Thematic Lesson Planning and Performance-based Assessments

Lessons from the 2010 China Institute Startalk Summer Language Academy

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Who Are We?

- The China Institute, founded in 1926, is the oldest educational and cultural organization in the United States focused on advancing a deeper understanding of China through programs in education, culture, business and art in the belief that cross-cultural understanding strengthens our global community.
What is Startalk?

- STARTALK is a program commissioned by the National Security Language Initiative (NSLI).
- STARTALK’s mission is to increase the number of Americans learning, speaking, and teaching critical need foreign languages by offering students (K–16) and teachers of these languages creative and engaging summer experiences that strive to exemplify best practices in language education and in language teacher development.
China Institute & Startalk

- Fourth year – began in summer 2007
- Targets 25 New York metro-area high school students in two proficiency levels
- Six-week immersion program
- Focuses on oral communication, reading and writing, and Chinese culture through studio art classes and local field trips.
Thematic Planning

- Framed our level 1, novice-low, in the context of the 2010 Shanghai Expo.
- Previously, our program’s overall theme was the Beijing Olympics.
- Within the context of a relevant Chinese cultural event, we developed our weekly goals and objectives.
Thematic Planning

- Our level 2 course, including novice-mid and novice-high learners, was framed with the Chinese classical masterpiece *Journey to the West* (Monkey King).
- The usage of *Journey to the West* allowed for various approaches into the Chinese language and culture.
Day-to-Day Objectives and Goals

- Curriculum is thoroughly integrated in all daily objectives, goals, and activities. Our thematic planning is also integrated into our studio art classes as well as our martial arts classes.
- Backwards planning facilitated integration between theme and daily activities.
- Teachers planned weekly, daily, and hourly.
Stages in the Backward Design Process

1. Identify desired results
2. Determine acceptable evidence
3. Plan learning experiences and instruction
Results of Thematic Planning

➢ Shanghai Expo –
  • Art class – created backdrop for dialogues, developed their own pavilions
  • Frequent dialogue practice framed in Expo

➢ Journey to the West Drama Club
  • Art class – costumes, props, backdrops
  • Puppet show, rap battles, comic strips, song, and interpretive dance
Performance Based Assessments

➢ Level 1
  • Write letter to Shanghai Expo roommate
  • Complete a World Cup tournament bracket
  • Create dialogue simulating ticket purchase and inquiry of directions
  • Create a Shanghai Expo brochure for their specific country’s pavilion
Journey to the West

Week 1: Characters
- Clothing
- Personality
- Appearance
- Encounters

Week 2: Time Period
- Seasons
- Dynasties
- Lunar Calendar
- How to Tell Time

Week 3: Geography
- Weather
- Chinese Cities
- Transportation in JTW
- Route of JTW
- Food in JTW
- Minority Groups
- Apparel & Shopping
- Festivals & Traditions

Week 4: People of China
- Route of JTW
- Chinese Cities
- Transportation in JTW
- Food in JTW
- Minority Groups
- Apparel & Shopping
- Festivals & Traditions

Week 5: Silk Road
- Characteristics of the Route
- Landscapes and Scenery
- Encounters
Week 1 Activities

Development of Characters

- Missing Person Telephone Activity

猪八戒是唐僧的第二个徒弟。他又矮又胖，长着猪脸人身，又贪吃又爱睡觉，非常滑稽好笑。他对唐僧衷心耿耿，个性单纯。
Jeopardy

- An integral part for our students to check their personal understanding of the material.
- Used throughout the six week program and spiraled old material throughout.
- Integrates notion of competitive learning in environment for students.
Create Your Own Journey to the West!

- Students created a five day personal Journey to the West.
- They were asked to include weather, geography, date and time. Students created a fictional monster’s physical attributes, weapons and personality.
“Would You Come With Me?”

- Week 2 assessment – evaluated students’ understanding of the characters.
- Students would be randomly assigned a character. They will need to write down personality, physical appearance, clothing, and other characteristics of their character.
- Then, students would have to verbally interact with peers to find the four members of the Journey of the West characters.
Facebook – Guess Who?

- Students played a game of ‘Guess Who’ in which they were presented four facts about their fellow classmates. (Week 2)
- Students needed to guess the identity of this person based on facts about their nationality, personality, physical appearance, and hobbies.
Yo Mamma Rap Battle

- Students were asked to ‘compliment’ a fellow classmate using set sentence structures that required usage of pronouns, verbs, nouns, and adjectives.

- A continuous string of sentences must be stated in a call and response method.
Performance Based Assessment

Level 2

- Drama Club Performance
- “Would You Come With Me?” assessment
- “Create Your Own Journey to the West”
- “Fight Off The Monster”
- Missing Person Case
- Personal Ads
Group-Pair Share Component

- “Guess Who?”
- Twister
- Yo Mamma Rap Battle
- Mad Libs
- Scattergories