# A Pedagogy of Multiliteracies:

# Second Language and Literacy Acquisition

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This article iterates the results of integrating literacy into SLA (Second Language Acquisition) from a constructivist's perspective in preparing syllabi, pedagogical activities and testing. The observation of Mandarin-learning students' performance and conversations with them suggest that introducing certain vocabulary, expressions and knowledge from outside the textbook can enhance their active learning. The definition of teaching literacy has expanded from printed text and lectures to a wider scope of media, and to testing and research methodologies. The article also cautions that classes must be well prepared and managed to avoid far-fetched items. One of the key issues in socio-constructivism is to keep pedagogical activities within the "zone of proximal development" (Gee, 2011), or to follow the "i+1 formula" (Krashen, 1981). The study further illustrates the efficiency of teaching and learning through a shift in focus from teaching "forms" to teaching "form", and from "literacy" to "literacies".

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The discussion on the different viewpoints and approaches advocated by the two paradigms of positivism, also known in linguistics as formalism, and constructivism which is also known as functionalism, intends to provide implications for literacy education within the area of SLA. The former emphasizes the importance of imitation and repetition for learning, and the latter advocates the importance of literacy education, with dynamic pedagogical activities.

Literacy in a SLA context means an ability level beyond linguistic knowledge, the ability to understand a complex concept on the basis of a wide knowledge for interaction in a social context, and the ability to interpret and evaluate a wide variety of discourse in written texts, symbols or signs. It covers multiple dimensions of linguistic knowledge of lexis and grammatical structure, pragmatic competence, cultural awareness, social issues and use of technology (Hartman et al., 2010).

Traditionally, the teaching of language was through pens and printed materials. Teaching culture was separated into "big C" and "little c" culture, i.e. high culture and popular culture, but the boundary is getting blurred. In today's cultural studies in the humanities, theory has shifted to a wider angle to include the sociological and anthropological approaches, and this shift influences the ways of teaching culture in our classrooms (Heath, 1983; Heath et al, 2008; Atkinson, 1999; Zhang, 2011). Reviewing the development in the second language teaching and learning context, or in the discipline of language education referred to as teaching literacy, we can see the change in definition of what competence is considered being literate. This new trend directly influences second language teaching, and my article focuses on literacy teaching of Chinese in particular.

Constructivism has emerged since the 1970s to replace behaviorism, as a main paradigm in education, and influenced the area of SLA. The constructivist teaching approach enables learners to construct meaning through reading, exploration, and their social experience, and prior subject knowledge and experience (Dionne, 2008). Constructivism is increasingly influencing second language pedagogy, shifting the teaching focus from isolated practice to task-based activities. This new trend started in the 1990s and overshadowed the previous CLA (Communicative Language Approach) which had become popular in the 1970s, and became a hot topic and the most preferred approach in the 1980s (Liu, 2010). Constructivists believe that literacy learning and language acquisition are social practice, through social and cultural interaction (Watson-Gegeo, 2004).

Teaching and evaluation can extend to knowledge, words, phrases and ideas relating to the textbook, but knowledge should, of course, not be limited to the textbook. Observing classes also provides good experience of how to teach and what to teach in a dynamic way. Gee (1989, 2011) considers reading and literacy learning in a wide sense as "capital discourse" which is a combination of talking, writing, acting, presenting, understanding, valuing etc.; such discourses are not achieved by overt instructions, but by enculturation or by apprenticeship into social practices through scaffolded and supported interaction with people possessing such competence.

## Theoretical Framework

The ability to read and write through printed material and the pen was considered being literate, especially before the 1960s when the trend was to focus on form. Under the notion of communicative competence which became popular in the 1970s, focus on meaning became the new trend at that time, with much less attention paid to grammar teaching.

Literacy was expanded to include media and cultural texts in the 1970s and 1980s. Technology use and the New Literacies were introduced in the 1990s (Masny & Cole, 2009). In the new millennium, there was further change and improvement. The return of the emphasis on "form" indicates the balanced attention to both meaning and form in modern language teaching theory. This is to say that grammar cannot be abandoned, but has to be taught whenever a focus on meaning alone is insufficient. In the 21$^{st}$ century, literacies in reading and writing include being technical as well (Lankshear & Knobel, 2006; Eyman, 2007).

Before the 1970s, the teaching trend was to focus on forms, and the practice followed the behaviorist approach, through observing and repeating. Behaviorism soon gave way to the cognitive approach which believed that learning takes place in the learners' brain in a "black box". This approach was advocated by Chomsky's language universal theory (1957) that points to the innate nature of human beings' language learning ability. That is to say such a teaching and learning approach puts emphasis on the learners, and excludes the importance of the learners' environment.

