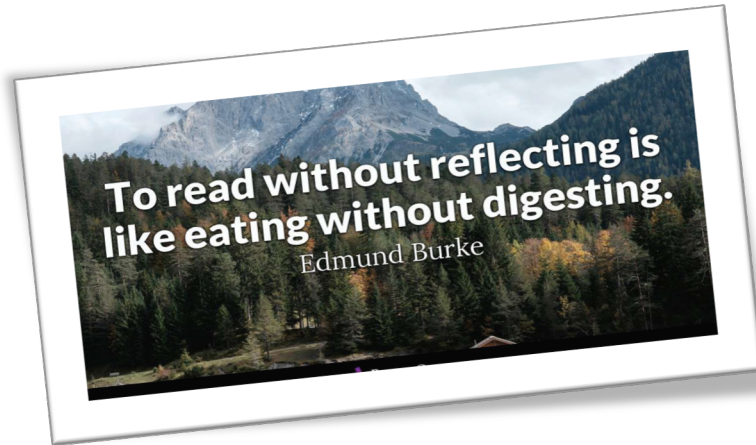Ying Feng Kline_Self-Reflections

#1 [Week 1 June 18th – 22th] Pedagogy & Principles for Effective Teaching

(Picture: https://www.brainyquote.com/lists/topics/top_10_education_quotes)

I. A Summary of key concepts.

The first-week training focused on pedagogical principles as well as provided participants opportunities to be more familiar with key concepts in foreign language teaching and learning. The key concepts & pedagogical principles include 1.) 5Cs and Gradual Release of Responsibility (GRR) Instructional Framework 2.) Backward-design 3.) Student-center Instruction 4.) Authentic Materials 5.) Differentiated Instruction 6.) Performance-based Assessments 7.) Comprehensible and meaningful Input 8.) Culture.

Through the process of completing the first-week training, I have found myself to have gained an increased awareness of incorporating the key concepts & pedagogical principles that mentioned above into my daily teaching and curriculum design. It is indisputable that teaching is a complex system; Just like an engineer must understand the mechanical principles in order to design a reliable vehicle, a teacher must understand the key concepts & pedagogical principles in order to design a lesson plan that inspires students and facilitates language acquisition effectively.

II. Reflections on my teaching experiences, the key concepts and best practices that have inspired me, and what I plan to do to maximize the effectiveness of my teaching.

The first-week training has led me to gain additional insights into the nature of a successful and productive language class; furthermore, it delineates the key components and provides trustworthy detailed evidence on how a language class can be observed, described and evaluated both qualitatively and quantitatively. I found the "Checklist for Teaching Preparation & Online Class Observation" is extremely helpful and I will use this form as a self-evaluation checklist in the process of my future curriculum design.

UVa Checklist for Teaching Preparation & Online Class Observation

A. Summative Reflections That Are Keys to Success of Teaching

B. Implementing a standards-based and thematically organized curriculum

C. Facilitating a learner-centered classroom (create at least 3 student-centered tasks during 1-hour teaching).

D. Using target language and providing comprehensible input (to generate productive language output)

   D1-Strategies for making language comprehensible

   D2-Teacher Scaffolding in other aspects

E. Integrating culture, content and language

F. Adapting and using age-appropriate authentic materials

G. Conducting performance-based assessments

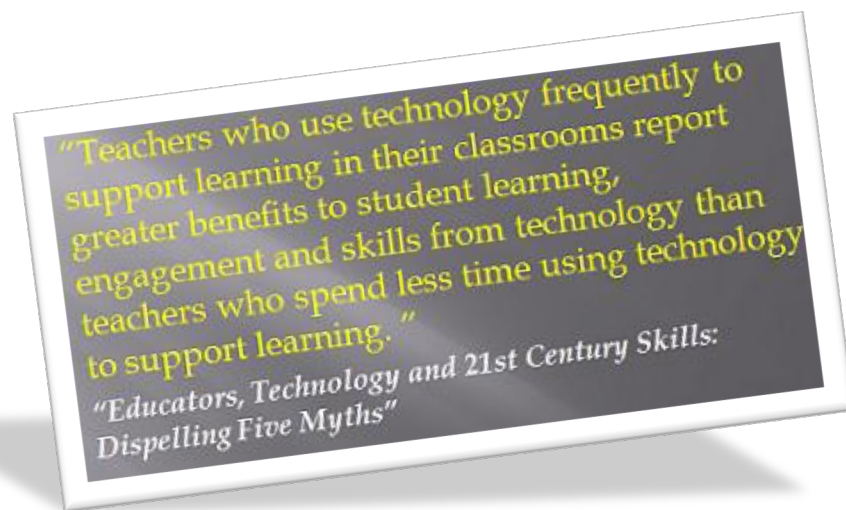H. Through the learning tools, have the instructional objectives been achieved?

