

Backward Design, Differentiate Teaching, and Comprehensible Input

Backward design is to think about the desired learning outcomes first, then the acceptable evidences in order to assess the outcomes”, and finally design learning activities will result for the evidences for learning. I have used backward design for my unit/lesson plans for a while. I like to use thematic unit planning template to design my lessons. My lesson design usually includes three parts: 1) what will learners be able to do with what they know by the end of the lesson? 2) How will learners demonstrate what they can do with what they know? 3) What will prepare learners for what they know with what they know? Then I will pull resources and technology together into lesson design.

Differentiate teaching is key to keep learner engaged in the classroom. We usually take language proficiency level, learning style, personality, and culture background into considerations, trying to offer different learning requirements or activities in order to meet varied learning needs. I usually had Chinese 3 and 4 combination class for many years. This year, my Chinese 4’s registration doubled. We have to make two combination classes. Besides usual Chinese 3 and 4 combination class, I have to teach another Chinese 2 and 4 combination class. I found teaching Chinese 2 and 4 combination class is challenge. I originally design to let Chinese 4 take a leadership in the learning, but most of time it didn’t work. When I reflect why my original plan didn’t work, I found I didn’t group students carefully, and I didn’t create clear routine making sure every learner in the group take turns doing their work. I always look for strategies for combination class teaching. This year I used canvas courses for differentiate teaching. Technology plays an important role for catering differentiate teaching.

I like Dr. Fu’s multiple levels class teaching. She ran the class smoothly. I like she use one topic to cater three different learning goals. From the video, I can tell she has routines for doing specific tasks like character dictation, group works, and so on. In the video, every learner is engaged in his/her learning. I especially like the way she groups the groups, and the way making sure every learner in the group has a turn to go. After a while, she checked in for the group work. There are a lot of things to learn in this video. I will definitely revisit this video again.

This year I made using target language and providing comprehensible input as one of my professional development goals. I tried one unit with TPR, students gave me very positive feedbacks. But I didn't continue with TPR method because I didn't know how I can stay with the curriculum while implementing TPR teaching strategies. I started reading books about TPR and Comprehensible Input for Chinese. I also went to Youtube searching related teaching videos. I kept notes when I watched teaching videos. I hope I can do more about comprehensible input next year.

CaiLuoyi Laoshi's teaching video really opened my eyes on comprehensible input, especially after we went over the video during online meeting. To me the challenge is I usually have a full class of 32 students. It is difficult to keep all the students on track when we do comprehensible input with Chinese only. I saw students checked out because they couldn't catch up. But when I slowed down to help this group of students, I saw other advanced students felt bored. I understand I need differentiated teaching here. I hope I can find answers or some doable solutions for this.

Online Teaching and Tools

Online teaching is quite different from face to face teaching (F2F). Online teaching uses virtual classroom which highly relies on online classroom technology, including virtual classroom software, network connections, and other useful online teaching tools and software. The classroom management is quite different in the virtual classroom too. Teachers need to learn how to monitor the lesson while checking every learner staying on the task. What is more, teachers need to learn how to make online lesson plan and materials to suit virtual classroom learning environment. I feel like need to know how to create online learning activities by using right tools to engage students in learning. I also need to learn how to keep students on task in the virtual classroom.

We are using a lot of tools to create activities that including 4 skills-listening, reading, speaking, writing, and 3 communication modes-interpretive, intrapersonal, and presentational. Like Chen Laoshi said we need to understand what the tool can do in

order to use them. I need spend time learning different tools and thinking about how I can seamlessly integrate them into my lesson plans. I also learn how to pay attention to small details in the virtual classroom teaching. At least I figure out that I can use the right tools to convert F4F learning activities into online virtual classroom teaching. But I know have a lot to learn.

Whiteboard of WizIQ is a great interactive tool that supports three communication modes. Other tools like Playposit, goAnimate, PowToon, Screencast-O-Matics, PowerPoint, zoom etc. are great tools too.

Input Flood/Pushed Output/authentic materials

Comprehensible Input is one of my professional goals this year. I have been using TPRS, Storytelling, Color coding, and movie talks to enrich comprehensible input in the class. But today' s discussion helps me understand that input flood and pushed output are correlated. It is necessary to encourage learners to produce output while providing them input flood. The I +1 strategies is perfect for input/flood/pushed output. Teachers could intentionally give learners a little bit challenge on comprehensible input, while encouraging students to produce output. I didn' t realize that we could switch from mechanical drills into comprehensible inputs. I also realize that how powerful the authentic material is! Tseng Lao Shi' s using pictures to teach grammar structures really opens my eyes on selecting authentic materials for language teaching. I like how our teachers put BEST together. “Be a fun teacher, use Effective teaching strategies, be Student-centered, and use Target language.”

