

Teaching philosophy

ChyiChuan Chi

❖ Speaking to students' Motivation: the Secret of Retention

It is impossible to teach students something they do not want to learn. Since many students take a foreign or second language simply to fulfill a requirement, extra effort must be made to gain and keep their interest. As a language teacher, I believe that I should pay attention to the critical element of motivation in foreign language learning to keep students with me. I motivate my students in two aspects: (1) as a knowledge deliverer, I have created a interactive, intrinsically motivated approach to teaching, (2) as a helper, I have paid just as much attention to enable my students with the ability to "receive" the language, and adopt the knowledge of how to learn. Some of the keys to this goal include the use of self-assessment surveys, activities that require the implementation of clarification questions and conversational repair strategies, multimedia lessons which encourage top down and bottom up language processing strategies to decipher meaning, and simulations that test all of the language skills in action. More recently, the creation of online material for autonomous learners will play a greater role in helping students practice Chinese beyond traditional learning borders. By doing so, students can learn to function outside of the classroom environment without the aid of the teacher, in the meanwhile, shift the burden of learning from the teacher to the student.

Teaching philosophy

❖ **Talking Up a Storm: Maximizing Speaking in the Classroom**

As a language teacher, I emphasize on the high-leverage, interactional classroom strategies and activities that will allow my students to continually expand their speaking ability. Activities focus on pair and small group work and will be anchored in the Intermediate range of proficiency with a glance toward what it takes to have students classified as advanced speakers.

❖ **Culture: I Mean Literally!**

The need for Americans to speak other languages and operate within other cultures will continue to grow from here on out. Language is uniquely human and being shaped and driven by culture. When teaching Chinese language, it is very important to create a virtual environment that will not only serve as learning tool to accompany thematic units, but will also show off student created projects and decorate the classroom simultaneously as a cultural learning. All of these ideas have a dual function in that they decorate the room and show of the students' creations as well as support the learning at hand.

❖ **Attitude: Example is better than precept!**

Like other practitioners in the field, my basic philosophy of language teaching/learning has evolved, and will continue to do so, over the years. The guiding principle in my teaching now encompasses the idea that teachers should

Teaching philosophy

seek to empower or capacitate students with the necessary skills to take control of their own learning and, at the same time, emulate the behaviors they expect their students to acquire.

❖ **Catch Up: For both teacher's and student's sake**

Traditionally, language instruction has focused on creating an interactive, intrinsically motivated approach to teaching, i.e., "delivery". But I feel we need to be paying just as much attention to empowering students with the ability to "receive" the language, I mean helping our students learn how to learn. Some of the keys to this recipe include the use of self-assessment surveys, activities that require the implementation of clarification questions and conversational repair strategies, multimedia lessons which encourage top-down/bottom up language processing strategies to decipher meaning, and simulations (classroom "virtual reality") that test all of the language skills in action. Thus, the end goal is that students can learn to function outside of the sheltered classroom environment without the aid of an external evaluator (the teacher), shifting the burden of learning from the teacher to the student.

At the same time, teachers should take charge of their own individual development as teachers, researchers, or administrators. The activities we are



Teaching philosophy

engaged in have a significant impact on our work. Rather than view the development of teaching as the mastery of prevailing principals and theories that have been laid down by others, individual teachers can devise their own workable teaching models based on experience as both a teacher and learner of languages. Rather than just keep abreast of changes, we can lead them and find our own "niche" in the field of education. I feel my continual involvement in learning, teaching, training, materials development, and committee work over the last several years demonstrates my attitudes towards our profession.