

## **Selected Daily Reflections**

**6/22**

Compared with yesterday's lecture, today students were directed to participating group discussions. We spent the whole day to review and re-learn many theories and approaches in second language teaching. They are: Krashen's Monitor Model, communication approach including communication Language Teaching (CLT), The Natural Approach (NA), Cooperative Language Learning (CLL), and Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT). Through the classroom discussion, I learned three things about Tasked-based Language Teaching:

1. Students are encouraged to determine language resources
2. Teachers provide real-life experience/situations for students to practice
3. Teachers need to include clearly defined communicative outcomes.

In conclusion, the afternoon discussion provided me the opportunities to apply what I had learned in class to brainstorm different authentic and meaningful tasks for the students. The more the practice, the better I will be.

Response to the article named "How to learn Teaching Techniques from Classroom Observation"

The content of this article is very practical and especially useful for new teachers. If I can boil down the whole article and summarize them into a two-page checklist, it certainly is a useful tool when I do an observation. I concur with the author's suggestion that it is more effective to focus on one or two things to observe instead of aimlessly trying to catch every detail in a single setting. These are the areas I would like to concentrate on in next observation:

1. Is the classroom environment conducive to learning?
2. Is the teacher using the target language?

3. What kinds of activities are being used?
4. Are students engaged? Is it best to be described as student-centered class?
5. Is the teacher a good manager: classroom management in time and discipline
6. Is there any oral participation system in place?

**06/23**

Assignment #3: Due by 8:00am, Friday, June 24.

Ms. Pierce gave a presentation on authentic material this morning. During these three hours, my eyes were opened to see many interesting resources out there for Chinese teachers to choose and pick. She suggested a variety of approaches and examples how to convert an authentic material such as an advertisement, a song, or a poem into an interesting learning tool. In reflection, I should remind myself to be more creative and become less dependent on textbooks and ready-to-use teaching material. The challenge is not I don't have any authentic material. The challenge is whether I know how to choose an appropriate material and use it to create an engaging opportunity for my students to learn and use the Chinese language. Another wake-up call was when I watched how she used a modern version of “游子吟” by S. H. E., a Taiwan group and a song sung by an American singer, Abigail Washburn to expose her students to different genres of art forms. I told myself that I should have the same confidence and passion in my culture. In addition I should keep myself updated with the current development in Chinese modern arts. This is one of the best moments I felt so far in the program. 谢谢!

The main theme for the afternoon lecture consists of two areas: how to convert exercise to task and how to create a task-based lesson by following a sequence of tasks. I agree with task-based teaching on these three aspects: real-life experience, meaningfulness, and clearly defined communicative outcome. At the end of the lecture, we had a hot discussion about the difficulties we may face with when we adopt this approach. However, I feel a teacher should not be confined in

one approach. As an educator, we should allow ourselves to explore a variety of theories and practices. Based on our students' needs and our own personalities, then we select the best elements and incorporate them in our classroom instruction. In today's classroom practice, I was disappointed with my performance. However, I knew that I understood the concept. The thing I need to improve is to have a better planning and know how to execute the plan. I am thankful for the patience and support from my teachers and classmates.

**06/24**

Mr. Tseng's preparation for today's multimedia teaching session was extraordinary. He was very gracious to share his knowledge, experience, and his electronic devices such as palm phones. I heard about some of the devices he included in his presentation. However, I had no idea how to use it in the classroom teaching. I am sure my students will be very excited about using the “文林” & “ 南极星” to practice Chinese writing. After the “WOW” moment passed, I still don't know how to use these wonderful devices into my lesson. If I may have Mr. Tseng showing me how to use the device in character writing unit, I will be very satisfied. I am impressed with the “Go Chinese” educational software. This program provides different levels to meet students' needs. Even though I may like the product, I don't know if the county will purchase it due to the tight budget. I suggest the future program may allocate more time for the computer training.

TPR training is very interesting. I came across this terminology many times during my teacher training. However, this was the first time I had this hand on training. I find it is especially useful to teaching action verbs and nouns. Through this experience, I found this approach is quite effectively for the people who belong to kinetic learning style. I could not believe I am able to translate a German passage into English. TPR Storytelling is not easy to use but I would like to start using it for the students who are the first year in the program especially useful for teaching vocabulary.

**06/28**

This was the first day of my teaching practicum. Three trainees formed a group and each member gave a 50 minutes lesson. The objectives for this lesson were: 1. Students were able to count from one to ten; 2. Students were able to identify the kinship terms of their families; 3. Students were able to know when to use 有/没有, After completing today's 50 minutes teaching practicum, I found these are the areas I need to improve. I benefited a lot from the comments given by the peer teachers.

