

Yuen Long Lutheran Secondary School

Name of Awarded Teacher : Lee Shui Ching, Kit

Reflective Teaching Practices of a Young Teacher

Introduction

My Reflective Teaching Practices

Viewing language as something central to human communication, I believe that the ultimate goal of language teachers is to improve the students' language use for communicative purposes. With language being such an essential and utterly useful tool in our everyday activities, I deem my career as an English language teacher in Hong Kong very important and conducive to my students' personal competence and long-term development. Commanding fluency and proficiency in English language can bring them scores of advantages in all aspects of their life.

In Hong Kong, as a result of inadequate exposure to the target language, students' English language knowledge has to overwhelmingly depend on their English language teachers. Many teachers are therefore induced to advocate a sole emphasis on grammatical structures and even promote rote memorization of prescriptive grammatical rules. Therefore, students may find the lessons monotonous and consequently, they may even lose interest in learning the language.

To counteract the "under-exposure" situation of my students, instead of giving explanations of grammatical rules and tedious grammar-translation exercises, I would engage students, especially my junior formers, in tasks involving meaningful interactions and provide them with more language exposure, focusing on language form as needed. It is hoped that my students will acquire the language through providing them with comprehensible input and making them use the language. I believe if students are exposed to the reality of language use, they can be more motivated by the sense of achievement and involvement they gain from using the language, especially for communicative purposes.

I deem the traditional "chalk and talk" English lessons, which are teacher-centered, somehow outdated because the kind of students nurtured with such an education method cannot meet the society's expectations nowadays. In order to foster students with creativity and spontaneity, two important elements for success, I opt to adopt a learner-centered approach in my teaching. By using such an approach, I hope to provide my students with more opportunities to use English for both written and verbal communication purposes, develop their critical thinking on social issues particularly, and promote values and attitudes that are conducive to independent learning. With a learner-centered approach, students' chance to use English is maximized. It helps build desirable language learning experiences for students.

"Hear and forget" is one of the many underlying beliefs I have in my teaching practices. If teachers just talk in the lessons without using any effective visual teaching materials, students will soon forget what they have learnt. Thus, I believe both audio and visual learning materials should be provided for students in lessons to facilitate their understanding and learning process and thus generate more positive learning impacts.

"See and remember" is another belief of mine as shown in my teaching. Therefore, I have my teaching handouts and materials tailored to the needs of my students in order to help them in their revision. Of course, these tailor-made handouts and materials not only act as reminders for students' revision, but also cater for the English learning needs of my students, targeting at their language weaknesses.

In order to produce effective handouts and learning materials for students, I need to evaluate students' learning progress and effectiveness constantly by giving them carefully-planned tasks, assignments and tests,



which also help consolidate what they have learnt in the lessons. I also keep modifying the teaching materials to cater for different learning capabilities of my students.

Anyone who teaches language should know that learning is a developmental process instead of short-term memories of knowledge for the learners. However, there is the very real possibility many English language teachers in Hong Kong simply may have overlooked the fact that knowledge about a language does not necessarily contribute to the ability to use the language.

In view of this fact, I always remember a simple learning principle "do and understand". By engaging students in purposeful tasks, I can make students learn and use English in authentic settings. I also believe rote learning will deprive students of their creativity and motivation to learn. Therefore I often engage students in some meaningful tasks with specific teaching objectives, which, as I believe, will help them understand better what they have learnt.

Having worked as a language teacher for five years, I have wended my way through classes, which included grammar translation, the audio-lingual method, and notional functional syllabi and the communicative approach, which has helped consolidate my belief in language learning and teaching. I am convinced that there are always alternative teaching methods at our disposal. Therefore, my language teaching belief and practice have been evolving rather dramatically. I expect that it will keep on changing based on my accumulated knowledge of language and teaching experience.

Striving towards being recognized as professionals, Hong Kong language teachers have to reflect on their daily teaching practices, keep on learning and equipping themselves with the latest knowledge on teaching in order to enhance their professional judgment in regard to the most effective teaching methods for learners with different needs and learning styles. Thus, a language teacher must be reflective and flexible to change his/her teaching methods to cater for different learning styles of students.

Teachers play a very important role in the betterment of students' prospect. As an educator, I will keep on learning new and effective teaching techniques to improve my teaching practices, elevating my level of teaching professionalism.

Way of Access to Further Information of the above Teaching Practice

Please contact Ms Lee Shui Ching, Kit for further information.

Preferred Way of dissemination / collaboration

Email, telephone, in-person

Contact

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Remarks of the Assessment Panel

There is no doubt that this young teacher demonstrates a number of excellent qualities as a language teacher, which include whole-hearted devotion to students' growth and well-being, professional competence and a commitment to elevating the quality of learning for her students.

Her professionalism is clearly reflected not only in her dedication to language teaching and learning but also in her "reflectiveness" as a teacher. She is constantly evaluating the effectiveness of her strategies and methods in enhancing students' learning. She is committed to learning new and effective teaching techniques to improve her teaching practices, elevating her level of teaching professionalism.

