

Foreign Language Assessment, Dr. Plakans, March 6, 2009

Target Language: Chinese

Students: American Learners of Chinese

Level: Beginners

Content: Chinese character recognition; Classroom assessment for learning

Introduction: Beginner American learners of Chinese have great difficulty in recognizing Chinese characters when no *pinyin* (the Romanized phonetic system for Chinese) is given to these Characters when they appear in the exercises. Students also report that it's more difficult for them to recognize Chinese characters when the font is different from that of the textbook they are using. The following activity-set intends to use classroom assessment as a way to enhance learning or, to be more specific, to help students recognize Chinese characters.

Step 1 Brainstorming: ask students what characters in the exercises are difficult for them to recognize in the unit. They can point it out, read it out loud or copy it on a piece of paper and I will write all these in a list on the blackboard.

Step 2: I will create a Table as illustrated below for those characters that students have suggested in step 1 and ask the students to fill in the blank.

第八课 生词回顾 (Unit 8 New words Review)

| Chinese Characters | pinyin | meaning |
|--------------------|--------|---------|
| 宿舍 | | |
| 食堂 | | |
| 教室 | | |
| 上海 | | |
| 日本 | | |
| 吃饭 | | |
| 早饭 | | |
| 看电影 | | |
| 买东西 | | |

| | | |
|------|--|--|
| 听音乐 | | |
| 睡觉 | | |
| 打保龄球 | | |
| 买花 | | |
| 起床 | | |
| 长城 | | |
| 早上 | | |
| 时候 | | |
| 银行 | | |
| 工作 | | |
| 上课 | | |
| 星期六 | | |
| 高兴 | | |

Note: the Characters should be in big size because students are beginners.

Step 3 Peer feedback: ask the students to share their answers among themselves and discuss the right answers.

Step 4 Teacher feedback: I'll review the answers together with the students and give the ;authoritative; right answers.

Step 5 Since the above character recognition activity is very decontextualized. In this step, I plan to give them some context for these characters. I will create a story by using all these characters and ask them to read out loud the story. I'll also prepare some questions to ask them based on the story to make sure that they understand the story.

Extension Task:

Ask them to type all these characters in the computer and change the font for several kinds to have a feel of different Chinese fonts.

Reflection: After listening to Dr. Plakans' lecture, I understand that to decide which method is best for assessment, the teacher needs to know why (purpose), what, and how the results will be used. I now also know that assessment is not something that should be particularly done by the teacher; student involvement in assessment and self-assessment are also very valuable. So, in my design, I combine peer feedback and teacher feedback to make assessment part of learning.