

## **STARTALK 2017 Self- Reflection**

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### **Reinforce the Best Practice Principles**

My goal for this program is to maximize the effectiveness of a learner-centered online teaching. After one week of online review and discussion with Dr. Tseng and other teachers, base-on the World-Readiness Standards, I realized that providing comprehensible input with target language, task-based assessments, and differentiated instructions are the strategies that will lead to the success of online teaching.

Using target language and providing comprehensible input. Unlike the face-to-face effective teaching strategies such as body language/gestures/facial expression and visual aids/real/concrete objects, the application of online teaching strategies is to use the target language almost all the time and apply the various teaching methods. Examples would consist of making the language modification/simplification, applying contextual clues, modeling for pair/group work, and using age-appropriate language and level-appropriate language, etc. All these comprehensible input strategies will make language teachings more effective. Additionally, the scaffolding teaching methods such as mechanic/meaningful/communicative drills, frequent invitations of students' responses, and error corrections are the strategies that I need to keep in mind during online teaching.

Using Task--Based Assessments as the evidences of students can do. According to the epilogue from Van Patten, the Implications #3 is "All learner production should be meaning based or communicative", which means that "whenever learners produce language, it should be for the purpose of expressing some kind of meaning.....,when production is required, it should be communicative in nature." Based on the 12 videos we have discussed online in the first week, effective teaching is when students can apply what they have learned in classrooms to real-life situations. Lastly, a few points to take note is that assessments are not tests at the end of a unit, it is ongoing; students need multiple ways to demonstrate their learning; assessments identify about what is right and what is wrong, and suggest how to fix what is wrong.

Differentiated instruction is a challenge teaching methods in a differentiated classroom. Because students are a diverse population and they are differentiated in their culture background, readiness, interests, learning styles, and anxiety levels, etc. to facilitate a learner-centered classroom, all of these points must be factored into consideration for me to design their learning activities to meet individual needs. To reach this goal, as a differentiated teacher, I must consider the content, the process, and the product and I will:

- Know what I want my students to know, to understand, and to do (key concepts, key skills (content))
- Know a variety of activities that encourage students to practice those skills at different levels (process)
- Assess how students will be able to show what they know (product)

I must use flexible grouping consistently to help my students be successful in classroom.

The reflections on my teaching experiences, reviewing the key concepts and deeper understanding of the best practices will inspire me to do well in the coming online teaching.

### **The transition from face to face to online teaching**

In the second week of the UVa STARTTALK online teaching program, I had the opportunity to familiarize myself with the new tools available for effective teaching online. In the past week, I have realized that online teaching is completely different compared to face to face teaching in the classroom. The aspect that I am most concerned with is how to adjust during the transition from face to face to online teaching. Online teaching is an extremely rewarding experience that has allowed me to utilize new technology tools in my classroom that I have never encountered before. Even if I do not teach an online course, this training has helped me improve my teaching methods in the classroom with integrated technology.

The main difference between online teaching and face to face teaching is the approach to each method. The process in preparing a lesson plan and actually presenting the teaching material varies online and in the classroom. The main four types of online learning include four different types of interactions: 1) Teacher & Student, 2) Student & Student, 3) Student & Materials, 4) Student & Platforms. There are several main principles that lead to effective teaching online. It

is important to use more culturally relevant visual clues such as pictures, videos, and diagrams in order to facilitate the design of our lesson plan. It is necessary to create my own icons in order to make my instructions clear. Furthermore, using realistic props as well as including 3 modes activity to design opportunities that can help students understand the content, encourage them to practice and lead them to reach their goal.

When it comes to designing an online class, I need to keep in mind that I have a set of clear expectations to my online students. I need to communicate how much time students should be working on the course each week. During my teaching time, I need to use a variety of large group, small group, and individual work methods to design both synchronous and asynchronous activities. On time informal feedback is also important because I need to prepare discussion posts that would invite students to participate through questions, reflections, and responses. It is necessary to focus on the content resources and apply connections to current events that are easily accessed from students' computers. All in all, I strive to combine the core concepts by customizing learning tactics which will prepare a strong conclusion and ending activity for the course.

Attending online teaching training has proven to be both challenging and rewarding. The second week was an enlightening experience because I garnered an abundance of new information in a completely new field that I had never explored before. The new platforms included WizIQ, Zoom, Collab, Canvas and various practical tools such as Screen-O-Matics, TouchCast, Snipping Tool, Camstudio, etc. which I can recommend and implement into my teachings. These integrations will optimize the learning experiences with the interactive platform Zoom and innovative technology such as the video and audio functions of Screen-O-Matics and TouchCast. I am excited to gain more from these new fields in this UVa STARTALK program and I believe that I have great room to improve my skills of online teaching and technology.