Tools for Online Teaching/Experiences for Creating Online Lesson Plans

I learned many useful online learning tools from Dr. Kathrine and Dr. Gao' s talk of “Learner-Centered Online Teaching and Learning” . This is the first time I realized that

these learning tools can be categorized into groups of four language skills of Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing. As we explored the tools in the class, I found there were several tools I would like to try for the next school year. First, I would like to try some reading websites like www.langnet.org and yes-Chinese.com. I also want to try the Story Starter game from scholastic.com, and the Scan the QR Code game for reading. Secondly, I would like to use emailfuture.com for my students' "Future Plan". Thirdly, I would like to use slow-chinese.com for practicing listening comprehension. Fourthly, I would like to try playposit and voxopop for interactive video game. I also plan to use Padlet for Icebreaker.

We used backward design to create Day1 online lesson plan. Each of us paired up with another teacher to create one part of the lesson. Then we sat down and put our design together. We presented our lesson plan to the class. Teachers and participants gave us feedbacks. We discussed, revised, and redesigned our lesson plan. Then we got together to go through our lesson plan again. At the very beginning, I was struggling on how to relate lesson plan to students' own experiences. When I was going through the lesson plan, I suddenly realized that what the online virtual tour to Beijing mean. I let students imagine themselves as one of the exchange student who went to China with Susan. Once I figured out this, my lesson flow became clear. I felt like I got a hang of this online learning lesson plan design. The collaboration between teachers, teachers and lead teachers is a unique professional learning experience.

Active online teaching resource: http://readchinese.nflc.org/?page=to_the_learner

Writing : <http://www.bbc.co.uk/languages/chinese/games/characters.shtml>

Listening : https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8Xpdhbh_2Rc

or <http://www.nclrc.org/webcasts/chinese/2014-11-30/index.html>

Speaking : <https://edpuzzle.com/join/ojsijha>

The First Online Teaching Lesson

July 10th is my lucky day. Seven years ago, on July 10th, my second child came to this world joyfully. I was so amazed when she first opened her eyes and looked at me. Ever since then she has been mommy's second shadow. I understand that how sad she had been since she knew her mommy would be gone on her birthday for a 3-week workshop. I know she will remember it for the whole life. But I want to tell her when I get home that mommy launched her first two online teaching lessons successfully on her birthday. From now on, Mommy will celebrate July 10th with her together every year, not just because on that day she came to this world but mommy marked her first step on online teaching.

I understand that in the near future a lot of learnings will be happened in the virtual classroom, although I have no idea of how online learning can be as good and delicate as Face to Face learning. I know technology is the driving engine for the change. I start to integrated technology into Chinese classroom teaching. I learn, try, reflect, try, and reflect. When talking about using technology, it never been easy to a Chinese teacher. I surely have many teary moments, from which I learned how to be patient, how to stay calm when bad things happen, and how to prepare for unpredictable situations when using technology in the classroom teaching. As usual, I made mistakes when I was planning for my first online teaching lesson. I forgot to share my PowerPoints with students. They couldn't give me pushed output when I gave them many input floods. I saw people were talking about something near me. I didn't realize that I forgot to share PPT until one of our TAs came to tap the "share PPT" icon on my screen. Okay, the first STUPID mistake—I laughed at myself secretly. But- I decided to move on. Okay, it was okay - that was exactly how I felt after I finished my first online teaching lesson, -- no more mistakes. My mood was totally changed after I finished my second teaching lesson. I was very joyful because I made at least one reluctant to speak student joined our output floods. I knew I pushed his button, just like in the FtF classroom. Aha, some part of online teaching is similar to FtF classroom teaching. Later I realize that we still teach

students from the same pool we teach at FtF classroom. They are still themselves when they behind the screen and connect to your virtual classroom through incredibly complicate technology. We, as a teacher, need to figure how our teaching can be effectively delivered through this kind of connection. We still need standard- based curriculum. It never changes that we need authentic materials. Learners are our forever center no matter where they choose for their learning. We still have to use target language in the virtual classroom. Age appropriate materials will definitely attract our learners no matter they hide behind the screen or sit in front of you. Performance based assessments are still our ultimate assessment tools. The only thing we need arm with is technology tools and growth mindset that will help us conquer the frustrated moments.