

# Teaching English in China

## *A Handbook for Native Speakers*

Wei Zhang



2004

Grand Valley State University

# Table of Contents

<b>Note to Readers</b> .....	iv
<b>Links to China</b> .....	v
<b>Chapter I: Overview of the Chinese Culture</b> .....	1
I.1. What the Chinese People Value .....	1
I.2. The Chinese Beliefs in Education .....	1
I.3. How the Chinese Culture Differs from the Western Culture .....	2
<b>Chapter II: The Chinese Educational System</b> .....	5
II.1. The Chinese Schools .....	5
II.1.1. Stages of Schooling .....	5
II.1.2. The Chinese School Year .....	7
II.1.3. The Classroom .....	8
II.2. The Administration .....	9
<b>Chapter III: Chinese and English</b> .....	11
III.1. The Chinese Language Map .....	11
III.2. Differences Between Chinese and English .....	12
III.2.1. Phonology .....	13
III.2.1.a. Intonation .....	13
III.2.1.b. Rhythm .....	14
III.2.1.c. Word Stress .....	14
III.2.1.d. Vowels and Consonants .....	14
III.2.2. Morphology and Syntax .....	15
III.2.3. Semantics .....	16
<b>Chapter IV: Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL)</b> .....	18
IV.1. English teaching in China .....	18
IV.1.1. English Curriculum .....	18
IV.1.2. English Textbooks .....	19
IV.1.3. English Assessments and Tests .....	19
IV.1.4. The Chinese EFL Linguistic Environment .....	20
IV.1.5. Large Class Size and Lack of Technology Support .....	20
IV.2. Chinese English Learners .....	21
IV.2.1. Misconceptions of Chinese English Learners .....	21
IV.2.2. Learning Styles of Chinese English Learners .....	22

IV.3. TEFL Methodology .....	22
IV.3.1. The Grammar Translation Method (GT).....	23
IV.3.2. The Audio-Lingual Method (ALM) .....	23
IV.3.3. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) .....	25

<b>Concluding Thoughts</b> .....	27
----------------------------------	----

<b>References</b> .....	28
-------------------------	----

**Appendices**

Appendix A: Pinyin and Its Pronunciation .....	30
Appendix B: IPA (International Phonetic Alphabet).....	31
Appendix C: Grammatical Differences Between Chinese and English.....	32
Appendix D: Teaching Plan (1) .....	40
Appendix E: Teaching Plan (2).....	43
Appendix F: Survey Narratives .....	48
Appendix G: Teaching Survival Kit.....	60

**Figures**

Figure 1: Characteristics of Hall’s High-Context and Low-Context Cultures.....	3
Figure 2: The 2002 Statistics of Student Enrollment in China .....	5
Figure 3: Stages of Schooling in China .....	6
Figure 4: Course Schedule .....	8
Figure 5: School Administration Organization Chart .....	10
Figure 6: The Chinese Language Map.....	12
Figure 7: The Hierarchical Relationship of the Basic Elements of the English Phonology .....	13
Figure 8: An Example of the Language Drills Used in ALM.....	24

## **Note to Readers**











This handbook is designed for native English speakers who are preparing to teach English in China. The contents of the handbook are selected based on the findings of face-to-face interviews and a questionnaire survey conducted by the author with experienced native English teachers to China as the partial fulfillment of her Master's in TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other languages). The author also holds a B.A. in English education and has taught English to Chinese learners aged 3 to 50 in different kinds of programs for four years in China.

The materials in this handbook should be helpful to you in the following ways:

- 1) To improve English instruction by understanding the Chinese cultural and educational contexts.
- 2) To improve English instruction by knowing how English is taught in Chinese schools.
- 3) To facilitate communication between you and your future students, colleagues, and administrators by familiarizing yourself with their life, work, and study in China.

## Links to China

All right, before you venture into China, it is definitely necessary to know a little about the country. If you are already a China-savvy person, it does not hurt to refresh your memory, anyway.

<b>Country Name</b>		The People's Republic of China (PRC) since Oct. 1, 1949
<b>Size</b>		9.6 million square km
<b>Administrative Regions</b>		23 provinces, 5 autonomous regions, 4 municipalities and 2 special administrative regions: Hong Kong and Macau
<b>Capital City</b>		Beijing
<b>Largest city</b>		Shanghai
<b>Population</b>		1,3 million (2005 est.)
<b>Ethnic Groups</b>		56 ethnic groups; 91.59% Han nationality
<b>National Holidays</b>		New Year's Day (Jan. 1), the Spring Festival (Jan.-Feb.), International Labor Day (May 1), and the National Day (Oct. 1)
<b>Currency</b>		Renminbi (RMB)/ Yuan; 1 USD = 8.3 RMB
<b>Weights/Measures</b>		Metric system

For more and updated information, please browse The World Factbook at <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/goes/ch.html>, China – Quick Facts at <http://test.china.org.cn/e-changshi/>, and Wikipedia at <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/China>.

# Chapter I: Overview of the Chinese Culture

This chapter provides you with a conceptual tool to approach the Chinese people and the Chinese culture. Hopefully, it will help you to find an answer to the question “why do they do it” and gain a deeper understanding of the people you are going to work with.

## I.1. What the Chinese People Value

China has a very long civilization history of more than five thousand years. It became a unified country in 221 BC in the Qin (or Ch'in) Dynasty. The independent country was under the reign of different feudal governments until the Republic of China replaced the Qing (or Ch'ing) Dynasty on February 12, 1912. The long period of feudal reign ingrained deep-rooted cultural values and beliefs in the mind of the Chinese people. Here is a list of the basic values of the Chinese people derived from a survey by a group of sociologists in the early 1980s:

- \* Adaptability
- \* Being conservative
- \* Benevolent authority
- \* Chastity in women
- \* Contentedness with one's position in life  
(Come what may; *Sui yu er an*)
- \* Close and intimate friendship
- \* Courtesy
- \* Filial piety
- \* Harmony with others
- \* Having a sense of shame
- \* Having few desires
- \* Humility
- \* Industry (working hard)
- \* Kindness (forgiveness, compassion)
- \* Knowledge (education)
- \* Loyalty to superiors
- \* Moderation, following the middle way  
(*Zhong yong zhi dao*)
- \* Noncompetitiveness
- \* Observation of rites and social rituals
- \* Ordering relationships by status and observing this order
- \* Patience
- \* Persistence (perseverance)
- \* Personal steadiness and stability
- \* Protecting your “face”
- \* Prudence (carefulness, not risk-taking)
- \* Reciprocation of greetings, favors, and gifts (*Li shang wang lai*)
- \* Repayment of both the good and the evil that another person has caused you
- \* Resistance to corruption
- \* Respect for tradition
- \* Sincerity
- \* Self-cultivation
- \* Sense of cultural superiority
- \* Sense of righteousness
- \* Solidarity with others
- \* Thrift
- \* Tolerance of others
- \* Trustworthiness
- \* Wealth

(Adapted from Chinese Values and the Search for Culture-Free Dimensions of Culture by the Chinese Culture Connection, *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 18(2), 143-164).

## I.2. The Chinese Beliefs in Education

The Chinese beliefs in education are greatly influenced by Confucianism. Confucianism is the teachings of a great ancient scholar, Confucius, who lived between

551-479 BC. His teachings begin as lessons in “practical ethics” or a “set of pragmatic rules for daily life derived from the lessons of Chinese history” (Hofstede & Bond, 1988, cited in Chan, 1999, p. 297). His philosophy is reflected in the traditional Chinese views on teaching, learning, and the roles of the teacher and the students. The following chart is for you to reflect on your own beliefs and compare your ideas with the Chinese traditional ideas.

<b>My Idea</b>	<b>Chinese Beliefs</b>
<i>Learning</i>	To emulate the wisdom of the ancients and the authorities; teacher and textbook are the source of learning and authority of knowledge
<i>Teaching</i>	To instill knowledge into the student’s mind
<i>Teacher</i>	To transmit knowledge; to answer questions; and a good moral model
<i>Student</i>	to respect and learn from the authorities and to internalize wisdom by emulation
<i>Good Teacher</i>	“well prepared, keeps the students busy, demonstrate mastery of teaching techniques and resources, provides a clear outline of the teaching plan and the material to be covered in each class, maintains strict discipline, praises the diligent students and punishes the lazy or ignorant, gives clear explanations, provides frequent tests and returns marked assignment and test papers promptly” (Muehl & Muehl, 1993, cited in Tang & Absalom, 1998, p. 121)
<i>Good student</i>	“diligent, preserving and well behaved, obedient to authority and in theory modest and oriented to serving the needs of the group rather than the individual” (Tang & Absalom, 1998, p. 121)

### I.3. How the Chinese Culture Differs from the Western Culture

Difficulties in communication often arise because of cultural differences. Cultural differences may occur on a daily basis when you teach in China. It would be utterly impractical and almost impossible to enumerate them one by one. But works by American scholar Edward T. Hall on cultural differences would guide you through your intercultural experience in China.

Hall published this theory of cultural differences in 1977. He assumes a strong linkage between culture and communication and distinguishes between the high-context culture and

the low-context culture. He proposed that cultures may lie somewhere between the two ends of the continuum, being more or less of one or the other.

In the high context culture, people have close connections between one another over a long period of time. In the low-context culture, people tend to have many connections but of shorter duration or for some specific reasons. While the high-context culture stresses collectivism, the low-context culture values individualism. The Chinese culture is typically high-context and the American culture, typically low-context. The table below provides a comparison of the two types of cultures.

**Figure 1: Characteristics of Hall’s High-Context and Low-Context Cultures**

HIGH-CONTEXT CULTURE	LOW-CONTEXT CULTURE
<b><i>Covert and implicit message:</i></b> Metaphoric and read between the lines meaning	<b><i>Overt and explicit message:</i></b> Plain and literal meaning
<b><i>Introspective:</i></b> Inner locus of control and blame inner for failure	<b><i>Looking outward:</i></b> Outer locus of control and blame outer for failure
<b><i>Much nonverbal coding:</i></b> A lot of attention paid to body language and mannerisms	<b><i>Verbalized details:</i></b> More expression emphasized in the verbal instead of body language
<b><i>Reserved reactions:</i></b> React more inwardly than outwardly	<b><i>Reactions on the surface:</i></b> React more outwardly
<b><i>Distinct group relationships:</i></b> Closely knit groups of affiliation, i.e., family gathering, birthday banquet	<b><i>Flexible group relationships:</i></b> Open groups of affiliation, i.e., fast food restaurant
<b><i>Strong people bonds:</i></b> Family and community most important	<b><i>Fragile people bonds:</i></b> Family and community less important
<b><i>High commitment:</i></b> Relationship more important than task, long term relationships	<b><i>Low commitment:</i></b> Task more important than relationships, short term relationships
<b><i>Open and flexible time:</i></b> Process more important than product	<b><i>Highly organized time:</i></b> Product more important than process

(Adapted from <http://staff.washington.edu/saki/strategies/101/hallcul.htm> )

An understanding in how culture can influence people’s behavior is very important for native speakers who are going to teach in China. Your own communication styles might be in direct opposition to those of the Chinese. For instance, questioning and challenging authority are acceptable and even encouraged in North American society, but they are considered offending in the Chinese context. Here are some points to consider when teaching in high context cultures:

- a) Listen to what the student is communicating instead of assuming anything based on



- self-concept, past experience, stereotypes, and attitudes toward others.
- b) Try to use descriptive terms such as “creative” or “innovative” rather than those expressing approval or disapproval, such as “good”, “that’s interesting”, or “that’s fine”.
  - c) Be specific: try to substitute more precise words for vague ones and use examples.
  - d) Comment on what the student has already done well and provide specific examples on how to improve the work instead of writing “awkward” or “needs improving”.
  - e) Take time to learn more about your students and their culture.
  - f) Examine your habitual behaviors for your students’ communication context: make eye contact with all the students and call upon them equally instead of calling upon a selected few or waiting for the students to volunteer.
  - g) Recognize your own stereotypes and prejudices and check your perceptions before you make any interpretation about the behaviors of others.
  - h) Listen to what is not being said and pay attention to the nonverbal behaviors in the classroom: don’t assume that everyone understands and check it out, for instance, by asking “I am noting a lot of blank stares; am I going too fast?”
  - i) Make your expectations explicit so that everyone knows what the rules are and what you really want.

(Adapted from Specific Issues in the Multicultural Classroom at [www.irc.edu/trg/137.html](http://www.irc.edu/trg/137.html).)

These suggestions are also useful when you deal with your Chinese supervisors and administrators. The following incident is a very unpleasant illustration of a conflict arisen from the different values and communication styles of the Chinese and a teacher:

*“...During my first semester here, my supervisor pulled me into her office, and announced that I would be teaching two more classes at another school, starting on this date. I had neither been consulted beforehand nor given any information about the school. When I pressed her and others involved for information, they merely told me I had to do it. Even though I was asking for information regarding the educational environment and students of the other school (which I had never heard of), they acted as if I was trying to sabotage the command, and refused to provide any information ...”*

(Comment: the teacher was annoyed by the sudden change of schedule without any prior notice while the Chinese supervisor took his questions about the new school as defiance to her authority without considering that the teacher really wanted to gather information about his new teaching task.)

Nevertheless, there is a lot of room for individual variance within all groups of people. As far as cultural values and behaviors are concerned, hardly can anyone define what is good or bad. China now is in the process of change, but changes will not happen all at once. Be patient. Look ahead and you will see more.

## Chapter II: The Chinese Educational System

Teaching in China means entering a new educational system. This chapter will provide an overview of the school system where you are about to teach. With regard to English teaching, the Chinese educational system has the following characteristics:

- a) The centralized structure of authority.
- b) The pivotal role of the written text.
- c) The intellectual and moral authority of the teacher.
- d) Skepticism about the trial and error aspects of the inquiry method of learning and about the focus on communicative activities emphasizing function rather than knowledge of form.
- e) The over-arching functions of a prescribed national curriculum.
- f) The authority of the national competitive examination system in political socialization, economic modernization and nation-building. (Tang & Absalom, 1998, p. 125)

### II.1. The Chinese Schools

Schools in China are mostly government-funded except a very small percentage of private schools. There are great differences in resource allocation and teaching quality between schools in the cities and in the countryside. Most colleges and universities cluster in big cities. By the end of 2002, there were 1.17 million educational institutions of various kinds and at all levels with a total student enrollment of 318 million, the largest in the world.