Under the notion of communicative competence which became popular in the 1970s, focus on environment and real-life communication meaning became the new trend at that time, with much less attention paid to grammar teaching and cognitive learning. Hymes' theory (1972) of communicative competence became the notion in SLA (Zhang & Anthony, 2007). Since the 1960s, the trend of cultural studies theory being employed in the humanities has brought a sociological and anthropological approach to teaching culture in the second language classroom (Swaffar & Arens, 2005).

Two paradigms

There was a shift in the area of literacy from behaviorism to constructivism, and for several decades scholars of different schools have debated over the two paradigms (McKenna & Conradi, 2010). Behaviorism is an offshoot of positivism. In this paradigm, teachers clearly and explicitly define what to teach. The teachers' role is to teach through drills, let students repeat and memorize. Students are passive, without active engagement in analyzing the language, and they are not required to develop learning strategies.

Constructivisms is based on the belief that students learn much faster and more efficiently when applying different methods of learning. Educators' and language teachers' roles are to guide students in their learning process and let them learn through experiment and through their own experiences. In a constructivist's classroom, the teacher's role is to guide students in their learning process, making use of students' experience and previous knowledge. The classroom is a place for active learning, not a place filled with information dictated by the teacher that does not consider students' learning needs and students' preferred methods of learning.

Literacy and SLA

Foreign language teaching theory is based on first-language teaching (L1), known as teaching literacy which influences the teaching theory of second language (L2). Literacy in L1 can be an important factor in SLA, as literacy in L1 can be transferred to L2 (Cummins, 2008). It is of great interest for us to deal with acquisition of literacy in L2, which is missing in the learners first language (*Moustapha,* 2011*).*

Constructivist reading theories view literacy understanding as social practices, laying emphasis on the importance of training students by providing them with prior subject knowledge. Inspiring students' learning is considered a key element that affects their reading process. In another word, constructivism emphasizes the active role students play in understanding the meaning of the text. Positivism used to be the prominent paradigm, but is no longer the only prominent paradigm in the SLA field (Zuengler, & Miller 2006).

At the turn of the new millennium of globalization and the prevalent use of technology, under the influence of the multiple literacies theory, reading and writing, especially English teaching, underwent further change and improvement. The emphasis on "forms", i.e. linguistic work and grammar, was replaced with emphasis on "form"- from plural to singular, to indicate the combination of form and sociolinguistic communication competence, paying balanced attention to both form and meaning in language teaching theory. This recent development in second language teaching indicates that grammar should not be abandoned, but has to be taught at any time when focusing on meaning alone gets difficult, and when reliance on cultural understanding and prior subject knowledge become insufficient for moving on with learning.

## On teaching, learning and research trends

The works of Skinner (1957), Chomsky (1957, 1988), Hymes (1970, 1972), Krashen (1981, 1992) etc. have been quoted and discussed in the context of foreign language didactics till the present days, and the area of language teaching has been divided into two major schools - the positivists and the constructivists; some scholars refer to them as formalists and functionalists (Liu, 2010), with two different foci, i.e., the focus on forms (at the language and grammar level) vs. the focus on meaning (as discourse, content and stories), respectively.

Gee (2011) considers literacy learning in a wide sense as the Capital Discourse which combines the competences of understanding, speaking, writing, performing and interacting in social settings. Such skills are not achieved by positivistic instructions, but by a learning process through scaffolded and supported practice, interaction and communication.

Following the new way of teaching reading, also known as "new literacies", teaching can go beyond the foundational reading/literacy of merely using books, paper, and pencils. The new approach of teaching (new literacies) includes reading and writing, viewing, meaning construction, and technical communication skills in the modern social and cultural context. My discussion intends to identify and clarify the new concepts and theories developed in SLA to inform language teachers in general, and to enhance the teaching, learning and re-

search in Chinese SLA in particular. Literacy is an important part of this, and the new trend leads to changed approaches in teaching, learning, testing, and research. The debate of the competing paradigms contributes to enriching the SLA area.

The scope of cultural studies needs to be extended to include the understanding of both big "C" culture and small "c" culture, including cultural issues in literacies and language teaching that lie "outside the sociology of language or the bounds of anthropology" (Swaffar & Arens, 2005, p. 162), and also including the explicit study of texts. Thus, second language teaching is interdisciplinary and deals with multiple areas.

