

## **Ai Shi: Self-Reflections**

**June 23, 2017**

The first week of online training has been very helpful and inspiring for me. Reviewing some important teaching theories such as backward design, 5cs and target language and comprehensible input gave me a better understanding about how these theories could be used in effective online teaching in this program. At the same time, watching and sharing ideas about some online teaching videos in training sessions gave me a deeper understanding about how effective online teaching could be done.

It's essential to build a student-centered classroom to make real learning happen. But this can be more challenging based on my understanding and video-conferencing teaching experience. However, in almost every sample teaching video, students were so engaged in learning activities and showed great language output even in online learning environment. Taking Ms. Kong's teaching video of textbooks in backpack as a great example, students in her class engaged themselves in reading class schedule, recognizing different textbooks on the bookshelf, dragging the textbooks to the backpack according to the class schedule and reporting to the class about all learning process. As a teacher, Ms. Kong acted as a successful facilitator letting students comprehend and give the most language output. Ms. Kong only talked and helped when students needed some help giving correct and complete output in the whole video. The interactive teaching method and engaging activities Ms. Kong used in this teaching video gave me great ideas about how to teach class schedule and the Chinese sentence structure of “ba3/把” in lower level Chinese classes. With the same interactive teaching method, Ms. Kong designed the topics of eating and hotpot in her other two teaching videos. In both teaching videos, students were engaged in choosing/dragging food into their plate in school cafeteria or into the hotpot and learned the language effectively in target language. In these three teaching videos, as I remembered, Ms. Kong was on target language for all the time, and students were definitely on target language higher than 95%. Students only used a few English words when they wanted to double check with the teacher and the teacher

answered the questions in target language perfectly.

After week 1 online-training, what I learned the most is that there are many great ideas to stay in target language and make students show productive language output. One of the most effective way is to design interactive learning activities which can be done by WizIQ. I am so excited that we will get more training about WizIQ next week. I am looking forward to learn to design interactive learning activities next week during and after the training with my partner and my team.

### **July 7, 2017**

I have to admit that I have been challenged and surprised by this training program so far, definitely in a good way. Teachers like Dr. Tseng, Ms. Henny, Ms. Li and Ms. Zhong are so experienced and patient that they already knew what we Chinese teachers have been encounters with different kinds of teaching issues or concerns/challenges. The way they shared and challenged us to rethink how to teach more effectively with case study and group presentation and discussion really made reconsider what I have been teaching for past a few years in different classrooms.

The first take-away is how to be a best teacher. I learned that we do have different ideas about what is a best teacher, but we all agree being a best teacher has to make students shine instead of teachers themselves. Four leading teachers created discussion activities to let all of us share what we think about being a best teacher. I reflect what I have done to meet all these requirements, without doubt, there is a better path to follow.

The second take-away is the importance of “input flood, pushed output”. The more comprehensible input we give to students the more meaningful and communicative output students will use in the real language world. Four leading teachers showed us so many different ways to lead students’ learning and push their output such as matching, supplying information.

The third take-away is the importance and multi choices of error correction. I do know it’s a struggle for lots of students when, how and how much to correct students. The

discussion and case study session gave me so many different ideas and suggestions such as elicitation, recast and combination of some of them.

### **July 13, 2017**

July 10<sup>th</sup> is an unforgettable day for me during this program: I successfully had my first online class with all my five fantastic students with great help of my partner's. I would consider that day a great day to always look back and be appreciative about my teaching career.

Honestly, I was pretty nervous the night before my first day, as usual, with 7 years of teaching Chinese. Even though I spent a lot of time preparing for the PPT, materials and rehearsal with my teammates, I still felt the unknown future was bothering me. I call that feeling my little anxiety. Communications with other teachers in our program made me realize that I am not the only one who had this little anxiety. I told my partner I had some anxious dreams related to teaching and classrooms but she told me to calm down and face what is coming for us. After breakfast, I was still thinking back some anxious moments I had in the past when some of my classes/levels were not well prepared when I showed up in front of my lovely students. I rarely felt I was totally ready for all my seven levels students based on what I think I should had been. My partner reminded me that at least, your preparations are much better than other times during regular teaching at school. I agreed and moved forward to deliver what I am good at and what my team prepared for this class. As my partner said to me, there was a whole team supporting me with food, great smile, true encouragement and practical suggestions after class. I calmed myself down even though my little anxiety showed up for a long time as a habit.