*Figure 2: The 2002 Statistics of Student Enrollment in China*

School	Number	Enrollment
<i>Kindergarten</i>	111,800	20,360,200
<i>Elementary School</i>	456,900	121,567,100
<i>Junior High School</i>	65,600	66,874,300
<i>Senior High School</i>	32,800	29,081,400
<i>Higher Education</i>	257	16,000,000

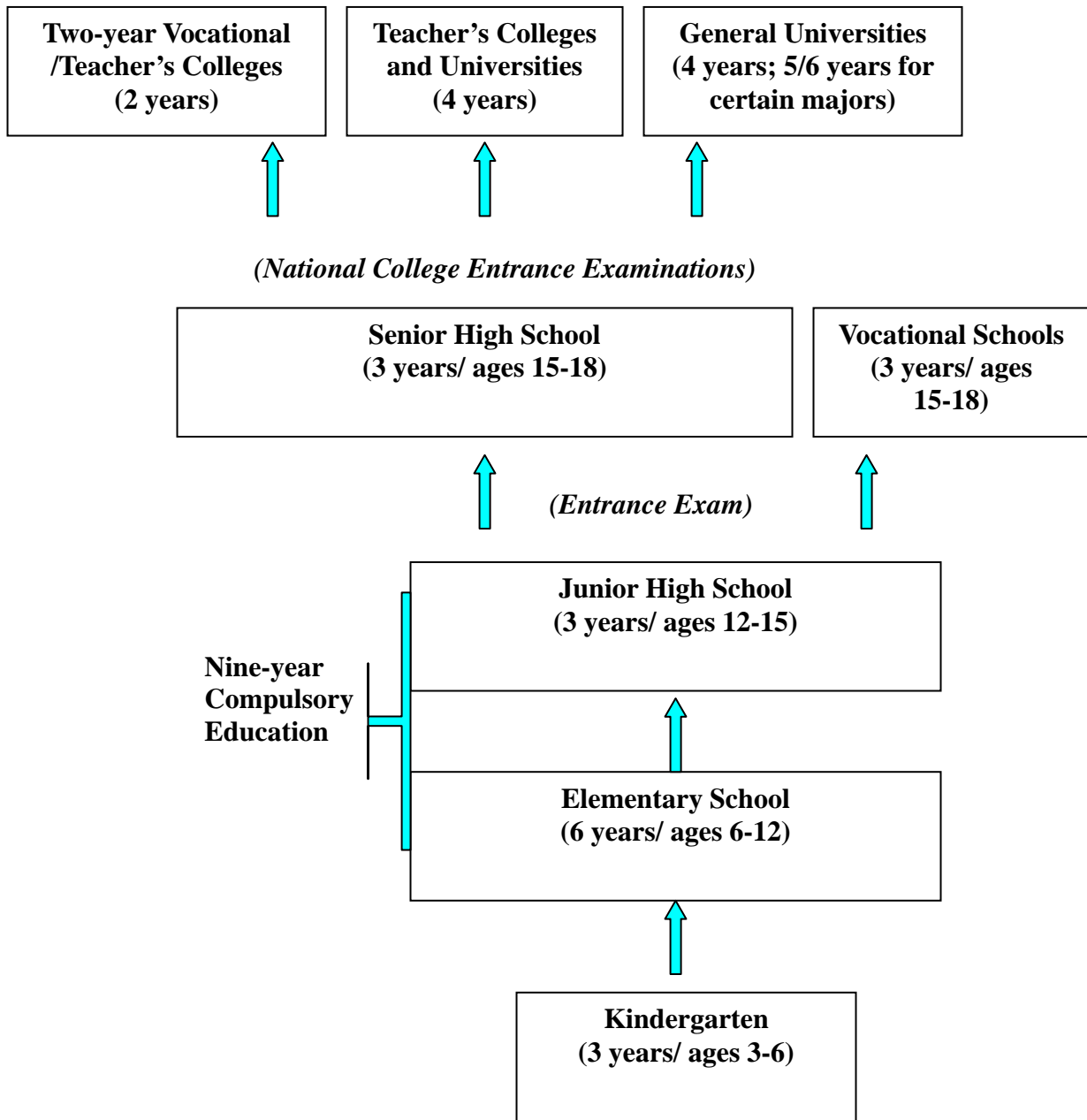
(Statistics obtained from *Survey of the Educational Reform and Development in China* by the Chinese Ministry of Education, January 6, 2004.)

#### II.1.1. Stages of Schooling

The main stages of schooling in China include elementary, secondary (junior high school and senior high school), and higher education. In 1987, the Chinese People's Congress passed the Universal and Compulsory Education Law that mandates that all children must receive nine years of schooling including six years of elementary school and three years of junior high school. But children's schooling can begin as early as when they are two or

three years old. They first go to day care for one year and kindergarten for three years.

**Figure 3: Stages of Schooling in China**



Then they move on to elementary school and junior high school. After graduating from junior high school, they study at senior high school for three more years before proceeding to colleges and universities.

Examinations play a very important role in the Chinese educational system. Various examinations, including quizzes, unit tests, mid-terms, and final exams, graduation exams,

and higher school entrance exams, are frequently conducted as a measure of academic achievement and the only criterion to get admission into higher level schools.

Exams and tests are believed to serve multiple purposes in education: to diagnose problems in teaching and learning in a timely manner, to motivate students to study continuously, and to provide chances for students to review taught knowledge and gain fresh insights.

Within the nine-year compulsory education, children are assigned to elementary and junior high schools according to where they live. But key schools (schools with good facilities, high quality teachers, and demanding teaching and learning goals) admit students based on test scores. At the end of elementary school and again at the end of junior high schools, students take exams for positions in key schools. The exams to key schools are very competitive, but none can be compared to the National College Entrance Examination, the most important examination of all.

The National College Entrance Examination is a highly centralized testing system to select high school graduates for higher education and all universities and colleges recruit through it. The core subjects in the National College Entrance Examinations are Chinese, Math, and English. Successfully passing the exam and going on to higher education is one of the most important achievements in one's life. It guarantees a better chance to get a good job after graduation and automatically qualifies one for being part of the intellectual elite.

## **II. 1.2. The Chinese School Year**

A Chinese school year starts in early September and continues into the following July. It consists of two semesters: the fall semester and the spring semester. These two semesters have approximately 20-22 weeks respectively and are separated by a three-week winter break between January and February for the Spring Festival (Chinese New Year according to the Chinese lunar calendar) and a two-month summer vacation between July and September. The fall semester has a one-week break in the first week of October for the National Day (the Chinese independence day) and the spring semester has a one-week break in the first week of May for the International Labor Day.

Within the two semesters, schools are in session five days a week from 8 am to 4 or 5 pm. Students usually attend five classes in the morning and another two or three in the afternoon. Each class is 40 minutes long with a 10-minute break in between and the lunch break is about two hours.

From elementary up to high school, one class of students usually remains in their own classroom for regular classes except for music, P.E., and art lessons as well as for labs. Teachers move from one classroom to another to teach their specialties. As shown in the course schedule of a class in a high school in Guangzhou, Guangdong province, the students take different classes each day and only Chinese, Math, and English are taught every day. While most classes are required, students also take optional classes in the afternoon. There are no classes for reading because reading is taught through the content areas, but students usually arrive at school before the first class in the morning begins to attend an activity called

morning-reading, a 20-30 minute session in which students read the Chinese or English texts aloud, either together after a peer, after the tape, or on their own. Reading English aloud *per se* is believed to be helpful to develop the “language sense” and is widely practiced by Chinese students. Some schools also require students to attend self-study in the evening.

**Figure 4: Course Schedule**

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8:00-8:40	Class Meeting	Chinese	Physics	Math	Math
8:50-9:30	Chinese	Biology	English	Chinese	P.E.
9:30-9:50	Morning Exercises				
9:50-10:30	Math	Math	Chemistry	History	Biology
10:40-11:20	English	Chemistry	Chinese	English	History
11:20-11:30	Eye Exercises (message the eyes with the fingers)				
11:30-12:10	History*	English	Biology	Politics	Chemistry
12:10-14:00	Lunch Break				
14:00-14:40	Math	Optional Course	Math	Physics	English
14:50-15:30	Politics		P.E.	Biology	Chinese
15:40-16:20	Physics	Self-Study	Art/Youth League Activity		Quiz
16:30-17:30	Extracurricular Activities/Self-Study				
18:30-20:45	Self-Study in the Evening				

(Note: Geography is taught in place of history in another year.)

Colleges and universities have a somewhat similar format to colleges and universities in the United States. Students move from one classroom to another to attend classes. While each class still lasts 40 minutes, they usually take two classes of the same subject in a row. Reading aloud in the morning is no longer a required activity for everyone, but foreign languages majors, such as English majors generally do that on their own.

### II.1.3. The Classroom

The class size in China is big, with 40-60 students each. The seats in the classroom are usually arranged in rows and lines. Students in one class usually have fixed chair and desk and they change their seats regularly. Colleges and universities have even bigger classes, with 60-80 or even over a hundred students each. But the classes for foreign languages majors are usually much smaller, from 20 to 35 students per class or sometimes even fewer students. College students no longer sit in appointed seats, but the seat arrangement in the classroom is still the same.

Because of the large class size, the chairs and desks usually take up most of the space in a classroom. Sometimes you might even find unmovable seating in a university classroom because the back of the chair and the desk behind it are connected. As a result, it is usually very inconvenient to move the seats or to arrange them in a different way. Also, the teacher’s desk in front of the class is usually placed on a platform that stands a little higher than the floor.

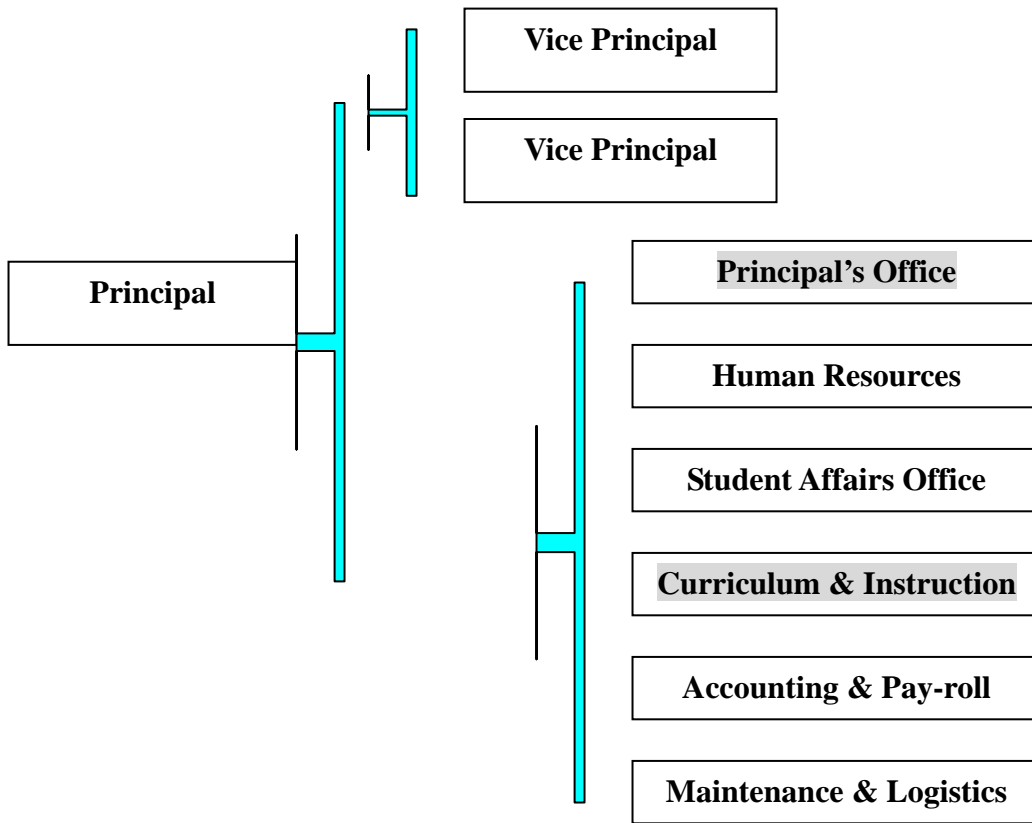
There are at least board and chalk in the classroom. Over-head projector and tape recorder or even computers have become more and more common, but it is wise not to take them for granted. The classroom in most cases is not air-conditioned, but usually has ceiling fans. Two basic requirements for a teacher are clear blackboard writing and talking in a voice loud enough for every student to hear.

## **II.2. The Administration**

All schools in China are under the administration of the Ministry of Education in the central government. The Ministry of Education is in charge of policy-making, curriculum and textbook development. Decisions made by the Ministry of Education go through the provincial education department, the municipal education department, and the district before they finally reach individual schools. Almost everything is unified, including curriculum, textbook, teaching standards, evaluation, and teacher's salary.

While the Ministry of Education is at the top of the centralized administration of school, individual principals are responsible for the operation of individual schools. The next page is a school administration organizational chart. The offices you might need to contact often are the principal's office and the curriculum and instruction. For example, for all teaching related problems, go to the curriculum and instruction; and for all other problems concerning your life and position, go to the principal's office. This chart might help you to identify the right person to talk to when needed, but please take this chart as an example only because variances are bound to exist from school to school. Sometimes the school might appoint a teacher who speaks English as your contact to answer your questions and provide you the assistance you need. But it is highly recommended that you talk to the personnel in charge before school begins. Ask them questions about your work and life there, such as your schedule, their expectations of you, and your living conditions. Tell them your concerns if any and the assistance you need. If something unexpected comes up, make sure to handle it tactfully: try to avoid challenging the authority by direct questioning while holding your own stance firmly.

*Figure 5: School Administration Organization Chart*



## Chapter III: Chinese and English

The Chinese language and the English language are very different from each other. Chinese is a tone languages belonging to the Sinitic sub-family of the Sino-Tibetan linguistic family while English belongs to the Germanic sub-family of the Indo-European language family. Knowing more about the Chinese language will help you understand the linguistic background of your EFL students better and teach English to them better. This chapter will give you a general idea of what the Chinese language is and show you a concise structural analysis of the two languages.

### III.1. The Chinese Language Map

The Chinese language is actually a collection of numerous dialects instead of one single language. The Chinese dialects are classified into eight main varieties of speech (or seven if Min is used to include both Northern Min and Southern Min):

- \* Northern Chinese (known as Mandarin)
- \* Yue (i.e., Cantonese)
- \* Hakka (or Kejia)
- \* Northern Min
- \* Southern Min
- \* Xiang
- \* Gan
- \* Wu

As a matter of fact, the eight varieties of speech are spoken mostly by the Han majority of the Chinese people. This classification has not taken into account the non-Han minority languages, such as Tibetan, Russian, Kazakh, Mongolian, and Korean that are spoken by around 6% of the population. But as far as the written system is concerned, there is only one. David Crystal in his *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Language* provided an in-depth description of the dialects in China:

Because there has long been a single method for writing Chinese, and a common literary and cultural history, a tradition has grown up of referring to the seven main varieties of speech (*Min is divided into Southern Min and Northern Min* -- author) in China as “dialects”. But in fact they are as different from each other (mainly in pronunciation and vocabulary) as French or Spanish is from Italian, the dialects of the south-east being linguistically the furthest apart. The mutual unintelligibility of the varieties is the main ground for referring to them as separate languages. However, it must also be recognized that each variety consists of a large number of dialects, many of which may themselves be referred to as languages. The boundaries between one so-called language and the next are not always easy to define. (p. 312)

Despite of the multitude of dialects, Mandarin is the native tongue to 70% of the Chinese



population. As shown in the Chinese language map below, it captures a wide range of dialects in the northern, central, and western regions. North Mandarin, which is found in Beijing the capital, is the basis of the modern standard Chinese, *Putonghua*. *Putonghua* has a pronunciation system written in roman characters called pinyin (see Appendix A: Pinyin and Its Pronunciation) and its written form is accepted as the national norm. It is now the official language and is required to be spoken in class at schools.