- Use English selectively. For example: giving instructions in English, and vocabulary definition.
- I found myself too dependent on PowerPoint. When I was teaching, I become less flexible and less creative. Use more real objects, pictures, gestures, and facial expression.
- I felt the flow of the lesson plan was kind of choppy. I need to work on how to connect the gap from one learning activity to the other.
- Group activity instructions need more clarity and organization.
- I asked three students to do hand signs while the rest of the class gave orders. My original intention is to ask students to call out numbers in order. However, some teachers got an impression that I asked students to call out numbers randomly. How can I avoid this mistake in the future?
- I also made a mistake asking students to write a kinship term before they learned.
- Implementation is a challenge for me.
- I need to find a better way to give comprehension check. It becomes more meaningful and natural.
- Teacher talks less; students talk more.

As I am preparing for the Thursday's lesson, I hope I am able to find ways to improve.

**06/30**

Second day of practicum

Day 4: Theme: hobbies

It was my second time doing the teaching practicum. I was very grateful for the teachers who volunteered to help me and shared with me their insight. You all are great teachers. I am deeply grateful for that.

Compared to the last class, I saw the difference. This time, I had very limited time to prepare the lesson plan and the teaching material. According to my last reflection, one of my goals was that I should become less dependent on PowerPoint. This time I did reach the goal. I used eight slides only. For this reason, it might help me more connected with the students. There are many areas I need to improve:

1. Execution: I planned four activities during the 40 minutes. Due to my nervousness, I mixed up the sequences. I ended up doing the 3<sup>rd</sup> activity first and then went back to the first and second activities. The first two activities aimed to help students to be familiar with sport names such as 籃球, 棒球, 橄欖球。。。 It hurt the flow of the lesson.
2. Teaching concept: The concept of 去 was taught quite clearly. However, I had not explained the concept of “打” very well. Students were confused. I need to work on how to present the material in a more orderly and meaningful order.
3. Pacing and Input: I need to give more teacher input: clear demonstration and repetition. How can I make the classroom atmosphere more dynamic and tight? The pacing was kind of slow.
4. Rethinking about the sequence of activities:
  - a. First & two activities: vocabulary
  - b. Third activity: more in depth activity such as making long and complicated sentences.
  - c. Fourth activity (last): more relax and fun activity

I should always ask myself this question when I design an activity for my students: what the purpose for this activity or task is. In order to maximize the student

output, the student-centered activity should be carefully planned.

**07/05**

One of the biggest problems of my performance today is the time management. I used too much time to review the material the students had learned in the first two hours such as clothing and colors. Actually, I should move on to the next topic of bargaining when I finished the comprehension check about money. I spent some precious minutes to review the things they had already mastered such as counting money. I should start the shopping part with \$300 earlier and then moved on to teach the phrases about bargaining. Then finish up with shopping spree task at the end.

I still need to improve how to give Chinese instruction about the task or activity in a more orderly and logically way so that the students are able to understand and follow the instructions. I can tell some students are quite confused and did not understand what they were supposed to do. A shopping activity is supposed to be fun. However, I forgot to give each group of three students ¥300. It created confusion: some students had money to buy while some did not. I should spent more time in planning the activity and make sure each step is clearly written.

**Reflect upon my teaching BEFORE and AFTER the practicum**

Before this teaching practicum, I read many theories about second language learning. This program differed from other programs in many facets. First, it was very intense and fast paced. Second, the three teaching demonstrations were placed almost back to back. It is very challenging. Third, this program provided numerous opportunities of classroom observation. I am currently teaching in Henrico County Public School. I did not have many opportunities to do observation in Chinese classes because we had only two Chinese teachers.

Before I came here, I have three goals: how to teach Chinese in the target language, classroom management, and assessment. Dr. Tseng's classes emphasized

on using Chinese to teach Chinese and recognized that students learned best through meaningful and communicative student-centered activities. After these three weeks training, the first goal has been achieved. Now, I have been equipped with the tools to improve the way I teach. I will implement what I heard and saw from here to my classroom practice. After attending this Startalk program, my goal is to improve my teaching skill focusing on creating a communicative, student-centered, and meaningful task. My plan is to rewrite my lesson plans. Second, I will work on how to use Chinese exclusively in the classroom. Third, collect more authentic materials that I may use in the future lessons. If I am able to accomplish one goal at a time, I will be happy because I am heading to a right direction. Teaching Chinese in Chinese is workable; however, it takes time to break the bad habit and develop a new one.