

许迎军 雒丽 著

外语课堂教学艺术

*On the Art of Foreign language
Classroom Instruction*



国防工业出版社
National Defense Industry Press

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· 北京 ·

图书在版编目(CIP)数据

外语课堂教学艺术/许迎军, 雒丽著. —北京: 国防工业出版社, 2011. 10

ISBN 978-7-118-07687-5

I. ①外... II. ①许... ②雒... III. ①外语教学: 课堂教学-教学研究 IV. ①H09

中国版本图书馆 CIP 数据核字(2011)第 206961 号

—*—

国防工业出版社 出版发行

(北京市海淀区紫竹院南路 23 号 邮政编码 100048)

国防工业出版社印刷厂印刷

新华书店经售

*

开本 880×1230 1/32 印张 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ 字数 220 千字

2011 年 10 月第 1 版第 1 次印刷 印数 1—3000 册 定价 38.00 元

(本书如有印装错误, 我社负责调换)

国防书店: (010)68428422

发行邮购: (010)68414474

发行传真: (010)68411535

发行业务: (010)68472764

Preface

In *On the Art of Foreign Language Classroom Instruction*, the author is transitioning the teaching and learning of a foreign language from that of a strictly modern viewpoint/era to that of an integration of modern and post-modern viewpoints/eras. Such a stance gives rise to paradoxes in the teaching/learning environment. General characteristics of the modern era are as follows:

- The human exists apart from the world and the universe as an on-looker. The human is more important than the rest of creation.

- Numbers, figures, symbols, rules and standards, position, and time, or that which can materially be proved, are of importance.

- Truth and meaning are sought on individualistic terms, yet with a need for belongingness and approval of the group.

- It is scientific in the typical sense where knowledge and control exist outside of self. It is mechanistic, deterministic, absolute, certain, materialistic, dualistic, formal operational, objective, authoritarian, sameness, and hypothetico-deductive/logical. Language is pre-determined.

- The earth can be manipulated for individual purposes.

- There is the sense of upward mobility toward the good life or achievement consciousness—striving for excellence and competing for power.

As society and culture evolved, the results of the changes were designated as the post-modern era. (The post-modern era may better be called a transitional or chaotic time between the modern and the

evolving integral era.) Characteristics of the post-modern time include:

- The human is a part of the world and universe. The self and the world exist in contexts and backgrounds that have a common history. All creation is important and ever evolving. The human is in the universe and the universe is in the human.

- Self inhabits a global perspective finding one's own authentic being in the world.

- Truth and meaning are sought in a pluralistic context through personal growth of the whole person, collaboration and community consciousness, reconciliation and consensus, relative value systems, seeking good of all humanity, and working for justice. Disparate points of view are used to get at the truth.

- In the typical sense, meaning making and responsibility occur from within self. They can be described as thought-filled, non-deterministic, uncertain, spiritual/energy-filled, non-dualistic, intuitive, subjective, and connected to all creation. Language is the language that arises within the individual.

- There is increased responsibility for the earth and all present therein. Creativity and initiative are honored.

- The human spirit is freed from greed, dogmas, and divisiveness bringing a critical distance from them. Human bonding with others and planet earth brings a new understanding of psychological space. Spirit /Energy is unfolding its own value and worth for those who have the courage to live in a world centric space.

The author defines art from the post-modern era that emphasizes the reality of internal relationships among teacher, students, and environments rather than the external, accidental and derived links that are inherent in the modern era. She describes foreign language teachers from the perspective of not only beings of society, but also creators and initiators within the society, who along with students and

their culture, create and give free response to the teaching and learning environment.

Throughout this book, the mechanics of teaching and learning of a foreign language (modern) and the personal meaning making (post-modern) that occurs are brought into a non-dualistic relationship. Mechanics of a language include, such things as the use of symbols, the rules of grammar, pronunciation/inflections, the patterns or structural forms, and functions, or what the author calls the "practicalities of language." Examples of the mechanics of teaching include the elements and types of planning/preparation, teaching/instructing, and evaluating various kinds of lessons. Emphasis is also placed on resources and sample/model lessons.

Moving beyond the mechanics of teaching and learning a foreign language, the author incorporates aspects of the post-modern. Implied in her description of "art" and its use in this book, truth is ever emerging from a complex process of mutual inquiry. The class is a community that is interdependent and resourceful. Although the author does not use of the phrase, "a set of paradoxical tensions" (non-dualisms), in describing teaching situations, such tensions are implied as an essential part of classroom settings she describes. These tensions are: (1) The classroom is open and bounded, as well as hospitable and challenging; (2) The classroom respects the voice of the individual and that of the group; (3) The big stories of the culture, its language, and traditions and the stories of the individual are honored.

