Preparing Chinese Teacher to Teach Culture through Reflective Pedagogy

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Presentation Outline

• Program Introduction
• Reflection as Pedagogy
• Pedagogical Planning and Participants’ Reflections
• Visualization of Growth
• Questions and Discussion
Program Introduction

• **STARTALK Teaching and Assessing Chinese Culture and Language Authentically**

• Program Type: residential teacher program

• Program Goals: Culture as Core
  – Exploring theory and research about culture and culture learning
  – Examining curricular models for integrating language and culture
  – Investigating techniques and materials for teaching culture
  – Creating authentic teaching materials to achieve proficiency
  – Developing and applying criteria for evaluating cultural content of teaching materials
  – Exploring traditional and alternative methods for assessing language and culture learning
Participants Profile

- Language
- Geographic location
- Program type
- Experience
- Cultural background
## Curriculum Mapping

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TELL Domain</th>
<th>STELLA Module</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>E4 Culture-rich environment</td>
<td>I create a classroom environment that is culture rich and encourages uses of the target language</td>
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<tr>
<td>P6 Lesson Planning</td>
<td>I use the backward design process to plan lessons that lead students to meet the unit performance objectives</td>
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<tr>
<td>LE6 Cultural Observation and Analysis</td>
<td>I provide opportunities for students to engage in cultural observation and analysis</td>
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<tr>
<td>LT3 Cultural Perspectives</td>
<td>I use a variety of learning tools that facilitate the understanding of the perspectives behind cultural products and practices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PR3 Reflective Practitioner</td>
<td>I am a reflective practitioner</td>
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Reflection as Pedagogy

Reflective writing is the key concept in teacher education.
(Korthagen & Vasalos, 2005)
Definitions of Reflection

- **Rodgers, 2002**
  - Reflection involves **rigorous** thinking.
  - Reflection acquires **meaning** when expressed in a collaborative context.
  - Reflection values the affective aspect of personal and intellectual **growth** for **self** and others.

- **Sandars, 2009**
  Reflection is a metacognitive process… with the purpose of **developing** greater understanding of both the **self** and the situation to inform future experiences.

- **Nguyen, Fernandez, Karsenti & Charlin, 2014**
  as the process of **engaging the self** in attentive, **critical**, exploratory and iterative interactions with one’s thoughts and actions, and their underlying conceptual frame, with a view to **changing** them and a view on the change itself.

- **Rivera, 2016**
  Reflection is a process of **engaging one’s self** in metacognition and self-examination, wherein one is purposefully **exploring** his/her thoughts, feelings, actions, processes, experiences, and circumstances, as well as their **underlying rationale**.
In Teacher Education…

“a combination of alternative teaching/learning techniques presented in a way that creates cognitive dissonance for students, discussion, and critical reflection were effective in creating a learning environment in which perspectives were transformed”.
(Curran & Murray, 2008, p.116)
What pedagogies will maximize the opportunities of the STARTALK teacher participants’ reflection?
Pre-program Reflection

What is Culture?

How can we help K-12 learners understand different perspectives in world language classrooms?
What is Culture?

• Culture is about customs and traditions. It is about how we express ourselves and what we consider important. For example, the Chinese has the habit of being humble…

• Culture is in the eye of the beholder…Culture is comprised of many components…In order to provide a detailed depiction of certain culture, we must ask [certain] questions about a group of people…

• According to the Intercultural Studies Project of CARLA, culture is defined as “the shared patterns of behaviors and interactions, cognitive constructs, and affective understanding that are learned through a process of socialization”. These shared patterns identify the members of a culture group while also distinguishing those of another group.
How can we help K-12 learners understand different culture perspectives in world language classrooms?

Participant #1

• Being a Chinese teacher in a Chinese immersion school, I see Chinese culture is an inevitable part of my classroom… In my classroom, students learn Chinese culture sometimes implicitly, sometimes explicitly. I believe that what is more important than Chinese language and Chinese culture learning is that we as world language teachers have the mission to train students to be a global citizen who have the ability to understand and appreciate different language and different culture…
How can we help K-12 learners understand different culture perspectives in world language classrooms?

