

## 2017 Virginia Startalk Chinese Teacher Academy

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### Reflections

#### Week 1 online training

Although I have taken online classes before, I still had some troubles to navigate the UVACollab at first. Thankfully, the program staff are all very helpful and are prompt to answer all my questions. I felt more comfortable to navigate the site at the end of the first week.

For the first week, the course focuses on introducing the principals of Startalk program and the pedagogy of effective teaching. Dr. Tseng led us to go through the important concepts and ideas in Tuesday's online class. We discussed five topics: World-readiness Standards, backward design & lesson planning, student-centered instruction, comprehensive input and performance-based assessments. I am familiar with all these concepts and has been practiced for years. My teaching practices aim on getting students ready for interpretive, presentational, and interpersonal assessments at the end of each quarter. I use student-centered activities every day to help students to be able to speak, listen, write and read the language. The one thing I would like to improve is to increase the time of using the targeted language in class. I understand the benefits of using the target language to teach in class, however, since my middle school students are very "unsecure" when I speak all Chinese. Sometimes, I must explain abstract concepts in English. We have read and discussed some ideas to give a comprehensive input on Tuesday. I am hoping I can do a better job when we are teaching the online program.

On Thursday, we talked about differentiation and reviewed the teaching samples. I watched the video of Fu Laoshi's multiple levels class. I think it is a good idea to have the same topic and differentiate the outcomes. Dr. Tseng mentioned that there are three aspects can be considered into differentiation- content, process and product. To watch the teaching videos give me the idea how the online teaching would like and the observation checklist is a big help for me to analyze these teaching practices. I will adopt these student-centered activities and learn all the features which WizIQ offer next week to better prepare myself for the practicum in

July. Also, I think it is important to set up the class expectations and rules at the beginning of the practicum even this is an online class. I would work with my teaching partner to make sure we come up the list.

Overall, it is a very productive week of learning. I refresh my memory about these important concepts for effective teaching and read some helpful articles. Watching these teaching videos helped me to view the real teaching situations and analyze how to modify to do a better practice.

### Week2 online Training

This is definitely a busy week for learning and exploring. Chen Laoshi lists many different online tools in the Canvas. I only knew/used few of these tools. I am always amazed how fast the technology has been changed. It is so hard to keep up. The most important one for us to learn is WizIQ because we will use this platform to teach the UVa online classes.

The main difference between online teaching and face-to-face teaching is the teacher and the students are not in the same room. This makes it harder for teacher to observe the whole class. In a face-to-face classroom, the teachers will use all different ways to deliver the content they want to teach. These methods include lecture, motions, expression, voice tones, eye expressions etc. Certainly, these teaching methods could be used in online teaching too. However, the teacher is easy to see students' reaction in a face-to-face setting and response on the situation. For example, when the teacher asked the student a question and the student does not response. It will be easy for teacher to figure out if the student has no idea or the student just does not pay attention in a classroom. However, if this is an online class, the teacher would suspect if the student doesn't hear the question clearly or he/she just doesn't know how to answer the question. So, the teaching flow becomes slow. I saw this situation happened several times when I watched the demo videos.

When the teachers design for the online classes, I think details planning becomes very important. Since the students are easily to be distracted in an online setting, the teachers need to plan for every minute. Also, providing the visual aids and action icons are essential for a well-designed online class. After Chen Laoshi's second class, I learned several principals to choose

an appropriate picture for the presentation. I used just do google image search and pick up the picture and I never really give it a thought. Now, I know I need to pick an authentic and meaningful picture.

Working on the demo video recording is another big thing for this week. It is so weird to talk in front of my computer screen at first. But, I guess I got used to it after recording couples of videos. Also, it is a good way to self-reflect on my own teaching via the recordings. Overall, this is a productive week and I am excited to be in campus soon to work with other teachers.