**Figure 6: The Chinese Language Map**



(David Crystal, 1987, p. 312)

As complicated as it is, it is still possible to gain a general picture of the Chinese language. Besides the common written language and the standardized *Putonghua*, all the Chinese speech also shares important features in their basic structures. The following part focuses on just the basic structures of Chinese in comparison to English.

### III.2. Differences Between Chinese and English

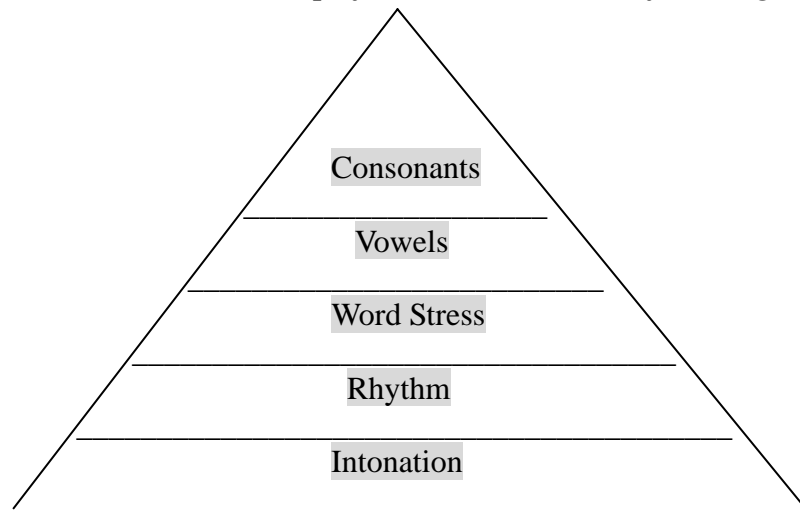
When we learn a second language, we tend to link the second language to our first language in many ways. Or in other words, our first language affects the acquisition of a second language. If our first language facilitates us to learn the second language, we say the influence is a positive one and we call this positive influence *transfer*. If the influence prevents us to learn the second language, we say the influence is a negative one and we call

this negative influence *interference*. There is a greater chance for transfer to happen when the language learner is learning the identical features of the two languages. On the contrary, when one feature of the second language is lacking or has a similar but not identical equivalent in the first language, interference might happen. Knowledge of the major differences between Chinese and English can help us teachers to predict the difficulties Chinese English learners have in learning English.

### III.2.1. Phonology

Phonology studies the sounds and the sound patterns in a language. Figure 7 shows the hierarchical relationship of the basic elements of the English phonology. Word stress, rhythm, and intonation, the so-called prosody of the English phonological system appear to be more important than the individual sounds, namely the consonants and the vowels or the so called segments in natural speech. So pronunciation instruction needs to pay equal attention to both the prosody and the segments.

**Figure 7: The Hierarchical Relationship of the Basic Elements of the English Phonology**



(Adapted from Pennington, 1996, p. 156)

#### III.2.1.a. Intonation

Intonation includes the stress patterns and the final pitch movement of a sentence. Content words, such as nouns, adjectives, adverbs, and numerals are stressed in an English sentence and the pause within a sentence usually happens after the stressed word. The tones in English function at a sentence level in three basic ways: 1) falling tone as used in statements; 2) rising tone as used in yes-no questions; and 3) falling-rising tone as used in tag questions. These are the intonations of English.

Chinese has four tones to distinguish different words and hence it is a tone language. The tone is the integral part of the pronunciation of a word instead of a sentence. Chinese

English learners usually have to pay special attention to the rising tone when asking the yes-no questions because the yes-no question is formed typically by adding a question word, such as *ma?* (吗?) at the end of a statement in Chinese instead of changing the word order and raising the tone. Raising awareness and good modeling are necessary for Chinese students to overcome this problem.

### III.2.1.b. Rhythm

English is a stress-timed language. The rhythm of sentences is marked by sentence stress instead of by the number of words or syllables. English speakers rely as much on rhythm to identify words as on the vowels and consonants, or pay attention to the rhythm more than to the sounds. But for people whose first language is word-timed, such as the Chinese and Japanese EFL learners, they tend to stress every English word and ignore the co-articulation of neighboring sounds or accentuate the linking sounds. To solve the problem, it should be pointed out that 1) English sentences are articulated phrase by phrase and the marker is the sentence stress; and 2) sound linking happens naturally when a sentence is spoken with smooth airflow.

### III.2.1.c. Word Stress

As the saying goes that not every white house is the White House, word stress carries important semantic information. In a double-syllable or multi-syllable word, three levels of stress should be recognized: primary stress, secondary stress, and weak stress. As far as word stress is concerned, three groups of words call for special attention:

- 1) Multi-syllable words, such as exPERiment, extracuRRicular and NEWspaper.
- 2) Word pairs carrying different semantic meaning with different stress or stresses, such as GREEN HOUSE and GREEN house; and GRAND FATHER and GRANDfather.
- 3) Words belonging to different lexical categories when stressed differently, such as IMport and imPORT; FREquent and freQUENT; and RE-SEARCH and reSEARCH.

### III.2.1.d. Vowels and Consonants

English has at least 20 vowels and 24 consonants and the sounds are transcribed by using a set of symbols called the International Phonetic Alphabets (IPA). Chinese learners start learning the English sounds by learning the IPA (see Appendix B: IPA to learn the symbols). Chinese learners generally find English sounds hard to pronounce because of two reasons: a) some English sounds have no counterparts in Chinese; and 2) other English sounds have similar, but not identical equivalent in Chinese. The following are some examples of sounds that might be problematic for Chinese learners.

#### *Vowels*

- a) The contrast between /i:/ and /i/, /ɜ:/ and /ɝ/, /u:/ and /ʊ/ have no equivalent in Chinese. Learners tend to confuse *eat* and *it*, *bean* and *bin*, *fool* and *full*, *Luke* and *look*, *shot* and *short*, *doctor* and *daughter*.
- b) /æ/ does not occur in Chinese. Learners tend to confuse it with /e/ as in *bag* and *beg*,

*pan* and *pen*, *dad* and *dead*.

- c) Chinese diphthongs are usually pronounced with quicker and smaller tongue and lip movements than its English counterparts. Learners tend to replace the English diphthongs with the similar diphthongs in Chinese and make the sounds too short to distinguish the two component vowels.

### **Consonants**

- a) In the three pairs of stops /**p, b**/, /**t, d**/, /**k, g**/, the voiced sounds /**b, d, g**/ are voiceless in Chinese and learners tend to lose the voice feature in speaking, especially when these sounds are the ending sound of a word because these sounds never occur at the end of a word in modern Chinese.
- b) /**v**/ does not occur in most Chinese dialects. Learners tend to pronounce it somewhat like /w/ or /f/ as *invite* may become “*inwite*” and *live* may become “*lif*”.
- c) /**n**/ and /**l**/, /**l**/ and /**r**/ are often confused by speakers of Cantonese, Hakka, and Min dialects. So they tend to confuse *night* and *light*, *light* and *right*, *name* and *lame*, *fly* and *fry*.
- d) /**n**/ and /**ŋ**/ are especially difficult to speakers of Min, so *on* might be pronounced as “*ong*”, *ton* like *tong*.
- e) /**θ**/ and /**ð**/, /**l**/ and /**ɹ**/, /**tʃ**/ and /**dʒ**/ have no Chinese equivalent. Learners tend to replace them with /**t**/, /**d**/, /**s**/, /**z**/ . So *this* sounds like “*tis*”, *that* like “*dat*”, *fish* like *fiʒ*, *usual* like *uzual*.
- f) Consonant clusters such as /**pt**/, /**kt**/, /**sp**/ are also hard. Learners tend to insert a sound between the two consonants. So *spoon* sounds like “*sipoon*”, *please* sounds like *police*.

A widely used exercise to raise awareness of the English sounds is the *minimal pair* exercises. The *minimal pair* is a pair of words that differ from each other in only one sound, such as *ship* and *sheep*. But the rule of the thumb is to diagnose problematic pronunciation of vowels and consonants according to how the sounds are made. When pronouncing vowel sounds, pay attention to the particular mouth shape and tongue or lip position in terms of height, tenseness, frontness, and roundedness. When pronouncing consonants, pay attention to the voicing, place of articulation, and manner of articulation.

### **III.2.2. Morphology and Syntax**

Morphology studies the components of words and syntax studies the word order in a sentence. English and Chinese share a lot of similarities in word composition and syntactic structure, but where the two languages diverge poses as potential difficulties for Chinese English learners. For instance, because Chinese uses context, word order, and adverbial to signify concepts such as time, aspect, pluralism, all variations of word forms in English have to be learned as rules.

Please refer to Appendix C: Grammatical Differences between Chinese and English for detailed explanation of the phonological and syntactical differences between English and Chinese. You might try to diagnose what is behind the errors in these sentences before you read Appendix C or if you prefer reading Appendix C first, these sentences might help you to refresh your memory.

- 1) He very likes to pay volleyball.
- 2) They are Japaneses.
- 3) I afraid it is going to rain soon.
- 4) He kept me to wait for two hours.
- 5) Had you a meeting yesterday afternoon?
- 6) Look, the bus comes.
- 7) My uncle said it was bad lucky.
- 8) He gave me some good advices.
- 9) I have gone to Beijing for three times.
- 10) She married with him last year.
- 11) He went to bed until he heard the other shoe dropping on the floor.
- 12) Japan lies in the southeast of China.
- 13) Though he failed many times, but he never lost heart.
- 14) My mother likes traveling, so I am.
- 15) There are many children play in the park.
- 16) I will tell my mother to buy this book for me tomorrow.

### III. 2. 3. Semantics

Semantics studies the meaning of words. Not every English word has a one-to-one correspondent in Chinese. Different English words might be expressed by the same word in Chinese, such as *lend* and *borrow*. They both mean “jie” (借) in Chinese. So Chinese learners might end up saying \* *he borrowed his bike to me yesterday*. A word with negative meaning in English, such as *propaganda*, is considered neutral in Chinese or *vice versa*. Chinese learners might also misuse two English words simply because their spellings or pronunciations are similar, such as *prosecute* and *persecute*, *lie* and *lay*. The following are examples of words that might cause confusion to Chinese learners.

{ above over ( <i>prep.</i> )	{ every day everyday	{ fewer less	{ amoral immoral
{ appraise apprise	{ assume presume	{ base basis	{ bring take
{ classic classical	{ complex complicated	{ council counsel	{ effective efficient

{ discrete	{ hung	{ memorize	{ principal
{ discreet	{ hanged	{ remember	{ principle
{ postpone	{ receive	{ related	{ sensible
{ delay	{ accept	{ relevant	{ sensitive
{ satisfying	{ shall	{ whether	{ precede
{ satisfied	{ will	{ weather	{ proceed
{ satisfactory			

To conclude this chapter, remember that when you teach in China, it is important not to assume anything as the basic that students “ought to know”. Chinese learners need to practice time and time again before they are able to produce a correct and appropriate sentence. This teacher wrote about how the local dialect influences English pronunciation:

*“In my opinion, a foreign English teacher should recognize that local pronunciation will play a large part in the student’s ability to correctly pronounce English words. Therefore, the foreign teacher should be familiar with peculiarities of the dialect of the province, or city, where he/she will be teaching. I tell my Chinese students that however they pronounce Chinese words or letters, they can not carry that pronunciation to the English language. For instance, in Hubei Province (Hubeihua), the “L” sound is pronounced as an “N” sound. Carrying that sound over to English makes it very difficult for a native speaker to understand and takes a great deal of practice on the part of the Chinese speaker to overcome...”*

## **Chapter IV: Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL)**

Both EFL and ESL pedagogies have been developed based on the findings of second language acquisition. While all language teachers should know about the process of language learning in order to make appropriate pedagogical decisions, native speakers working with Chinese English learner have to be informed well enough to adapt what they know about second language acquisition into the Chinese EFL linguistic environment. This chapter will first give you an overview of English teaching in China. The second part will focus on the Chinese English learners. The third part will be a review of the language teaching methods used in China.

### **IV.1. English Teaching in China**

English is a foreign language in China. To teach English as a foreign language (EFL) is very different from to teach English as a second language (ESL). In ESL settings, such as in the United States and the United Kingdom, English learners are learning English, the predominant language in the linguistic environment of the target language (English), but EFL learners are learning it as a subject at school in the linguistic environment of their native languages such as Chinese in China. If you have ever taught ESL, the experience is definitely helpful in teaching Chinese EFL learners. But in order to make the best use of it, you also need to familiarize yourself with English teaching in China.

Formal English teaching in China can be traced back more than 150 years ago in schools set up by western missionaries and the reformers in the Qing Dynasty. At present, English is one of the basic subjects in schools. It is taught at least four times a week of a length of 20 minutes or 40 minutes starting from the third grade up to the sixth grade at elementary level and five days a week at secondary schools. It is also a compulsory course at colleges and universities. English teaching has seen a lot of changes since the 1990s, but you will still find many differences between English teaching in China and that in other countries.

#### **IV.1.1. English Curriculum**

Since 2001, the Ministry of Education of China has engaged in curriculum reforms of all subjects at all levels. A nine-grade system has been set up to assess students' English proficiency from third grade up to high school. Grade 1 and 2 apply to the elementary level and grades 3-9 to the secondary level with grade 7 being the minimum requirement for senior high school graduates. Elementary graduates are expected to master a vocabulary of 600-700 words and high school graduates, 3,500 words. Detailed criteria are clearly laid out to assess the four skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing with an emphasis on communicative ability.

At higher education, the 2004 College English Curriculum stated that the goal of college English teaching is to develop students' integrated ability to use English for effective oral and

written communication with an emphasis on oral communication skills and to motivate students to learn English in the future. It also included specific requirements for listening, speaking, reading, writing, and translating. Students are to understand listening materials with a speed of about 130 words per minute and to converse in English effectively. They are also expected to read 70-100 words per minutes, to write a short English passage of 120 words in half an hour, and to translate 300 English words and 250 Chinese words per hour. A good command of 4,500 English words and 700 English set phrases are required.

#### **IV.1.2. English Textbooks**

The most widely used English textbooks at Chinese secondary schools are *Junior English for China* and *Senior English for China* published by the People's Education Press in collaboration with the British publisher Longman. The textbooks are divided into units of four lessons based on a single topic. The unit topics range from the daily life of the Chinese and western children living in Beijing, western culture (food, festivals, places of interest, sports and language), scientific inventions, to ethnical behaviors.