Participant #2

• The difference between different Nations, ethnic, culture and language bring a wealth of life resources to the world. Diversity of ethnic and cultural is a rich resource to support the development of pluralistic society… We need not only think about each student's cultural identity, but also provide a necessary cultural knowledge, attitudes and skills, help each student to achieve actively, participate in social life so that they can live in harmony with the different cultural groups.
How can we help K-12 learners understand different culture perspectives in world language classrooms?

Participant #3

- In foreign language classrooms, students could learn different culture perspectives in language learning itself. Taking Chinese as example, understanding the way some characters are made and the meanings of proverbs and idioms can help students gain insights of Chinese culture…卧虎藏龙（Crouching tiger and hidden dragon）means a place where talented people stay quietly. From this idiom, students could learn that in traditional Chinese culture, tiger and dragon represent power, strength and talents, and Chinese people tend to be humble. …In a word, culture appreciation could be embedded in the language acquisition in daily class…. Through comparing the similarities and differences between the culture associated with students’ native language and the culture with the target language could help students not only understand a new culture but also reflect and better understand their own culture.
Pedagogical Planning

- Environment
- Readiness
- Diversity
- Autonomy
- Dual identities
Pedagogical Planning

- Environment --- reflective community
- Readiness --- scaffolding
- Diversity --- various forms of reflection
- Autonomy --- self-evaluation
- Dual identities --- building connections between a learner and teacher identity
Pedagogical Planning

- Environment --- reflective community --- classroom policy & daily routines
- Readiness --- scaffolding --- examples, prompts, modeling
- Diversity --- various forms of reflection --- free writing in either English or Chinese, pair sharing first
- Autonomy --- self-regulation --- sharing explicitly the rationales and purposes of teaching, open discussion on the use of reflection
- Dual identities --- building connections between a learner and teacher identity --- learner and teacher role shift and transfer
Example: Daily Reflection

Instructions:
You will complete a one-page reflection paper daily about learning on that day, including the feelings, gains and challenges, and questions you have. This assignment may be written in Chinese and/or English.

The essay is due the next morning before class. Please email it to both instructors.

Here are a list of prompts that may help you reflect. You don’t have to answer each one of them.

1. How did you feel about today’s learning overall? Do you know why you felt the way you did? Was there any particular moments or events that caused the feeling(s)?

2. Think about what you have learned today. What is the most helpful learning moments? Please describe.

3. Has your understanding of culture changed (updated, reinforced or challenged) after today’s learning? What part of your understanding of culture has been updated, reinforced or challenged? What do you think has brought the change?

4. What has been the most challenging part of learning today? Please describe. And what would have been helpful to address your challenges?

5. What questions do you have about today’s learning?
Participant #1

Day 1
The reflection using the “I am…” graphic surprised me a little – There were so many aspects of myself that I felt were important to put down and they seemed disconnected, but when I had to choose 2, and then 1, that was most important, I identified a thread of nurturing/supporting in several of the circles.

Reflecting on myself as a cultural being, I feel overwhelmed at the thought of explaining a culture that is not my own to students. Although we are only at the starting point for bringing Chinese to our school, I feel inadequate to the task, for so many reasons, but mainly because I am not Chinese. I worry about focusing on cultural tourism, and hope I can find a middle way where I can incorporate modern Chinese daily life, similarities and differences from my culture. Throughout the day, I realized that cultures are very much viewed through our own lenses, and some teachers talked about using what they love as a vehicle to teach culture.
Day 10
To me, cultural education is about becoming an explorer with the students. We can use everyday items, or works of art/music, or events, or native speaker guests to help us explore life in other cultures and connect it to our own. My view of cultural education has changed in that I want to bring in this attitude of exploration to every unit of language education. Conversations can pull in cultural knowledge, we can use Skype, etc. to talk to other speakers, and we can observe/reflect/interpret/evaluate what we see or do. It’s going to be a terrific adventure, and I thank you both so much for giving me some tools to begin!
Participant #2

