

Tang – Creating Engaging Materials Reflection Essay

While taking this three week intensive online short course, *Creating Engaging Materials*, I learned so much about creating materials that can be visually appealing, attractive, and most importantly, *engaging*. I believe that reviewing some of the materials that I used to use, such as Padlet and VoiceThread, was a great refresher. Most importantly, I learned about backward design, and how to apply backward design in creating materials for my students. Also, the very useful resources that Shannon shared, such as the IALLT Webinar on discussion forums and the how to make them interactive. I also enjoyed making the engaging materials for Cantonese learners, as there are not many written for second/foreign language learners, as most materials use the nativist approach. Reflecting on these three crucial takeaways have shown me how to consider the different principles of engaging materials: audio, video, and interactive elements.

Incorporating backward design has taught me how to: 1) identify desired results, 2) determine acceptable evidence, and 3) plan learning experiences and instruction (Vanderbilt University, <https://cft.vanderbilt.edu/guides-sub-pages/understanding-by-design>). I think that these three stages of backward design “allows for deliberate and focused instruction design that requires teachers to make an important shift in our thinking about the nature of our jobs”, which is important to consider when creating materials for our language learners. It is important to consider what the end goal is, and to see what acceptable to *me*, as an instructor. After I find what is acceptable, I then can create learning experiences and instruction. This is why I thought using Perusall could be very useful to interact with learners and let them see what they should learn, and how I can use formative assessments to see what they have learned through reflections with the social annotation feature of this program. Backward design made me think about other programs that can also help with other instructional activities, such as Padlet and VoiceThread, some useful resources I’ve used before as an instructor.

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A really useful resource was watching the IALLT Webinar on “Are discussion forums really interactive? Ideas for purposeful asynchronous communication. I used to use Canvas as my Learning Management System, and I found that the discussion forums were really boring if they weren’t properly scaffolded. That’s why I think that using Padlet or VoiceThread could be useful and allow students to use these different avenues to convey and make meaning of the content that I am trying to use and instruct them in a unit/class. Without using alternatives, this would make learning very static and boring, and with what the post-pandemic world has taught us, we, as instructors, can find more engaging ways to teach our students in the language classroom.

As for creating engaging materials for the Cantonese language classroom, I found this very useful and valuable, as I have been working on a research project to teach the differences between *do ze* and *m goi*, which are both “thank you” in Cantonese. I have thought of making a very formal discourse completion task through worksheets, but seeing how I can use technologies like H5P or even Pear Deck to explicitly teach students the two different ways of using “thank you” in Cantonese. With these different approaches by using these different resources, this can help augment and illustrate the start, but subtle differences with thanking strategies in Cantonese.

As the course wraps up, I want to thank my instructor, Shannon Quin, with what I have accomplished so far in this course, and for the plethora of resources that she has shared with the class. I really appreciate her feedback with the engaging materials that I created for Cantonese language learners. Although this is a very grand idea, but I hope to use what I have learned with *Creating Engaging Materials*, and develop a Cantonese language textbook for the North

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American foreign language classroom context, and also corporate backward design to make materials interactive.