Building Proficiency in the Chinese Classroom with Deep and Rich Student-Centered Learning Tasks

CLTA - National Capitol Region Conference
October 21, 2018
Helena Curtain, Ph.D.

Email: helenacurtain@gmail.com
Central Idea:

In order for students to develop language proficiency teachers must engage the learners in meaningful communication and interaction.

The teacher's fundamental task is to get students to engage in learning activities that are likely to result in achieving [the intended learning] outcomes.

*What the student does is actually more important that what the teacher does.* (Schuell, 1986, p.429)
Focus Question:

How can we engage the learners in meaningful communication and interaction?

After the workshop I can:

A. explain how to provide context

B. explain what makes activities intrinsically interesting, cognitively engaging, or culturally connected.

A B. use deep and rich instructional strategies to engage learners
“Tell” Your Partner Activity

“Tell Your Partner” Activity

Please turn to the person sitting next to you or near you and say:

“Hello partner, I’m so glad to be sitting next to you!“
“Tell Your Partner” Activity

Tell your partner:

“This is an oral language activity which requires no preparation!”

In this activity students simply turn to another student (usually pre-designated) to tell that student something that the teacher has told them to say.

Example with Social Language:

Tell your partner: “Good Morning.” “Good-bye” “Thank you”.
Tell your partner: “The weather is sunny today.”
Tell your partner: “You did a good job!”
“Tell Your Partner” Activity

Example with Classroom Directions:

Tell your partner
“First we are going to ....”
“Second we are going to.....”
“It’s time for.....”

“Tell Your Partner” Activity

Basically, the students are repeating what the teacher says in a sheltered practice situation.

- similar to asking the whole class to repeat after the teacher
- telling it to a partner feels more social and more like real communication than does a whole class choral response.
The teacher is providing the correct model for language students have not yet totally mastered.

Students enjoy talking to other students!

Teachers who have tried this say that the students love it and are speaking quite a bit!!

“Tell Your Partner” Activity

Tell your partner:

“I am going to try this in my classes! Good bye! It was fun talking to you!”
Tell 2 (3, 4, 5???) Partners!

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Deep & Rich Curriculum
Talk with your partner:

What does the concept of “deep and rich” curriculum mean to you?

Building Proficiency: How do we get there?

Focus on Proficiency

Deep & Rich Curriculum

Thematic Planning (Providing Context)

Tasks: Intrinsically Interesting Cognitively Engaging Culturally Connected
Comprehensible input
(Meaningful and Interesting)

Intake
(Checking for Comprehension)

Output
(Negotiation of Meaning)

Process of Language Acquisition

Focus on Proficiency

Underlying Ideas

TEACHERS

Thematic Teaching
(Providing Context)
Thoughts about Good Teaching
It is vital that when educating children’s brains that we do not neglect to educate their hearts.

Dalai Lama
The best teachers teach from the heart, not from the book.

"Here is a secret hidden in plain sight: good teaching cannot be reduced to technique; good teaching comes from the identity and integrity of the teacher."

"The Courage to Teach"

Parker J. Palmer
If we fill today’s classrooms with love, integrity, global vision, and hope; our students will fill tomorrow’s world with love, integrity, global vision, and hope!

Focus on Proficiency

Underlying Ideas

LEARNERS

Thematic Teaching (Providing Context)
What do learners need?

How you make learners feel has a direct connection to their cognitive growth.

*We feel, therefore we learn: The relevance of affective and social neuroscience to education, 2007*
Mary Helen Immordino Yang
“People will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will not forget how you made them feel.” -Maya Angelou

What do learners need?
Playfulness
Learning and Playing are not Separate Activities

Partner A
Men do not quit playing because they grow old. They grow old because they quit playing. Oliver Wendell Holmes
Tools we use are:

- Proficiency Guidelines
- NCSSFL/ACTFL Can-Do Statements
- ACTFL World Readiness Standards

**Advanced:** Can narrate and describe in the past, present, and future time/aspect, and handle a complicated situation or transaction.