### **Things worked out:**

Students followed the learning flow and stayed engaged in learning activities we designed and had a lot of high quality output. Good preparations (teaching materials, mood, technology, students readiness etc. ) is the best thing we can do to make sure a good class has a good start. There are some activities I probably would not use because of my teaching habit but thankfully other teachers contributed their experience and ideas and students loved them. The last activity is to call students' Chinese teacher and have a

phone call about first day experience in China. In this activity, students were so excited to think of all related questions their teacher would ask and the phone call was wonderful. I would like to thank Xiaorong Wang, my lesson planning partner, who contributed this great idea to push students to wrap up all their knowledge and skills learned in this topic and gave us a great presentation of what they could do with language they learned. I also would like to thank my teaching partner, Xuemei Huang, who kept taking care of teaching issues during the classes. She reminded me about the timing, paying attention to certain things during teaching and tutored students who were falling behind or misunderstood the content. Things worked because of a great team and great preparations. That is very important for me to gradually overcome my anxiety I believe, at least, it's a good start.

**Things I could try and maybe do better next time:**

I simply did pdf and ppt presentation mode during the whole class because I would like to make everything smooth and successful for my first online class. For activities, I simply tried to ask students to answer my questions or interview each other because this is the best way to make sure instructions are clear and activities will be easy to handle. For Day 3 class, I am going to try whiteboard for ordering food in the restaurant, singing Chinese songs in class, group typing and discussing about healthy and unhealthy food. I think these three new things I will try tomorrow will give me a rewarding result. No matter what, I will try my best and see how it goes and I will always learn something new good or bad/not that good from new actions tomorrow.

**July 15, 2017**

Today is my second day online teaching and it's a meaningful experience for my teaching career I would say.

First, I would like to talk about things worked out. This is the first time our group tried to use a story to plan this lesson. The topic of our lesson is visitors in Chinese host family. At first, we reviewed the dialogue in textbook together. Then, we decided we would like to cover two topics: personal interests and food. After group discussion, we started to work on 3 smaller sections in 3 small groups: personal interests, food and wrapping

up/review. Instead of making 3 parts totally different content or activities, we tried to make it a whole story: exchange students arrived at their host family. The next day, a visitor came to host family and made friends with exchange students by talking about their own interests. When all students showed their great interest in singing songs or music, Chinese host family encouraged exchange students to join the Voice of China. Exchange students practiced a Chinese song with the Chinese teacher in class and won the first prize. They celebrated it in a local restaurant and practiced ordering food and learning about more authentic food. Right after that, a reporter came to visit exchange students for their wonderful performance in the Voice of China. I feel our teamwork really worked perfectly so that we went over every part on the PPT very smoothly. When I did rehearsal I was engaged in leading the whole story we created and language practice was just one part of it. I would say I was much more comfortable with the materials I was going to teach today than other days. I would not worry about any difficulty with transitions of different learning activities.

Also, I would say I am proud of two things I tried today in class: ordering food on whiteboard and teaching songs through media player in wiziQ. It was a great challenge and a great success technically and emotionally.

When I finished the first class today, my teaching partner told me that my class was wonderful. She said, “You led two students a great journey with the story you created together and each of you was so into it until the last minute of class.” I was thrilled when I heard that. I understand what she was saying because for most of time, I was just follow the story and enjoyed myself too. I appreciate the experience of creating a story with my team and make a enjoyable class happened both for me and my students. Organizing all learning activities into a good story has been proved to be very effective. I made my mind to try this method when I am writing new curriculum design for my new district.

I am so grateful that some more experienced Chinese teachers like Dr. Tseng, Ms. Chen, Ms. Lin and Ms. Li were there for suggestions to improve my teaching. Ms. Li reminded me to be aware of time management in class and I made much progress in second class. Ms. Lin reminded me to be more careful to some details like sentence format,

presentation image and clear visual aids. I put some questions on the PPT screen when I modeled some statements and expected students to give statement output, which, can be really confusing for most students. Good preparation leads to less mistakes and more success.

The more reflections I have done, the clearer I could see what I have been doing and how much I could improve my teaching. I am looking forward to trying more new things in Day 5 discussion and future classes.