

Running head: Russell Fung Method

Week 8 Assignment – Russell Fung Method

Russell Fung

University: TESOL Methods: Reading, Writing, Listening and Speaking

March 14, 2021

The Russell Fung teaching method incorporates anecdotal experience from working in the film and television industry. There is an emphasis on dialogue training, integration with one's environment, and real world application. My teaching method combines several elements found in the book, *Techniques & Principles in Language Teaching* by Diane Larsen-Freeman and Marti Anderson. It also agrees with Stephen Krashen's theories of language acquisition.

First, a personal anecdote on language acquisition: I do not believe that sitting in a classroom to learn sentences written on a board is helpful for retaining the target language. English is my native language, and I've been fluent because my mother is an English speaker. I also grew up in a household with a father who spoke Cantonese to me. I learned both languages, but couldn't retain Cantonese because I was unmotivated to learn. I wanted to assimilate and emphasize English as my strong primary language. Years later, when I became an adult, I decided to take Mandarin classes. I've attempted Mandarin three times, and I still do not retain the language because I don't use it. Yet, I can speak Cantonese without straining too hard to remember. I chalk it up to being fortunate to have exposure as a baby. So therefore, with my teaching method, I believe that learning and retaining a language requires motivation, environmental exposure, and practical application.

Dialogue training is best-performed using elements of the direct method and audio-lingual method. Use the target language only, and also "students need to overlearn the target language, to learn to use it automatically without thinking" (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson). The use of the students' native language will get in the way of learning the target language. Another thing that gets in the way is their affective filter. Much like professional actors in a drama, the students must be relaxed in order to access the part of the brain that recalls memorized phrases. Once the affective filter is lowered, then comes another major component to dialogue training:

motivation. Motivation in the acting world of theater, film, and television is key to making scenes come alive. Without motivation, an actor cannot make the scenes believable and real. Therefore communication with the audience is lost. Once I set up students with relaxation and motivation, the real work of dialogue training can begin.

The environment for learning a new language must be immersive and communal. Therefore, I would set up the classroom like a stage and foster a rehearsal type of energy. We're all going to memorize scripts and act out scenes in various practical scenarios. For example, if I were to do an airport setting, and we learn basic dialogue that incorporates a travel scenario, the students would have new vocabulary and phrases imprinted into their experience. The idea would be that if they were to enter an airport in the future, the environment would trigger the part of the brain that imprinted memories of the class exercise.

Finally, the real world application happens when a student can interact in real time with other people. The lessons that I teach are scenario-based, and therefore will always be useful in the context of my students' lives. The best way to retain vocabulary and phrases is to use them frequently in an immersive experience with fellow human beings. What better way than acting out scenes with props (realia) and a goal? The use of repetition applies to the dialogue training. Writing down words and phrases at the end of the rehearsal would be the way to refer back for more practice outside the classroom. Physical movement throughout the stage environment, along with music and visual aids, would ensure a fun atmosphere.

In conclusion, my experience working in television and film has brought me to the approach in teaching that I tentatively call the Russell Fung method. Is it unique? I cannot say for sure. But I would like to test this out in the future. My hope is that my future students would be able to accomplish their goals and learn to express themselves creatively.

## 15 Ideas

1. Reduce the affective filter first. We do this by checking in with the students' mental and emotional well-being.
2. Motivate students with a prompt and a reason to learn. Emphasize how the lesson will relate to a student's way of life.
3. Enact a goal for students to reach by the end of the lesson.
4. Avoid use of native language, and emphasize target language. Minimize use of any translation methods.
5. Warm-up exercises. Write vocabulary words on the board and have students write them down on notebooks. No typing. Write by hand with pen and paper.
6. Classroom seating arrangement matters.
7. Social activities after initial lesson are a must.
8. Use visual aids along with vocabulary. This uses the spatial learning intelligence.
9. Play a clip from a video or audio file to give context and exposure.
10. Repetition and practice is required.
11. Problem-solving activity: utilizes logical-mathematic intelligence
12. Physical movement, along with audio is my way of retaining knowledge
13. Realia, and interacting with physical objects works so well.
14. Experiences are another way to retain knowledge. I would like to someday take students on a field trip to learn about natural things: zoo, park, train station, airport.

15. Scene reinactments. Taking students to a physical location like an airport would be an ambitious activity, but would make an awesome place to practice dialogue.

#### References

Larsen-Freeman, D., & Anderson, M. (2011). *Techniques and Principles in Language Teaching (Teaching Techniques in English as a Second Language)* (3rd ed.). Oxford University Press.