



Confucian Teaching Re-examined in Foreign-Language Teaching Settings and Transformative Learning

Hanwei Tan Ph.D



Abstract



- Differentiated teaching efficiency
- Ancient Chinese teaching philosophy and transformative learning theory.
- The teacher's role in transformative learning
- “teaching students in accordance with their aptitude”
- Confucius's practices and ideas followed and shared by other ancient Chinese scholars.
- The corresponding transformative learning theory



Talking Points



- ▶ **Having Fun in Learning.**
- ▶ **Teacher's role.**
- ▶ **“Reading between/beyond the lines” type of transformative learning.**
- ▶ **The word *wu* (悟) “enlightenment”: Another higher-level transformative learning approach.**
- ▶ **Classroom practice**
- ▶ **Teacher's note.**
- ▶ **Conclusion**

Having fun in learning. 學習 Xue Xi Study or Learn

學 = learn (a process) → 習 = acquisition (a result)

學游泳 learn how to swim (can forget when stop)



小鳥振翅日有所進。 《說文解字》



The bird flutters and advances daily. — *Shuo Wen Jie Zi*

習水 know how to swim (will not forget when stop)

學而時習之，不亦說乎？ 《論語·學而》

Learn and get it, isn't that fun? — *The Analects of Confucius*

能思之自得者，真；習之純熟者，妙。 — 王廷相《慎言 潛心》

True learning is achieved through independent thinking,
Outstanding accomplishment is realized through practice.

TL Teacher's Role

师范／师表 **Setting as a model**

“師者，所以傳道授業解惑也”。--韩愈《師說》

A teacher's job is to teach, lecture and answer questions.

—Hanyu

傳道transmit 授業transact 解惑 (Q & A) transform

Student's Natural and Supernatural Transformation






因材施教 *yincaishijiao* —— 孔子

“teaching students in accordance with their aptitude” —
Confucius

➤ Or “competence-based teaching,” in modern terms).




颜渊问仁。子曰：“克己复礼为仁。一日克己复礼，天下归仁焉。为仁由己，而由人乎哉？”颜渊曰：“请问其目。”子曰：“非礼勿视，非礼勿听，非礼勿言，非礼勿动。”颜渊曰：“回虽不敏，请事斯语矣。”

仲弓问仁。子曰：“出门如见大宾，使民如承大祭；己所不欲，勿施于人；在邦无怨，在家无怨。”仲弓曰：“雍虽不敏，请事斯语矣。”

司马牛问仁。子曰：“仁者，其言也切。”曰：“其言也切，斯谓之仁已乎？”


子曰：“为之难，言之得无切乎？” -- 《论语·颜渊》

- 
- Yan Yuan consulted Confucius about *Ren*. Confucius explained: “*Ren* is to comply with the rites by setting restraints on oneself.”
 - Zhonggong asked what *Ren* is. Confucius responded: “Do not do to others what you do not want others to do to you.”
 - Sima Niu asked about *Ren*. Confucius said: “*Ren* is just to talk with caution.”



“Reading between/beyond the lines” type of transformative learning.


