

HOW TO TEACH IN CHINA

Class Agenda & Top 10 Lists

A. Class Agenda for an 80-minute class

Ten minutes before class – play a fun mindless video of Britain's/China's/America's Got Talent, a music video, or when I know them well enough – teach them to dance the YMCA, Cha-Cha Slide, or the Little Apple dance by the Chopsticks. Then play music until the class starts. Have the quote of the day up.

1. Read the quote of the day aloud; talk in partners about the quote; ask one to tell the meaning.
2. Welcome, business, quiz if needed.
3. A couple of 5-minute presentations:
 - a. My favorite – About me – my likes/dislikes, my family, what I value (5 min)
 - i. They can't plagiarize! We see them as children growing up.
 - ii. Students loved getting to know each other
 - b. 2nd fave – A life lesson I learned from a member of my family (5 min)
 - i. Include a story, pictures.
 - ii. They loved learning these stories from their relatives.
 - c. AVOID:
 - i. Teach the teacher – you see way too many of the same Ppts on Chinese tea production.
 - ii. Weather – boring.
 - iii. Things happening on campus – tried and didn't work; uninteresting.
 - iv. Things happening in China – OK, but unmemorable.
 - v. Things to see in Guangzhou – Interesting, but I eventually had to open it up to any city in China. Even then they plagiarized.
4. Concept
 - a. Pronunciation, grammar, complex sentence structure, etc.
 - i. Something I want them to be applying during the rest of the lesson
5. Lesson module
 - a. The *McGuffin – the thing that gets them talking/discussing/solving/acting
 - i. Speaking English is more important than the McGuffin! Always!
 - ii. They may use their phones to look up words or better yet, ask a friend or me about a word. Only then may they speak Chinese to each other.
 - iii. Competition and/or cooperation is a great motivator.
 - b. OR a day of 2-minute presentations such as:
 - i. Idioms – they teach and demonstrate their use; the class practices them in pairs. Call on someone to use the idiom in a sentence.
 - ii. Occupations. They choose and present on one the next week (2 min).
 - iii. Create and market a product. Present your ideas in 1 minute then show your 30-second commercial. (My business English final – great!)
 - iv. End of class 2-min. presentation – What I learned in class this semester. Wow!

B. Top 10 Teaching Tips

1. Seating chart/roster – list their names on a seating chart. Store their grades by their names. Include 16 spaces for 16 classes per name. Mark zero if they didn't get a grade that day.
2. Attendance – use the seating chart to figure out who's missing. Place an X in the space for that day. Instant attendance record!
3. Quizzes as needed
 - a. Give quick review quizzes and keep scores. No attendance=no score. They grade each other's quizzes.
 - i. Great way to review last week's lesson.
4. Homework
 - a. Don't do it. Presentation assignments and quizzes worked better for me.
5. Speaking only English in class – the focus of an oral English class.
 - a. SHOE – Speak Here Only English
 - i. In my presence, it is a point of good manners to speak only English, as it is our common language.
 - ii. Use the 20/80 rule – I speak 20% to give instructions, they speak the rest of the time in English. If a student can be speaking English instead of me, let him.
 - iii. Reward them for casual English conversation. Pat on the back, an American penny, a BYU sticker, etc.
6. Timing presentations
 - a. Green paper held up by student in front row when 1 min. left; red paper at end of time.
 - b. When the red paper goes up, class applauds and student is done (hard to do make them stop otherwise).
7. Grading
 - a. Oral presentations:
 - i. Use a printed rubric. Put their name on the paper, and circle what they get. Write the score under their name. Fold paper up with name showing.
 - ii. On the back of the paper, write "+" and "-". List their strengths and weaknesses.
 - b. Immediately write grades on class seating roster.
 - c. Give back presentation grades the same day. They love it, and you're done.
8. Peer review
 - a. Use it for large writing classes where you'd spend the rest of your life reading papers.
9. Cheating
 - a. Ridiculously rampant. I had them bring cell phones and papers to the front of the class during finals.
 - b. I made 3 versions of the test and didn't tell them. Worked out well.
10. Relax!
 - a. Everything doesn't depend on you and your classes.
 - b. Things have a way of working out.
 - c. Keep it simple as possible.
 - d. Have an emergency lesson up your sleeve. Conversation cards were always a ready back-up for me.

