very good time should be at the beginning of each unit, you can teach solid words, and following by mini-stories for confirmation check...

TPR follow session

I love this session a lot (another typical example of student-center classroom). I bet everyone enjoy as much I enjoyed. It's also an evidence of Dr. Tseng's statement "We have a very strong learning community here."

TPRS - Teach Proficiency Through Reading Stories

I was very confused when I first got to know TPR and TPRS two years ago from the StarTalk at the Minnesota. I feel great when I finally figure it out today.

Planning micro-teaching demo

I love this part too, and so as many other teachers. By reading the instruction, we were not quite sure what we suppose to do, while we are doing it and observe other teacher doing it, and also feedback we received, we are very clear now. It's a very good warm-up activities for the micro-teaching demo.

I feel very fortunate to be accepted by this program and looking forward to another great day.

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#6 Reflection

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June 29, 2011, Wednesday

I felt very excited today!

After we learned CURRICULUM AND LESSON DESIGN, INSTRUCTIONAL PLANNING AND STRATEGIES, SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION, TASK-BASED LANGUAGE TEACHING (TBLT) and many observations and practicum, we are puring hours in planning lessons. We all know that "10 minutes play on the stage supported by 100 minutes preparation", we've put way more than 100 minutes!

There are some many new ideas hanging in our minds when we work on lesson plans, we keep thinking about 5Cs, 3 mold, input, output, stay in target language, backward disign, authentic materials, authentic tasks, a lot good tips and teaching resources from many other teachers.

Today, we finally performed on the stage. It's a great experience!

I love the feeling of trying some we newly learned and see the light in our students eyes. I love most the profesional feedback we got from Shih and Dr. Tseng right after the class. This is the part I missed in my past 4 years of teaching experience. A lot thank to Shih laoshim Dr. Tseng and Miang laoshi. GREAT JOB!!!

There are many things I need to work on:

1. Control time: I spend too many time on the WARM UP activities, I was trying to establish connection with every single student, same as I did to my publish high school students. I was also thinking about using this activity to review everything students learned yesterday and the day before yesterday. I'll do a better job next time. e.g. I'll design 12 questions for students to answer, the questions will cover everything students learned in the past 5 days.
2. Lack of flexibilities. I felt that I'M NOT MYSELF in the class today when I aware that I was losing time control, my brain was controlled by the thought of WHAT AM I GOING TO DO TO MAKE IT UP... my class is like TIGER HEAD SNAKE TAIL - hu tou she wei :(
3. Not do well the t-s vs t-ss, which a very good way to correct students' pronunciation and sentence patterns.

I believe that I will do a better job next time.

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July 2, 2011, Saturday

I'm so happy that I improved this time. The following is the improvement I made with the help of Shih laosh, Ming Tsing laoshi, with the other teachers:

### **Students**

I know my student better now and feel more confident as a result. I take the time to talk with them and find common interests. The key is having fun with them (kick the shuttle rock, ask them about their food preferences, etc).

### **Time control**

Better time control this time, but can still improve

### **Goal**

I didn't focus on the goal for each single movie clip, e.g., when the movie is about "order drinks", the students activities should stay in "order drinks" only, not mix with order food, make sure everyone "gets it".

### **Solo & Choir**

I didn't do this part consistently.

**Solo:** I should ask a student to repeat after the teacher, then ask 2-3 students to repeat, then

**Choir,** ask the whole class to repeat. It's a very good way to correct pronunciation and sentence structures. E.g. Teacher asks the question, student answers. (今天几月几号?).

### **Student's individual needs**

I didn't pay attention to student's individual needs, when a few students give me the right answer, I move on right way and ignore the wrong answer, so, some students may walk out of classroom with questions not answered.

### **Immersion environment**

In order to provide an immersion environment, I project the instruction in English so students will understand what we are going to do next. Instead, I should project instruction in English and explain in Chinese for comprehensive input with body language, and modeling.

### **Content**

I feel overwhelmed when I found out that I forgot the camp song, I should work on it. I should also engage students to move with the song.

### **Great support**

I got a lot support from other teachers, I got pictures from Guo Lin, Zhong Yuqong; teaching tricks from Xiao Yonghong, guidance from Shih laosh with lesson plan, video taping, Ming laoshi,

A lot teachers jump in to help videos taping, set up screen and equipment, get classroom ready, and great feedback after the class, and many many more...

### **Work around the clock**

We worked very hard, back to room 1:30am.

### **2011 Virginia STARTALK Chinese Teacher Academy**

This is 5<sup>th</sup> time I attended the STARTALK program, I've learned a lot from each one of the program, I learned more from Virginia program.

The time frame and approach is really great!

We learned theory and best practice in the 1<sup>st</sup> week, then followed by practicum, which give us a great chance to try it out before we forget it and put great idea away due to busy schedule...

Feedback right after the class is a great help for my professional development, I learned more than what I learned in the past 5 years!!!

**Suggestion:**

1. field trip to Chinese restaurant – order food at the restaurant, talk with native speaker other than their Chinese teachers, or
  2. order food on the phone if transportation or safety is a issue
  3. field trip to Asia store – shopping, students will chance to try out their Chinese language skills, they may carry on their skills outside of the classroom setting.
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#8 Reflection

July 6, 2011, Wednesday

**Better time control**

Check time, check lesson plan and check if students can comprehend and finish part of the task.

**“Solo & Choir”**

I switch between “solo” and choir” when ever need.

**Feedback**

I provide immediate feedback whenever I found student’s wrong pronunciation before they carry on mistakes for too long.

**Immersion environment**

I stay in TL all the time if the classroom, I explain the instruction in Chinese and provide English on the screen, so students can get some TL input.

**More confident**

After the first and second try, I feel more confident using the Task-Based Language Teaching.

**Model**

I should model before each every activities.

**Meaningful exercise**

I should use meaningful exercise to replace mechanical repetition. E.g. when teach 飞机,

I should following the first couple repetition with asking students question “xxx, 你喜欢坐飞机吗? ” to repeat 飞机 many times.

**More Student-Center Activities: Fade out**

Instead of teacher always ask questions, I should let students ask questions whenever they able to do so (teacher fade out).

**Group activities**

I should arrange more time for group activities not to worry about “finish lesson plan”.

**Improve survey**

Before students start the survey, they should choose their transportation means, once they decided they shouldn't change so they collect “accountable” information (some students changed their answer...)

**Google map – sightseeing**

When teaching site, a good idea is to introduce the site by using google map.

**Connections**

When teaching locations, first start from students location, then extend to America, then to China.