



# Unity Language

## Discourse Based Language Learning

DISCOURSE ORIGINATES FROM THE LATIN WORD "DISCURSUS" MEANING "RUNNING TO AND FROM". IN UNITY LANGUAGE, WE CONSIDER IT AS THE FORM AND FUNCTION OF THE SPOKEN AND WRITTEN LANGUAGE RUNNING TO AND FROM THE GLOBAL CULTURE OF LEARNING TRACKS.



# A New Language Learning Approach

- The Unity Language Center has developed a unique approach to language learning.
- Our Experience shows our methods work. Even complete beginners find they are able to grasp the language fundamentals in a very short time.



# Unity Language Approach

We developed a new approach to language learning – discourse based learning – which is anchored in coherence with three stages of educational process, and the best of traditional grammar approaches, but also aims to expose students with different configurations of civilization and cultural discourses.



# Sentence versus Discourse based approach

The traditional method is through teaching the grammar structures. Sentences are usually the smallest independent units of communication which can be combined to form larger units. But there are problems with this method of language teaching.



# Problems with the Grammar Approach

## ▶ Problems with the semantics!

i.e., A sentence can have good grammar structure, but can not be carried by discourse knowledge vessels! i.e., It does not contain any meaning! e.g. *Colorless green ideas sleep furiously.* Chomsky

## ▶ Problems with the forms

How do you teach a form of knowledge which is not yet structured as a sentence based on the grammar approach alone?

- ▶ e.g., *One planet, One people, Please Peace*
- ▶ *Haiku Poems! Language Phrases!*



# Our Discourse Based Learning Approach....

## ► What is discourse?

Discourse is like photons of light. Photons carry information. Discourse transports social knowledge. As photons of different wavelengths can be combined to produce different colors, discourses can also be combined to transfer the current disjointed global social reality into a beautiful cultural coherent garden as a form of a global culture of learning.



# Advantages of the Discourse Based Learning Approach

- ▶ Discourse based learning is a work in progress. It's cultural and selective. It's dynamic and active. It's linked and elective. It's universal and effective.
- ▶ Our approach helps each student to build discourse courier vessels to carry forward their newly acquired knowledge outside of the classroom and into the real life language and cultural learning experience.



# Limits of Discourse Methods

## **Discourse have finite lifetime.**

Beware! The finite lifetime can scale the interaction sequence and the course time sequence. Students will become confused!

## **Discourse knowledge cargo overloaded.**

The discourse teaching method may end up into much more general and out of tune social interactions, which make it difficult to link them with the global culture of learning. Beware! This may not always end in positive learning outcomes. Students will become frustrated or cease to pay attention.

**Discourse may have unbalanced knowledge load.** Students need too much effort to keep up with the course. Beware! They may disengage from classroom learning.



# Teaching language through discourse

## ▶ How do you *teach* language through discourse?

- ▶ Various ways, but focus on interactions, e.g. Simple questions and answers, story telling, pairing, group discussion and consultation, etc.
- ▶ Consider each of the classroom interactions as a new circle of development, whereby you can consider each of the class interactions as a social action. Record the interactions in the student evaluation book and suggest relevant homework exercises.
- ▶ Divide lessons into three segments, i.e. civilization, cultural and everyday language sections.
- ▶ For the civilization state, you can use the Ruhi Institute course materials or Virtue Project workbook!
- ▶ For the cultural discourse, use newspaper articles, TV documentaries or Internet! Use one cultural discourse at a time!
- ▶ Link the different cultural discourses to the global culture of learning tracks!



# Launching a unity language discourse-rich lesson

**It is not always easy to facilitate a discourse rich lesson! What do you intend to teach?**

Give students the cultural and civilization discourse which serves as the point of the lesson and which suits the level of each learner.

- ▶ Choose usually the cultural aspects that will be integrated easily into the global culture of learning!
- ▶ Data: Can come from media texts (e.g., news, reports, articles, pictures from newspapers and internet blogs) or from personal accounts (e.g., interviews, life experiences, blogs).
- ▶ Check the subjective or objective nature of the media texts.



# Principle of Ever-Advancing Civilization- Our Lines of Effort!

The execution of a successful discourse based learning approach is built along four lines of effort:

- accelerating learning momentum,
- strengthening cross-cultural interactions,
- Promotion of unity language discourse and
- forming lasting friendships.



# Discourse based Teaching Tips

- ▶ Turn Taking - When should students take turns?
- ▶ Universal participation - Encourage every student to participate in consultation, either in small groups or a whole class.
- ▶ Coherence Timing - Who should speak first and second, etc...?
- ▶ Phrasing and coherence - Encourage students to add their own native language phrases into the global cultural discourse in a coherent way.
- ▶ Prosodic and discourse progress - monitor disruption to prosodic coherence from one learner to another. Some students are more sensitive than others to prosodic coherence disruptions.
- ▶ Spatial arrangements - Seating should be carefully considered when creating room arrangements. Regularly change the classroom setting arrangements!



# Evaluating progress

- (a) Monitor students' use of grammar and phrases. Give homework to students.
- (b) Ask students to show the steps where and when their native culture can be grafted onto the global cultural learning state.
- (c) Allow the student to guess or predict what is to come next from the article or group activity.



## Some more practice...

- ▶ What sort of discourse activity next needs to be considered?
- ▶ Discourse learning approach – Practice, practice and practice.
- ▶ Ask students to also provide some articles of his/her choice which can be discussed in class.
- ▶ Design a speaking activity. Practice with them again important phrases.
- ▶ Encourage students to develop their own phrase book.
- ▶ Give opportunities for extra tuition!



# Discourse – based approach

## Example 1

- ▶ A San: Excuse me!
- ▶ B San: Yes!
- ▶ A San: I am lost! I am looking for this address ....
- ▶ B San: Ok! Let me check this address on my smart phone for you.
- ▶ A San: I really appreciate it. Thank you!
- ▶ B San: Here is the google map! You can use your phone to take a photo!
- ▶ A San: Oh thank you! This is great! Thank you very much.
- ▶ B San: You are most welcome!
- Observe body language, tone and volume!



## Teaching language through Discourse - Example 2

- ▶ In this example, we will take a look at one of our beginners' classes. They have decided to present a project on the Shinto Shrines.
- ▶ Step 1) The group first consults together on which place to visit. They all agree to visit a nearby shrine.
- ▶ Step 2) Following a visit to the shrine, students consult again on the shrine's civilization, cultural and historical aspects, in order to make an informed decision on the possible topics which they can present to their whole class.



## Example 2...

Step 3) Then each student does his/her own investigation on the topics chosen. They check the local library, do online research, interview people and watch a documentary about the world shrines.

Step 4) Our tutors arrange extra time for students to practice. Each student is then given a choice of whether to give a short presentation or write a short essay about their learning experience.

Step 5) Finally, our tutors arrange for a seminar, whereby the students present their project work, discuss their learning experiences with each other and receive feedback from other class members concerning their grammar, pronunciation and tone of voice, etc.



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# Thank You!

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