At the college level, non-English majors are required to take intensive reading of English for at least two years. Not to be taken literally, intensive reading is actually a comprehensive English course that pays attention to the skills of listening, speaking, reading, writing, translating, and vocabulary building. The textbooks for intensive reading usually include units of a text of one or two pages, a list of new words, background notes, and exercises. The exercises include oral reading practice exercises, multiple choice questions to check understanding of the text, vocabulary and word-building exercises, grammar exercises, guided writing, and scan-reading materials. For English majors, more English courses are offered besides intensive reading to develop students' English proficiency and knowledge, such as listening comprehension, spoken English, extensive reading, writing, English phonology and phonetics, English literature, and linguistics courses.

#### **IV.1.3. English Assessments and Tests**

Assessments of academic achievement are most commonly conducted through exams and tests in China. Besides the subject exam in the entrance exams to higher level schools, such as the National College Entrance Exams, other exam systems were set up to assess students' English proficiency. At college level, there is a six-band system for non-English majors as well as an eight-band system for English majors. The band test (for non-English majors) and TEM (Test for English Majors) were both introduced in the 1990s. All non-English majors have to pass the Band Four Test before they can graduate while all English majors must pass TEM Four and are encouraged to take TEM Eight.

Outside the school system, other proficiency tests abound. The widely accepted TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) and IELTS (International English Language Testing System) are the most popular among students who want to study in English-speaking countries. Meanwhile, newly developed tests are gaining popularity, such as the Business English Certificate test introduced by the National Educational Examinations Authority under the Ministry of Education of China introduced in cooperation with the University of



Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate of the United Kingdom in 1993. In 2000, 30,000 people were reported to have taken the Business English Certificate test.

#### **IV.1.4. The Chinese EFL Linguistic Environment**

As you have read in the previous chapter, the complexity of the Chinese language and the huge differences between Chinese and English make English a difficult language to learn. Besides the native language factors, other inherent factors in the Chinese EFL setting also constraint English teaching and learning in China.

*1) Paucity of access to English.* While the quality and quantity of input (the linguistic elements to which language learners are exposed) plays an important role in language learning, the Chinese EFL environment is definitely very unfavorable to Chinese English learners. The place where English is used most is the English classroom and the English textbooks and English teachers provide the main input that is accessible to most Chinese English learners. Outside the classroom English is barely used and the exposure to English is minimum. English publications tend to be English reference books and English classics. The China Daily is the only national English newspaper. However, there are a few regional English newspapers, such as the Shanghai Daily and the Guangzhou Morning Posts. English broadcast is available mainly on China Radio International, which is the national English radio, and Channel Eight of China Central TV, which is the national English TV channel.

*2) Lack of authenticity of English.* English used in China is hardly authentic. Most English teachers are native Chinese speakers who have learned English in China from Chinese English teachers. Few of them are able to achieve native-like proficiency, especially in spoken English. This is also the case with the anchors and hosts at the English radio and television channels as well as the journalists at the English newspapers.

#### **IV.1.5. Large Class Size and Lack of Technology Support**

Despite of its economic success in recent years, China is still, especially in inland regions, a poor country with a population of 1.3 billion. Teachers usually have to teach large classes with very little technology support. A typical class in a Chinese school has 40 to 60 students or more. The large class size makes it harder to employ teaching methods that require attention to individual student and requires different classroom management techniques. Moreover, while there are at least chalk and a blackboard, access to tape recorders, VCRs, overhead projectors, language labs, or computers might be very limited or unavailable. In particular, you might find it most inconvenient that photocopy to teachers are also restricted in most schools. Even when photocopy is available and free of charge, you need to order the material to be copied earlier, say a week ahead before you want to use it.

The outer factors of English teaching in China all require you to be very adaptive and flexible in teaching. Your ingenuity and creativity are needed. But in order to make your

lessons both interesting and helpful to Chinese English learners, knowledge of who you are teaching and what you are teaching are also necessary.

## IV.2. Chinese English Learners

You and your Chinese students enter the classroom with different assumptions and expectations about what learning and teaching are and how they should be fulfilled. More knowledge about the Chinese English learners will help you derive better teaching strategies to teach them.

### IV.2.1. Misconceptions of Chinese English Learners

**High Motivation.** Though Chinese English learners often strike their NS teachers as highly motivated to learn English, it is wise not to take it for granted. Different from ESL learners who are learning English in order to survive in your home countries, Chinese EFL learners vary greatly in the purpose to learn English, such as:

- a) To prepare for a future job.
- b) To read technical materials only available in English.
- c) To pass an examination in order to graduate.
- d) To be qualified for the approval of a professional entitlement.
- e) To study in English-speaking countries.
- f) To gain a job promotion.
- g) To enjoy English literature.
- h) To satisfy curiosity about a foreign language.
- i) To travel in other countries using English as an international language.

Naturally, the students who have a genuine interest in the English language and culture or recognize the practical advantages of learning English are highly motivated and eager to learn. But not all Chinese students are the same. For instance, some of them might take the English class solely because it is required. They typically lack intrinsic motivation and need to be motivated to learn by outer factors. Identifying students' motivation to learn English will help you choose the appropriate teaching material and activities to meet the needs of the students and to stimulate their interest in learning.

**Rote Learners.** Another misconception of Chinese English learners is that they are rote learners. They are described as “dull learners who enjoy rote memorization of grammar rule and spend all their time sitting in the classroom emotionlessly” (Sun & Cheng, 2002, p. 75). But studies on Chinese learners revealed that Chinese learners actually adopt repetitive learning strategies instead of being the misperceived rote learners. As the saying “meaning reveals itself after a hundred times of reading” goes, repetition and meaning are considered integral in the Chinese conceptions of learning. Repetitive learning enables Chinese learners to infer new meanings from the material learned and thus is a high level or deep-learning strategy.

## IV.2.2. Learning Styles of Chinese English Learners

Language-learning styles are the general approaches that students use in language learning. All learners have individual preferences in learning and they learn more effectively when their learning styles are matched with the appropriate approaches in teaching.

The four most important dimensions of language-learning style appear are analytic or global, auditory or visual or hands-on, intuitive-random or sensory-sequential, and closure-oriented or open. Chinese students' learning style are described as:

- a) Introverted: knowledge is to be transmitted by the teacher rather than discovered by the learner.
- b) Closure-oriented: students who favor this orientation dislike ambiguity and uncertainty.
- c) Analytic and field-independent: Chinese students, also Japanese students are often detail- and precision-oriented, preferring language learning strategies that involve dissecting and logically analyzing the given material, searching for contrast, and finding cause-effect relationships.
- d) Visual: lectures, conversations, and oral directions without any visual backup are very confusing and can be anxiety producing.
- e) Thinking-oriented and reflective: students typically base judgment on logic and analysis rather than on feelings of others, the emotional climate, and interpersonal values.
- f) Concrete-sequential: students are likely to follow the teacher's guidelines to the letter, focus on the present, and demand full information and prefer language learning materials and techniques that involve combination of sound, movement, sight, and touch that can be applied in a concrete, sequential, linear manner. (Rao, 2002)

Since teachers tend to mirror their own preferred learning styles in teaching, the learning styles of Chinese EFL learners might be in conflict with your teaching styles. Here are some things you can do to prevent the conflict between your teaching styles and you Chinese students' learning styles:

- a) Acknowledge that some of the learning preferences of the Chinese EFL learners are suitable to the input-poor EFL settings in China and contribute to Chinese English learners' success in learning English.
- b) Recognize your own learning styles so as to adjust your teaching styles to match the learning styles of the students.
- c) Enhance Chinese English learners' awareness of their own learning styles by discussing this topic in class with the students.

## IV.3. TEFL Methodology

Second language acquisition (SLA) is a branch of linguistic study on the process of how

another language is learned after the native language has been acquired. One primary concern of linguistic study is how a language is learned. Based on the different theoretical views, different methods have been developed in language teaching. The major methods used in EFL teaching in China are the grammar-translation method (GT), the audio-lingual method (ALM), and communicative language teaching (CLT). Before we try to compare one method with another, it would be helpful if we bear in mind the following:

- a) Aim of teaching
- b) Area of language emphasis: listening, speaking, reading, or writing
- c) Design of material
- d) Role of the teacher and the students
- e) Function of the native language: use the native language or not
- f) Teacher's response to errors

#### **IV.3.1. The Grammar Translation Method (GT)**

GT came into being in the early to mid nineteenth century. A typical English lesson using this method was illustrated by one of the lessons in the English textbooks used in the 1950s in China:

*Our English Lessons*

*We have a new text every week. Our teacher reads the text and we read after her. Then she explains the text. We listen carefully because there are many new words in it. If we do not understand, we put up our hands, and she explains again. Our teacher asks us questions. When we answer her questions, we must try to speak clearly. We do a lot of exercises in class. We make sentences. We have spelling and dictation. Sometimes we write on the blackboard. Sometimes we write in our notebooks. We learn to write clearly and neatly. I like our English lessons. I think we are making good progress.* (Adamson & Morris, 1997, p. 9)

It is obvious that in GT, the sequence of classroom activities is teacher-centered with an emphasis on reading and writing, grammatical forms and rules. English is taught by constant use of the mother tongue. Students' production of English, namely speaking and writing have to be accurate and clear.

GT is not based on any learning theories and has serious drawbacks in English teaching and learning. One drawback is that it allows almost no chances for the learner to use the language in class and thus ignores the basic function of language – to communicate. Students who have learned English in this way are very poor in oral communication.

#### **IV.3.2. The Audio-Lingual Method (ALM)**

The involvement of ALM is closely linked to the Army Specialized Training Program (ASTP), a language-training program for U.S. soldiers before they were deployed to different parts of the world at the end of World War II. ALM based itself on two theories: 1) Structuralism, a language theory that concerns itself with the structural analysis of language developed by American linguist Leonard Bloomfield in 1930s; and 2) Behaviorism, a

behavior theory that emphasizes the train of stimulus – response – reinforcement developed on the combined works by Ivan Pavlov, a 19<sup>th</sup> century Russian; John Watson, an early 20<sup>th</sup> century American; Edward Thorndike, another early 20<sup>th</sup> century American; and Burrhus Skinner, a mid-20<sup>th</sup> century American.

ALM emphasizes oral skills before written ones, encourages maximum use of English, and uses sentence-pattern drills to build up language ability. Its most prominent characteristic is the frequent use of sentence drills (see Figure 8). The rationales are that language learning is a process of habit formation and repetition/positive reinforcement helps students to develop correct habits. Rigidly controlled grammatical drills prevail in class and learner errors are corrected immediately.

**Figure 8: An Example of the Language Drills Used in ALM**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ What is he/she going to do tomorrow?</li><li>■ He/She is going to {<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>visit his/her friends in the city.</li><li>buy a TV.</li><li>get his/her bike repaired.</li><li>...</li></ul></li></ul>
--

The biggest drawback of ALM is the basic assumption that language learning is habit formation. This idea met its face-off criticism by American transformational linguist Noam Chomsky in the 1950s.

Chomsky contributes language acquisition to an innate language acquisition device (LAD). LAD enables a child to access the underlying general rules of language, the so-called Universal Grammar (UG), which in turn enables the child to speak his mind, to produce sentences that he has never heard of. Unlike the behaviorist theory that considers the input the learner receives and the training in imitation and accurate repetitions as most important, language input functions merely as a trigger to activate LAD to Chomsky.

As far as language acquisition is concerned, Chomsky distinguishes competence and performance, but his primary interest is not in performance but in competence, the underlying ability to use the language. He assumes “an ideal speaker-listener, in a completely homogeneous speech-community”. His exploration into UG does not consider the external/social factors and thus falls into the situation of studying “what is possible” instead of “what is going on”.

Contrary to Chomsky’s asocial stance, sociolinguists claim that knowing a language also means knowing how to use it appropriately in social interactions. It drew attention to the importance of context in language learning. The emphasis on context led to the development of the situational audio-visual language teaching that organizes language teaching in such situations as at the bus stop, at the airport, and at the hotel and provides audio-visual aides, such as recording and pictures to create situation to facilitate understanding. But by and large the situational audio-visual method is still a grammatical approach that relies on mechanical drills. Real communication in language teaching remained unresolved until the rise of communicative language teaching.

### IV.3.3. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)

The communicative approach to language teaching grew out of the functional and grammatical approach depending on mechanical exercises in the 1970s. This approach of language teaching aims to develop the learner's communicative competence in real communications.

Communicative competence is a concept proposed by Hymes (1970). It pays attention to appropriate language use rather than language forms. It concerns itself with speaking what to whom in what situation (where) and at what time (when).

Real communication is established on the existence of the *information gap*. The *information gap* is basically about *I know something you don't know* or *you know something I don't know*. Asking the question "what color is the ball?" when 1) holding the red ball up in front of the whole class; or 2) the ball is inside a big box are different. The former is not considered real communication because there is no information gap: every student knows that the ball is red by looking at it. The latter is considered real communication because there is an information gap: nobody can see the ball and the students have to guess its color by going through the color words in mind.

The main characteristics of CLT are as follows:

- a) *Aim of teaching*: to develop communicative competence
- b) *Area of language emphasis*: listening, speaking, reading, and writing; communication is realized in communicative activities marked by the existence of the *information gap*
- c) *Design of material*: authentic material
- d) *Role of the teacher and the students*: students as communicators and teacher as director, advisor, and facilitator in communication
- e) *Function of the native language*: use English only
- f) *Teacher's response to errors*: correction is needed only when errors prevent communication

So a communicative English classroom is learner-centered rather than teacher-centered where the learners interact with the teacher or with one another. Group and pair work, such as role-play and discussion, are often used.

CLT seems to be a promising method in language teaching, but the Chinese EFL environment does not readily support real communication in English to take place. Communicative activities, marked by the existence of the information gap in communication require "real situations, real roles and real needs and purposes for communication" (Hui, 1997), but all of them are lacking in the Chinese EFL classroom.

First, the need to use English is always very remote for Chinese EFL learners and the lack of input makes the learning task very difficult. Secondly, the notion underlying a communicative classroom does not agree with the Chinese conceptions of how a class should be conducted. Communicative activities often asks learners to complete a task by gathering

information from a partner, or ask them to express opinions on a topic. Since EFL learners speak the same first language, the interaction becomes unnatural and less engaging and Chinese learners, in particular, are reluctant to speak out for fear of losing face or offending others. Besides, the traditional Chinese role expectations of a teacher are those of a knowledge holder who display rich knowledge in lectures instead of taking up a minor role in classroom interaction.

Therefore, an eclectic approach has been adopted in English teaching in China. The eclectic approach tries to integrate the principles of communicative language teaching with other teaching methods. It pays attentions to the four skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing with a general focus on communication skills and permits the appropriate use of the mother tongue and traditional approaches, such as the audio-lingual drills. For a better understanding of the eclectic approach, see Appendix D and Appendix E, which are two teaching plans of Chinese English teachers.