1. *In fiction, a McGuffin is a plot device in the form of some goal, desired object, or other motivator that the protagonist pursues, often with little or no narrative explanation. The specific nature of a MacGuffin is typically unimportant to the overall plot. --Wikipedia

C. Top 10 Lesson Modules

1. Introduction day – Teacher 1st; then students stand & say name, country they would like to visit, and favorite food. Or something else.
2. Lost Wallet – In 4 groups, they find a wallet with 6K RMB and do 1 of 4 things with it. They must verbally defend their actions.
3. Mary's Choice – Mary can stay in China with her poor ageing parents and boyfriend and attend the best local university on full scholarship or go to Harvard and pay an additional \$10K.
4. One-minute talks – Students choose a topic from a list and talk for a minute.
5. Role plays – Students act out scenarios they're given.
6. Who Gets the Heart? – Students are doctors deciding who gets the transplant.
7. Debate opinions – First person presents a statement of opinion. The other 3 must add on according to the prompts – "I disagree," "In addition," "As I see it..."
8. Pepsi Dilemma – Decide which coworker gets the prize money for opening the Pepsi with the \$1M prize cap – the purchaser or the one who found the Pepsi in the fridge.
9. IELTS Questions – Pairs ask each other a question and listen to the answer for 2 min.
10. Dubbing – Have them record a 2-3 minute part of a movie and voice over the actors.

D. Top 10 Games

1. Runner Game – Teams send runners to the teacher to read the topic. The team who writes the answers and stands up 1st wins. (8 things to see in the US, 5 farm animals).
2. Hot to Cold Comparisons – They each write a word for cold on the board with no repeats. Then they physically line themselves up on a wall from hot to cold according to their word. Good vocabulary builder.
3. 20 Questions – A student answers yes/no questions about a picture only he sees until the class guesses the picture. Guesser is the next one up.
4. Idiom Bluff – Give small groups an idiom, its meaning, and it used in a sentence. They must make up 2 more definitions and sentences for that idiom. The class guesses which is the real meaning. Keep score!
5. Conversation cards – Give out cards with topics to discuss. Have the whole class up and talking in pairs. They trade cards when done and move on.
6. Do You Love Your Neighbor? – Students sit in a circle of chairs. The student standing in the center asks a seated student DYLYN? If the student answers yes, those on either side of him trade chairs while the one in the center tries to steal a chair. If he answers no, he declares who he does love: "No, I only love people wearing glasses," or "...who have been to Beijing," or "...who like squid." Everyone who fits the description changes chairs. The one left standing is it.

7. Concentration – Two teams. Ask a question. If they answer right, they uncover a square over a picture on a Ppt. and get to guess who's in the picture. Great for review.
8. Mocktail party – Assign each student an occupation. Then tell them to go network with the group and introduce themselves to each other. Later ask who met whom. You can get the entire room to talk about each other afterwards while asking them questions. "You met the pilot? Where did he fly you? Pilot, how did you know to go there? Oh, from the travel guide! Travel guide, who did you meet?..."
9. CONSTANTINOPLE – Write this vertically on the board 3 times. Teams compete to make words starting with each letter. 2 points for 1 team done; 1 point each for great words.
10. Noun game – Each student has 30 seconds to describe the noun on the slip of paper. His team gets a point for each noun guessed during his time. (Boat, sheep, movie, soda...I used 100 nouns.) Alternate teams.

E. Other Good Stuff

11. Tutor a local young student and get to know his family.
12. See your city every Saturday.
 1. Wander the markets.
 2. See what Trip Advisor says are the top 30 things to see. See them.
13. Socialize with the other local teachers weekly (FHE, date night...). Happy times.
14. Take your home teaching/visiting teaching seriously. It may be the first time the branch members have seen it done right.
15. Know that you can request a more convenient schedule from the university. I taught MWF the first semester while my husband taught TWTh. Tough. Next semester we were both done teaching by Wednesday. Just ask. They can say no or surprise you with a yes.
16. Exercise in the mornings/evenings with the locals. I joined the dancing women. They were thrilled to have me; I was thrilled to learn and integrate. I made friends.
17. Invite a class over to make cookies. Attend the Dragon Boat Festival together. Do something with your class outside of class.
18. Get out of the apartment! Celebrate all the local festival days – National Day, Lantern Festival, New Year, etc. Travel. A lot.
19. Make Chinese friends. Do things with them. Go out together. Visit their hometowns.
20. Pamper yourself. Find whatever it is you miss the most from home. I found fresh milk and Cadbury chocolate powder. Hot cocoa is my comfort food. (Now my cholesterol is high.)