Since the 1970s, the approaches introduced by cultural anthropologists such as Keesing (1976) to the newly emerging discipline *Language and Culture Studies* (Shaul & Furbee, 1998) have resulted in an increased use of research methodologies that look beyond the linguistic level, aiming at the underlying cultural suppositions of the speakers and listeners. These new approaches have their roots in anthropology, ethnography, and philosophy, and can be subsumed under the qualitative paradigm of "research that seeks to discern meaning" (Tesch, 1990, Heath et al., 2008), using the descriptive/interpretive approach of phenomenology and hermeneutics – the main ingredients in qualitative research.

The cultural dimension in second language teaching has been an important part in SLA since the 1960s (Zhang & Anthony 2007). Cultural research was not only done by anthropologists, but entered the areas of education, language teaching, management, nursing etc. Qualitative research in SLA concerning culture is influenced by an ethnographic research design that complies with the paradigm of interpretive qualitative research. Data are usually gathered through qualitative methods such as structured and non-structured interviews, observation, and content analysis for triangulation. A phenomenology of intercultural miscommunication is synthesized in form of a *story,* with all the anthropological, ethnographic and philosophical connotations.

Heath's pioneer work of "Ways with Words" (1983) on language socialization paved the way for ethnographic research in SLA, with large units as research scope. This classic work is interdisciplinary, spanning linguistics, education, anthropology and sociology.

Qualitative inquiry is criticized for its "deconstructionism" (Gall et al., 1996), as it does not follow any pre-structured, pre-determined grids or procedures. However, this "weak point" can also be viewed as a strong point, as conducting scientific investigations is not a matter of following recipes (Tesch, 1990; Heath et al., 2008).

## Teaching Goals and Research Methodology

With the rise of constructivism in teaching, there was a shift in research methodology. Qualitative research was not quite accepted in SLA in the 1970s and 1980s. Thus, most of the sociolinguistic work during this period had been conducted within the framework of *speech acts* (House, 1982; 1986; 1993). Studies on speech acts have demonstrated the difficulties language learners experi-

ence, such as the work done by House (1982), who analyzed speech acts with 200 German and 100 English subjects. House (1982) concluded that German speakers tend to opt for more direct realizations of requests, and they prefer to surround their requests with more content-oriented discourse strategies than the English native speakers who tend to prefer "interpersonally active and routinized" strategies. Beebe and Takahashi (1989) report on how Japanese and English native speakers differ in their statement of disagreements, and in giving embarrassing information.

Most speech act research is conducted based on linguistic categories, such as discourse and syntax analysis (Schmidt & Richards, 1985). The use of *units of analysis,* and the choice of data gathering and data analysis methods traditionally place speech act research within the quantitative paradigm. The dichotomy of the quantitative and qualitative research paradigms is reflected in the continuing debate among SLA researchers in the 1990s. The debates and diversity of theories is a healthy phenomenon and stimulates the SLA field (Lazaraton,1995; Zuengler & Miller, 2006).

The debates between the behaviorist and constructivist notion became a hot topic in SLA research that are generally defined as quantitative and qualitative research approaches (McKenna & Conradi, 2010). Qualitative research methods encourage researchers to extend their vision to the entirety of circumstances that surround the production of language. By widening their perspective to what surrounds spoken or written utterances, researchers also obtain an understanding of what the utterances are really about in a social context. Mey (1993) uses the term *macropragmatics* to describe research that deals with larger units of analysis. The change from small to larger or plural units of analysis can be seen in language teaching and research, as well as in literacy studies.

SLA is a interdisciplinary area, relating to the disciplines of linguistics, psychology, and sociolinguistics, as well as to sociology, anthropology, communication, philosophy etc; they are contributors to an understanding of the nature of SLA. However, before the early 1990s they had had less of an impact on the field of SLA" (Gass & Selinker, 1994, p. 188). The traditional SLA researchers adhere to conventional research methodologies and exclude the qualitative methods that have their roots in sociology, anthropology and philosophy.

Ethnographic/qualitative research advocating the qualitative paradigm has gained a strong foothold in SLA research in the 1990s (Johnson, 1992; Davis, 1992, 1995; and Lazaraton, 1995). Ethnographic researchers believe that only ethnographic/qualitative data can provide a rich insight into human behavior. Davis (1995) points out that linguistic anthropologists, ethnographers of communication, and other qualitative researchers interested in language issues have offered an alternative to mainstream SLA studies. They define language as human behavior which, as stated by Guba and Lincoln (1994) "…unlike that of physical objects, cannot be understood without reference to the meanings and purposes attached by human actors to their activities" (p. 106).