Whether the eclectic approach is the best practice is not sure, but modifications are necessary when CLT is used in the Chinese EFL classroom. Here are some suggestions on how to better implement CLT in the Chinese English classroom:

- a) Inform the learners about the teaching approach and verbalize the goals, focusing on the cyclical aspect of the learning process: language input → communicative practice → review → further practice → new input → communicative practice.
- b) Design communicative activities in a variety of forms instead of only using group or pair work.
- c) Rather than asking student to communicate with one another, which might end up with students talking in their native tongue, design communicative activities that allow student communicating with the text and the teacher.
- d) Use language drills appropriately to prepare students for communicative activities.
- e) Increase the teacher's own participation in student pair or group work, circulating and joining students in their pair or group work.
- f) Elicit students' responses by calling on specific students rather than waiting for students to decide to speak on their own.

As a teacher said in my study, teaching is not a profession that is quickly absorbed by “on the job training”. Your success as an EFL teacher in China won't come easily. Please allow me to quote two more messages from the participants in my study to end this chapter:

*“...I think it is important to study techniques of teaching EFL because it is quite different from ESL. I think it is important to know language acquisition theory. I would encourage new teachers to not be afraid to give teaching a try. Training is important, but you learn the most when you are actually teaching, trying out new methods everyday. I encourage any teacher to make at least a two year commitment so they can refine their skills and serve the students better the second year.”*

*“Synthesize your own beliefs and approaches with Chinese beliefs and approaches. Avoid rose-tinted spectacles when considering “Western” practices. Go with the flow –*

*do not jump to snap judgments. Look to enjoy your time in China as a learning experience.”*

## **Concluding Thoughts**

Teaching English in China, in a country so different from the home countries of your own is a complex situation that crosses both cultural and pedagogical traditions and practices. I understand there are a lot more that you might want to know, but my hope is that this handbook will ease you into the Chinese EFL context for your future success as an English teacher in China.

I am most grateful to all the participants in my study for sharing their experience in China with me. Their suggestions and recommendations are so valuable and insightful that I feel obliged to disseminate them to more teachers. You will find the summary of the narratives in the questionnaire survey Appendix F: Survey Narratives. I took the liberty to edit some sentences to make the summary into a coherent and relevant piece, but it is still the very original account.

My cordial thanks also go to Xiaobing Huang and Yuesha Wang, my best friends in China, for sharing their teaching plans and Jennifer W. Craft for allowing me to use her Teaching Survival Kit in the handbook. Jennifer W. Craft is an ESL instructor at Oakland Community College, MI and the president of MITESOL for 2002-2003. You will find the teaching plans and the Teaching Survival Kit in Appendix D, Appendix E, and Appendix G.



## References

- Adamson, B., & Morris, P. (1997). The English curriculum in the People's Republic of China. *Comparative Education Review*, 41(1), 3-26.
- Bartels, D. T. & Eppley, F. C. (1995). Education in mainland China. *Social Education*, 59(1), 31-37.
- Boyle, J. (2000). Education for teachers of English in China. *Journal of Education for Teaching*, 26 (2), 147-155.
- Bigg, J. (1994). Asian learners through Western eyes: An astigmatic paradox. *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Vocational Educational Research*, 2(2), 40-63.
- Catterick, D. (1996). Square peg in a round hole? *ELI Teaching*, December, 4-9.
- Chan, S. (1999). The Chinese learner – a question of style. *Education and Training*, 41(6/7), 294-304.
- Chen, H. (1999). *Say it in Chinese*. Beijing: Sinolingua.
- China – Quick Facts. Available at <http://test.china.org.cn/e-changshi/>.
- Cortazzi, M. & Jin, L. (1996). English teaching and learning in China. *Language Teaching*, 29, 61-80.
- Craft, J.W. (2002). Lessons learned teaching in Beijing. *MITESOL Messages*, XXVIII (1), 3.
- Craig, B. (1997). Negotiating discourse expectations in an English as a foreign language classroom. *Hong Kong Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 2(1), 22.
- Crystal, D. (1987). *The Cambridge encyclopedia of language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Dzao, Y. F. (1990). Historical background. In Y. F. Dzao (Ed.) *English in China* (pp 11-39). Hong Kong: API Press.
- Feng, Y. (1994, November). *From the imperial examination to the national college entrance examination: The dynamics of political centralism in China's educational enterprise*. Paper presented at the 19<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Association for the Study of Higher Education, Tucson, AZ.
- Finegan, E. (1999). *Language: Its structure and use*. Orlando, FL: Harcourt Brace.
- Ford, D. J. (1988). *The twain shall meet: The current study of English in China*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, Inc.
- Gu, P. Y. (2003). Fine brush and freehand: The vocabulary-learning art of two successful Chinese EFL learners. *TESOL Quarterly*, 37(1), 73-104.
- Guo, Z. & Yu, H. (2002). Hybridized discourse: Social openness and functions of English media in post-Mao China. *World Englishes*, 21(2), 217-230.
- Halliday, A. (1997). Six lessons: Cultural continuity in communicative language teaching. *Language Teaching Research*, 1(3), 212-238.
- Hall, E.T. (1977). *Beyond culture*. Garden City, NY: Anchor Press/Doubleday.
- Hall, E.T. (1990). *Understanding cultural differences*. Yarmouth, ME: Intercultural Press.
- Hu, W. & Grove, C. L. (1991). *Encountering the Chinese: A guide for Americans*. Yarmouth, Main: Intercultural Press, Inc.
- Hui, L. (1997). New bottles, old wine: Communicative language teaching in China. *English Teaching Forum*, 35(4), 38-41.
- Johnson, K. (2001). *An introduction to foreign language learning and teaching*. Essex, England: Pearson Education Ltd.
- Lam, A. (2002). English in education in China: Policy changes and learners' experiences.

- World Englishes*, 21(2), 245-256.
- Lou, J. & Wendel, F. C. (1999). Preparing for college: Senior high school education in China. *NASSP Bulletin*, 83, 57-68.
- Ministry of Education, People's Republic of China. (2001). *教育部关于积极推进小学开设英语课程的指导意见* [Guidelines on actively promoting English teaching at elementary schools]. (Document No. [2001]2). China: Ministry of Education.
- Ministry of Education, People's Republic of China. (2003). *普通高中英语课程标准（实验）* [English curriculum for senior high school (trial version)]. China: People's Education Press.
- Ministry of Education, People's Republic of China. (2004). *大学英语课程教学要求* [College English curriculum]. (Document No. [2004]1). China: Ministry of Education.
- Ministry of Education, People's Republic of China. (2004). *A survey of the educational reform and development in China*. Retrieved on January 29, 2004 from <http://www.moe.edu.cn>
- Moore, O. (2000). *Chinese*. CA: University of California Press.
- Pennington, M. C. (1996). *Phonology in English language teaching: An international approach*. New York: Longman.
- Pottorff, D. (1994). Education in China at a glance. *Grand Valley Review*, 7, 41-47.
- Shen, S. & Wang, Z. (1995). *容易混淆的英语词语辨析* [How to distinguish similar English words]. China: Chinese Translation Publishing Co.
- Special issues in the multicultural classroom. Retrieved on December 10, 2003 at <http://www.irc.uci.edu/trg/137.html>.
- Swan, M., & Smith, B. (2001). *Learner English - A teacher's guide to interference and other problems*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Sun, G. & Cheng, L. (2002). From context to curriculum: A case study of communicative language teaching in China. *TESL Canada Journal*, 19(2), 67-86.
- The Chinese Culture Connection. (1987). *Chinese values and the search for culture-free dimensions of culture*. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 18(2), 143-164
- The World Factbook (2003). Available at <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/ch.html>.
- Tang, D. & Absalom, D. (1998). Teaching across cultures: Considerations for western EFL teachers in China. *Hong Kong Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 3(2), 117-132.
- Yang, Y. (2000). *History of English education in China (1919-1998)* (Eric Document Reproduction Service No. ED 441 347). Washington, DC: Educational Resources Information Center.
- Wyss, R. (2002). Familiarizing learners with communicative language teaching classroom approaches. *TESOL Matters*, 12(3). Retrieved on August 29, 2003 from <http://www.tesol.org/pubs/articles/2002/tm12-3-13.html>.

## Appendix A: Pinyin and Its Pronunciation

Vowels (compared to similar but not identical English pronunciation)

### *Simple Vowels*

<p><b>a</b> a as in <i>father</i></p> <p><b>o</b> aw as in <i>law</i></p> <p><b>e</b> er as in <i>her</i> (British English)</p> <p><b>i</b> ea as in <i>eat</i></p> <p><b>u</b> oo as in <i>too</i></p> <p><b>ü</b> as “yu” in German</p>	<p><b>ei</b> ay as in <i>lay</i></p> <p><b>en</b> weak form of an as in <i>and</i></p> <p><b>eng</b> no similar English sound but nearly as in <i>lung</i></p> <p><b>ie</b> ye as in <i>yes</i></p> <p><b>in</b> ean as in <i>bean</i></p> <p><b>ing</b> ing as in <i>sing</i></p>
---	---

### *Diphthongs*

<p><b>ai</b> i as in <i>bike</i></p> <p><b>ao</b> ow as in <i>now</i></p> <p><b>an</b> ahn</p> <p><b>ang</b> like in <i>song</i></p>	<p><b>ou</b> ow as in <i>low</i></p> <p><b>ong</b> oo-ng</p> <p><b>un</b> oon as in <i>balloon</i></p> <p><b>üe</b> no similar English sound but as the voiceless sure in <i>treasure</i></p> <p><b>ün</b> no similar English sound</p>
--	--

Consonants (compared to similar but not identical English pronunciation)

b p m f d t n l	g k h	j q x	z c s	zh ch sh r y w
<b>b</b> b as in <i>ball</i>			<b>j</b> j as in <i>jeep</i> *	
<b>p</b> p as in <i>pour</i>			<b>q</b> ch as in <i>cheek</i> *	
<b>m</b> m as in <i>more</i>			<b>x</b> x as in <i>she</i> *	
<b>f</b> f as in <i>four</i>				
<b>d</b> d as in <i>ladder</i>			<b>z</b> ds as in <i>deeds</i>	
<b>t</b> t as in <i>better</i>			<b>c</b> c as in <i>streets</i> (strongly aspirated)	
<b>n</b> n as in <i>nurse</i>			<b>s</b> s as in <i>sup</i> *	
<b>l</b> l as in <i>taller</i>			<b>zh</b> j as in <i>jump</i> *	
			<b>ch</b> ch as in <i>church</i> *	
<b>g</b> g as in <i>nigger</i>			<b>sh</b> sh as in <i>shore</i> *	
<b>k</b> k as in <i>darker</i>			<b>r</b> r as in <i>rose</i> *	
<b>h</b> h as in <i>her</i>				
			<b>y</b> y as in <i>yet</i>	
			<b>w</b> w as in <i>wolf</i>	

(\* = less similar)

## Appendix B: IPA (International Phonetic Alphabet)

### vowels

/i:/	as in 'peat' /pi:t/	/eɪ/	as in 'bay' /beɪ/
/ɪ/	as in 'pit' /pɪt/	/aɪ/	as in 'buy' /baɪ/
/e/	as in 'pet' /pet/	/ɔɪ/	as in 'boy' /bɔɪ/
/æ/	as in 'pat' /pæt/	/əʊ/	as in 'go' /gəʊ/
/ɑ:/	as in 'part' /pɑ:t/	/aʊ/	as in 'cow' /kaʊ/
/ɒ/	as in 'pot' /pɒt/		
/ɔ:/	as in 'port' /pɔ:t/	/ɪə/	as in 'hear' /hɪə/
/ʊ/	as in 'put' /pʊt/	/eə/	as in 'hair' /heə/
/u:/	as in 'poodle' /pu:dl/	/ʊə/	as in 'tour' /tuə/
/ʌ/	as in 'putt' /pʌt/		
/ɜ:/	as in 'pert' /pɜ:t/		
/ə/	as in 'about', 'upper' /əbaʊt/, /ʌpə/		

### consonants

/p/	as in 'pea' /pi:/	/m/	as in 'map' /mæp/
/b/	as in 'bee' /bi:/	/n/	as in 'nap' /næp/
/t/	as in 'toe' /təʊ/	/ŋ/	as in 'hang' /hæŋ/
/d/	as in 'doe' /dəʊ/	/l/	as in 'led' /led/
/tʃ/	as in 'chin' /tʃɪn/	/r/	as in 'red' /red/
/dʒ/	as in 'gin' /dʒɪn/	/j/	as in 'yes' /jes/
/k/	as in 'cap' /kæp/	/w/	as in 'west' /west/
/g/	as in 'gap' /gæp/	/h/	as in 'head' /hed/
/f/	as in 'fat' /fæt/		
/v/	as in 'vat' /væt/		
/θ/	as in 'thing' /θɪŋ/		
/ð/	as in 'this' /ðɪs/		
/s/	as in 'sip' /sɪp/		
/z/	as in 'zip' /zɪp/		
/ʃ/	as in 'ship' /ʃɪp/		
/z/	as in 'measure' /meʒə/		

## Appendix C: Grammatical Differences between Chinese and English

(Swan, M., & Smith, B. (2001). *Learner English - A teacher's guide to interference and other problems* (314-320). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.)

### **General**

There are certain similarities between the syntactic structures of English and Chinese, yet the divergence is vast. It is advisable not to regard anything as a 'basic' point which students 'ought to know'.

### **Parts of speech**

Parts of speech in Chinese are not always formally distinguished. There is no established comprehensive grammatical classification, and the same word may often serve different structural functions. As a result, learners have to try hard to remember the set classes of English words and their functions in a sentence. They may fail to distinguish related words such as *difficult* and *difficulty* in terms of their parts of speech, or to appreciate the fact that certain functions in a sentence can only be fulfilled by words from certain classes:

\**She likes walk.*

\**I have not son.*

\**He is not doubt about the correct of his argument.*

\**It is very difficulty to convince him.*

### **Sentence structure**

Chinese sentences often start with a 'topicalised' subject or object which is grammatically detached from the rest of the sentence (as in English *That boy - I'm going to kill him one of these days*). This does not always transfer successfully to English, and can cause confusion, especially if a topicalised object is followed by a dropped subject pronoun (which makes the sentence look like a defective passive).