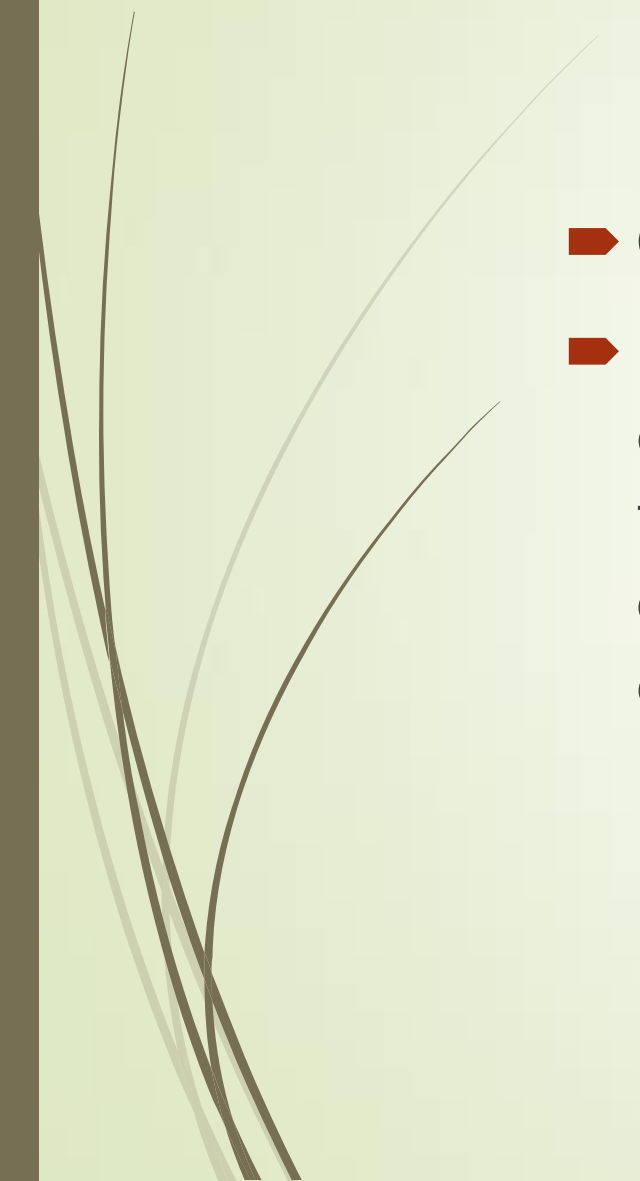
- ▶ ‘In study books one must grasp the principle or truth behind language....’
- ▶ 学以认理为主,而言理即在事上。故其言曰:‘读有字书,却要识没字理’,则公之自得可知矣。--孙奇逢 《理学综传》

- 
- ▶ *deyiwangyan* (得意忘言) when we understand the meaning, we can forget the word.
 - ▶ *Deyuwangquan* (得鱼忘筌): the purpose of making a fish catcher is to catch fish and that is forgotten when fish are caught.



The word *wu* (悟) “enlightenment”: Another higher-level transformative learning approach

- Shen Xiu (神秀) wrote: The body is like a Bodhi tree, and the heart a bright mirror; you should always diligently clean it, so it does not get dusty. ”
- Huineng: (惠能) “The Bodhi is not in the form of a tree to start with, and the heart is not in the form of a mirror. It is formless per se, and how can it get dusty?”

- 
- 
- Compare Mezirow's words:
 - “transformative learning involves experiencing a deep, structural shift in the basic premises of thought, feelings, and actions” and that “it is a shift of consciousness that dramatically and irreversibly alters our way of being in the world” (1996, p.162)



Classroom practice

- ▶ The project was divided into two sets assigned to students of different learning styles. Both groups read the same Chinese text. The first set asked students to draw a conclusion using a linguistic approach. The second set asked students to draw a conclusion from pictures in addition to the language.



▶ Please read the passage written in Chinese below and then do activities



▶ 大家知道，如果形容学生胜过老师，后人胜过前人，我们常用“青出于蓝而胜于蓝”这句话。如有报道说：“刘翔是孙海平教练一手调教出来的，可谓青出于蓝而胜于蓝。真乃后生可畏！”江山代代人才出，长江后浪推前浪。青出于蓝的事屡见不鲜。

▶ 为什么用青比学生，蓝比老师呢？它的来源是荀子著名篇章《劝学》中的一句话：“学不可以已。青，取之于蓝，而胜于蓝；冰，水为之，而寒于水。”这句话用来教导弟子学习永无止境，希望弟子们能够坚持不懈地学习，后代一定超过前辈。一节选自《中华词源》

▶ (the sentences in red are the keys of this reading)



Group A Student 1's work:

- ▶ 1) Please write a gist in 1-3 sentences
- ▶ This is explaining the meaning of a certain phrase in Chinese, by comparing it to a student-teacher relationship. I think the idea is essentially that students are taught by teachers, and then later those students can become teachers; so teachers beget students and students beget teachers.
- ▶ 2) Please put the sentence into English : “冰, 水为之而寒于水。青, 取之于蓝, 而青于蓝。”
- ▶ Ice comes from water, and also can make itself by freezing water.
- ▶ Green comes from blue, and also makes blue.
- ▶ 3) Please give an example to illustrate the meaning “青出于蓝而胜于蓝”
Rain falls from clouds, and when it evaporates the rainwater becomes clouds

Group B Student 2's work:

Activity: Please read the passage above and then study the pictures shown below. Do activities afterwards.



