

华裔学生读写教学教材策略和方法论

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Introduction

This presentation emphasizes the importance of designing reading materials that focus on improving students' reading proficiencies and socio-cultural experiences in the intermediate CFL classroom.

In the late twentieth century, most CFL reading and writing courses generally focused only on Chinese character memorizing and decoding. The textbook that epitomizes this approach of teaching is *The Lady in the Painting* (Claudia Ross, Jocelyn Ross, Fangyu Wang, Yale University Press) and *Beginning Chinese Reader* (John Defrancis, Yale University Press). After extensive research on CFL and Heritage Language (HL), however, it is found that top-down/macro approaches are more effective than bottom-up/micro approaches in Chinese literacy education. We have devised a new, more sufficient curriculum according to the most recent research results. The literacy goal is to learn 350 to 1000 Chinese characters for the beginning phase and 1000 to over 2000 for the final phase. Traditionally, reading ability is built through repetitive reading of short sentences, conversations, and paragraphs. Textbook used are focused on introducing the common characters. Our new literacy curriculum, the key teaching focus is to holistically read a prodigious amount of materials. Students' reading abilities will be developed through reading short stories under instructions, and eventually through reading long stories and

news independently. We will add Chinese Biographies series, (<https://www.cheng-tsui.com/browse/chinese-biographies>) such as those of Yao Ming, Jay Chou, and Lang Lang, to not only pique students' learning interests, but also to help them learn more deep culture.

1. Literature Review

1.1 Narrow Reading

Second language acquirers are usually exposed to a variety of board topics at the beginning level. In more advanced courses, students “specialize” their readings into specific topics to facilitate both structure and vocabulary. Stephan Krashen lists two advantages of narrow reading: it provides built-in review because of the writer’s distinctive style and each topic’s own discourse; background knowledge is a tremendous facilitator of comprehension (Krashen, 2004). Since narrow reading topics intrigue learners, it becomes very motivating for them to intensify their reading.

1.2 Heritage Language (HL) and Heritage Language Learners (HLLs)

According to Valdes (2001), a heritage language is the language someone learns at home that is also a minority language in society. The speaker, however, usually seems more competent in and feels more comfortable communicating in the dominant language that they grow up with. Heritage language learners are language students who are raised in homes where non-English languages are spoken and are to some degree bilingual in that language and in English (Valdes, 2000).

1.3 Top-down/Macro Approaches vs. Bottom-up/Micro Approaches

Top-down approaches or macro approaches are often characterized as discourse-based, content-based, genre-based, task-based or experiential. They are most commonly discussed and applied to help HLLs develop their grammatical and lexical knowledge through discourse-level or genre-based activities. Macro-approaches often start with content that is age-appropriate to HLLs. The reading, writing, speaking, listening, and culture tasks are fairly broad with a relatively full range of language input. In contrast, micro-approaches' vocabulary is full-ranged, and its reading, writing, speaking, listening, and culture tasks are relatively short and gradually increasing in volume and complexity.

2. Cultural Literacy

Traditionally, the typical cultural contents presented in a language class are things one can observe on the surface, such as Chinese festivals, folk songs, and food. The information provides a context for the target culture to come to life. However, this approach posts a potential challenge when the students possess prior knowledge of the target culture.

As part of the American culture, HLLs and their culture enrich cultural experiences in the American society. Engaging the HLLs with academically challenging content on contemporary Chinese American experiences can intensify their motivation and mutual respect (Lee and Kim, 2007).

What's more, Kagan and Dillon (2009) differentiate HL teaching from foreign language teaching, because HL teaching requires teachers to provide students with HL linguistic exposure in both the immigrant community and the home country.

Most of the American-born Chinese who are in my intermediate class have already got to know the surface Chinese culture, such as the traditional Chinese festivals, but they have little experience of the deep culture, such as the pop music in mandarin-speaking regions. Therefore, using narrow reading materials and applying top-down teaching approaches will motivate their interests in the deep culture and expand their vocabulary and cultural knowledge.

My course materials have helped students to not only acquire literacy, but also to acknowledge and appreciate their unique position as individuals living within two cultures simultaneously. Deep culture elements, such as Confucianism 儒家, filial duty 孝道, and feudal society 封建社会, will be introduced in the reading material to stimulate discussion about intricate cultural implications.