\**Old people must respect (meaning Old people - we must respect them).*



### Verb forms

Chinese is a non-inflected language. What English achieves by changing verb forms, Chinese expresses by means of adverbials, word order and context. English inflection seems generally confusing and causes frequent errors:

1. Subject-verb concord:
  - \**Everybody are here.*
  - \**Belong and Baoying has a shared kitchen.*
2. Irregular verb formation:
  - \**strided* \**hurted* \**flied* \**blewn*
3. Structure of complex verb forms:
  - \**The window was breaking by the wind.*

### Time, tense and aspect

1. Chinese expresses the concept of time very differently from English. It does not conjugate the verb to express time relations. Learners have serious difficulty in handling English tenses and aspects. Errors like these are common:
  - \**I have seen her two days ago.*
  - \**I found that the room is empty.*
  - \**My brother left home since nine o'clock.*
  - \**She will go by the time you get here.*
2. Some students have the false impression that the names of the tenses indicate time. For example, they think that the 'present tense' indicates 'present time'. They therefore find puzzling utterances like:
  - There is a film tonight.*
  - The play we just saw tells a tragic story.*
3. Progressive aspect causes difficulty:
  - \**What do you read?* (for *What are you reading?*)
  - \**I sit here for a long time.*
4. Certain conventions in using tenses cannot be explained semantically, which causes problems. In adverbial clauses indicating future time, for example, learners do not necessarily appreciate why the 'present' tense is required:
  - \**We shall go to the country if it will be a nice day tomorrow.*
  - \**She will submit the paper before she will leave the college.*

## Chinese speakers

### Verb complementation

1. Often transitive verbs are used as intransitives, and vice versa:
  - \**He married with a charming girl.*
  - \**She talked a few words with one of the passengers.*
2. Patterns of complementation cause difficulty even for advanced learners:
  - \**I suggest to come earlier.*
  - \**The grass smells sweetly.*
  - \**Most people describe that he is handsome.*
  - \**She told that she'd be here.*
3. It is particularly difficult for the Chinese to differentiate between the use of an infinitive (with or without *to*), a present participle, a past participle and a gerund. One frequently hears mistakes like:
  - \**I was very exciting.* (for *excited*)
  - \**I'm sorry I forgot bringing your book.*
  - \**You'd better to come earlier.*
  - \**She's used to get up at seven.*
4. Adjectives and verbs are frequently identical in Chinese. Thus the verb *to be* tends to be dropped when followed by predicative adjectives.
  - \**I busy.*
  - \**She very happy.*

### Auxiliaries; questions and negatives

Chinese does not use auxiliaries to form questions and negatives. The insertion of *do/don't*, etc. presents problems:

- \**How many brothers you have?*
- \**I did not finished my work yesterday.*

Question tags meaning *Is that so?*, *Is that right?* are used very commonly in Chinese. These are often converted to an all-purpose *is it?/ isn't it?* in English:

- \**He liked it, is it?*
- \**You don't read that sort of books, isn't it?*

### Modals

Certain meanings of English modals have direct equivalents in Chinese modals and can be readily understood. But other meanings which have no Chinese counterparts are problematic. For instance, *should* as in *I think you should take up writing* is easy as it corresponds to a Chinese modal, *yīnggāi*. But *should* is more difficult in the utterances below since it has no straightforward Chinese translations:

*It's strange that you should say this.*

*We should be grateful if you could do it.*

On the whole, English modals indicate a wider range of meaning and feeling than their Chinese counterparts. Chinese learners therefore tend not to use them as frequently as they should, and may fail to express the nuances that English modals convey; they would for example be likely to say *This is definitely not true* in preference to *This can't be true*, or *I'm probably coming* rather than *I might come*.

One point needs particular mention here. Communication in English requires appropriate polite forms of instructions, invitations, requests and suggestions, in which modals play a central role. Not being able to use modals (and associated patterns) adequately, Chinese students often fail to comply with the English conventions, and may appear abrupt. For example, they may say such things as:

1. *Please read this article.*
2. *You come and sit here, please.*
3. *Can you do me a favour?*

when it would normally be more polite to say:

1. *You may like to read this article.*
2. *Would you come and sit here, please?*
3. *Could you do me a favour?*

### **Subjunctives**

Chinese does not differentiate subjunctive from indicative mood. Learners are therefore likely to replace English subjunctives and 'unreal pasts' by ordinary present tenses or modals:

- \**If I am you, I shan't go.*
- \**I suggest that this applicant may be considered at the next meeting.*
- \**I wish you can come.*
- \**It's time that we should leave.*

### **Relatives**

English relative structures are difficult for Chinese learners, who often simply avoid using them. Structures with zero pronoun (e.g. *The house we wanted was too expensive*) can cause comprehension problems. Typical mistakes with relative structures include the omission or addition of pronouns, and difficulty in using *whose*:

- \**There are many people have that idea.*
- \**That's the shop that I told you about it.*
- \**It was a society which its rulers held absolute power.*



## Chinese speakers

### **Passives**

Chinese learners often have trouble mastering English passive structures:

*\*Both the burglars captured by the police.*

*\*We were inviting to a party.*

Progressive and perfect passives are particularly difficult:

*\*A new hotel is building in the centre.*

*\*Tomorrow's meeting has cancelled.*

### **Articles**

There are no articles in Chinese. Students find it hard to use them consistently correctly. They may omit necessary articles:

*\*Let's make fire.*

*\*I can play piano.*

or insert unnecessary ones:

*\*He finished the school last year.*

*\*He was in a pain.*

or confuse the use of definite and indefinite articles:

*\*Xiao Ying is a tallest girl in the class.*

*\*He smashed the vase in the rage.*

### **Gender**

There is no gender distinction in the spoken form of the Chinese pronouns: for example, *he*, *she* and *it* share the same sound. Chinese learners often fail to differentiate them in spoken English:

*\*I've a brother, and she's working in a factory.*

*\*That is my aunt over there. Have you met him?*

*\*Julie is a good director. His films are very engrossing.*

### **Number**

Plurality is rarely expressed in Chinese. *-s* tends to be dropped:

*\*I have visited some place around York.*

*\*I've seen a lot of play lately.*

This is particularly true in speech, where there is already a problem with the pronunciation of final consonant clusters.

### **The countable/uncountable distinction**

Chinese students sometimes find the English concept of countability hard to grasp. For example, *furniture, equipment, luggage, news*, etc. can all be counted in the Chinese mind. Hence such errors as:

- \* *Let me tell you an interesting news.*
- \* *She's brought many luggages with her.*

### **Pronouns**

English uses pronouns much more than Chinese, which tends to drop them when they may be understood.

- \* *I bought the book before left the shop.*
- \* *The teacher came in with a big book in right hand.*

With personal pronouns, Chinese does not make a distinction between the subjective case (e.g. *I*) and the objective case (e.g. *me*). With possessives, it does not distinguish determiners (e.g. *my*) from non-determiners (e.g. *mine*). Students sometimes choose the wrong category of pronouns in English:

- \* *I am like she.*
- \* *The book is my.*

### **Word order**

#### **A. Questions**

Chinese word order is identical in both statements and questions. Inversion in English interrogative sentences may be ignored or may be applied wrongly:

- \* *You and your family last summer visited where?*
- \* *When she will be back?*
- \* *What was called the film?*
- \* *Would have she gone home?*

#### **B. Indirect questions**

Chinese uses embedded direct questions in indirect questions. This sometimes leads to errors such as:

- \* *He asked me what does she like.*
- \* *She wondered where is her father.*

*Chinese speakers*

### **C. Inversion in general**

Not only interrogatives, but also other sentences with inverted word order are error-prone:

*\*Only by doing so they could succeed.*

*\*He was unhappy, so I was.*

### **Postmodifiers**

Noun modifiers in Chinese, no matter whether they are words, phrases or clauses, come before the nouns they modify. So English postmodifiers often hinder comprehension. In production, errors like these emerge:

*\*This is important something.*

*\*This is a very difficult to solve problem.*

*\*That is the place where motion pictures are made there.*

### **Position of adverbials**

Chinese adverbials usually come before verbs and adjectives in a sentence. A learner is very likely to say, for instance:

*(\*Tomorrow morning I'll come. (for I'll come tomorrow morning.)*

*(\*This evening at seven o'clock we are going to meet. (for We are going to meet this evening at seven o'clock.)*

### **Conjunctions and compound sentences**

A common mistake is to duplicate conjunctions of concession and cause, as their Chinese equivalents usually appear in pairs:

*\*Although she was tired, but she went on working.*

*\*Because I didn't know him, so I didn't say anything.*

### **Prepositions**

The use of English prepositions is highly idiomatic and difficult for learners. Errors of all kinds are common:

*\*What are you going to do in this morning?*

*\*I go York in May.*

*\*He is suffering with cold.*

*\*The text is too difficult to me.*



**CAMBRIDGE**  
**UNIVERSITY PRESS**

**PUBLICATION PERMISSION**

April 7, 2004

Wei Zhang  
51575 Steeple Chase Ct.  
Granger, IN 46530

Fax: 616-331-6515

North American Branch  
40 West 20th Street  
New York, NY 10011-4211  
USA

Telephone 212 924 3900

Fax 212 691 3239

**Reference**

ISBN: HB 0-521- PB 0-521- 77939-1 Other 0-521-  
Author: Swan, Michael and Smith, Bernard  
Title: LEARNER ENGLISH: A TEACHER'S GUIDE TO INTERFERENCE AND OTHER PROBLEMS, 2ND ED.  
Selection/pp.: pp. 314-320

Additional:

**Use**

Reprint Title: Master's Thesis  
Publisher: Wei Zhang, Grand Valley State University  
Format: Master's Thesis  
Quantity: n.a.  
Avail. Date: 2004

**Rights/Acknowledgement**

Permission is granted for nonexclusive rights throughout the world in the English language for interior text editorial use in the format described above, including non-profit editions for the blind and handicapped. Please fully acknowledge our material and include the phrase "Reprinted with the permission of Cambridge University Press."

**Restrictions**

This permission does not allow the reprinting of any material copyrighted by or credited in our publication to another source; Cambridge disclaims all liability in connection with the use of such material without proper consent.

- This permission is restricted to the indicated format only; for additional uses you must re-apply for permission.
- This permission requires that you obtain the written consent of one author of our material, without which this grant is not valid.

Authorization: \_\_\_\_\_  
Ted Gerney  
Marketing Associate, Rights and Permissions

## Appendix D: Teaching Plan (1)

### *The traffic Accident*

(Lesson 98 Unit 25 Junior English for China)

Grade Level: Grade 8 (Second year at junior high school)

by Huang Xiaobing(黄小冰), Guangdong Experimental Middle School, Guangzhou

#### . Teaching Aims

1. **Linguistic Aims:**

A: Words and expressions: a traffic accident, cause, don't mention it, motorbike, crowd

B: Grammar: Past continuous tense

2. **Competent aims:** to understand the text thoroughly and find out the ways to solve the daily life problems.

#### . Learning Strategies

Learning-on-one's own, learning-in-cooperation, learning-by-doing, learning-in-competitions

#### . Teaching Methods

1. Student-centered
2. Task-based Teaching Method

#### . Tasks Design

Pre-task	Sing a song "Twinkle, twinkle, little star"
Task One	Put the pictures in the right order
Task Two	Skim the text and check the order
Task Three	Text reading comprehension
Task Four	What causes traffic accident? And what can we do?
Task Five	Give out the solutions to some of the daily life problems.

#### . Teaching Procedures

**Step 1: pre-task**

Sing a song "Twinkle, twinkle, little star"

**Step 2:** get close to the students by asking questions like:

1. How are you?
2. Where do you live?
3. How do you usually go to school?

(The teacher may make some comments about Nanhai's traffic like "I know Naihai is a

beautiful place. There is a lot of traffic. There are many buses, cars, bikes, motorbikes...)

***Step 3: Warm-up***

Look at the photo and tell what will happen to the people on the motorbike. (The photo shows that a man is picking up two more people on his motorbike.)

***Step 4: Pre-reading***

Task One: Get the students to look at the pictures and arrange the order of the pictures. (There are all together five pictures, each of which shows part of the accident.)

***Step 5: While-reading***

Task Two: SKIMMING: Get the students to skim the text and check whether they have put the pictures in the right order.

Task Three: DETAILED READING: Get the students to read the text again and answer the questions “What did the children do after the accident happen?” They are required to work in groups, each student tells one or two sentences, so that they can tell the whole story.

***Step 6 Post-reading***

Task Four: DISCUSSION: “What do you think causes the accident? What will you do to help?” Students must work in groups of six and come up with different ideas.

***Step 7: Brain-Storm***

Task Five: DISCUSSION: “We will have different accidents in our daily life. What can we do to help the people in danger?” Students are required to choose one of the topics and write down their answers on a big piece of paper. They must work in group of six. (Students may come up with the ideas like: We must call the police for help. We may jump into the water and save the boy etc.)

***Step 8: Homework***

What will happen after the accident? Guess the ending of the story. Try to write a story about it.

**. Teaching Materials**

**A Traffic Accident**

The children were leaving school on Tuesday when they saw a truck. The truck was coming round the corner near the school. It was carrying some large bags of rice. Suddenly one of the bags fell off the truck. It landed right in the middle of the road.

The children shouted to the driver, but he did not hear them.

“Let’s move the bag, or it may cause an accident,” said Li Lei.

The children were running to move the bag of rice when they heard the sound of a motorbike. It was coming round the corner. The man on the motorbike was driving too fast. He did not see the bag until it was too late. His bike hit the bag of rice and he fell off his bike. The man lay on the road. Luckily, he was not badly hurt.

“Quick!!” said Li Lei. “Lucy and Wei Hua, go round that corner and stop the traffic.”

Li Lei and Jim carried the man to the school gatekeeper’s room. “It’s really nice of you. Thank you very much,” said the man.

“Don’t mention it.” said Li Lei. “But you’d better not talk.”

“Don’t crowd round him,” said the gatekeeper. “Li Lei, go and find a teacher. I’ll go with Lin Tao to move the bag of rice out of the road.”

After they moved the bag away, the girls let the traffic go again.

Li Lei went into the school and found Miss Zhao in the school library. She was choosing a book. He told her about the accident. As quickly as she could, Miss Zhao got a medicine box.

“I’ll go and take care of the man,” she said. “You go to the school office and call the police. Please hurry up!”

With the medicine box under her arm, Miss Zhao hurried off to look after the man.

**Appendix E: Teaching Plan (2)**

**Earthquake**

**(Senior English for China, Book 2)**

**Grade Level: Grade 10 (First year at senior high school)**

**by Wang Yuesha**

**Shenzhen High School, Shenzhen, Guangdong**



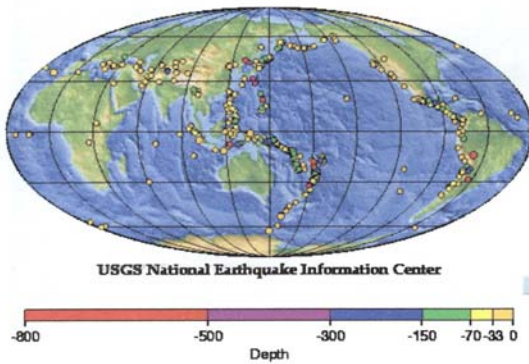
What is the video about?



### About earthquake

- What may happen during an earthquake?  
( shake, fall down, clasp, cut off, fire)
- Where does it break out/take place most frequently? In the world? In China?
- Do you know any famous earthquake?