To adapt to the new technology in language teaching is important to meet students' needs today. The new generation is growing up as the e-generation where technology plays a prominent role in education. In the midst of these changes, I have learned to overcome and combat these challenges in order to progress and consistently improve. As for myself, I am still learning and

growing so I am sure that my students are doing the same. The new technological education tools are changing the ways that students learn and interact with me and each other.

### **First experience to meet my students online**

The past two days bore many fruitful lessons. The opening ceremony was my first time interacting with students online and it was a truly unique experience. Online teaching and classroom teaching have truly drastic differences. Prior to our session, our team of teachers planned everything with meticulous detail so we were able to combat all situations with preparation. Ultimately, the session went smoothly and successfully. This experience showed me how this type of work involves extreme preparation with back-up plans. It provided an opportunity for me to understand my online students with their diverse backgrounds, their different personalities and Chinese language levels. The most valuable lesson I gained from this experience is the importance of preparing lessons very well with details to deliver the content smoothly. Also I need to have back-up plans and alternative solutions in the face of diversity and unpredictable situations.

The preparing day for Day 1 online teaching was also a success. As a team, we prepared and rehearsed the material together. This created an atmosphere where we were able bond, collaborate and understand each other. The different perspectives of different teachers from diverse backgrounds were able to cover our own blind spots where we may be lacking. The professional critique and suggestions also aided us greatly. Professor Tseng imparted that "no one is the hero". Everyone is imperative to the team and offers his/her own crucial portions. After the critique, I have gotten positive professional feedback to make my future teaching more effective. Although I already have nine years teaching experience, but I have learned a lot from other teachers and I still have a great room to improve.

### **Taking Challenge and Getting Rewarding**

Today was the third virtual classroom teaching. I experienced an unique circumstances. Due to unexpected technical difficulties, our teaching today did not go smoothly. Due to this, one of the students who kept losing contact while other one experienced connection issues and audio problems. It greatly affected the overall performance of my teaching and their learning

experience. It was challenging to keep all the students on track because there were many issues that disrupted the teaching. Once we resolved all these issues, we had to rush through the rest of the lesson under these less than optimal circumstances. I felt that this was a necessary situation that I had to overcome because despite the obstacles, I was able to persist and continue with the lesson. It is inevitable that these issues may occur with technology but now I am confident that I am able to remain calm and resolve these difficulties while maintaining composure.

In addition, another aspect of teaching I have improved on is my ability to grasp all opportunities and continuously ask questions for students to be constantly stimulated. I found that this can be likened to squeezing toothpaste out of its tube, I kept pushing and asking questions for students to display their linguistic skills to about the language.

I will work diligently to effectively utilize visual aids to optimize their learning experience to create stimulating and interactive activities for better engagement between students and myself. Also, the room I can improve is my grammar teaching. I would like to focus on key words in target language to ask questions to make my instructions clear and push out students language output. Even though, Chinese is a flexible language, I need to remain consistent with my language to keep it simple and clear. Those students who are more familiar with the language are able to understand when I use different ways to explain something but each student has varying degrees of understanding so I need to be consistent with my language for all students to understand.

Input Flood/ Pushed Output is one of the best practices that I need to improve in daily teaching. When I design a lesson, this practice helps me seriously consider how to design the most effective flood comprehensive input to scaffold and prepare students for the rich output. This best practice will help students to reach a higher level of learning and have a more impactful learning experience. I will also continue to design variety of task-based assignments to strengthen students' language abilities and apply what they have learned in their real-life situation. Overall, this was another day filled with new experiences, lessons and growth that I will use to implement into my teaching to be the most effective Mandarin Chinese teacher.

Attending online teaching training has proven to be both challenging and rewarding. I had an enlightening experience in the past few days because I garnered an abundance of new technology information in a completely new field that I had never explored before. The new platforms included WizIQ, Zoom, Collab, Canvas and various practical tools such as Screen-O-Matics, TouchCast, Snipping Tool, Camstudio, Flipgrid, Padlet, etc. which I can recommend and implement into my teachings because technology plays a supporting role in language learning.

Another valuable lesson I gained was the importance of a new and positive mindset. I learned to "Being Kind to Yourself". The impact of positive thoughts and a positive outlook has a great affect on our abilities and capacity to grow. Dr. I have learned more about how to be Self-Kindness, and how to do well on Self- Compassion. I learned that if we are to think that we are busy, it carries a negative connotation and weight to our life. Even if we are busy, we have to face it with a positive mindset. It is incredibly importance to let the depression dissipate, and let positivity reign.

I have received countless lessons and enlightening experiences. I have not only learned new techniques in technology but the most fruitful lesson is the lesson of the positive mindset. It has drastically changed my approach to teaching not only in the classroom, but my personal philosophy as well.