Ethnographic research methodology in SLA

The ethnographic research approach allows the researcher to see the details of the events, for discovering, understanding and describing human behavior

in natural settings within social and cultural contexts (Peirce, 1993; Purcell-Gates, 2011). The qualitative approach allows researchers to expand their options for examining and understanding to the sociocultural roots of miscommunication phenomena. As behaviorism was replaced by constructivism in the 1960s and 1970s and onward, real world experience or learning was viewed important and helpful for classroom learning (Walker, 2011).

The qualitative approach is also known as *naturalistic inquiry*, or *ethnography* (Tesch, 1990), or *phenomenology,* that is to say the research "is concerned with coming to understand the world from the participants' perspective" (Purcell-Gates, 2011, p. 138).  The participants' perspectives refer to the emic views as "researchers in the sociocultural tradition demonstrate either the etic view or the emic perspectives (Baker et al., 2010). The advantage of a phenomenological empirical study is that it provides an understanding of the real world, through the participants' lived experience (Tesch, 1990).

The prototypical qualitative method is an ethnographic study in which the researchers derive and describe findings that promote greater understanding of how and why people behave the way they do. Qualitative researchers believe that human behavior is too complex to explain or predict based solely on statistics or theoretical considerations. For example, in her qualitative language-related ethnographic study, Peirce (1993) focuses on SLA in terms of the societal and cultural factors that affect the learners, despite certain weaknesses pointed out by other SLA researchers such as Price (1997). Peirce (1993) shows how power is embedded in the social relations in which the immigrant women are engaged in their workplaces. Heath's (1983) path-breaking qualitative research on community also contributed to the validity of ethnographic studies to examine literacy practices in workplaces from sociocultural perspectives (Mikulecky, 2010).

## From Theory to Practice

Research questions:

- In what way can teachers integrate L1 literacy into L2 and culture course?
- What is the effect of exceeding the restricted contents in textbooks and simultaneously implementing a multiliteracies pedagogy and syllabus?
- In what way does positivism influence SLA teaching and research, and what are the characteristics of qualitative study approach in SLA?

<u>Study participants</u>

Twenty-eight students in this class and the students have different linguistic and cultural backgrounds of Europe, Asian and Africa. None of them had knowledge of Chinese before. Their characteristics are: western students learn Chinese phonetics much faster than students of Asian backgrounds. With the assistance of learning tools for Chinese, students' assignments are done through typing Romanization (pinyin) which converts to Hanzi (Chinese characters). This

approach narrows the gap between western students and students with an Asian background.

I identify students' learning needs and provide the missing literacies. The absence of literacy discourages students' from class participation when encountering expressions like "Liang-Zhu music" (the Chinese "Romeo and Juliet" equivalent), the Yellow River as "Mother River", or the sentence "husband and wife live a life like the cowboy and the weaving girl" (myth of the husband and wife separated by the Milky Way).

Thus, I provide students with literacy knowledge for learning, instead of repeating and reciting the textbook. The concept of literacy outside the textbook is well discussed by Walker (2011) and is very inspiring. Besides the cultural knowledge, I also need to focus on "form", not "forms", through providing knowledge to let students get familiar with the concept and unfold on their own.

The educational implications are that to acquire academic literacy, pedagogical activities need to cover language and grammar practice, but also must include teaching and learning practices that activate students' prior subject knowledge, and achieve mastery of that knowledge (Pletzen, 2006).

<u>"The sky is round, the earth is square"</u>:

In Chinese, the expression "the sky is round, the earth is square" consists of four words. I initiated students' critical thinking for learning this expression by providing multiliteracies, in form of Chinese traditional mythology and the "*yin-yang*" belief.

Based on the concept of multiliteracy, students need to understand the "*yinyang*" belief from other sources. I link the saying with students' knowledge of bird nests being above the ground, and water being on the ground. Based on this discussion and idea, I led students to describe the Olympic Bird Nest Stadium in Beijing which is a round structure, and the Olympic swimming pool which is known as the Water Cube and has a square shape. I also link the "*yinyang*" idea with the Temple of Heaven (round) and the Temple of Earth (square) in Beijing. Through multiliteracy students learn more about this traditional Chinese cosmological concept, and develop their competence of comparing Canadian and Chinese cultures.