Earthquakes Magnitude 7 and Greater  
1975 - Present

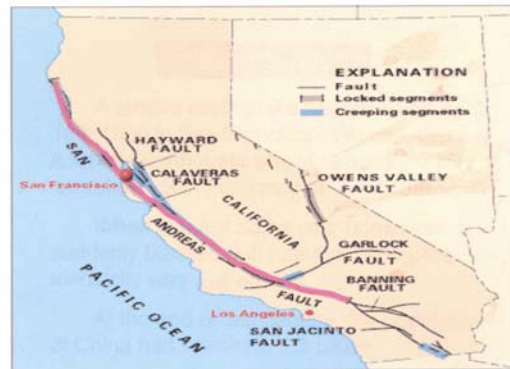


### Historically Significant Earthquakes

Year	Location	Magnitude	Deaths (estimated)
780BC	Shanxi Province, China	Unknown	Unknown
1201	Upper Egypt or Syria	unknown	1,000,000
1964	Prince William Sound, AK, U.S.	9.2	130
1976	Tangshan, China	8.0	240,000

### Comprehension Questions 1

- How many earthquake are mentioned in the text?
- Where did the earthquake happen?
- When did the first earthquake happen? When was the second?
- Where is San Francisco? (To be specific)
- Will there be more earthquake?



## Comparison Between Two earthquakes

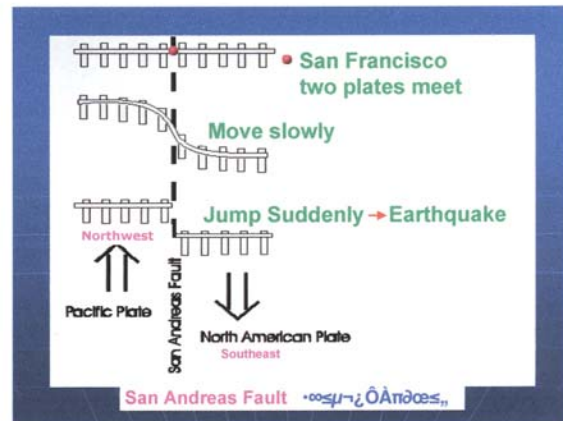
Earthquake	Exact time	Exact place	Damage	Death / homeless
<b>1906</b>	On the morning of April, 18th	In the city	City destroyed, buildings burt down	700 died 250,000 homeless
<b>1989</b>	on the evening of Oct, 17th	55 kilometers away	Overpass fell, old buildings destroyed, electricity cut off	100 died



Plate moves, Fault does,

## Comprehension Questions 2

- Why did the earthquake in 1989 killed fewer people? Give at least two reasons.
- Watch the video and try to understand how earthquakes happen.
- Read paragraph 4 again and explain in your own words why earthquakes happened in San Francisco.



## Discussion



If you are one of the citizens of San Francisco, what will you do when you know there will be even a bigger earthquake in the future? What will you do to protect yourself?

Question: A person who lives in a certain city or town

## Word Study

A terrible earthquake happened on April 18th, 1906 in San Francisco; We can also say a terrible earthquake **shook/ struck / hit / attacked** San Francisco on April 18th, 1906.

When you are doing your homework, it suddenly **blacked out**. Later you know the electricity was **cut off**.

At the end of last century, the population of China had **reached** 1.3 billion.

**Damage Destroy**

**damage** v. n

v. The building was partly damaged in the explosion.

n. Cause damage to / do damage to

n. The flood caused great damage to the crops.

**destroy** v. **destruction** n.

v. The fire destroyed the whole forest.

n. The US bombs caused widespread destruction in Iraq.

**Exercise**

1. If the volcano erupts, the whole city will be destroyed.
2. Typhoon "Cuckoo" caused great damage to our city.
3. Gambling was his destruction.
4. Dishonest behavior will damage one's reputation.

**Unforgettable experiences**

Unit 4

**Sample dialogue**

- (Picture 1)
- Do you know the man in the first picture?
- Yes, he's Zhang Heng.
- How do you know him? What is he?
- He is the man who made the earliest seismograph in 132.

**Disasters**

- Flood



Encarta Encyclopedia, Gary D. McMurtry/Photo Researchers, Inc.

**Tornado / Typhoon**



Encarta Encyclopedia, Howard Bluestein/Science Source/Photo Researchers, Inc.



## Fire



## Earthquake



### About earthquake

- Where does it break out/take place most frequently? In the world? In China?
- What may happen during an earthquake?  
( shake, fall down, clasp, landslide, tsunami wave, fire )
- Do you know any famous earthquake?

### Historically Significant Earthquakes

Year	Location	Magnitude	Deaths (estimated)
780BC	Shanxi Province, China	Unknown	Unknown
1201	Upper Egypt or Syria	unknown	1,000,000
1964	Prince William Sound, AK, U.S.	9.2	130
1976	Tangshan, China	8.0	240, 000

### Part 1

1. When did the earthquake happen?
2. Where was the man driving when it happened?
3. What was the first thing he saw? What did he think happened?
4. Then what did he do?
5. What happened at the end?

To express worries, fears, and difficulties

- Help!
- I'm afraid (to ...).
- It scares me.

To comfort and help others

- Don't worry.
- Don't be afraid.
- It'll be ok/all right.
- It's all right.
- Well done!
- You can do it!
- Come on!
- That's better.
- Keep trying.

## **Appendix F: Survey Narrative**

### *Subjects Taught in China*

English, English methodology, conversational English, English speech and drama, phonetics and pronunciation, Beginning English, TESOL, Western Civilization, Writing, Academic writing for middle school EFL teachers, English speaking and conversation, North America culture, Survey of British History, MS writing, Ph.D. Conference English, reading, extensive reading, Topic Discussion/Debate, Listening Comprehension, Adult training,

### *What else do you wish you had known more before you went to teach in China?*

- It would have been very helpful to know more about the Chinese educational system, as well as Chinese culture in general. I see now that I knew nothing about attitudes of Chinese students and teachers, or about their expectations or their difficulties in the classroom. Probably I still know little.
- I have learned more about Chinese culture and literature since coming to China. The literature has been especially helpful to provide examples in class and to talk to students out of class. Certainly students can talk in English with more ease about Lu Xun than about William Blake. It also provides common ground.
- I wish the topic of language and its connection to culture had been explored more. New teachers need to know when they are focusing on language and when they are imposing their own culture on students.
- I wish I had more of a foundation in the Chinese language – especially in pronunciation and pinyin.  
I wish I had been encouraged to observe Chinese teachers before I began to teach my own classes.
- Importance of values in education – Confucian values of authority (Chinese students want strong leader who will correct them and directly teach them, not just invite them to construct their own meaning, as teachers often do in America)  
Teaching students how to learn – learning strategies  
Teaching students pronunciation, intonation, and the rhythm of English  
Explaining the RATIONALE behind activities (students seem to hold that we only play in Oral classes...)
- That all schools are different and each city and location varies greatly. Resources available also vary greatly.
- I wish I had known more about specific activities that work well in a large classroom, and more large-class type games that foster each student speaking.
- Better training in EFL teaching as one week was not long enough to grasp it.  
Chinese language skills, especially for younger students who often asked what a word was in Chinese.
- General English skill levels for the different ages
- If I had known what specific classes I was going to teach, I would have brought more

resources with me, more specifically for writing or if I had had literature classes.

Knowing the school's curriculum guide for such classes as Oral English or writing would have been helpful, also. I think to have known a little more linguistics/psycholinguistics would have been helpful—even to know how to read the phonetic spelling that all Chinese students do so well and hardly any foreigner knows how to read.

- I wish I had known in advance what grade I was going to teach so I could have prepared materials for my students. I didn't find out until I arrived what grade I was teaching. I wish I had known what my daily schedule would be. I wish I could've been in contact with American teachers who had taught at my school previously so I'd have known more what to expect.
- I wish that I had made more of an effort to study the Chinese language before going.
- I would want to know more about how to teach English in large classes, so that I could have modeled that for my trainees. Also, I think we often forget that Chinese student lack an English environment, and we don't always keep that in mind in our teaching.
- A clearer picture of the expectations the schools would have of me in the classroom would have been helpful.
- I felt that I was pretty well prepared to do the things that I was asked to do. I wish that I had learned more about how to respond to requests that were made of us by the administration. I also wish that I had learned more about the geography and history but that has come in time.
- I wish I knew about the simple day-to-day life and activity in the country. I desired to know about lifestyles and things that can only be answered by living in the culture.
- I felt I was adequately prepared, having worked with foreign students here in the US and having taught in Nigeria for three years. I had a sense of what students would need to work on to improve their speaking and listening skills.
- More about cultural differences. I loved the teachers. I hope I did not inadvertently offend any of them.
- How much I would need to change my beliefs and approaches to ELT and life in general.
- If I had known what an absolute joy it would be, perhaps I would have gone sooner.
- My answers for the IMPORTANCE column may help in your survey, however, my experience, as you know, was not in teaching ESL – but improving what the Chinese teachers already knew. Some Chinese teachers were very good English speakers and some were not as good. For some it was the first time they had spoken with a native English speaker. So my experience is somewhat different than that of a teacher teaching middle school students.
- Backgrounds of the local areas where I was teaching. Each area of China is so different. Maybe more communication about that specific area of English learners.
- Knowledge of the equipment would've been useful. Also, more cultural info would have been good.
- This has nothing to do with teaching, but I wish I had known how isolated I'd feel. I came in the middle of the year; all the other teachers were well-entrenched in their

friendships and routines. It was hard for me to find my way. Additionally, the person who was assigned to me by the university to make sure all was well ended up having to give most of her time to an elderly woman who arrived shortly after I did. I was fine in the classroom, but the day-to-day life was a bit depressing. I wish there had been organized Chinese lessons at least. Only my students were willing to teach me, and I felt that, ethically, it was not right for me to take their time in that way. When we were together, we used English only.

- (1) Gestures, voice tones, behaviors, and other activities that are culturally offensive to the Chinese. The whole arena of (2) gift-giving and (3) guanxi is challenging to me. I am embarrassed to receive lovely gifts and frankly find it difficult to transport them home on the plane (and after 11 summers, I have more Chinese souvenirs than I know what to do with). I don't know how to befriend a Chinese in the purest, uncomplicated sense or to receive "friendship" without entanglements of "owing" and expectations. I'd like to give and to receive friendship without impossible obligations attached [such as "sponsor me"].
- I feel China needs qualified teachers with specialty in ESL. Although I had a wonderful time learning to teach I had no theoretical knowledge of language acquisition and could have done a far better job with my students with both teacher training and specialized understanding of second language acquisition and Asian education.
- The conversation school that hired me said I only needed a bachelor's degree and they would provide training in teaching methods. I worried about this lack of teacher instruction but was confident that I would learn quickly and would do OK. I underestimated how important real teacher training is. Because I was older than the other western teachers I think I took the job more seriously. I felt that I was shortchanging the students who paid a lot of money and then received an untrained and inexperienced teacher (me). I tried to prepare for classes every day but I felt that I received little support from the school administration to become a good teacher...What I wish I'd known was primarily (1) how to teach English as a language and (2) how to teach ESL classes in particular. Ideally it would be nice for teachers going overseas to know a lot about the specifics of the particular country, but I feel that is secondary to being well prepared as a teacher. Adaptability, flexibility and creativity may be as important as training in the differences between US learners and Chinese/Japanese/etc learners.
- Chinese students' difficulty in learning English and Chinese culture.
- My ELIC training was excellent! Our curriculum was prepared for us, and we took necessary resources with us (teacher's book, student books). The school was committed to providing extra materials we needed. We had training in cultural differences, which were very helpful.
- I had taught reading to young children for many years, and I had taught at the college level. I found that the very simple concepts and ideas I used at the beginning reading level were effective with the Chinese middle school students.
- ... Since relationship and the face issue are complicated to understand, I want to know more about relationship between students as well as colleagues. It took me a long time

to understand why the students are so reserved in class and then some of them are aggressive outside of class in seeking for help or opportunities to speak English. An understanding of how the school system works would also help since the school officials or local teachers never informed me. I never knew what classes the students have taken and their education background.

- I wish I had understood the amount of flexibility needed to live and work in China and how that affects every aspect of life here.
- In terms of teaching, I think my prior experience with Asians (particularly Koreans) helped me understand the personality of the people. Unfortunately, my primary experience with the Chinese psyche was only knowing students from Taiwan. Well, the Taiwanese are much more willing to express their opinions and personal details than Chinese. So, I think knowing the history since 1949 would have been helpful. During my first semester here, my supervisor pulled me into her office, and announced that I would be teaching two more classes at another school, starting on this date. I had neither been consulted beforehand nor given any information about the school. When I pressed her and others involved for information, they merely told me I had to do it. Even though I was asking for information regarding the educational environment and students of the other school (which I had never heard of), they acted as if I was trying to sabotage the command, and refused to provide any information... They refused to consider the issues I raised; more importantly, they didn't understand the importance of my wanting to know about the school in order to adequately prepare for the class. The main issue was that they were not allowing me to assess the situation in order to provide a good teaching method, because they did not really care about the students at this other school (it is a secondary school to BLCU). What I found frustrating was that, whenever I asked someone for information, they would say, "Let me talk to so and so," and then come back to me with the exact same thing that I had been originally told, as if they were brainwashed to sidestep my questions. After this experience, I decided to have my students give me a history lesson. I also did some research on my own of the era since 1949. Well, I think it is very important to learn everything you can about Confucius and his effect on the Chinese psyche. It is also important to learn how dismally the people in the upper echelons of this society have repeatedly abused the control that Confucius's teachings have over the psyche. The last 54 years in particular exemplifies this abuse. It helped me understand what role I am expected to play.

I also think knowing the educational structure of Chinese children would have helped. Because of Confucius and the over-population of China, classrooms are overly packed with students who learn by having a teacher tell them what to think. My class is the first time most of them were exposed to the idea of discussing ideas. Unfortunately, creativity and introspection are often absent, because these are not things that can be forced upon them by their prior teachers; yet, it is creativity and introspection that make communication an expression of an individual, rather than the controlled responses of



people who live in a collective society like China. Because I wasn't fully aware of their educational history, however, efforts to have them express their opinions at first were met with stony silence (with the exception of a few). At the other school especially, where the students' English level is low, a simple exercise to create "an imaginary family" and introduce them to the class was met with utter confusion. Even when I gave them a week to prepare, only a few were comfortable with actually presenting it. At BLCU, where most of the students are advanced, I have some students who ask me why I don't follow the book. Well, the book presents topics, and then basically gives the reader all the opinions they should assess about it. I don't think it is good for them to learn this way.

There is one more thing that I wish I would have known. When I was in Korea, my students would often heartily discuss topics. In China, my students will often make the excuse, "I have no experience with this topic, so I can't talk about it." For instance, when we talked about the differences between what men and women want, I had students telling me that they have never had a girlfriend/boyfriend, so they have no idea about what women/men want. After reading some things and listening to things from my students, I have come to realize that they do not have "heart to heart" talks about things with family and friends while growing up as people in the rest of the world do, and to a high degree they are sheltered from seeing a diversity of things on television. The rest of the world usually takes its clues from observing not only relationships depicted in the media, but also closely observing the social interactions of the people around them. Chinese children are forced to study, study, study, so by the time they get to college, many of them still seem to have the social comprehension of children. Unless they are exposed to more, this level continues into adulthood. And so the ease with which leaders use Confucius's teachings to exact complete compliance. For example, I have had many Chinese people say, "I have to learn English. This is the only way I can improve my life." When I ask them where they heard this, or how they came to this conclusion, they cannot answer. It just seems to be something that has been forced into their psyche. At BLCU, they force all the students to take several English courses in their first two years. So, people who are studying Computer Science and the Chinese language (including literature) are spending almost one third of their college education learning a language whose use for their field is dubious at best. A week ago, I had dinner with some Chinese who told me this sentence about having to improve their English. So I told them, "Just learning a language makes no sense. Why are you learning English? The most important thing is to learn critical thinking, innovative thinking, creative thinking, and then perhaps you can learn English in order to express these ideas to others." My idea was met with a stony silence, and they promptly changed the subject. It is as if they have been brainwashed on a mass scale to regard learning English as the end-all to wealth. As a teacher, it leads me to wonder, what will be the next catch phrase they will be expected to assimilate and put into practice? It is frustrating for me as a teacher to combat against this mentality, because the expression of some students' faces indicates that they just want to

practice English, and do not see the sense in getting deep into subjects.

