

MY Professional Goals

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As a professional, I have attended countless professional development and training courses in different cities and even different countries in order to better myself as a teacher (both in Choir and Mandarin Chinese). However, my experience as a middle school Choir teacher has been very different from my experience teaching high school Mandarin Chinese.

First, Choir is an elective class so most of the students who chose choir did so because they truly loved singing. Also, Choir is a competition/performance based course; if the students earn good ratings in competition and/or do a good job in their performance, then I have accomplished my goal. Third, there is no GPA pressure in middle school so the stress level is much lower than teaching Mandarin Chinese at the high school level.

On the other hand, I feel it's much harder to teach Mandarin Chinese, especially at the high school level

Because it satisfies the foreign language requirement, in a way it is a required course for students to study – two years minimum, and so there is GPA pressure, and the students will fight/argue for 0.1 point with teachers if they can. And this pressure is intensified because of one inescapable fact: Chinese is a much harder foreign language to learn than any other foreign language available to them.

For all of these reasons and because of the stress that came from five years of teaching Mandarin Chinese, I was thinking of changing my career again (either going back to teaching Choir, some other branch of Music or even something else - entirely different) so that I could have a better chance of feeling happy and professionally satisfied even though I wouldn't have as much passion for the subject as I do for Mandarin Chinese.

The thing is that after this course, I think there might still be hope for me in teaching Chinese: I think I can apply what I learned in these recent weeks to my teaching career in a way that might reduce some problems that caused all the stress before and that didn't even relate directly to learning Chinese (from students, their parents, and the school administrators, etc.).

After these past weeks, I learned to keep the goal small at first, but solid, and then move up to the next goal, instead of having a big goal and not achieving it. Therefore, my professional goal for now is to make sure that I teach a quality class to my students and to make sure that they:

1. Have enough language outcomes - Enough practice in class,

2. Don't waste the class time doing the activities that have no goals and that are not meaningful,

- 3. Extend every teachable moment, and most importantly,**
- 4. Have the end goal in mind when I design the lesson plan each day/unit, semester, etc.**

It might look like there are only four goals in my teaching goal, but those four teaching goals will need my whole teaching career to work on and to practice and perfect.

I don't know yet just how long I am going to stay in teaching Mandarin Chinese, but hopefully, with what I have learned and believe, I can stay in the field (instead of burning out). Not only do I hope to be a better teacher every single year, but also I hope that I can do the same job that Tseng Laoshi does, that is to share what I have with other teachers – if I am lucky enough to be in that position.