

## Personal Statement

Ying Feng Kline

*“A teacher is one who makes himself progressively unnecessary.” ~ Thomas Carruthers*

My name is YingFeng Kline. I am a lecturer of Chinese in the Department of Asian Studies in the Pennsylvania State University (Penn State). I have rich cross-institution work experience as well as a cross-disciplinary background. The courses I have taught include Chinese classes at all levels, Business Chinese, Study of Chinese films, Classical Chinese etc. I am also a certificated Chinese language tester of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages and I have served as a language tester for FLAS fellowship at Penn State since 2017.

I strongly believe that in any classroom including the foreign language classroom student's active learning strongly influences their learning outcomes and therefore the voice of students matters. In my class every single student has a voice that engage in their learning experience which allows them to share who they are, what they have already known, what they want to learn and how they want to learn etc. Students are encouraged to engage with their peers and the community they live in. I believe that a successful foreign language classroom is the one to create a sense of community by encouraging students to have an ability to influence their future with the use the language skills they have learned in the classroom. To better service this goal, I adopt a service-learning approach in two upper-intermediate classes which allows students to apply their language skills and knowledge to real-world problems in community contexts and to complete structured reflections on the relationships between assignments, course objectives, and personal educational objectives etc. Adequate opportunities and a great amount of

classroom time are provided to students for meaningful communicative dialogue using plenty of authentic materials. I also use an inquiry approach for language instruction in the process of conducting the service-learning project to prompt students ask meaningful questions with interdisciplinary connections.

In addition, making the learning relevant to the students is another key characteristic of successful foreign language teaching especially teaching a language like Chinese which is regarded as one of the most challenging language for English native speakers. Having a personal connection to the language can easily motivate learners and therefore I keep most teaching components such as classroom activities, assignments, role play, exam etc. as close to real life as possible.

In a digital age, I have realized the assignable power of virtual learning (e.g. blended learning and online learning) and its influence on traditional education approaches. Since the year of 2015 I have adapted flipped teaching in my Chinese class and in the year of 2018, I offered a 1-credit blended course at Penn State to meet the need of students who prefer to spend some of their time to study Chinese online.

Teaching is so appealing and exhilarating however, “A teacher is one who makes himself progressively unnecessary.” As Thomas Carruthers said, a teacher should treat learner as protagonist and help student to become a lift-long and independent learner. Therefore, in my opinion, only in a mutually supportive and active learning environment in which a positive and meaningful relationship built on genuine dialogue with leverage technology can a foreign language classroom be truly productive and success.