

A Basic Guide for Sequencing Lessons

(parts of this guide are adapted from Eric Herman)

Phase 1 - Collaborative Character Construction (Story asking)

(note: the meaning of “character” here is NOT 汉字)

Step 1 - Explain expectations:

First, explain to the students that you don't expect them to be able to remember and reproduce everything you say or even understand it 100%. This will reduce their affective filter because some will feel like they are failing if they can't understand everything you say. Tell the students that you will be trying your best to make sure they will understand the overall meaning of what you say and that their main job in the classroom is to try their best to understand whatever they hear. So, they have to listen very carefully as you speak, and this means they aren't allowed to talk to or distract others.

Step 2 - Establish background information:

What is the goal of this step? The class is embellishing a statement and adding new statements, all to develop an image (initially) or a scene, or (later) a story. The teacher draws details of the image, scene, or story as it develops. Teacher-student interaction is question-driven. There is a variety of yes/no, either/or, and questions with one-word answers, but no recall questioning, unless to confirm, clarify, or check comprehension. Communication is about new information, NOT practicing language. (**This is a VERY important distinction to understand). In other words, if you ask the students a question that you personally know the answer to (eg Is this blue or green? What's the time now?) then you are not engaging in communication, you are doing language practice.

Phase 1 could start like this ... tell the students (in English) that you are going to draw a picture on the board and they are going to help you create the image by answering your questions about what the image looks like. In your questions try to use some words that are internal to the story that the students will read in a later session (for the purposes of this Basic Guide we'll use the Frozen story). Draw a circle on the board and say (in your target language L2 - no English)....

T: This is a head (write the word for “head” in both L1 and L2 on the board - romanised script so that they can get the meaning immediately). Is it an animal or a person? (write the words for “animal” and “person” in both L1 and L2 on the board).

Ss: A person ! (they can say the word for person in L2 because you wrote it on the board with the English meaning next to it, and you are now pointing to the English words “person” and “animal” - but they have to say those words in the L2 in response to your question).

T: Is it a boy or a girl ?

Ss: A girl !

T: OK, so it's a girl. Does she have a nose?

Ss: Yes !

T: You're right ! Is her nose big or small (write these on the board in L1 and L2 - it also helps to gesture these words whenever possible)

..... continue constructing this character using the suggestions of your students as long as they find it interesting.

This first CCC (collaborative character construction) session will be mainly descriptive but later in the term as the students gain proficiency, the CCC will turn in to CSC (collaborative story construction) that are controlled by the teacher but driven by the student's interests.

In your early sessions when you start a new CCC with your classes you should be embellishing a character with adjectives, making sure that meaning is understood. Add physical descriptions (eg eyes, size, height) and personality descriptions (eg happy/ not happy). You could for example end up with "There's a boy, he's tall, fat, with big eyes. He's really happy....". In later lessons you can add more

physical descriptions of these class created characters with the students (parts of the body, colour of hair, age etc). The description can also extend to where (country, city, street, building) the person lives, when he did something, and get into what the character owns/ has, and wants. This is how you add colours/ numbers/ time and many other language elements rather than teaching them in lists.

Remember that when you speak to the students you should NOT be trying to get them to repeat/practise language, you should just be leading and encouraging them (with your questions) to provide new information - in the beginning this is just simple descriptive language, later they can provide new information which will develop and move a story along. Remember also that we are not expecting 100% acquisition of this new language at this point - partial acquisition is just fine. Total acquisition will take quite a while and when it takes place will vary from student to student.

You can repeat this “establishing background information” process frequently throughout the term. You slowly build more language into your character description and when you have a solid base of core words and structures you can then get into solving some problem (this would then be called CSC). Drawing the character or story supports comprehension and allows for retells. Later in the year you may want to include actors.

View these videos:

Collaborative Storytelling

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=woHdaHIByBA&t=9s>

E1 Class 3 Goats Characters

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FygU96Q3M1Q&list=PL8JqpkCp61R4uH6c41CBA9R7Ie_jGffgU

Dr. Krashen on Targeting1 vs. Targeting2

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lzwxP6E1LE4>

Phase 2 - Storytelling

Step 1 - Tell pre-written story:

Tell a pre-written story (eg the Olaf story) by drawing on the board as you tell the story, and make frequent use of gestures, facial expressions, translating (note that in this phase that you while you write both write L2 and its L1 equivalent on the board, it is recommended to erase the L1 word as soon as students have made the L1-L2 match).