Day 1

One of the challenges that I faced today was free writing. The first two questions were pretty easy for me to write, since I have been a culture learner for a long time and I have had many related experiences. However, I had some hard time to answer the last two questions. After working as a language teacher for a year, I thought I had some experience to answer those questions. For some reason, I couldn’t relate my teaching experience very much to those questions. After I heard other teachers’ sharing, I think I need to be more reflective. Even though the free-writing activity has been a challenge to me, it still one of the best parts of my learning today.
Participant #2

Day 10
Before I attended this program, culture is a vague term to me. I knew I have been carrying it and displaying it to people around me every day, but I didn’t think of it in depth. While instructors led us to think and learn about culture and culture teaching, I have realized that culture consists of different aspects, which include Big C and Small C. Small C in a culture is like a door and we teachers are doorkeepers. What we do is to use Small C, cultural practices, to teach profound concepts of cultures, Big C. It’s just like we open a door called Small C to widen our students horizon to see a “huge house” -- Big C.

There is no an exact answer of what culture is and no a certain way to teach culture. Some researchers think culture learning and teaching is linear and some believe it’s circular. We have learned various theories of culture teaching and culture learning. No matter what kind of cultural learning and teaching theory that we use, the ultimate goal is to improve students’ intercultural communicative competence. As foreign language and culture learners, students are not staying in the level of talking in a foreign language and knowing basic cultural concepts only. Teachers need to lead them to become a foreign culture insider.
Example: Free Writing

Instructions:
1) Think about a positive experience of learning about culture (regional, national, etc.). What makes it a positive experience in learning? Write for 3 minutes in Chinese or English.
2) Think about a time when you struggled to learn about culture. What makes it a challenge to you? Write for 3 minutes in Chinese or English.
3) Think about a positive experience of teaching culture (regional, national, etc.). What makes it a positive experience in teaching? Write for 3 minutes in Chinese or English.
4) Think about a time when you struggled to teach culture. What makes it a challenge to you? Write for 3 minutes in Chinese or English.
Participants’ Voice on the Use of Reflection

Example #1
• Reasoning
• Recall
• Rethink
• Revise

Example #2
• Put the scattered dots together
• Dynamically connect past, present, and future
Instructors’ Reflection

Andie’s reflection:
• The dialogic nature of reflection
• Focused reflection vs. unfocused reflection
In teacher education…

“a combination of alternative teaching/learning techniques presented in a way that creates cognitive dissonance for students, discussion, and critical reflection were effective in creating a learning environment in which perspectives were transformed”.

(Curran & Murray, 2008, p.116)
Visualization of Growth
Visualization of Growth: Cultural Quilt (in previous years)

- To complicate understanding

- To express complex identities
Visualization of Growth: Reflective Growth Roadmap

• To document learning

• To visualize ideas and thinking

• To display development

• To connect theory and practice
Example: Annie’s Reflective Growth Roadmap

• What indicators of growth do you identify in her narration of the journey and the roadmap?
Example:
Annie’s Reflective Growth Roadmap

• “Looking into my own self”
• “What is my own culture?”
• “I was doubting myself.”
• “Who am I?”
• “Maybe I could bring it into my classroom. I always thought I knew the answer, but maybe I don’t. It is ok. I just need to bring that journey of looking at culture, looking at identity into my classroom.”
• “Many of my students are Asian Americans. They themselves will eventually or actually they are in that process of looking at that issue, so by bring that issue into the classroom, I feel that it will be helpful for my students, on top of telling them how to play yoyo and how to write calligraphy.”

• Confusion – clarification – self exploration – solution – the final picture “the teacher with the students thinking through the complexity and all these issues.
Reflective Growth Roadmap

• Reflecting on teaching practice
• Identify problems
• Exploring self
• Critical thinking
• Transformative thinking
• Complicate cultures
• Application in classroom
References


Now Let us Reflect! 吾日三省吾身

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