

Reflections

Week One

Through the first week's online discussions, Zoom and Nearpod were introduced. I think choosing an effective online platform is the very first step to create a successful online class. After watching and discussing the two demo videos by the two lead teachers of this program, I learned not only the different activities teachers can do with students in Zoom and Nearpod, but also the writing functions from Nearpod to show the desirable language output in both speaking and writing.

We also discussed backward design and learner-centered classrooms, which are STARTALK principles and which are the major elements when we plan our own lessons during daily classes. The demo videos gave me a clear guidance regarding how teachers, in the online classroom, gradually release the responsibility through present, practice and finally produce that students themselves are able to engage in the learner-centered activities. It is very impressive to calculate how many of these activities and how many minutes altogether for learner-centered activities in these two videos during our second online discussion, which help me to think about how I will design my lesson plans in the following weeks.

Lastly for using target language and making comprehensible input, my interactions with students in my daily classes are not as effective as the two teachers did in the demo videos, and their consistently maintaining the target language in communication with students in the videos is my ultimate goal. I think the two teachers have a solid knowledge about students' background and previous Chinese language. I would like to reinforce the key concepts about how to make the target language input comprehensible during teaching and use what they did in the demos in my own teaching.

Week Two

Online teaching is very different from face-to-face teaching. First, students and teachers can only see each other through a small window in the online classroom. There might be some Internet speed delays in online teaching, but teachers can use more technology tools to reduce the distance between students and themselves.

Transitioning from F2F to online teaching, I believe teachers need to adjust their speaking speed, more clarifying, more repetitions, and more frequent checking for understanding during teaching. Moreover, rely more on their PowerPoint to present new information to students and use more online technologies' active features to engage students. These come to the answers of the third question.

During this week's online discussions, after choosing an effective online classroom platform, I think creating effective teaching materials and students' activities are the next key steps to success. We practiced Zoom and Nearpod features this week, which help us set the tone for the online teaching. Activities in online teaching cannot be done without the help of technology tools. Therefore, in order to include three modes of communication in online teaching, I will use the ones Gao Laoshi demonstrated and practiced with us during this week's discussions. I look forward to using Nearpod and Zoom functions to support the interpersonal, interpretative and presentational modes in the following weeks of online teaching.

Onsite Week 1 Day 1

I agree with what Yu Peng Laoshi mentioned that one of the things I learned today are the three types of elicitation techniques: the three types of drills and their examples. I realized I was not so clear about the meaningful and communicative drills before. I used these three, but was not sure which one is called which name. Also at the beginning level, using mechanical drills is very necessary. Based on my past teaching, I used more meaningful ones than communicative ones. I also like matching the six in-class activities

after the three types of drills were analyzed and agree that not every student-centered activity is meaningful or communicative. Moreover, the five techniques to teach grammar in contexts were also discussed today, in which some of them I feel are easy said than done. I used teacher-guided pictures and some student-centered authentic tasks before and I would like to use more other types in my teaching later.

In the afternoon teaching demo videos watching, the idea of pushed output was mentioned a couple of times in order to remind us when in our real teaching, we should maximize student's output as much as we can. And during our group discussions, one teacher in the demo video did an interesting rooms drawing activity when teaching Day 2 content and maybe we will have more related discussions in tomorrow's whole class presentations. Overall, we discussed using the target language 100%, some ways to avoid English, using appropriate target language that are suitable to student's current level. I also learned a way that I did not see before to use a set of sentences/a story telling to guide students to go over the new words and grammar structure. This connects to what mentioned in the morning regarding teaching in the meaningful context. And a meaningful context will help push student's output.