Language acquisition is more likely to occur when 1.) the content of learning is relevant, organized, authentic and comprehensible; therefore, an effective lesson plan should build up on students' prior knowledge and always echoes what they have learned in a class. For example, "yesterday's learning is complemented by today's lesson, which leads to achievement tomorrow and beyond". 2.) learners are provided chances to practice in a meaningful communication （3 modes） through an interactive task that connected with real life and learners' own experience.

Another highlight of the first-week training is the teaching video demos designed by the two very experienced teachers: Zhong Laoshi and Cai Laoshi. The two videos are exemplified in how to incorporate the key concepts & principles into online teaching. Modeling (="I Do") is the first step of learning according to GRR Instruction Framework and the model can also serve as a comprehensive "quality input Flood" for learners. Both two teachers demonstrated effective elicitation techniques to push students' language product maintain at "sentential-level"（i+1） by using scaffolding questions.

I believe both the two skills (i.e. modeling ="I Do"; effective elicitation techniques by using scaffolding questions) are essential keys to the success of language teaching.

A big challenge for me this week is to design meaningful and interactive online activities as a mean of performance assessment. I hope by the end of this program I will gain more experience in activity design and teaching skills. Overall, it was a very productive week of learning which not only laid a more solid foundation on pedagogy but also pointed out a direction of improvements for my further F2F and online teaching.

> ### #2 [July 1st] Week-two Online Training Modules on Technology

"Teachers who use technology frequently to support learning in their classrooms report greater benefits to student learning, engagement and skills from technology than teachers who spend less time using technology to support learning."
"Educators, Technology and 21st Century Skills: Dispelling Five Myths"

The second week of online training has been successfully completed! What a challenging but also productive week!

At the beginning of the second week, both students and teachers have started to use CANVAS and it is so amazing that how well-organized the UVa Startalk program is. What I really like is the course layout, pacing, content delivery and assignments are all be tailored for online delivery. It maximizes the advantage of online resources and minimizes the disadvantage of online teaching/learning. I also like the diversification of students' assignments, such as speaking exercise using Flippgrid, write/type exercise using Padlet, and a game-like exercise using Pagomo. Regarding the use of Apps and/or online platform, it is not only important to choose which one is the most appropriate for teaching but also important to be able to combine them to better server learning and teaching.

In addition, being able to access students' information as well as pre-test result is so helpful to prepare the online teaching. Students' introduction video is extremely helpful because it gives me a good idea not only the students' language proficiency level but also their personality, motivation, preference and learning style which can help me to make a better choice on the details of my teaching design.

The two online training provided us with a great chance to be better prepared for using both ZOOM and Nearpod. It is true that the best way to learn is to learn it by doing. Gao Laoshi's lecturer was very interactive and step-by-step. I am new to Nearpod and by attending the two online training, I have learned a lot and get excited to use both ZOOM and Nearpod in my future teaching!

The most challenging part for me is, of course, the design of the mini teaching demo. I have to admit that asking teachers to have a mini teaching demo done by the end of the second week is a great design. it gave me a great number of chances to "make mistakes" while using the two platforms. I also have a chance to reflect on my self's teaching design by practicing the teaching demo with my partner. I really love this step because it makes sure we are prepared instead of being throw to my students directly.

This is the second day of on-site training. In the morning we reviewed mini-teaching demo of all participant teachers according the principles such as input flood and pushed output especially how to push students have satisfactory language output, using target language and providing comprehensible input, scaffolding especially effective elicitation techniques, adapting and using age-appropriate authentic materials and use available technologies (i.e. the Zoom online platform and Nearpod to help learners engage and meet performance objectives).

I was assigned to Zhao Lin Laoshi as one group to analysis the teaching demo made by Zhai Laoshi. Zhai Laoshi's class was very interactive and inspiring. There are so many highlights and I have learned so many from her demo. Zhao Laoshi focused on generally reviewing the demo according to the principles above and I explored the correlation between the way that teacher ask question (i.e. Yes/no question, meaningful question, communicative question) and the quality and quantity of students output in a F2F virtual language class （线上面对面同步教学中教师提问和学生输出语言的数量和质量的关系）. I make a chart to keep track of Zhai Laoshi's class teaching flow and students' output. According to my primary analysis, communicative question facilitated better output both quantitively (count of words of output) and qualitatively (intermediate level) in Zhai Laoshi's class.