**Paragraph Level**

- Superior: Can support opinion, hypothesize, discuss abstract topics, and handle a linguistically unfamiliar situation. No patterns of errors.

**Sentence Level**

- Intermediate: Can create with language, ask and answer simple questions on familiar topics and handle a simple situation or transaction.

**Novice:** Can communicate minimally with formulaic and rote utterances, lists, and phrases.

**Word Level**

- ACTFL (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages) Proficiency Pyramid
https://www.actfl.org/publications/guidelines-and-manuals/ncssfl-actfl-can-do-statements
PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LOW</th>
<th>MID</th>
<th>HIGH</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I can identify memorized or familiar words when they are supported by gestures or visuals in fictional texts.</td>
<td>I can identify some basic facts from memorized words and phrases when they are supported by gestures or visuals in fictional texts.</td>
<td>I can identify the topic and some isolated elements from simple sentences in short fictional texts.</td>
</tr>
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Sharing Proficiency Information with Students!
Performance

1. always uses sentences
2. Tests and phrases
3. a sentence
4. words

How high can you climb Mt. Fuji?
1. Novice Low
2. Novice Mid
3. Novice High
4. Intermediate Low

Proficiency Levels Posted in a Classroom
Deep & Rich Focus on Proficiency
What do learners need?

Access to the new language through the new language (not through English).
Using the native language to teach a child another language is like teaching kids to swim without water.

Language is the key to culture.
Access to the new language through the new language (not through English).

Recognizing the teacher as culture bearer.

Separate Native Language from the Target Language.
Use sign or signal

We’re speaking English!

我们 现在说 中文
How much time should be spent using the target language?

90+ %
Target Language Use

American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages
We’re speaking English!

Deep & Rich

Focus on Proficiency
Doing vs. Knowing
(Language Proficiency)

They need to be in classes where the focus is how to use language rather than what they know about language.
I know... I can...

Learning Targets
“Can-Do” Statements
**Interpersonal Speaking: Novice Mid**

- I can state my name, age, birthday, where I live, and my travel destination.
- I can greet fellow travelers, the customs officer, and other people I meet at the airport.
- I can describe where I was born.
- I can talk about my travel destination.
- I can state that I am traveling to the target country as a tourist.

**Deep & Rich**

**Focus on Proficiency**
Grammar Communication

Deep & Rich

Focus on Proficiency

Thematic Teaching (Providing Context)

Intrinsically Interesting
Cognitively Engaging
Culturally Connected
Deep & Rich

Thematic Teaching
(Providing Context)

Quiz!
The language teacher went to Hawaii for the winter.

Quiz!
Quiz

A =  
B =  
C =  
D =  
E =  
F =  
G =  
H =  
I =  

A B C
D E F
G H I
The search for meaning is basic to the human brain.

Learners Need CONTEXT

How do we Create Context?
Props, Actions, Visuals, Gestures

What’s in My Bag?

What’s in My “Magic Box”?
How to Make a “Magic Box”

We can create meaning through

CONTEXT
Props, **Actions**, Visuals, Gestures

**Total Physical Response (TPR)**
Basic Elements of Total Physical Response

1. Teacher uses commands, students respond with actions, not words
   a. whole body
   b. manipulation of concrete objects
   c. use of pictures

3. After introduction, commands are recombined to create novelty, unpredictability.

3. Commands increase in length and complexity, calling for a series of actions as soon as possible

Useful Verbs for Beginning TPR

- stand up
- sit down
- lift/raise (hand, etc.)
- lower
- point to
- lay/place/put
- take
- jump
- turn around
- clap
- open
- shut/close
- wave
- draw
- write
- dance
- sing
- drink
- eat
- look
- read
- play
- swim
- climb
- walk
### TPR Adjectives/Adverbs

- fast
- slow
- ___ times
- (to the) left, right, front, back

- backwards
- forwards
- side-ways
- above/over
- below/under

- high
- low
- in
- on
- next to

### TPR Nouns

- body parts
- classroom objects

- parts of the room
- colors
- numbers

---

**German TPR Check for Understanding**

From Janice Dowd
Strecke dich nach oben!

