A PBLL-designed Advanced Chinese Unit for a Distance Learning Course
ADAM ROSS
Chinese American International School
Why Online?

- CAIS is a PreK-8 dual immersion Chinese-English school.
- Our 8th grade students graduate with a range of Intermediate-Mid to Pre-Advanced levels of Mandarin.
- A problem our students have faced is high school programs with not enough challenge for them, hence our decision to offer an online course for our graduates.
Why PBLL?

- At CAIS students have had ample exposure to Chinese as an academic subject, with much exposure to Chinese and Taiwanese culture in trips overseas in 5th, 7th and 8th grades.

- Students discuss often wanting to be able to use their Chinese in active ways, beyond what they have done in school or homestay study-abroad environments.

- In an online course environment, we want students to be able to engage in tasks that feel real, exciting and motivating.
Online Tools

- Hangouts
- Google forms
- Zaption
- Screencastomatic
- Vocaroo
- Padlet
- Click to Record
LMS Use

- LMS = Learning Management System (Haiku, Canvas, Moodle, Schoology, etc.)

- Useful for both fully online and blended learning PBLL modules
  - Can post video and resource links, flipped classroom videos
  - Students can share work
Evaluation of this “Regular” Project Unit

Unit on Monkey King/ 孙悟空故事单元

What this unit does reasonably well…
- Engages students in reading/writing on standards-based culturally appropriate themes; vocabulary practice.
- Some amount of student voice and choice to develop their written chapter; creativity to produce.
- Other students as readers, with opportunities for students to review and comment on each others’ work.

What this unit does less well…
- No challenging problem or question; no real world tasks; lack of sustained inquiry.
采访项目 Interview Project

你们的任务：想出10-15个问题来问湖畔学校的会说普通话 / 国语的华人移民，或来美国进行留学活动的中国 / 台湾等留学生。

进行采访时，必须要说中文！千万别说英文！

Due Date: Wednesday, January 13

Requirements:
1. Please record your interview using a “Flip Camera,” cell phone or digital camera device

2. When editing your interview, you need to:

   • Create a title slide (including your name and your subject’s name and a concluding slide, perhaps with thanks to your interviewee and/or anyone else you would like to mention.
   • Make a short introduction about the content of your discussion, what was most interesting, and what you learned about this person’s experience.
### Problem
How do we document about ordinary Chinese-Americans and their experiences in California? This is asking students essentially to become documentary journalists to create a submission for a “This Chinese-American Life” webpage.

### Purpose
Most students in the course in the course will have learned about Chinese immigration to California (and to North America in general) in Lower and Middle School. In addition, they will have had some experience interviewing Chinese people-on-the-street in their study abroad experiences in China. This focus is to engage students with, and learn from, Chinese people in their local communities in a deeper way.

### Product
Students will create video mini-documentaries about their interview subject, creating the video mostly in voice-over to showcase their own oral production in this advanced-level performance task.

### Audience
Google Plus Communities to showcase work, connect to Twitter feed. Videos can be shown to students in the CAIS LS and MS Chinese classes to supplement their own learning on Chinese immigrants.
Evaluation of an (approaching) “Gold Standard” PBLL Unit

“This Chinese-American Life” / 美籍华人的生活

What this unit does well...
- Point of inquiry to drive project
- Student choice in person to interview, way to develop interview project.
- Extended inquiry in a number of media, engaging students in all four skills.
- Public project where students have more at stake to produce something worthwhile

What this unit does less well...
- Less traditional “grammar and vocabulary practice” (though these can be added)
- But, are traditional grammar/vocab practice really needed? We teachers need to decide what our students need...
THANKS FOR LISTENING!
I’m happy to hear your feedback!

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