Anyway, I wish I would have known this before I came. I feel like I have walked into a room where a large, messy party has just taken place, and all I brought with me to clean it up is a dust cloth. It would have been good to know what barriers I needed to overcome; then I would have brought more materials from America to aid in class preparation.

***Now that you have had the experience of teaching in China, what advice would you provide to other future educators concerning language teaching?***

- Your life is on display as you teach – live worthy of emulation! Throw your heart into teaching and the students will see it!  
Study TESL as you teach; it's an exciting way to study because you apply it right away!  
Collaborate with other teachers, especially to create objective tests or rubrics.
- It is most important to model good teaching and help our students learn how to be flexible in applying communicative methods of teaching in their classes.
- Chinese students are shy and often find it embarrassing to speak in class. Western teachers are apt to consider this frustrating, so they must adapt to these cultural differences. There is nothing wrong with shyness; in fact, it may be preferable to assertiveness. If a student is silent, it does not mean they are not engaged, but it may be up to the teacher to establish a communication based on reticence rather than boldness. Above all, the teacher must be patient. The patient teacher will find it quite rewarding to teach in China, where students are very hard-working, respectful, and good-hearted.
- I would advise them to limit their expectations of their students to developing one aspect at a time, and that encouragement is better received through students independently doing a task well because you have prepared them, than you praising them a lot about general things.
- I would advise future teachers to be learners as well as educators. Observing everything around them and studying their students' native language is a huge help to their teaching.
- Principles of teaching are the same however, it all depends on the students you get and how the administration deals with the education of their school. Also public & private schools are very different in how they function and what their educational focus is, in addition to differences in the characteristics of the students.
- Foreign teachers are not really accepted and integrated as part of school life... Chinese students are usually well-behaved, kind, friendly and hard-working but at times they can seem cruel to each other and their world view is narrower and more 'black and white' than many young people of corresponding age in 'western' countries. Although they are enjoyable to teach a foreign teacher may find that he/she learns more about themselves and their own culture whilst living and working in China than they are ever able to teach their students.
- Be flexible, don't assume teammates or Chinese educators think like you do, be prepared

to make do with less and then be pleasantly surprised when it turns out better than you expected.

- Be patient and flexible because you will not understand why things happen the way they do. Things change at the last minute all the time. Also, you may not be told of a change in class schedule until the class starts. That is just the way life is here. If you are not prepared to handle it, these differences will drive you crazy. I do think that being patient and flexible in a new culture is just a good thing to do when trying to adjust.
- To understand that Chinese students do not all have the same learning strategies as you do. Future educators should know that love is the most important character trait that is needed to be a language teacher. Patience and Flexibility is important as well to adapt to the different cultures.
- ... I think it is important to study techniques of teaching EFL because it is quite different from ESL. I think it is important to know language acquisition theory. I would encourage new teachers to not be afraid to give teaching a try. Training is important, but you learn the most when you are actually teaching, trying out new methods everyday. I encourage any teacher to make at least a two-year commitment so they can refine their skills and serve the students better the second year.
- Get to know your students – what they enjoy, and with which language concepts they struggle. These two things are key in being a successful educator.
- Material – we didn't take enough! The students went through the material quite fast.  
English – Only two teachers knew English and it was British English not American English (spelling and pronunciation are different).  
Teacher's pay – had to ask to be paid and left there with two weeks owing to me.  
Room and board – They were very good to me but we needed a toilet and eventually got one in our room, but not the school.
- You also need to make your classroom fun. There are as many websites in the Internet to help you with this! [Eslgames.com](http://Eslgames.com) is just one!  
Also, you want your classroom to be a safe environment – a place they want to come into and also to come back to.
- I would suggest that if they're not an English major and have not had proper training in English to know a little about it, such as the pronunciation-phonetic spelling, the technical names of parts of speech, and typical mistakes that a Chinese student will make to help you understand them better. Of course, knowing what you're going to teach is nice to know in advance. Finally, the level of the students is also important to know beforehand.
- Get background knowledge of the language.  
Brush up on grammar and spelling  
Be visual and active to keep the students interest and make the lessons stand out from other lessons  
Try and find as many name games as possible as it is difficult to learn names  
Read up on different ideas and lesson plans to keep you inspired.

- Try to live and do it here in the States. Read as much about ESL and Chinese culture as possible. Be a language student yourself before you go and pay attention to what and how and why you learn or why you don't.
- Enjoy your students, relax, have fun, repeat, repeat, repeat, speak slowly, repeat the words again! Sing the words, act out the words, write the words, encourage your students, use the words in sentences, makeup games that require an oral response.
- I had about 30 years experience in teaching here before going to China, so I had a lot of resources and ideas to draw from. My experience in middle school teaching was especially helpful. I think working with some foreign students who are studying in this country would be helpful. We have hosted international students, have had exchanged students living with us from five different countries, and have been involved with the international program at Western Michigan University for many years. All of this has been valuable background for our teaching in China.
- Learn a little Chinese to help in building relationships. Be generally familiar with the teaching syllabus before beginning the teaching experience. Have a compatible team of English teachers to work with. Look forward to a very satisfying teaching experience with Chinese teachers of English at the middle school level.
- Interact with the students, be equipped with questions on subjects to get the students to respond in English. Speak slowly, modeling pronunciation of English words.
- Synthesize your own beliefs and approaches with Chinese beliefs and approaches. Avoid rose-tinted spectacles when considering "Western" practices. Go with the flow – do not jump to snap judgments. Look to enjoy your time in China as a learning experience.
- I would suggest that if teaching were their calling, then they should consider doing what they love in China. I would suggest they get their graduate degree at the university in TESOL...
- In my opinion, a foreign English teacher should recognize that local pronunciation will play a large part in the student's ability to correctly pronounce English words. Therefore, the foreign teacher should be familiar with peculiarities of the dialect of the province, or city, where he/she will be teaching. I tell my Chinese students that however they pronounce Chinese words or letters, they can not carry that pronunciation to the English language. For instance, in Hubei Province (Hubeihua), the "L" sound is pronounced as an "N" sound. Carrying that sound over to English makes it very difficult for a native speaker to understand and takes a great deal of practice on the part of the Chinese speaker to overcome. The foreign teachers should have some knowledge of Chinese history and culture.
- It's really important to read about what's going on in the Chinese classroom now. I think it's also very important to talk to those who have gone and get their impressions and advice about how to work within the different conditions.
- The key is to give students confidence, so getting them talking is most important. They can do it, they just don't know it yet.
- Be prepared to go with the flow. Don't expect to have ready access to technology. Bring

along some books/activities for yourself in addition to what you bring for your classes. Read as much as possible about where you're going to be before you get there. Study some of the language before you get there if at all possible (I went kind of at the last minute). See my article for classroom advice.

- Learn as much as you can about China and the Chinese. Read books written by both the Chinese from their perspective and by foreign experts from their perspective. Talk with Chinese and with those who have traveled to China.
- Sending people off to teach in China without teaching backgrounds (especially a lack of knowledge about language acquisition) is not overly helpful to China. China needs qualified and culturally sensitive teachers who have been vetted carefully to go into its schools and colleges to work with language learners. Of course, economics prevent this ideal from being reached.
- I would suggest that a person planning to go to China or Japan (or any other country)
  1. have teacher training, it's not a profession that is quickly absorbed by "on the job training"
  2. know the expectations and customs of the school administration where you'll go, i.e., is profit the main concern, do they support teachers with prep time, what objectives do they expect of the students?
  3. try to become familiar with the customs of the country and ideally have some language training before going
  4. have western friends who can be a source of information/support but don't socialize exclusively with westerners. I think the students assess how interested/involved the western teachers are by noticing if the teachers' only interaction with the culture is in the classroom and the rest of the time is spent with other westerners. I think it's important to not be an outsider - try to learn about and respect the people and the culture.
  5. be flexible and adaptive in all activities, particularly in the classroom. There may not be lots of resources but don't panic. And don't berate yourself as you're learning what things do and don't work in the classroom. The students are usually there because they want to learn and it should be a positive experience for both students and teacher.
- Learn English grammar well.
- Learn some Chinese and be well informed about the Chinese culture (specifically values). Know well the school system from elementary level to college level (teaching style, teaching material, courses). To avoid misunderstanding and disappointment from having certain expectations, teachers must understand the roles of a teacher and a student from the Chinese standpoint. Also, the foreign teachers need to be aware of the classroom atmosphere and understand how the affective filter plays a big role in the way students respond to teachers. This kind of awareness will prevent teachers getting mad at students who act very passive in the classroom.
- Study the culture and history as much as possible before coming because that is reflected in many aspects of the Chinese philosophy of education.
- You CAN'T teach in China the same way you do in your home country. You MUST be

flexible and adapt to the needs of the students, the expectations of the school and the resources available to you.

Before you teach you really must be aware of what your students are expected to learn and what they are interested in learning. It's good to talk with the department you will teach in to find out what they expect the course to include. Often, they will tell you that it's up to you. But, you should press that further and find out what skills the students need to have in the future for other courses they will take, exams, and future jobs. Ask how they will use English in the future, who will they use it with?

I also encourage teachers to observe how Chinese teachers teach. What is the role of the student, of the teacher? You don't want your teaching style and methods to be so different that the students are uncomfortable and don't know what to expect. Work cooperatively with other teachers in your department. Enlist their help when you aren't sure what to do. Mutual encouragement goes a long way in this setting.

Don't assume your students know how to do things the same way students in English speaking countries do. If you want them to set up their papers in certain ways you must carefully show them what you expect them to do and explain why. If you ask them to do activities you need to give them examples and explain how the activities will improve their English.

Act and dress professionally. Don't be too casual. The students will respect you more if you play and look the part of a university teacher.

Your students can be great sources of information and feedback. Ask them to evaluate your teaching and classroom activities. Ask them for help when you need something. Allow them opportunities to teach you about themselves, their language and their culture.

- I did not undergo any training (I did read parts of books about teaching English as a second language, but cursorily). I imagine anything you can learn about teaching is helpful, though what I have found helpful now that I am in China is talking to other teachers, preferably more experienced teachers, about their classes. They can tell me what has worked in their class, what hasn't, and all in all have been quite supportive. If nothing else, it is nice to know that you aren't the only one you has a bad class or two (speaking hypothetically; of course none of my classes are bad).
- Well, in terms of the school administrative structure, my supervisor said I could quote what she told me: "This is China. You cannot expect any stability in your position. If changes have to be made, then they are made. You should just accept what your superiors tell you without questioning."

Also, they should not expect any kind of teacher meetings on how to improve curriculum or discussions with the administration on how to solve problems or improve the structure of their programs. The only meeting that I have attended this year involved the superiors reading a long referendum of issues, of all the problems with the other school that we need to deal with. There was no discussion on how to deal with them, or new methods of approach to helping the students, just "here are the problems, now it is your

problem.” ...So future educators in China might want to know that this political atmosphere still pretty much reigns supreme in their daily affairs, even if there is not the outright violence that took place previously.

So my advice would be: avoid political issues; don't tell your students anything you might have learned about the events in China since 1949, because they have no real idea regarding these events; don't expect a proactive attitude toward changing or improving educational systems, even if you see glaring examples of what could be improved. The bottom line is the bottom line; in other words, keeping the economic machine in progress mode, not helping individual student's lives, is the most important. So do not expect support or advocacy from the administration on any level.

On the other hand, the majority of Chinese students still have great respect for their teachers, and it is easy to become very close to them and want to take a personal interest in their progress, even if the school administration doesn't. When I was frustrated about the problem I had with my supervisor, my father said that I should put my energy into helping my students, because they will be your best advocates. They should be aware, though, because of the system here, students will usually deal with a complaint against the teacher by complaining to people higher up rather than talking to the teacher. I want to say the majority of the students you have will make you feel that they are grateful if they see you put a lot of energy into helping them.

Also, because the government devalues its currency, it is impossible at this point in time to go to the store to buy teaching materials that are easily accessible in Western countries. In other words, if you want teaching aids in the form of books, movies and music that you may deem useful for the Chinese classroom, you had better buy them before you come. There are no books here in English for language instruction, especially ones that advocate creative teaching methods. Also, any movies sold here are illegal black market copies, so your choices are usually limited to whatever the supplier was able to pirate that month. So, a movie you could have bought several months ago (e.g. The Princess Diaries) is no longer available for purchase. And forget buying music. The same rule applies: Here today, gone tomorrow, all pirated.

Your main tool for class topics will be the Internet, so you had better bring your own computer (preferably a laptop), because the availability of websites at Internet Bars may be limited. If you have cable access to the Internet where you end up living, this is good; if not, you will have to find out the special code that you need to dial up to the Internet (I was lucky to have a friend who told me, because this is not a piece of information that is provided to people) along with your 201 phone cards. They should know that the whole phone system here is done through phone cards, which you constantly have to purchase for your mobile phone and regular home phone use, and also for public telephones. It can

be a frustrating experience when you are trying to deliver an important message to someone, and the phone card runs out of minutes on your phone. Also, if you do not bring your own printer, be prepared to either pay for the printing service at copy places at the school, or you will have to prepare your lessons far in advance and give them to your department for printing and copying...

I guess my main piece of advice, when all is said and done, is to read as many books as you can about the Chinese psyche. I don't mean the social factors that you might read in the Lonely Planet or Culture Shock books, but ones that delve into the historical basis for the way they think. Beyond the Chinese Face by Michael Harris Bond (1991) is good, although they might want to look for similar books that have a more updated perspective on the moral standards, since there seems to have been an almost wholesale adaptation of Western morals within a few years...



## Appendix G: Teaching Survival Kit

1. Copies of your favorite textbooks
2. Magazine and/or newspapers
3. A picture file
4. Books of language games
5. A couple of decks of cards
6. Dice
7. Note cards
8. Books of teaching techniques
9. Culturally interesting items of your choice
10. Example essays, paragraphs, outlines, summaries, etc.
11. Handheld tape player/recorder, ear phones, batteries, and cassette tapes
12. Copies of your favorite activities and assignments
13. Pens and/or pencils of your liking
14. Markers, colored pencils, crayons

(From Jennifer W. Craft. (2002). Lessons learned teaching in Beijing. *MITESOL Message*, 28 (1), 3)