In regard to the use of technology, the combination of ZOOM and Nearpod turned out to be very powerful tools for online teaching. I really enjoy the reliability of ZOOM and the highly interactive features of Nearpod. Nearpod is not only useful for online teaching but can also be a beneficial tool for F2F class to enhance engagement.
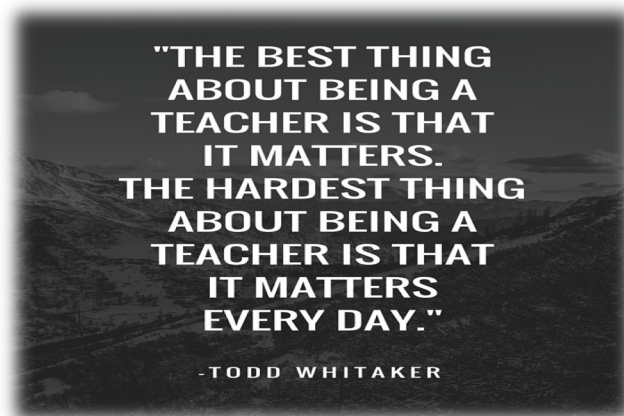
Another unforgeable experience is Professor Tseng's demo of how to teach a grammar by the use of question-asking techniques plus the use of image in a language class. She demonstrated how to teach "一 M.V.…都/也…" without explain the rules of how to use this grammar at all. Instead, she used context and scaffolding questions to led students not only understand of the meaning of this grammar but also understand the circumstance of the target grammar that should be used. I was really inspired by Tseng Laoshi's teaching skills and her demo is a great example of principles and strategies

in second language acquisition that we have learned in the first two weeks. The highlights of Tseng Laoshi demo are:

- Teaching language in a meaningful communicative dialogue.

- Scaffolded questions make the teaching flow smooth and easy to follow.

- Do not explain the grammar rules. Teach target grammar in a meaningful and authentic conversation.

- Push students to have higher-level of language output progressively.

#4 [July 10th]   Frist Day of Online Teaching (Day1)

"THE BEST THING ABOUT BEING A TEACHER IS THAT IT MATTERS. THE HARDEST THING ABOUT BEING A TEACHER IS THAT IT MATTERS EVERY DAY."

-TODD WHITAKER

My first day of online teaching was so challenging but also so interesting! I have experience of teaching courses online before I attending this program. But the online courses I taught are either 1-on-1 class or a class with about 15 students online. In the UVa program online teaching, even though I only have two students in one section, how to maintain a high quality of interaction as well as balance the language output of students who have very different language proficiency (especially the first section) are two of the biggest challenges to me.

I think what worked well in the first day online teaching is the atmosphere in both two sections was very enjoyable and encouraging. I consistently encouraged my students to output in a sentence-level, all
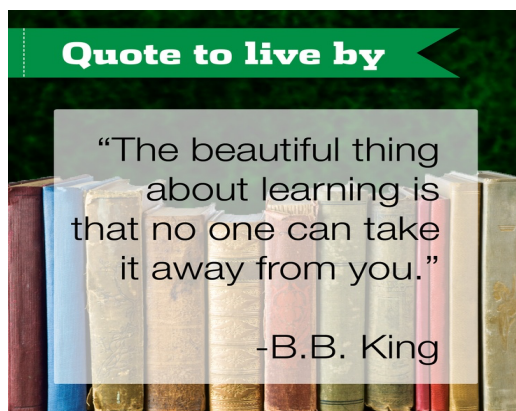
classroom instruction language were Chinese and students had no problem to comprehend my questions/instructions most of the time. In addition, I think the use of several authentic materials include authentic video that incorporated in the PPT is also a successful experience. I believe that students feel invited and engaged in today's class.

However, I need to improve my time management skill in the further teaching. We designed a lot of class activities however there was not enough time to fully carry out those tasks. I think this problem is very likely because we did not design the teaching in strict accordance with Can-Do statement. There were so many interesting content and activities that we wanted to introduce to our students however not all of them were closed tied to today's Can-Do statement.

In the future, I will pay more attention to time management skill and make sure all the activities in the online class service the Can-Do statement. I look forward to next online teaching already!

#5 [July 12th]   2nd online teaching session (Day3)

Quote to live by

"The beautiful thing about learning is that no one can take it away from you."