Strecke dich nach unten!

Springe ein (1) mal!

Zeige auf ______!

Stehe auf!

Setze dich!

Klatsche zwei (2) mal!

Klopfe drei (3) mal!

We can create meaning through CONTEXT
Props, Actions, Visuals, Gestures

We're speaking English!

Wir sprechen Deutsch!
Guten Morgen!  Guten Tag!  Guten Abend!  Gute Nacht!
Guten Morgen, Partner!

Guten Tag
Guten Abend
Gute Nacht

6 Uhr 14 Uhr 19 Uhr 22 Uhr
We can create meaning through CONTEXT

Games
Stories

Music, dance
Songs, chants,
Guten Morgen!
Guten Tag!
Guten Abend, Freunde
Eine gute Nacht!

Freunde
Guten Morgen!
Guten Tag!
Guten Abend, Freunde
Eine gute Nacht!
We can create meaning through **CONTEXT**

Poetry Rhymes
We're speaking English!

Wir sprechen Deutsch!

die Henne
Ein Ei

Eins, zwei, drei
Die Henne legt ein Ei
Die Henne legt ein weißes Ei
Eins, zwei, drei
Eins, zwei, drei
Die Henne legt ein Ei
Die Henne legt ein gelbes Ei
Eins, zwei, drei

Eins, zwei, drei
Die Henne legt ein Ei
Die Henne legt ein Oster Ei
Eins, zwei, drei
We can create meaning through CONTEXT

Social situations: role plays

Drama
We can create meaning through

CONTEXT

Projects:
arts, crafts, cooking
Cultural Connections

Connecting to the Regular Curriculum
Thematic Instruction:

Subject Content Instruction:
Connecting to the Regular Curriculum
Using Academic Skills and Processes:
Classifying, Categorizing, estimating, predicting, evaluating, synthesizing
How do we operationalize a DEEP & RICH Curriculum?

- Intrinsically Interesting
- Cognitively Engaging
- Culturally Connected

Focus on Proficiency

Deep & Rich

Moving from Topic to Theme

Intrinsically Interesting
Cognitively Engaging
Culturally Connected
Intrinsically Interesting
Cognitively Engaging
Culturally Connected

Deep & Rich

Is the Task Intrinsically Interesting?

Piaget’s concept of "desequilibrium"
Humans view incongruity or uncertainty as motivating. We seek out a reasonable challenge and we want to conquer it!
Once Upon a Time

Story Form

The End

Beginning

Middle

End
How to Create Story Form

<table>
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<th>CONTEXT</th>
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<td>PURPOSE!!</td>
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<tr>
<td>Game</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drama</td>
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Stories Provide CONTEXT and are intrinsically interesting
In Einem Dunklen, Dunklen Wald
Der Wald
Der Wald

In einem dunklen, dunklen Wald
War ein dunkler, dunkler Weg

Und auf dem dunklen, dunklen Weg
War ein dunkles, dunkles Haus.
Und in dem dunklen, dunklen Haus
War eine dunkle, dunkle Tür.

Hinter der dunklen, dunklen Tür
war eine dunkle dunkle Treppe.
Am Ende der dunklen, dunklen Treppe war ein dunkler, dunkler Schrank.

Und in dem dunklen, dunklen Schrank War eine dunkle, dunkle Schachtel.
Und in der dunklen, dunklen Schachtel

War...
ein...
Providing CONTEXT Stories
We’re Speaking English!

Wir sprechen Deutsch!
Die Geschichte von der kleinen, kleinen Maus

Source Unknown
In einer kleinen, kleinen Stadt...

...steht ein kleines, kleines Haus.

In dem kleinen, kleinen Haus...
...wohnt eine kleine, kleine Maus.

Die kleine, kleine Maus...

...kriecht durch ein kleines, kleines Loch.

Hinter dem kleinen, kleinen Loch...
…liegt ein kleines, kleines Stück Käse.

Und hinter dem kleinen, kleinen Stück Käse…

…sitzt eine große, große…

…K… …K… …K…
...Katze!!!