Fig. 1

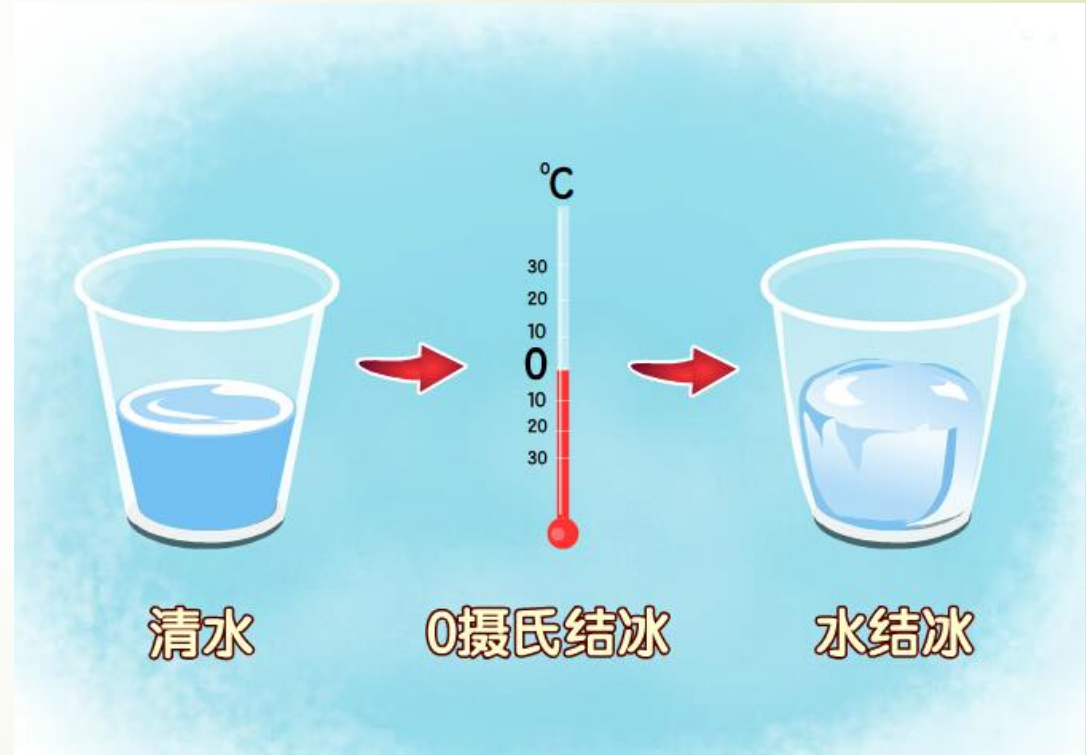


Fig. 2



1) Please put the sentence into English : “冰, 水为之而寒于水。青, 取之于蓝, 而胜于蓝。”

➤ Ice is water turned in to a solid.

➤ Blue, the name of which was changed from the indigo flower (青) to (蓝色)

2) Please give an example to illustrate the meaning “青出于蓝而胜于蓝”

In Chinese, Planes first took the name of “飞船”(flying boat), but later also became known as “飞机” (airplane).

3) Please write a gist in 1-3 sentences

The meaning of “青出于蓝而胜于蓝” is that something completely takes over its predecessor, and this phrase is oft used when a student surpasses their teacher. 青 stands for student, while 蓝 stands for the teacher, because the student came from the teacher. 冰, 水为之, 而寒于水 goes for the hopes that one’s child will be able to study well and surpass whatever lies in front of them.



Teacher's note.