One of the students said,
*"I am fascinated by Chinese, with every word there being a big story. It is interesting to learn."*

By using knowledge outside the textbook, teaching and learning became more fun, more enjoyable and more efficient. Through similar situations, I analyzed the Chinese educational culture which is based on a positivist approach, requiring learning through simple repetition. Under this paradigm, the Chinese educational culture defines learning as a struggle: "learning is like rowing a boat upstream." Students are encouraged to study far into the night without falling asleep. If one fell asleep, one should remind oneself not to waste time, but wake

up to continue with the rote learning. The situation is described by the saying: "tie your queue to the ceiling beam, and place an awl under your thigh".

When integrating literacies into learning, students are given the opportunity to unfold in the learning process. I need to prepare students first by giving them enough prior subject knowledge. When they can find the solution, they are happy and they enjoy learning. It is also important to consider words and the knowledge from outside the textbook. Language teachers are expected to provide input that is appropriate for the learners, rather than providing far-fetched knowledge.

<u>Explaining grammar</u>

The teaching of grammar does not mean a return to Skinner's behaviorism, which flourished in the area of language teaching in the 1950s. The availability of technology for use in education contributes significantly to the coexistence of behaviorism and constructivism. Combining second language teaching theory with educational technology in the digital era has made graphic-based language easy to teach and to learn, especially in the case of Chinese *Hanzi* (Zhang 2006).

According to the theory of language universals (Chomsky, 1957), all languages have the same elements, grammar, or structure. Comparing Chinese and English, one can see how the ending "-er", which in English indicates a profession as in the words  "teacher", "painter" , "singer", etc., is equivalent to the Chinese word "de" as in jiāoshū de (teacher), huàhuà de (painter), chànggē de (singer).

Referring to something difficult to understand, people say "c'est du chinois". This illustrates the absence of a well developed teaching theory and technology for Chinese. Relating to grammar incongruences, people would say that the English language has tenses, while the Chinese language does not have tenses. Certainly, the Chinese language expresses tense in a different way:

In English: I went to Beijing in July. (past tense)
In Chinese:  Wǒ qīyuè qùle Běijīng. ("le" indicates past tense)
          (I)  (July) (went) (Beijing)


With the rise of the popular sociolinguistic notion of communicative competence in the 1970s, the role of grammar was neglected, criticized and downplayed in SLA instruction (Nassaji & Fotos 2004). On the other hand, through the recent tendency of focusing on form in SLA, grammar has again become one of the main concerns in L2 class. The important point is when and how to teach grammar (Ellis, 2001, 2006)

Based on Chomsky's (1957) cognitive language teaching and learning theory, language teachers can influence learners through activating the "black box", but not through repetitive or rote learning activities. Language teachers are acting like sports coaches who manage and instruct the learning activities, but leave room for the learners to unfold, like the players on a soccer field. With sufficient and proper input provided to the learners, they can develop their own lan-

guage abilities and achieve output (Krashen, 1981). In general, the language teaching principle is:

- to provide input that is at the appropriate level of the learners, rather than provide far-fetched knowledge, and
- to combine language forms with function, employing the task-based teaching approach with "language use" as the central goal.

Scaffolding and inferencing

Language teaching can be taught in a dynamic way, appropriately extending certain words, phrases, knowledge and ideas. The content should not be limited to the textbook. To help students develop inferencing skills, I present words that have not been taught in class to the students. I first provide general knowledge on Chinese character formation, such as the meaning of the radical for "fish", for "herb", for "bird" etc. Then I provide a sentence for students who have to figure out the meaning, like "On Sunday, when Wendy went shopping, she bought a "bie" (turtle, with "fish" radical at the bottom of the character), "caomei (strawberries, with "grass" radical on top of the character indicating its plant category), and a "e" (goose, with "bird" radical on the right side of the character indicating poultry). From the radicals of the three words, students can infer that the first one is a kind of fish, the second one is related to plants, and the third one is related to birds.

Applying the i + 1 concept:

日(sun) + 月(moon) = 明 bright

Task-based learning of pinyin

Lately scholars advocate a new type of post method (Kumaravadivelu, 2011) which gives teachers the responsibility to design their own approach addressing the aspects of language, society, culture and politics. Teachers follow the key teaching principles and concepts rather than following other teaching and learning processes that have been available.

For teaching the pinyin Romanization and Chinese phonetics in general, instead of asking students to repeat isolated morphemes as their homework, I selected songs for them to practice pronunciation, but also to give them an opportunity to actually perform as well. They became more active in practicing pronunciation. I took time to find songs with ideal lyrics that would fit students' levels. The Chinese Olympic theme song was selected for this purpose. Most of the words are covered in the textbook.