Auf Wiedersehen, Maus!
Ende

INTRINSICALLY INTERESTING: Pattern Stories
Predictable Stories
Pattern Stories

Scenes are repeated with some variation.

Why Use Pattern Stories?

- meaningful context for functional chunks
- have storylines, cultural sequences or concepts that are familiar to the readers
- have themes that are often of universal appeal.
- the rhythm of pattern stories helps to move language into long-term memory.
### Types of Pattern/Repetitive Stories

- **Familiar sequence**
- **Question and answer**
- **Repetition of a phrase**
- **Rhyme**
- **Chain or circular story**
- **Cumulative Story**

### Predictable/Pattern Stories

**Variations**

**Familiar or Logical Sequence**

Organized by recognizable theme, such as: days of the week and numbers.
Predictable Books: 
Familiar or Logical Sequence
星期三，它吃了三个柿子；
星期四，它吃了四颗枇杷；
星期五，它吃了五颗荔枝；
星期六，它又吃了饺子和大饼。
油条、馒头、刀削面。
但它还是觉得饿！
Strategies for Keeping the classroom in the Target Language

*xīng qī tiān  tā chī le yī piàn shù yè*
星期天，它吃了一片树叶。

*máo máo chóng bù è le*
毛毛虫不饿了。

*tā biàn le*
它变了，

*tā biàn chéng le hú dié*
它变成了蝴蝶！

Types of Pattern/Repetitive Stories

- Familiar sequence
- Question and answer
- Repetition of a phrase
- Rhyme
- Chain or circular story
- Cumulative Story
熊猫，熊猫你看见什么？
我看见两只黄色的羊。
我看见三只棕色的马。
我看见四只奶牛。
我看见五只棕色的猴子。
我看见六只绿色的青蛙。

By Wan Yang Fayette County Schools, Lexington, KY
Types of Pattern/Repetitive Stories

- Familiar sequence
- Question and answer
- Repetition of a phrase
- Rhyme
- Chain or circular story
- Cumulative Story

Predictable/Pattern Stories Variations

**Question and answer**

The same or similar questions are repeated throughout the story.
你看見誰?
Created by Dali Tan & Chinese Teachers

老鼠, 老鼠, 你看見誰?
我看見牛
牛, 牛, 你看見誰?
我看見老虎.

老虎, 老虎, 你看見誰?
我看見兔子
兔子, 兔子, 你看見誰?
我看見龍

豬, 豬, 你看見誰?
我看見熊貓
Types of Pattern/Repetitive Stories

- Familiar sequence
- Question and answer
- Repetition of a phrase
- Rhyme
- Chain or circular story
- Cumulative Story

Predictable/Pattern Stories

Variations

Cumulative Story

Each time a new event occurs, all previous events in the story are repeated.
Predictable Books: *Cumulative Story*

There is a house a napping house where everyone is sleeping.
And in that house there is a cozy bed in a napping house where everyone is sleeping.

And on that bed there is a granny, a snoring granny on a cozy bed in a napping house where everyone is sleeping.
Types of Pattern/Repetitive Stories

- Familiar sequence
- Question and answer
- Repetition of a phrase
- Rhyme
- Chain or circular story
- Cumulative Story

Predictable/Pattern Stories

Variations

Repetition of Phrase

Word order in a phrase or sentence is repeated.
By Li Li  Potomac Elementary School, MD

我是马. 我是农场动物.

我是牛. 我是农场动物.

我是羊. 我是农场动物.

我是猪. 我是农场动物.

我是猫. 我是农场动物.

我是狗. 我是农场动物.

我是鸡. 我是农场动物.
Types of Pattern/Repetitive Stories

- Familiar sequence
- Question and answer
- Repetition of a phrase
- Rhyme
- Chain or circular story
- Cumulative Story

我们都是农场动物.
Predictable/Pattern Stories

Variations

Rhymes

Rhyming words, refrains, or patterns are used throughout the story.

