

Yuan Yuan

Reflection #1

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The two online training sessions with Dr. Tseng are enjoyable and informative. Since I have never had any formal online teaching experience before, I felt very overwhelmed and could not have a clue of what to expect and how to prepare for the coming Startalk program at UVA. Dr. Tseng's training sessions helped me have a clear picture of online Mandarin teaching on the WizlQ platform.

I like the way that we discussed about theories about backward design and differentiation and the videos from last year's program. In my opinion, these videos effectively facilitated a learner-centered classroom in which students were exposed in 100% target language learning environment with comprehensible input from teachers and thus produced satisfactory language output. For example, when a student was not sure about the meaning of "cheng shi" and "guo jia", a teacher explained that "Beijing, New York are cheng shi and China, USA are "guo jia" instead of translating the words into English. Besides that, real-life contextual clues were provided in all these sample videos, which raised students' attention and interests and helped students to understand the content of those lessons. In my classroom, my personal goal is to reach 100% target language environment for all levels, I will apply similar strategies to facilitate more effective lessons.

I found out that online teaching is more challenging to keep students engaging and accountable than face-face class since I saw that the format of learning activities are mostly limited in Q & A. However, the tools on WizIQ platform offer teachers opportunities to design interactive lessons. As we discussed during the second online training session, the WizIQ works similar to smartboard, I am looking forward to gaining new ideas of creating lessons on WizIQ and converting it into smartboard activities in my regular classroom to benefit my students.

## Reflection #2

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This week I have learned a lot about on-line teaching. I practiced with my partner on using the Zoom and Wiziq platforms and became more comfortable of using the Collab and Cavas as the resource centers for instruction. Chen laoshi's online meetings gave me the opportunity to reflect my teaching practice of online instruction.

I was very overwhelmed during this week since online teaching is completely new to me. It took me a lot of time to play with the platforms and finish the assignments. My partner, Shi laoshi, guided me to how to lead an online classroom through Wiziq step by step, which helped me feel much relieved.

In my opinion, online teaching is much more challenging than face-to-face instruction. Successful online lessons require the teacher to plan extremely structured lessons and

spend tons of time to prepare the teaching materials. According to the examples picked by Chen laoshi, I feel that any carelessness on lesson designing may lead to the confusion of students. Besides that, the teacher has to select pictures and create activities in a logic way, otherwise it will be difficult for students to follow. In addition, teacher has to always get the backup plans ready and be flexible to technology issues since the Wiziq platform is not always stable. For example, when Shi laoshi and I were trying to record our opening ceremony, we were suddenly off the platform twice without clicking anything and we had to login out and then login in for several times and we finally made it. Hope we could learn about what kind of technology issues the 2016 teachers had and how to deal with those issues.

### Reflection #3

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On Friday, Dr. Tseng shared us her teaching philosophy and strategies on teaching grammar through theme-based context. She showed us sample activities, such as giving an authentic picture and key words, and then have students talk about a logical story to practice the grammar points. The traditional way, which is explaining the grammar points in English and having mechanical drills, is not an effective way to teach languages. Instead of that, having students practice based on authentic theme and scenario will greatly help their language output.

On Saturday, I learned about various tips from Dr. Kathryn Murphy-Judy about learner centered online teaching and learning with a focus on how to design activities to raise students' curiosity and how to integrate gaming into lesson planning. Dr. Murphy-Judy asked us to think about "Which communicative learning goals that you typically use in your F2F Chinese courses is most effective with your students?" We then discussed how to reach the communicative learning goals for online teaching. After the discussion, I realized that no matter for F2F courses or online language courses, the teacher should design student-centered learning activities which are communicative and meaningful. Later, Dr. Gao shared with a couple of useful websites and apps for teaching Mandarin language, for example, vocaroo, blabberize, voice thread and screencastify, to encourage students practice speaking and work on pronunciation. Those websites are convenient to share young learners' work with parents so their parents could see how their children are doing on language learning.

The mindfulness training on the past two days are very helpful to stay positive and be nice to ourselves under today's fast-paced and stressful environment. It is Ok to be less-hard to yourself. It is Ok to not to be perfect on every signal second.

Reflection #4

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The online opening ceremony was a completely new experience for me. Even though there was a little technology issue when I tried to log in, Henny laoshi calmly helped me

solve this problem. The opening ceremony gave me the opportunities to interact with our students and also served as a preparation for the coming real lessons. After that, I feel I am more comfortable to teach online.

The six teachers in my group designed the lesson plan for the first day lesson with our master teacher, Zhong laoshi. We discussed with each other a lot. This process gave me tons of new ideas. During the first rehearsal session, our group did a demo teaching to all the teachers and everybody gave us valuable feedback. I really enjoyed this session because during my regular work, I have never got an opportunity to have such detailed feedback from my colleagues. The rehearsal session greatly helped me to better reflect my lesson plans and gave me ideas which I have never thought about.

I was so exciting when I finished my first day teaching on Monday since it was my first online Mandarin lesson. It went much more smoothly than I expected, and the students and I had a great time together. I really appreciate the help I got from the preparation sessions.