



TEACHING TECHNIQUES

BY ZHU WANLI

Everything here in Boston is great! I have been trying out a lot of new ideas in the classroom. Take a look!

- First I make audio recordings of the Chinese text we are using in class. I then email these recordings to the students. They can listen to the text as they read it. I think it is working very well. I have also started to convert the audio files into MP3 files. Using this approach, students can download them onto their iPods and take the files with them. Unfortunately, converting the audio from a WAV file to an MP3 file has lowered the quality of voice.
- I also ask students to work in the computer lab. Here, they listen to a Chinese language audio recording and type the words they hear. When they are finished, they email their work to me. Even though it's not perfect, the students like it, and I think it can be improved. I like it because they can practice listening and recognizing Chinese characters at the same time.

Recently, my school, Brookline High School (MA), offered to let me observe two clinics for English teachers. Because I'm an English teacher in China, these were very helpful. I think that after I go back to China, I will ask my students to talk with American students using an MSN video call. This way, my American students can improve their Chinese, and my Chinese students can improve their English.

Cao Fengqin (Boston 2007-08), Yang Ruiyu (Boston 2007-08), and I are currently attending a teacher training workshop offered by Snowden International School. The class is held in a church near Copley Square. One idea that I feel very strongly about is that teachers should respect all students, particularly special students. One measure cannot suit all people. Even in big classes, students are individuals and have different strengths and weaknesses. Teachers must recognize this. During the workshop we were asked to reflect on our teaching by writing a poem. Here is what I wrote:

Reflection on Teaching

My work as a teacher,
Fifteen years stays with me.
Happiness and torture,
little drops in the sea.

The most impressive thing,
Calls from the depth of heart.
Often I'm reflecting,
To make myself be smart.

One boy learning slowly,
In my class took a nap.
I scolded angrily,
And followed with a slap. (This is not true for me, but I have seen it happen before.)

Long time so regretful,
Each should be respectful.



I am also teaching Linda's (Linda Mast, my hostess) sons some Chinese by writing some simple sentences:

Come have a look 你来看

I have a book 我有书

It is Chinese 中文的

You read it please 请你读

One big yellow dog 一条大黄狗

walking in the fog 正在雾里走

meets a little frog 遇见小青蛙

playing with a log 它在玩木头