Predictable Books: Rhyming Words

Run, run, run,
As fast as you can!
You can’t catch me!
I’m the Gingerbread Man
Predictable/Pattern Stories

Variations

**Question and Answer**

The same or similar questions are repeated throughout the story.

**Types of Pattern/Repetitive Stories**

- Familiar sequence
- Question and answer
- Repetition of a phrase
- Rhyme
- Chain or circular story
- Cumulative Story
¡Hablamos español!

¿Dónde vive la llama?

Por: Señorita Jenny Griswold
¿Vive la llama en Wisconsin?

No, la ardilla vive en Wisconsin.

¿Vive la llama en China?

No. El oso panda vive en China.
¿Vive la llama en Antártida?

No, los pingüinos viven en Antártida.

¿Vive la llama en Australia?

¡No, no, no! El canguro vive y brinca en Australia.
¿Vive la llama en India?

No, el elefante vive en India.

¿Vive la llama en Zimbabwe?

¡No! La jirafa, el mono, el león y la cebra viven en Zimbabwe.
Intrinsically Interesting
Cognitively Engaging
Culturally Connected

Deep & Rich

Focus on Proficiency

Context (Thematic Instruction)

Intrinsically Interesting
Cognitively Engaging
Culturally Connected

Deep & Rich

Intrinsically Interesting
Cognitively Engaging
Culturally Connected
1. Connecting to the regular curriculum

Science, Math, Geography, Art, Music, History, Physical Education, Health, etc...

2. Academic Skills and Processes

Engaging students in using thinking skills.

Academic Skills and Processes

Some Academic Processes:
- Definition
- Classification
- Description
- Cause-effect
- Sequence
- Comparison-contrast
- Hypothesis
- Evaluation

Stella Kong
Deep & Rich

Intrinsically Interesting
Cognitively Engaging
Culturally Connected

The Culture Triangle

Perspectives
Practices
Products
Cultural, *Product*

Harley Davidson Motorcycle (Made in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, USA)

Cultural *Practice*
Cultural Perspective?

The Fan

Perspectives

Practices

Products
Cultural, Product

Cultural Practice
The Culture Triangle

Perspectives

Practices

Products

Cultural Perspective?
Deep & Rich

Intrinsically Interesting
Cognitively Engaging
Culturally Connected

Not just talking about culture but providing cultural experiences
Activity Level Examples

Taking Photos with a Mascot
Mascots taking cultural trips!

Gustave the Frog, Class Mascot Taking a Trip to France

Gustave at Sacre Coeur

Gustave buying a baguette
“Osito” the Bear from Venezuela Taking a Trip to New York City

Mascots taking cultural trips!

Ricardo and Osito

Osito’s Visa!
Mascots taking cultural trips!

New York City Times Square

Mascots taking cultural trips!

New York City Brooklyn Bridge
Mascots taking cultural trips!

Washington DC Lincoln Memorial

Cultural Fantasy Virtual Trip Imaginary Trip
Virtual trip along the Rhine River in Germany
Looking Out The Train Window

Airplane Trip to ....
How can we make activities deep and rich? Let’s take a look at two examples

Making Tasks Deep and Rich

**Intrinsically Interesting**

**Cognitively Engaging**

**Culturally Connected**
Where’s the Teddy Bear Activit
Partner A
Is your teddy bear in the living room?

Partner B
Yes/No

Partner A
Is your teddy bear in the kitchen?

Partner B
Yes/No
Making Tasks Deep and Rich

Intrinsically Interesting
Cognitively Engaging
Culturally Connected

YES!

Where is the Teddy Bear?
Making Tasks Deep and Rich

Intrinsically Interesting ✅
Cognitively Engaging ✅
Culturally Connected 🤔

Nighthawks by Dennis Hopper
Botero

Andy Warhol
Painting
New Year’s Celebration Scroll

[Image of a scene with traditional Chinese characters and elements, possibly a scrolling painting.]
Making Tasks Deep and Rich

Intrinsically Interesting

Cognitively Engaging

Culturally Connected

Examining Activities
Finding & Giving Information

Jigsaw Activity

Student A
1. It’s an African mammal.
2. It’s a type of ape.
3. It has black spots.
4. It lives in the Savanna.
5. It’s in the warthog family.
6. It can be under water for 15-20 minutes.
7. It has powerful back legs.
8. It’s a nocturnal animal.
9. It begins with L.
10. It’s the largest living land mammal.
11. It has a horn made of hair.
12. It is in the cat family.

