

2018 UVa STARTALK

Future Professional Goals

With the skills I developed through the 2018 UVa STARTALK program, my near-future goal is to start a STARTALK Chinese student virtual program in the State of New Mexico to serve underrepresented students in the far corners of NM; my long-term goal is to develop an online Chinese language course to reach community learners in NM whose learning needs may not necessarily be the same as undergraduate students.

The 2018 UVa STARTALK program has helped me with professional development in many ways. Firstly, it demonstrated to me an ideal online teaching and learning model. There are several models of online teaching: the massive MOOC model, the step-aside coach model, and the all-involved instructor model. Which model is more preferable for language teaching and learning? I think the instructor model would be the way to go.

Secondly, it trained me to teach virtual F2F class through teaching practicum. The “Virtual F2F Classroom” clearly illustrated the nature of this online teaching segment. It’s still a face-to-face class, but in an online environment. This means all the six ACTFL-endorsed principles for effective teaching and learning apply to this model of online teaching.

Thirdly, it prepared me with proper instructional technology for teaching online. The combination of ZOOM and Nearpod seems to work really well in creating a learner-centered virtual F2F class. They are relatively easy to set up, and can be used very effectively if the online instructor takes advantage of the interactive functions of these software applications. One feature worth mentioning is the Field Trip function of Nearpod. It integrates the current VR technology to immerse users with 360 degrees digital hologram. This enables teachers to take students on a virtual field trip without even stepping out of their room.

Last but not least, it provided me with an invaluable networking opportunity. I met and got to know excellent and experienced teachers from all over the nation, and learned from them. We started a WeChat group once we coincidentally landed at Charlottesville airport around the same time, and kept using that group chat to communicate during the onsite training and off-site practicum. One of my long-long-term goals is to be as caring as them, as engaging as them, as energetic as them, and as experienced as them some day in near future.