Along with the tensions, or non-dualism in teaching, the author highlights other post modern aspects of art in sections of the book related to teaching/instruction, the participants in the classroom, and the community of truth. These may best be described in the form of questions. How are the integrity and identity of the teacher and students, over and above technique and activities, essential parts of

teaching? How are teachers, students, and foreign language joined in the life of the classroom? How does what is taught connect to the inner lives of teachers and students and bring them into connection with one another? How does truth arise from the teacher, students, and subject material? How is the community of truth portrayed as circular, interactive, and dynamic/ever-changing, rather than as linear, static and hierarchical?

On the Art of Foreign Language Classroom Instruction is a book that helps one begin to reflect on and provide ideas for changing her/his teaching in the light of the cultural evolution into the post-modern era or through the chaotic stage leading from the modern to the integral stage. It is a necessary stage to be lived in order for a teacher and students to be able to move into the fast approaching integral era. Enjoy and live the ideas presented herein.

Pat Obenauf^①

May 2011

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Part One Introduction to the Art of Foreign Language Classroom Instruction

Not only is there an art in knowing a thing, but also an art in teaching it.

Cicero

The art of foreign language classroom instruction is a relatively independent course as the branch in didactics. The theoretical study and exploration in a deepgoing way enrich and perfect the ideological system of teaching methodology; and the practical probe and pursuit in a diligent way render it possible for foreign language teachers to reveal their charm in teaching, master the teaching rules so as to raise the classroom teaching quality and efficiency. So to say, classrooms are the carrier and the field of activities for the art of foreign language instruction where teachers can throw off all restraints and display their abilities and charm as much as they like.

1.1 The study orientation of the art of foreign language instruction

The foreign language teaching is a process of collaborative activities between teachers and students and is not mechanical with one-way imparting knowledge, but complex interpersonal communication, which makes the teaching activities go beyond the category of “science” and turns into an art so that it can make sure that foreign language teachers really impart knowledge, introduce methods and

solve problems in the classroom instruction.

The intension and extension of the art of foreign language classroom instruction should be determined completely based on the concepts such as all-roundness, history, objectivity and development so as to enable the study of the art of foreign language classroom instruction to become a comprehensive and systematic project with theory and practice.

1. 1. 1 The intension of the art of foreign language classroom instruction

As far as the intension is concerned, the art of foreign language classroom instruction is the advanced stage or the ideal state of the development of foreign language teaching experiences, skills and accomplishments accumulated in the practice of classroom instruction by foreign language teachers for a long time, and has become a crystallization of the unique creativity and the aesthetic value. In this sense, the art of foreign language classroom instruction is the consummate technical abilities and skills in teaching by which foreign language teachers turn running strategies into classroom instructional design aiming at cultivating students' sublimating their reading, speaking, listening, writing and translating by imagination, aesthetic appreciation and creative activities.

So the art of foreign language classroom instruction registers a distinctive visual angle which is unique, acrobatic, and explicit to some extent, and which depends on foreign language teachers to convey messages by using a language that needs accuracy, criterion, and appeal.

1. 1. 2 The extension of the art of foreign language classroom instruction

As far as we know, art is creativity; art is novelty that is strong

stimulus caused by art not only in senses but also in emotions. This kind of stimulus in advanced form has rapid and high effect. And the art of foreign language classroom teaching is just based on such mechanism to achieve the effect. On the part of the extension, the art of foreign language classroom instruction is that foreign language teachers, on the basis of teaching objectives and law and in connection with students' psychology and the characteristics of textbooks, select appropriate teaching models, arrange delicate teaching process, and use advanced teaching means in the practice of classroom teaching in order to accommodate themselves to the foreign language classroom environment and bring the teaching plan into play consciously, dynamically, intelligently and creatively.

Thus the art of foreign language classroom instruction possesses special patterns of 'mastery' of teaching which are demonstrative, pertinent, and implicit, and which rely on foreign language teachers to control the class by flexible methods and techniques.

1.2 The duality of foreign language classroom instruction

It is generally accepted that classroom instruction in foreign languages is the science and the art as well. Both scientificity and artistry constitute the teaching duality. These two aspects epitomize the essential features of the foreign language classroom instruction.

1.2.1 Scientificity of foreign language classroom instruction.

The scientificity of foreign language classroom instruction refers to objective law of foreign language classroom instruction which requires presenting the teaching contents scientifically. And the foreign language teaching scientificity is based on didactics that provides with the general teaching law, defines the general principles of teaching