Student B
1. It has stripes.
2. It ends in N.
3. It lives in forests.
4. It travels in small groups.
5. It’s a carnivorous mammal.
6. Its babies are white.
7. It hops.
8. It has hard-like forepaws.
9. It’s found in South America.
10. It’s an endangered animal.
11. It’s a vegetarian mammal.
12. It lives in Asia.

Student C
1. It lives in heiis.
2. It has long arms.
3. It lives in Africa and Asia.
4. It’s up to 5.5 meters tall.
5. It begins with O.
6. One to six inches of fat keep it warm.
7. It’s found in Australia.
8. It has a black nose mask.
9. It belongs to the camel family.
10. It’s highly intelligent.
11. It needs to cool the shade during the day.
12. It ends in t.

Student D
1. It ends in A.
2. It lives in trees.
3. It belongs to the cat family.
4. It eats from trees.
5. It’s slender and agile.
6. It has flippers.
7. It carries its baby in a pouch.
8. It ends with N.
9. It can work at high altitudes.
10. It lives in Africa and Asia.
11. It’s massive and hoofed.
12. It has stripes.
1. It’s an African Mammal.
2. It has black spots.
3. It lives in the Savanna.
1. It ends in A.
2. It belongs to the cat family.
3. It eats from trees.

1. It lives in herds.
2. It lives in Africa and Asia.
3. It’s up to 5.5 meters tall.

1. It has stripes.
2. It lives in forests.
3. It travels in small groups.

1. It’s an African Mammal.
2. It has black spots.
3. It lives in the Savanna.
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It’s a zebra!
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<td>2. It has black spots.</td>
<td>2. It lives in forests.</td>
<td>2. It travels in small groups.</td>
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<td>3. It lives in the Savanna.</td>
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It’s a leopard!

Student A
1. It’s an African Mammal.
2. It has black spots.
3. It lives in the Savanna.

Student B

Student C

Student D
Student A
1. It has stripes.
2. It lives in forests.
3. It travels in small groups.

Student B
1. It's an African Mammal.
2. It has black spots.
3. It lives in the Savanna.

Student C
1. It lives in herds.
2. It lives in Africa and Asia.
3. It’s up to 5.5 meters tall.

Student D
1. It ends in A.
2. It belongs to the cat family.
3. It eats from trees.
Student A

1. It ends in A.

Student B

2. It belongs to the cat family.

Student C

3. It eats from trees.

Student D

1. It ends in A.

2. It belongs to the cat family.

3. It eats from trees.

It’s a giraffe!
Making Tasks Deep and Rich

Intrinsically Interesting ✅

Cognitively Engaging ✅

Culturally Connected

Building Proficiency in the Chinese Classroom with Deep and Rich Student-Centered Learning Tasks

CLTA - National Capitol Region Conference
October 21, 2018
Helena Curtain, Ph.D.
Central Idea:
In order for students to develop language proficiency teachers must provide opportunities for meaningful communication and interaction.

Focus Question:
How can we provide for meaningful communication and interaction?
Guten Morgen!
Guten Tag!
Guten Abend, Freunde
Eine gute Nacht!

After the workshop I can:

- explain how to provide context (YES)
- explain what makes activities intrinsically interesting, cognitively engaging, or culturally connected. (YES)
- use deep and rich instructional strategies to engage learners (YES)
Tell your partner

WE are Changing the world one child at a time!!
Tell your partner

"Good-bye! I enjoyed Helena's presentation"

Building Proficiency in the Chinese Classroom with Deep and Rich Student – Centered Learning Tasks

Where do we need to go? How do we get there?

The End
Q & A
Question & Answer Session