**EFFECTIVE PLANNING FOR TEACHING YOUNG LEARNERS ONLINE**

Nobody would believe that we would be asked to deliver online classes within 24 hours without any guidance and training. Actually it sounds frustrating doesn’t it especially when it comes to teaching young learners? Not in the least.  As for me, even though the atmosphere seemed rather gloomy, there was no need to panic. I had three reasons for that.

First, I had already been tutoring adult learners online via a Japanese company at the weekends so I was familiar with what was going on so it was high time that I smoothly switched my online teaching experience from adult learners to my young learners.

Besides, our Foreign Language Department took immediate actions and the online learning platform called **Metodbox** (which will be presenting its own online lesson platform soon) came into play. This artificial intelligence environment soon became the flipped learning side of learning where kids learned, and revised (if necessary) the content of the lesson with lesson materials such as videos, docs, listening tracks and PPTs. We were also sent the necessary digital content and tutorials for the **Zoom** live lessons where we could practice the lesson content.

Last but not the least, as EFL teachers we have been utilizing an arsenal of digital activities and opportunities so far which would definitely contribute to such blended type of instruction. Being a foreign language teacher in 2000s already made each of us “equipped” with 21st century skills and taking the collaborative aspect of the process into account where parents would track their kids’learning process, it wouldn’t be so hard to transfer our effective teaching skills to the virtual classroom.

Still, I admit that the discovery process that we were going through required experimenting and we needed enough time for such a transition to happen. However, it wouldn’t sound very humanistic to end the school in the middle of an Academic Year in such a traumatic time and train each teacher for the upcoming semester. For this reason, we all dived right into the ocean and swam ashore with different pros and cons we experienced during our instruction. Now it’s time to share what we have in our pockets.

Thus, using my prior digital experiences and preparing effective lesson plans made the switch smoother. Since the temporary school closure in Turkey; for the last week of Marc, I’ve had the chance to try various ways of adapting my previous digital activities to the new digital learning environment so as to enrich my current classroom practice.

Here are my modest recommendations on how to plan your online lessons more effectively;

**Vocabulary**

For recycling vocabulary, I still made use of **Quizlet** and **Quizizz.** Hangman through a simple Hangman generator indulged my students.

**Speaking**

**Charades** made them participate in describing something and enhanced their speaking skills. Their own **PPTs**, and their sticky notes and posts on digital bulletin boards like **Padlet, Buncee** and **Canva** gave them the chance to express themselves confidently. Nominating one student from **chatbox of Zoom** (Chat with Host only mode) got them to play a guessing game which made them feel as if they were in their own classroom.

**Grammar and Writing**

For introducing a new grammar topic and checking my learners’ understanding via different ways of interaction like live polls, open questions, sorting and brainstorming **Wooclap,** **Mentimeter** and **Kahoot** really paid off.

**Project based Learning**

Students using **I-movie, Powtoons** and **Kinemaster,** had the chance to present a project at the end of each unit, which catered for project-based learning. When you screen share their projects they walk on air!

**Reading**

Digital reading platforms like **Highlights library, Scholastic, Reading A-to-Z** and **Raz Plus** provided them the opportunity to improve their reading at their own pacing. Providing digital feedback keeps them eager to learn.

**Classroom Competition**

**Classcraft’s “Boss Battle”** still gave them great confidence to answer questions just as if they were in the face-to-face learning environment. Even using the **Zoom’s chatbox** for answering multiple choice questions helped the shy ones to feel more at ease.

**Classroom Interaction**

Even though we are not using **Google Products,** I believe that using **Google Classroom** Instruments like **Google Slides** and **Peardeck** where students can actively engage and contribute to the content would improve classroom interaction. **Flipgrid** and **Seesaw Class** could also provide them the possibility to feel reassured to see their friends and teachers while sharing work. In addition, the interactive classroom whiteboard **Explain Everything** offers a great opportunity to for them to collaborate in both teaching and learning process with its real-time and asynchronous options.

**Challenges**

As in all learning processes, It seems that embracing such a transition and feeling as if we are in our everyday classes will take some time but optimistically speaking this change will contribute very highly to our teaching career in terms of blended and flipped teaching.

To be honest, I’ve been challenged until I got capable of using the features of the online collaboration tool that we were using **(Zoom);** such as muting/unmuting and using the right shortcuts at the right time. As I have classes of 24 and a duration of 30’, I did not dare to use the Breakout rooms as it would result in spending too much time of the lesson and hard times with monitoring. What’s more, I tried to catch the names of the students on the video panel and often missed them while I was trying to take special care to ensure that most students in my class could have a chance to give a short response to my questions. Moreover, I had difficulty when students did not want to share their videos as they had this right in terms of e-safety issues. Time management has been another aspect to be considered as the lessons flow one after another with 10-minute breaks.

However, on the bright side, I’ve been gaining lots of experience and still have a lot to learn. I’m trying to attend webinars and MOOCs. Now the K12 School I’m working at is attempting to train its selected teachers with a cascaded approach so as to reach every single teacher in each regional campus. (which equals to thousands of teachers). I hope reflecting upon my experiences and envisioning my future plans will increase my self-awareness and develop my creative thinking skills. Even when writing this post, I considered what more I could do and decided to think of integrating Augmented Reality like **Metaverse** Quizzes or using **Zappar** for content presentation. I think this is just the beginning and we have a long way ahead. I don’t know what the future will hold, but I believe facilitating the online learning process of young learners through such multi-tasking and digital resources will promote effective learning.