

New Horizons Project (FLAP Grant): Results from 2007-2008 Observations

In 2007-2008, there were 8 teachers in Jefferson County Public schools teaching Chinese language. These teachers represented 8 schools (7 elementary schools, 1 high school) consisting of:

Elementary: Bloom, Brandeis, Field, Stopher, Wheatley, Wheeler, and Wilder
High: Atherton

All teachers (100%) were observed by the project evaluator in the Spring of 2008. The following report shows the results from the observations.

Methodology

Observations were collected from 2007-2008 teachers of Chinese language in March 2008. Observations were collected using the New Horizons Observation Measure (2007) by the project evaluator from the Dept. of Accountability, Research, and Planning in JCPS.

Results

Length of Observations: Each observation was approximately the length of one school period. The average length of an observation was 36 minutes with a range of 20 minutes to 50 minutes.

Number of Students: The average number of students in a classroom was 20 with a range of 7 students to 26 students.

Topic of Lessons Observed: The lessons observed ranged in topics from basic introduction vocabulary (name, age) to more in-depth conversations about family, food/drink, and clothes. Three teachers reviewed vocabulary related to age (37.5%) two reviewed vocabulary related to name (25%) and two reviewed vocabulary related to food and drink (25%).

Instructional Orientation: During the observation period, the most frequent instructional orientation was direct instruction (whole class lecture). All classes had direct instruction for more than half the period observed, and 5 classes (62.5%) had direct instruction as the sole instructional orientation. Three teachers had some independent/individual work (37.5%) and two teachers utilized small group instruction (25%).

Language Orientation: All teachers spoke Chinese and English during the observation period. Overall, teachers spoke Chinese about 59% of the time and English about 41% of

the time. Three of the 8 teachers (37.5%) spoke more English than Chinese. Only 1 teacher (12.5) spoke almost exclusively Chinese.

Instructional Components: Teachers were observed for instructional components related to language instruction. The chart below depicts the percentage of teachers who were rated on each of the instructional components. Most teachers introduced new vocabulary by building upon previously acquired language. There was a wide variation in the extent to which vocabulary development was in the context of conversational activities (as opposed to rote/recitation). While most teachers used total physical response as a strategy, they did not use it extensively and typically, only used it during the greeting period.

Instructional Components	No	Somewhat Low	Somewhat	Somewhat High	Yes
Student's language acquisition is facilitated through the teacher's use of TPR.	37.5%	50.0%	12.5%	0%	0%
New language activities are built upon previously acquired language.	12.5%	12.5%	37.5%	25.0%	12.5%
Vocabulary development is in the context of conversational activities.	12.5%	25.0%	37.5%	12.5%	12.5%

Context of Teaching and Learning: Teachers were observed for general instructional components. The chart below depicts the percentage of teachers who were rated on each of the general instructional components. Overall, classrooms had a positive climate, with respectful interactions among students and between teachers and students. Teachers were not as high on communicating the goals of the lessons or in providing opportunities for student/student dialogue.

Instructional Components	Low	Somewhat Low	Moderate	Somewhat High	High
Opportunities for student assessment/checks for understanding	12.5%	12.5%	50.0%	0%	25.0%
Opportunities for interactive instructor/student dialogue	25.0%	12.5%	37.5%	25.0%	0%
Opportunities for interactive student/student dialogue.	25.0%	25.0%	12.5%	37.5%	0%
Makes the lesson relevant to students (explains the why or purpose)	25.0%	37.5%	12.5%	25.0%	0%

Activities are developmentally appropriate	12.5%	25.0%	12.5%	37.5%	12.5%
Effective classroom management	0%	12.5%	37.5%	37.5%	12.5%
Effective use of resources (texts, computers, etc.) →If no resources used, check NA___	12.5%	12.5%	50.0%	12.5%	12.5%
Positive atmosphere among students	0%	0%	0%	37.5%	62.5%
Respectful interactions between instructor and students	0%	0%	0%	37.5%	62.5%
Overall instructional quality	12.5%	25.0%	37.5%	12.5%	12.5%

Student engagement: Generally, there was a high level of student engagement with 87.5% of classrooms showing very high levels of attentiveness to the teacher and engagement with activities. Students were more likely to answer questions than ask questions as indicated by the finding that 62.5% of classes had the majority of students answering at least one teacher-directed question while 12.5% of classes had the majority of students asking at least one question.

Primary classroom teacher: In 5 of the 7 elementary school classrooms (71%), the students' primary classroom teacher was present in the classroom during Chinese language instruction. Two of the 7 (29%) were not present. Of those that were present, two primary classroom teachers did not interact with the class, while 3 of the 7 (43%) circulated (at least part of the time) in the class.