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BYU CHINA TEACHERS TEACHING TIP

Qingdao University has instructed the Freshman teachers to teach from specific books and specific lessons. With this in mind, I have been limited on what extra activities could be done in class.

A few of things that I have done:

- Memorize all the students' names
- Have each student read aloud on the reading and writing lessons
- Quick write about a subject they have been reading about
- When the students do not understand what I am trying to say to them, I use Chinese

Memorizing the students' names has been very beneficial in breaking down barriers and having more meaningful one on one's with the students. They are impressed when I call on them by name to do something in class. Many of them have made comments that their past teachers and current teachers have not learned their names and they have felt left out.

Whether there are 35 or 70 students in the class, I have each of them stand and read aloud to the whole class during the reading and writing lessons. This has helped many of the students overcome some of their shyness and forced them to pronounce their words more clearly. If a student becomes stumped on a word or they say it incorrectly, I immediately correct them. This can be done without embarrassing the students as we started the year with the understanding that we are all in this together and we all say things incorrectly or come upon words with which we are not familiar.

Quick writes have become a good tool to help the students with their written English and to also help me better understand each student. The subjects chosen are related to the lessons. Some of the subjects they were asked to write about are:

- Talk about a time when you were brave.
- Talk about a time when you failed.
- What is some advice that a member of your family has given you and how has it helped you?
- Which food is better, Mom's home cooking or the cafeteria food?
- Write about your family and include a family tree, to at least your grandparents.

These subjects were about things to which the students can relate and write about in some length. They were given 20 minutes to write and needed to write at least 80 words. (They were to write at least 120 words on the final exam in 30 minutes. This helped them prepare for this test.)

Many teachers have told me that I should only speak English in class, but I have found there are times that I need to speak in Chinese so that students are clear about my instructions. These kids have never had a native speaker and do not understand many of the instructions given. I always give them in English; and then, if I determine that they are not understanding, I will tell them in Chinese. Many of the students have thanked me for this help. It has also helped the students to be more relaxed around me, as well as more careful about what they say in class.