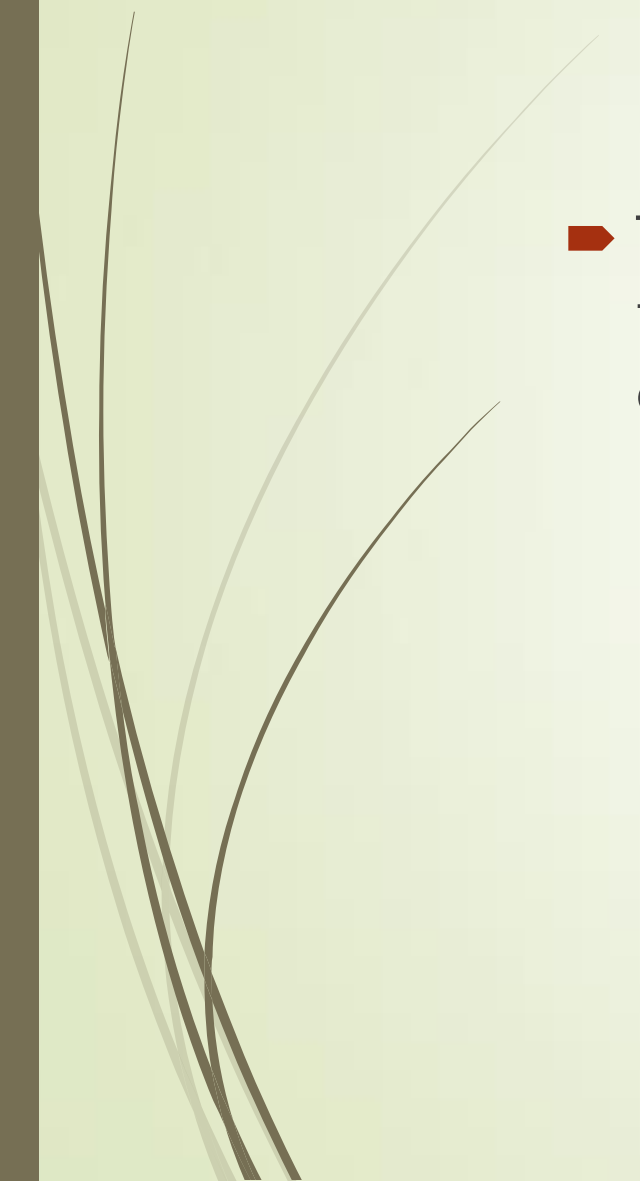
- Recommended translation of the two sentences:
- Blue, subtracted from the indigo plant , is bluer;
- Ice, formed by water, is colder.

The order of the questions arrangement is different according to the students' levels and learning styles.

: Q1. reading between the line,

Q2. a translation, or a reading the lines the bottom up-- a LOTS approach

Q3. a reading beyond the line or a HOTs (higher-order thinking skill), or if real transformative learning takes place.

- 
- 
- ▶ The main idea of the two sentences is “an appropriately trained learner can be transformed into a better person or surpass his or her teachers.”



Conclusion

- ▶ Transformative learning as presented in ancient Chinese texts can be summarized by Zhuang Zi's *Deyuwangquan*. The core of transformative learning is to forget the tools/vehicles we once used to achieve the learning results. This idea encapsulates what *xue* and *xi* are all about: transitioning from process/reflection to result. Confucian *yincaishijiao* guides the application of transformative learning by paying attention to students' individuality, and the ultimate goal is to get students *wu-ed*, or enlightened. This case study supports transformative learning theory and Confucius and Zhuangzi's teachings that linguistic features are like tools or fish catchers to acquire the target or meaning and help students get enlightened or transformed. This re-examination of Confucian teaching theories add depth and different perspective to the understanding of modern theories like transformative learning.

References

- ▶ Cranton, P., & King, K.P. (2003). "Transformative learning as a professional development goal". *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education*, 98, 31-37.
- ▶ Han Yu.(2017) *Shishuo [On Teaching]* Beijing: Gerentushuguan.
- ▶ http://www.360doc.com/content/17/0201/09/140174_625753376.shtml
- ▶ Mezirow, J. (1997). "Transformative Learning: Theory to Practice". *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education*, 74, 5-12
- ▶ Mezirow, J. (1991). *Transformative Dimensions of Adult Learning*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- ▶ Maiziro, J. ,& Associates.(2000). *Learning as Transformation: Critical Perspective on a Theory in Progress*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, Inc.
- ▶ Confucius. (2015). *The Analects of Confucius: An Online Teaching Translation*. Trans. Robert Eno. [http://www.indiana.edu/~p374/Analects_of_Confucius_\(Eno-2015\).pdf](http://www.indiana.edu/~p374/Analects_of_Confucius_(Eno-2015).pdf)
- ▶ Wang Tingxiang.(2015)*Wangshijia Cangji [The Wang's Collection]*. Beijing: Hongyeshangujiwenku.<http://hongyeshan.com/post/3055.html>
- ▶ Xushen. *Shuowenjiezi* <http://www.shuowenjiezi.com/>



■ Thank you and Questions?

