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I fundamentally believe that education is the only viable way to redress some of the blatant inequalities that exist in our world today. Each student is unique, consequently there is no single teaching paradigm that will work everywhere. My task as a teacher educator is to be a visionary, an innovator and to create a learning experience that is relevant, meaningful and inspiring for our student-teachers. I also believe that all students are capable of learning if their teacher can motivate them and treat them as individuals.

My learning from the research that I have done in addressing inequalities in education has helped me to critically reflect on practice and, more importantly, enabled me to help student-teachers understand how they can make a difference by giving each learner the best possible chance to overcome the disadvantages and inequalities that they face. Improving lives through education is what teaching should be all about.



STUDENTS' WORDS OF APPRECIATION

Dr Cheri Chan was very supportive throughout my two-year PGDE programme at the University of Hong Kong. She is positive, patient and approachable. She always provided us constructive feedback (two stars and a wish) and her lessons were always inspiring. I never felt bored in the class, as her lessons were very interactive and hands-on. She encouraged all of us to ask questions and present our ideas to class. She used jigsaw grouping lots and it has given us chance to work with everyone in class which was fun and interesting. She was a role model for us because she demonstrated what an engaging, well-planned and motivating lesson would feel like. She has definitely achieved 'practise what you preach' in this course.

SYPEL LEE Yee Wan*PGDE 2014*

For me, one of the reasons that Dr Chan's teaching style stood out amongst all the other teachers I've ever known, is that she managed to lead by example. Many people would not believe this is possible when one is teaching experienced adult teachers how to teach Primary English. A good example is the very first lesson when Dr Chan asked everyone to write their name on a piece of card. A simple enough task. However, for our class, that was the beginning of individual attention. From that moment she tried her hardest to understand the needs and learning styles of each of her students. Dr Chan knew that Andrew would always try and do something zany, Dave would always want to revert back to his experiences in Japan or Shaun would just love to draw something. When marking our assignments or commenting on our class work, she took time to give us individual feedback using praise intertwined with recommendations, often using examples from her own teaching experience. The way she gave feedback, by not criticising but praising sincerely, meant that students were more comfortable making mistakes in an attempt to do something special. When it came to thinking about our Action Research projects in the second half of the course, being inspired by her example, I chose to research the individual needs and learning styles of my students. I could not help but notice how many of my classmates were also thinking the same way and wanted to gain a better understanding of their students' needs and learning styles.

Phil STRIDE*PGDE 2014*

OUTSTANDING TEACHING AWARD

Indeed, the persistence with which activities and discussions were referred back to the scientific principles of education is what distinguished Dr Chan's classes from others I have attended. We were constantly encouraged to experiment, to be creative and explore diverse ways of considering issues – but always grounded in sound academic theory. If I had to describe Dr Chan's classes in one sentence, it would be 'The perfect blend of science and humanity'.

Although Dr Chan was patient and understanding with the struggling trainee teachers – while still challenging those more comfortable in an academic environment – she was still demanding, always inspiring us to try harder and do better. Irrespective of how much time I spent on my lesson preparation or how good I thought my classes were, Dr Chan always found ways to improve my teaching, which I have been able to implement for the benefit of my students.

Kevin WORTHINGTON

PGDE 2014

All the tasks required us to either work or think about the theory behind. It is never the traditional way (Dr Chan talking while us taking notes). Finally, I think most of the things that I learned from the lectures are practical because I can use most of them in my own lesson. For example, the way Dr Chan carry out some of the discussions (getting everyone involved by grouping them randomly and assigning them different roles). How she lead us to come up with ideas instead of giving them to us directly. In the end, I enjoyed every lesson and I think the students who are taking her lesson will feel the same as well.

John YU

PGDE 2014

Throughout the entire two-year course, Cheri demonstrated an extremely high level of both professionalism and humanism for a professor. From a professional point of view, she was very well prepared, more so than any other university professor that we encountered throughout our time at university as both undergraduate and postgraduate students and made classes easy to follow and accessible to all through the use of a large range of excellent PowerPoints, engaging activities and collaborative tasks. Cheri created a fantastic learning environment from which all the participants on the course could benefit. Instead of simply preaching good methods as so many professors often do, Cheri incorporated those methods into her own course to clearly model and highlight aspects of good teaching practice. In particular, she clearly modelled the need for teachers to set clear goals and targets for their students and the importance of collaborative input. Thanks to modelling such practices in our HKU classes, we were able to clearly see how useful such practices were and as a result are now experiencing a greater degree of success in our current teaching positions after implementing them too. Furthermore, we have been able to pass on the knowledge and skills we acquired to our colleagues and this has had a very beneficial effect on the planning and implementation of the English language programme at our school. It is paramount that teacher trainers practise what they preach and mirror good teaching practice in their own teaching, a skill at which Cheri excels.

Dave COOPER and Rachel SYKES

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