Multiliteracies

Teaching and evaluation can extend to knowledge, words, phrases, ideas relating to the textbook, but knowledge should not be limited to the textbook. This

idea of a wider scope in learning started in the 1980s. Heath's (1983) work showing students' own literacy being introduced needs to be recognized.

A multiliteracies perspective on teaching and learning suggests more than one way to teach and evaluate students' learning progress. When I notice some students trying hard to understand a story from the written text, I try to make a simplified version, or I show related pictures. When students still cannot fully understand certain parts, I then organize them to act out the story in a play. We did so for the Chinese text of "The Necklace" (La Parure) by the French novelist Maupassant. Students understand the text through being the actors and watching the "play" we prepared for class. My goal is to help students with different cultural backgrounds and different learning styles to learn according to their individual strong points.

## Conclusion

The constructivist perspective in SLA

- Engaging students: initiating classroom activities which require students to be active and independent in the learning process, thus avoiding a passive learning environment where students receive information and knowledge from lectures and textbooks.

-  Providing a wide range of relevant knowledge for lively discussions: students can engage themselves in class work when they have relevant linguistic knowledge and prior subject knowledge about the topics given.

-  Eencourage every student to participate in class: I get to know all my students' study interest, and I make sure that each student is involved in classroom practice, responses to questions, and discussions. I need to understand students' ideal learning style in a diverse student body. I note down their mistakes, and correct them by having the class provide the correct answers. Making constructive suggestions in confirmation, I elaborate on students' strong points while pointing out the errors; positive comments to students increase the likelihood of engagement in further class learning activities.

- Encouraging students to participate in class activities, without worrying about being criticized: I encourage students from diverse backgrounds to give their account of cultural understanding on the occasion of the Chinese Moon Festival. Japanese students, Korean students present their ways of celebration. How about other students? I asked them to think about a Canadian event with similar ideas. In response, European students mention the Oktoberfest, and Canadian students mention Thanksgiving. Such multicultural education contributes to an inspired understanding.

- Creating an active classroom learning environment; prepare and raise interesting questions in class to interact with students and to have a non-lecture atmos-

phere. Create a student-centered learning environment, where they can even transfer their L1 literacy into L2, or can actively acquire literacy in L2 that is absent in their L1.

- Meeting students' learning needs: In a comparison of teachers as the doctors and students as the patients. The Chinese saying goes "apply medication according to the sickness", this is to say that problems must be solved by using the appropriate means. If we ignore students' needs, what we teach to students would be the wrong thing for their needs, like giving patients the wrong medicine.

- Using a modern multiliteracies approach: this is the opposite of giving lectures according to the teacher's own criteria, but the teacher rather prepares and organizes the class to meet the students' learning needs. Understand the students through observing their performance, then match them to work in peer groups or in a role-play mode for developing their critical thinking skills.

- Considering students' individuality: identify and evaluate the diversity and intelligence of students. Some students are outgoing and speak out actively, others are introverted and quiet but think and write well. Some are from the humanities and social sciences, others are from the hard sciences. Scaffold students and help them to unfold their individual strengths, strategically organize their learning activities and match them for group work.

- Staying flexible and informal: apply multiple-literacies theory in your teaching, but use many other additional teaching sources, providing students with supplementary learning materials.

In the 1980s and the 1990s, educators started to extend literacy teaching to other disciplines of sociology, anthropology and history, such as using ethnographic inquiry in conducting cultural research (Spindler & Spindler, 1997; Spindler, 1997; Dionne, 2008; Purcell-Gates, 2011). This trend has been adopted by language educators who advocate the development of literacies for real-life communication, and have extended their research scope.

The successful application of language teaching theory is not achieved without challenge. My study also stress that teachers need to control the boundary of literacies from outside the textbook, to stay within the "zone of proximal development" (Gee, 2011). The positivists view teaching and reading as teaching "discourses", not simply "discourse" (Gee, 2011). Discourse can be taught directly to students, while discourses cannot be taught, but are achieved through teachers' and tutors' scaffolding and their supportive role. Further, teachers teach the Big D (discourses), rather than the small d (discourse), and for grammar, teach "form" rather than "forms." I employed this approach with good results in university teaching and in the university's community teaching to the Canadian Olympic Committee and the Parliamentarians. I intend to enhance learning about China and Japan through implementing the teaching and learning theory in Education.

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