## July 8

### Opening Ceremony

It was my first time to be in an online meeting/event with a group of 50 people. It was fun to see all the students' faces through the small boxes on my computer screen. On the other side, it is a weird feeling that we can bring people together from far away into a small device. I am glad to finally meet my students online, but I am not used to see the students through the camera. I feel I cannot express myself completely via the voices. I guess it might take some time to adjust. One of my five students lives in Illinois. Actually, his Chinese teacher is my best friend. When I told him that I know his teacher, he showed me a big smile and I feel we were connected at that moment.

### July 8 Morning Session

I really enjoyed Dr. Murphy-Judy's presentation. She has profound knowledge about pedagogy of teaching foreign languages and many years of online teaching experience. I am surprised to know that 100 out of 122 institutions she surveyed offer Chinese online courses. The percentage is higher than I expected. I used to think it is easy to teach online course. The teachers can just stay home and sit in front of the computer. It is true that teachers might not have to go out, but it is not easy to design an online class at all. The teachers need to follow all the concepts like teaching a face-to-face class. In additional to that, the teachers also have to be familiar with all the tools they can use. Since there are so many tools on the market, how to choose the appropriate ones is an important issue. Also, I found out that a very calm personality is essential too, because there are unexpected situations happened all the time. Dr.

Murphy-Judy mentioned the importance of building a community among the learners. I total agree with this and it is easy to do this now due to the popularity of social medias. Dr. Yan Gao, another presenter, joined us from Beijing via Zoom. She shared many tools which can be used to enhance the online learning experiences. She categorized these tools into listening, speaking, reading and writing skills. Most of these tools are new to me. It is always so hard to catch up with technology. I am excited that I have new tools to explore when I go home after this program.

#### July 8 Afternoon session

We gathered together to rehearsal the Day 1 power point slides created by group A teachers. I am amazed to see how the team work can produce a quality work. We communicated and exchanged ideas to make the slides more communicative and student-centered. It is a good learning experience to hear the different aspects of one idea. I know it was tough for those who stayed on the stage to be criticized, but we all need to understand this process can make us stronger and be a better teacher.

#### July 11

I can't believe I did it!! My first online class!! It took a lot of time to prepare one online class even we collaborated as a group to work on our PPT. After we have the sample PPT, it is still takes a lot of time to modify it to our group need. This is not what I expected.

I really appreciate the opportunity to work with other teachers. It is a good training to be able to listen to different perspectives. I never really think about how to utilize one slide in a different way when I work alone. I have learned a lot from past couples of days. I realized that different picture can be interpreted differently. Even the position you place the picture means differently. Chen Laoshi shared that most people are right-handed, so we used to place the image on the left side on the slide. However, we need to sometimes arrange the images/pictures from the view of left-handed people.

From my past ten years of teaching experience, I always teach level one students. I am so glad that I have opportunity to teach high level student. I am amazed how much language they can produce. I found out the students always have so much potential. As a teacher, we should try our best to help them to reach the high expectations.

Both of my sessions went smoothly. There were no technical issues either. All five students are all highly-motivated students.

What worked well- the instruction flow worked well. I did adjust the sequence of the original slides and I found out the materials was delivered smoothly.

What did not work well- there are so many materials need to be taught in one hour. I had to shorten and skip activities. The timing did not work well.

After watching my recorded video, I found out I say too much “發語詞”. I think this is something I should improve.

July 20

Closing Ceremony

I never imaged that we can have such strong bonding with students in 10-day online program. Some teachers were very emotional during the closing ceremony. I had tears in my eyes when I said good-bye to my students. Although it is a short program, all of us worked very hard to prepare the lessons. We worked in the group first, then we rehearsal the lesson in front of the all teachers. After finalizing the final lesson plan, each teacher modifies the lesson to fit into their group. I am so touched with all the effort from students and teachers.

I am so glad that I have this opportunity to be part of UVa 2017 Teacher Academy. I have learned some skills to teach online and make a lot of good friends. This is a memorable summer!