-B.B. King

I am very happy about my performance of the Day3 online teaching. Getting more familiar with my students, the class activities and my teaching instructions in today's online classes have become more level-appropriate. I am extremely happy to see my question-asking skills have improved a lot in the Day3 online teaching. For instance, the questions that I asked in today's two sections are more meaningful and communicative which yield higher quality of students' language output. In addition, rehearsal with my group members definitely help me to better scaffold the questions.

All of the four students enjoyed today's class very much and I enjoyed interacting with them too. Especially the two students in the first section who have very different proficiency levels were both very active and confidence to join the conversation, and one of the reasons was the use of differentiate teaching as well as better engagement skills such as asking the students who have higher proficiency level to answer challenging question first which set a model to the other students and the first student's answer can also be serviced as a model and type of input for the struggling students. This is a very easy use skill but definitely made today's online class more smoothly.

One aspect that should be improved is how to provide students meaningful corrective feedback in a communicative conversation. I used to give corrective feedback in a direct way which sometimes hurt the communicativeness of the conversation. By watching other teachers' videos, I have noticed some better way of corrective feedback. For example, use a clarified question (你的意思是…吗？or 是不是…) to make students aware of the correct way seems very effective and also earlier to be accepted by students. I will also give longer waiting time while student is trying to figure out some correction by him/her self because learning is more like to occur through guided discover instead of being told what the right answer is. Learning is not linear, so teaching should not be linear neither.

#6 [July 18th]   The 5th Online Teaching Session (Day9)

Dear teacher,

Teacher: Where is your homework?

Me: I lost it, fighting with a kid, who said you weren't the best teacher in the school.

Because you are the best.

Time flies! Can't believe that this is the last online class to teach for me and tomorrow the program will come to a closure. On one hand, I feel very happy and released because this intensive training and teaching finally come to a happy termination. On the other hand I also feel sad because I am reluctant to say goodbye to my students, my team, and the UVa Startalk Program.

I am deeply inspired and motived by the whole teaching team in the UVa program. I love how Tseng Laoshi being so encouraging and merciful mentor for all participants. Tseng Laoshi is not only the leader and organizer of this program, she is also the program's source of the spirit. She reminds me an old Chinese wisdom "上善若水" from Lao Tzu's "Tao Te Ching" which means a great leader should like water. *"Water for the benefit of all things, nourishes all things, but do not compete with all things, this is the most modesty. Jianghai been able to become the fate of all the rivers, because he is good at the downstream position, it has become one hundred valley king. [......] So handicapped wins strong, soft can be overcome."*

Tseng Laoshi managemental style is like the water in "Tao Te Ching". She is the most modesty one even she is the most experience one. Studying under Tseng Laoshi greatly inspire me and encourage me to be a better teacher and a better person. Zhong Laoshi, our team leader, she is always so happy and so elegance, her patience and enthusiasm motive everyone in the team to work closer and work harder. I remember she spent hours on helping us refine the questions and getting a better perspective. She often works until midnight. As our technological supporter as well as an experience Chinese teacher, Gao Laoshi is always so timely to offer her help to everyone in the program. She shares her experience without any reservation. Yujia and Yoyo who coordinator the teacher program and the student program are also very professional and amazing. Without their hardworking, the program would not be so successful.

At the last day of online teaching, I am confidence to teach language online even with students have very different language proficiency level and diverse background. By the use of differentiation teaching approach, I was able to make all students contribute to the class in a differentiated way. One student with mediate language proficiency level and one struggling student collaboratively completed the task of creating a vlog in which the student with higher language skills set a model for the struggling

student. The other student who also with mediate language proficiency level was responsible for answering questions based on the vlog that created by the previous two students. At the end, the student with the highest language proficiency narrated the vlog and make suggestions on the vlog.

I am so happy to see the changes of my responsibility from a person who demonstrate to a faithful audience of student's' performance. The importance of my role has progressively become less and less visible (I Do -- We Do -- You Do). At the end of Day 9, my students can output a long paragraph by themselves or with a little assist from peers or teach. I feel so pound of them!

As Tseng Laoshi always remind us, student is the protagonist of the class, teacher services as a coach. Therefore, a great teacher should like water, nourishes all students without trying to control.

> The supreme good is like water,
> which nourishes all things without trying to.
> It is content with the low places that people disdain.
> Thus it is like the Tao.
>
> In dwelling, live close to the ground.
> In thinking, keep to the simple.
> In conflict, be fair and generous.
> In governing, don't try to control.
> In work, do what you enjoy.
> In family life, be completely present.
>
> When you are content to be simply yourself
> and don't compare or compete,
> everybody will respect you.