Community Language Learning (Ch7)

Introduction

In this lesson, students will learn about Community Language Learning. Community Language Learning was developed by Charles Curran, a professor of psychology at Loyola University in Chicago. It emphasizes topics that the learners want to learn about, just as a patient would talk about what they wanted to talk about with a counsellor during a counselling session. Key features of this method are translation from L1 to L2 and recording learners' speech.

Learning Objectives

- Students will learn about Community Language Learning and its techniques and principles.

Learning Outcomes

- **Principles**: Students will be able to describe key principles of Community Language Learning such as its goal, whole-person learning, and building relationships and a sense of community.
- **Techniques:** Students will be able to describe and express their thoughts about the predominant techniques and resources used in a Community Language Learning lesson.
- **Application**: Students will be able to create and conduct a "Recording Student Conversation" activity for a given topic (i.e., *"Spring has arrived. What are you going to do now that the weather is nice?"*) that follows the principles and techniques of Community Language Learning.

Key Vocabulary

- Whole-person learning (p. 85)
- Students' intellect and feelings (p. 85)
- Counselling-learning approach (p. 85)
- Charles A. Curran (p. 85)
- Counsellor (p. 85)
- Record and transcribe (p. 86)
- Translation (p. 86)
- Human Computer^{TM} (p. 89)
- Building relationships (p. 91)
- Sense of community (p. 93)
- Movement from dependency to interdependency (p. 94)
- Six elements of nondefensive learning: security, aggression, attention, reflection, retention, and discrimination (SAARRD) (p. 95)
- Recording student conversation, transcription, reflective listening (pp. 98-99)

Video (watch before class)

- https://youtu.be/tx_we_P3Pic

Understanding Community Language Learning

1. What is the goal of community language learning?

2. Psychologists are generally interested in studying, understanding, and helping with thoughts, emotions, and behaviours. They create theories and treatments, and work to help effect change in individuals. That is, psychologists are interested in exploring **human potential**. While the focus of **human potential** at first was medical – to "cure" or "heal" a person through counseling – the scope has widened to include any normal **growth process**, and thus the process of education.

    The study of **human potential** attempts to reconstruct an educational system that has placed too much emphasis on "cognition" and not enough emphasis on "feeling". Students are thirsty for richer affective contacts with one another and with the world. Indeed, emotional education has a developmental priority that formal educational systems have overlooked. From this, we may conclude that a major goal of the **human potential** movement is the integration of affect, cognition, and action.

    What are your thoughts about applying the study of **human potential** to language learning?

Experience

3. Consider the Community Language Learning video, the sample lesson in the textbook (pp. 86-90), and the observations and principles of Community Language Learning (pp. 91-97).

    a) What did the teacher do to put into practice each of the four basic learning assumptions of CLL?

        • Students are whole persons.

        • People learn best when they feel secure.

        • Students should have the opportunity to generate the language they wish to learn.

        • The teacher should "understand" what the students are feeling.

b) What language is used the most during class?   L1   L2
   ➢ *As a teacher, how do you feel about this?*

c) Is translation permitted?   yes   no
   ➢ *As a teacher, how do you feel about this?*

d) Does the teacher need to be bilingual to teach the class?   yes   no
   ➢ *As a teacher, how do you feel about this?*

e) How and when did the teacher correct the students? Do you feel students can learn from this type of correction? Why? Why not? How do you correct students in your classroom?

f) The teacher did not call on students. Students were free to volunteer. Why do you think that this was done? What do you do in your classroom? Why?

g) The students generated the material (vocabulary) to be worked on in this lesson. How have you worked with student-generated material in your classroom? Brainstorm ways in which you can work with your textbooks that allow students to generate/select the material you need to cover.

h) Curran, the creator of Community Language Learning, says that there are six elements of nondefensive learning: security, aggression, attention, reflection, retention, and discrimination (SAARRD). Can you find examples of these elements in the lesson in the textbook and in the video on the course website?

4. Look at the list of techniques on textbook pages 98-99. Explain how they might be useful (or not).

    Recording Student Conversation

    Transcription

What do you think?

5. The textbook points out that,

    > The two most basic principles which underlie the kind of learning that can take place in CLL are summed up in the following phrases:
    >
    > 1. "Learning is persons", which means that whole-person learning of another language takes place best in a relationship of trust, support, and cooperation between teacher and students and among students.
    > 2. "Learning is dynamic and creative", which means that learning in an ongoing developmental process. (p. 100)

    With these ideas in mind, let's find out what everyone thinks about Community Language Learning. The textbook on page 100 asks several questions for reflection. First, **choose one question** that you want to discuss with your classmates. Second, **prepare a sample answer** to share with the class.

    a) Do you agree with these two basic principles?
    b) Do you believe that the teacher should adopt the role of a counselor, as Curran uses the term?
    c) Should the development of a community be encouraged?
    d) Do you think that students should be given the opportunity for, in effect, creating part of their own syllabus?
    e) Which of these or any other principles is compatible with your personal approach to teaching?
    f) Do you think you could use the technique of recording your students' conversation?
    g) Should you give your students an opportunity to reflect on their experience?
    h) Can you use the Human Computer[TM]?
    i) Which of the other techniques can you see adapting to your teaching style?

    _____

    _____

    _____

In-Class Activity

6. In this question, you will apply what you have understood about Community Language Learning. You have been asked to teach a **middle school beginner** language class.

First, we should refresh our memory that Community Language Learning aims at centering the language learning experience as much as possible on the learners themselves, giving them responsibility for the content of the lesson, and engaging not only their intellects but their feelings as well. The teacher's role is essentially that of a **consultant**, providing the language the students need in order to express their meanings effectively. Topics can be introduced by the teacher to guide the students' conversations, but more in line with CLL techniques, topics should be initiated by the students. In either case, the teacher decides which language points to focus on based on what emerges from the conversation, while at the same time considering the level and needs of the class.

The topic of the lesson is:

Spring has arrived. What are you going to do now that the weather is nice?

The grammar focus is:
going to (gonna)

The actual vocabulary used will be provided by the students (and translated into English by the teacher if necessary).

The teacher begins the activity by describing in Korean what the format will be:

우리는 오늘 좋은 봄 날씨에 대해서 대화를 할 거예요. 나는 봄에 너의 계획에 대해서 서로 질문하고 답 하길 바래요. 당신이 각각의 문장을 만든후, 이 MP3 플레어에 그것을 녹음해봐요. 이제 모두 준비되었나요? 그럼 시작해봅시다. ○ ○ ○씨 지금 날씨가 좋으면 무엇을 할 예정인가요?

**The recording stage is important to focus on, but let's also remember the other things that the teacher in the textbook and the video did during this lesson. These techniques and activities should be part of your activity too. Here are some examples:

- Listening to the recording / reflective listening
- Writing sentences on the board / transcription
- Translation exercises
- Human Computer[TM]

There are other techniques too, so check the textbook and recall the video carefully.