For example, from Jay Chou's biography, HLLs can learn about imperial examination 科举制度, family ties 家庭观念, and other deep culture elements. The short biography talks about Jay Chou's unsuccessful career as a student and discusses the imperial examination and how that has evolved to influence modern testing. It also focuses on intrapersonal relationships and family bonds. Not only is the short text interesting, it is highly educational.

Another example is Ang Lee, a Taiwanese-born American film director. He dreamed of making a Chinese martial arts movie. Such movies are mainly rearranged from martial arts fiction, which is a genre of novel combining history, Kung Fu, love, the supernatural, and fantasy. The setting is always in ancient China, and the stories are usually about the wars between the different schools of Kung Fu or between the Hans and the minority. Through the biography of Ang Lee, HLLs can access the deep culture elements like the martial arts fictions and learn vocabulary words like “江湖”, “武林”, and “侠客.”

Conclusion

Reading comprehension requires sufficient background knowledge (Anderson & Pearson, 1984; Spivey, 1996) as well as words recognition. Therefore, reading about topics that are mesmerizing to students can not only increase their engagement and confidence in their Chinese reading skills, but also foster students' apprehension and further their understanding of the Chinese deep culture. Moreover, celebrities like Ang Lee, Yao Ming, and Jeremy Lin all have backgrounds similar to HLLs. They are all either born and raised in China or come from China and then later gain their success in the U.S. The similar cultural experience of these people will not only pique the readers' interests, but also make them resonate with the stories. By implementing this technique, students can expand their vocabulary, phrases, and grammar and also gain a deeper understanding for the root of the language.

Resources:

- Kagan, O. & Dillon, K. (2001). A new perspective on teaching Russian: Focus on the heritage learner. *Slavic and East European Journal*, 45, 507-518.
- Kagan, O. & Dillon, K. (2008). Issues in heritage language learning in the United States. In N. Van Deusen-Scholl and N. H. Hornberger (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of language and education* (2nd Ed), Volume 4: Second and foreign language education (pp. 143-156). Springer Science+Business Media LLC.
- Kagan, O. & Dillon, K. (2009). The professional development of teachers of heritage language learners: A matrix. In M. Anderson & A. Lazaraton (Eds.), *Bridging context, making connections: Selected Papers from the Fifth International Conference on Language Teacher Education* (pp. 155-175). Minneapolis, MN: Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition.
- Valdés, G. (2000b). The teaching of heritage languages: An introduction for Slavic teaching professionals. In O. Kagan & B. Rifkin (Eds.), *The learning and teaching of Slavic languages and cultures* (pp. 375-403). Bloomington, IN: Slavica.

Krashen, S., Tse, L., & McQuillan, J. (1998). *Heritage language development*. Culver City, CA: *Language Education Associates*. Kroch, A.S. (1978). *Toward a theory of social dialect variati*.

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PUBLICATIONS

http://www.cheng-tsui.com/store/products/chinese_biographies (1st edition)

<https://www.cheng-tsui.com/browse/chinese-biographies-second-edition> (2nd edition)

Wu, Grace. (2016) Ang Lee: Chinese Biographies 2nd edition: Pinyin Annotated Readers. Boston: Cheng & Tsui Co.

Wu, Grace (2016) Jeremy Lin: Chinese Biographies 2nd edition: Pinyin Annotated Readers. Boston: Cheng & Tsui Co.

Wu, Grace (2016) Jay Chou: Chinese Biographies 2nd edition: Pinyin Annotated Readers. Boston: Cheng & Tsui Co.

Wu, Grace (2016) Vera Wang: Chinese Biographies 2nd edition: Pinyin Annotated Readers. Boston: Cheng & Tsui Co.

Wu, Grace (2016) Yao Ming: Chinese Biographies 2nd edition: Pinyin Annotated Readers. Boston: Cheng & Tsui Co.

Wu, Grace (2016) Lang Lang: Chinese Biographies 2nd edition: Pinyin Annotated Readers. Boston: Cheng & Tsui Co.

Wu, Grace. (2014) Ang Lee: Chinese Biographies 1st edition: Pinyin Annotated Readers. Boston: Cheng & Tsui Co.

Wu, Grace (2014) Jeremy Lin: Chinese Biographies 1st edition: Pinyin Annotated Readers. Boston: Cheng & Tsui Co.

Graded Readers Companion Website: <http://chinesebiographies.cheng-tsui.com/>