View these videos:

Les Trois Ours (The Three Bears) (French)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DFiM5UeXq-w>

In einem Dunklen dunklen Zimmer (German)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mvh4AUXtF_Y&t=34s

Phase 3 - Reading

Step 1 - Teacher reading aloud:

Provide the class with a copy of the story written in pinyin (with English support). Students should be asked to read along silently (pointing to words if they wish) as they listen to you read the story out loud to the class. To this point they have only seen the words written up on the board individually as they were introduced in the story

Step 2 - Whole class reading aloud with teacher:

Teacher reads one sentence out aloud by him/herself. Teacher re-reads the sentence but this time the whole class reads along aloud.

Step 3 - Individual students read aloud:

Some students may want to try to read out aloud to the class. The teachers should read the sentence first as a model, then the student can repeat the sentence - this is really just given the others more time hearing the sentence being read again. It also encourages the students to try to read themselves if they hear other students doing it.

Step 4 - Other reading activities:

There are a variety of reading activities you can do. One is SSR - sustained silent reading. You can put a copy of the current story on the seats of the students before they come in to class. On those days when the story is waiting for them, that is the clue for them to sit quietly for the first 5 minutes and read the story. When the students become more comfortable with reading in the L2, they can do reading activities like "popcorn reading".

Step 5 - Textivate (or other spelling activities):

Provide the students with a word list for the story. The pinyin spelling needs to be learned (this is the only skill-based activity the students do - it is essential they can spell 100% accurately in pinyin in order that they can input pinyin in to their ipads later when we start them writing in characters). At this point, students can be asked to complete spelling activities on Textivate in preparation for a summative spelling test.

Important for Chinese teachers ... DON'T use pinyin for cues as to how to pronounce words. Those cues need to come from the teacher aurally first. When they have heard the word said naturally many times then they won't mispronounce the pinyin when they read it.

Phase 4 - Q + A circling (Picture Talk and/or Movie Talk)

Step 1 - Story re-cap:

If there is a video or picture sequence of the story (screen shots of the Frozen trailer serves this purpose for the Olaf story) put those pictures on pptx slides (this is Picture Talk) and talk through the story again, this time asking questions of the whole class. Discuss the details of each slide (Q + A circling). The questioning can be quite intensive (Who is that? Where is he? Where is he walking? Is he happy? etc). Alternatively you might like to do a Movie Talk (stop the video at several points and discuss what can be seen, what has happened, what will happen next etc.)

Phase 5 - Writing

Step 1 - Story Write (pinyin):

Students can refer to previous stories and word lists to assist them to write their own story. They can do this without any direction from you but in the early stages it is probably best to nominate some words/ phrases that must be included in their story.

Step 2 - Free Write (pinyin):

An alternative to the Story Write is the timed Free Write. Students are given 5 or 10 minutes to write a story (only a word list can be referenced). At the end of the time, the number of words written should be calculated. This activity is NOT about accuracy and does not need to be corrected. It is simply a tool for the teacher to see what has been acquired by the students - it's essentially a brain dump. It is also motivational for the students who see their word count escalate throughout the year as they acquire more language.

Summative assessment - Spelling

Students must be encouraged to achieve 100% accuracy with their pinyin spelling. Marks for spelling tests can be collected throughout the term and are a component of a student's final result.

Character Writing

Each term students will be given a list of 25 Frequent Characters. These characters can be written first in the character booklet in class and then repeated for homework in the duplicate "homework" writing practice booklet. The list of characters can be found in Stile along with a link to the animation for each character so the student can practice stroke order correctly. This character notebook can be returned in Week 9 and used for the Homework mark for each student. Students should be told that the purpose of writing the characters is to help them recognise the characters when they read them later in stories - they are not required to write them from memory (though many will be able to do that). This practice aligns with the Montessori method of "writing before reading".