Day 2

This morning and afternoon we shared some thoughts about doing mini-demos and each group discussed different demo videos observed. The whole process of a mini demo lesson is a good opportunity for me to self-study and explore using different functions of Nearpod and Zoom. Fortunately there were two sample teaching videos from Cai Laoshi and Zhong Laoshi first. The activities I did in my demo lesson were basically following from Zhong Laoshi's sample as well as from my partner Zhao Laoshi's demo. I realized how to push output for students in online lessons and try to avoid silence moments. Then 100% input of the target language with students in online lessons. When watching other demo videos and hearing the comments from other teachers, we always mentioned first the 100% usage of the target language and the

strategies different teachers used. I would like to thank the posted notes group A and B teachers provided and I do think asking students' more high level questions such as providing more communicative context is the very next step I need to try and apply it to my own teaching. Overall, today's demo video analysis was very detailed oriented and I learned a couple of new activities demonstrated in Nearpod from other teachers as well as different suggestions.

In the afternoon, we watched last year's teaching videos and analyzed different ways to correct student's mistakes in speaking. Mostly I used recasts or half recasts to help my students. Having a summary of other different types which we may tried before but were not sure which one is called which is a good preparation before our first online lesson. We also watched and analyzed one of last year's videos that a teacher went off topic to practice another unnecessary structure with her two students during that online session. I wonder if in such situation, how should a teacher realize the situation and return to the right track quickly?

Day 3 - Day 5 Reflections

After this first full week of training, discussion, and preparation for second week's practicum, I think every morning's first thirty minutes of life attitude video watching is a very impressive part. It is essential and necessary that only here we all the teachers have this opportunity to talk about our life stories and spread positive energies. Attending this program is fortunate for me to change my mindset to intake new thoughts and suggestions, have an appreciation for what you already have, and to believe everything behind has a reason.

On 7/5 and 7/6 afternoons following lunch, we also did two mindfulness sessions by Anthony. This is another moment to learn about self-care for teachers, to maintain balance and emotional equilibrium, and to relax and to refresh. Most importantly, we knew the zenergy chime that we can buy and use in our classroom teaching when we can get students' attention.

The highlights of this first week are still the big group discussion and preparation for opening ceremony and small group preparation for Day 1 or Day 2 teaching. We had collaborative time for practicum and rehearsal. Especially rehearsal, in online teaching, gives teachers a clear picture to anticipate technological issues and develop skills to handle them. I realized some of these problems could be related to computer setting, Internet speed, or even headset. Therefore, before the first formal teaching session, teachers should feel comfortable with potential technology problems if they occur during the teaching sessions next week. In addition, since online teaching relies largely on teacher's PowerPoint slides, I also realized the transitions from one slide to another and how to guide students to describe the slide content and to speak in the target language seem much more important than face-to-face teaching. Even for native speakers, rehearsing a couple of times helps us discover different instructional ways. And since the opening ceremony provided chances for teachers to see each student they will teach next week and to interact with them to know their Chinese levels, customizing our slides or differentiating questions teachers will ask in different sessions is another important task to prepare for.

Onsite Week 2 Day 1 or 2 Teaching

During day 1 two sessions, I was the supporting teacher for my partner Zhao Laoshi. After observing her teaching, I felt she was very stable and was always on a steady pace that can complete the lesson content in the required one hour with enough input and asking different kinds of questions. The slides she made provided some new thoughts for me regarding how to scaffold step by step for students.

In day 2 my first session, the first challenge is about warming up and reviewing Day 1's new sentences. I realized when students could not meet teacher's expectation to reproduce the target language structure or vocabulary, teachers should switch topic or move on to the next ones quickly.

The second challenge is about teaching culture content regarding “Fu arrived” vs. “Fu is reversed”. Hearing three lead teachers’ comments and suggestions during the break greatly helped me and made me reflect and revise my slides quickly in order to modify my second session teaching.

During the two sessions we used chatting box a lot and thank my partner Zhao Laoshi very much for her interaction with students and providing with clearing explanations to them. I also would like to thank Zhong Laoshi who helped me sort out Nearpod’s Collaborate posting issue and Cai Laoshi who helped me answer one student’s direction question at the end of the second session.

Students’ asking unexpected questions is always the natural part of a normal lesson. In a case if I do not understand a student’s question at first if he or she cannot explain clearly in Chinese, I plan to move on and ask the student to keep his or her question in the end until after we accomplish all the lesson objectives. And discuss the question with the student one-on-one or in the whole class in details in the end.