

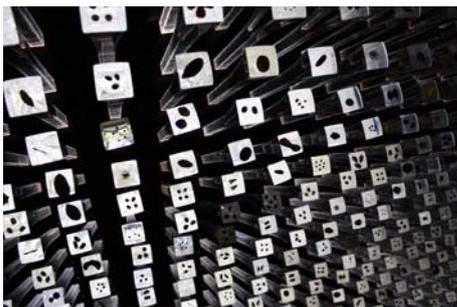
Exploratory Practice

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13th June 2015

Aims of workshop

- ▶ Gain a deeper understanding of exploratory practice as a form of practitioner research
- ▶ Be fired up to undertake your own small-scale classroom research projects

Students as seeds



Wider context

- ▶ In 2014 less than 3000 students took a GCSE in Chinese (CfBT, 2015: 29)
- ▶ Urgent need for more research into teaching and learning of Chinese at school level

Action Research

- ▶ 1. The initial idea/problem
 - ▶ 2. Fact finding – collect relevant data
 - ▶ 3. Action plan – work out a possible solution
 - ▶ 4. Implement the solution in the classroom
 - ▶ 5. Monitor – collect more data to investigate whether the solution is effective
 - ▶ 6. Revise the action plan – proceed through steps (4) and (5) or identify a new issue thrown up by the initial study
- (Adapted from Ellis, 2012: 27)

Focus on learners

- ▶ ‘Learners are interesting, at least as interesting as teachers’ (Allwright, 1980: 165 as cited in Allwright & Hanks, 2009: 1)
- ▶ ‘No teacher teaches except by consent’ (Cortis, 1977: 64 as cited in Allwright & Hanks, 2009: 2)

Exploratory Practice

- ▶ Seeks to integrate pedagogy and research *for* and *by* learners and teachers with little or no involvement from 'third party' or external researchers (Hanks, 2015: 117)
- ▶ Based on seven principles for inclusive practitioner research:

Exploratory Practice

- ▶ The 'what' issues
- ▶ 1. Focus on *quality of life* as the fundamental issue
- ▶ 2. Work to *understand* it, before thinking about solving problems

Exploratory Practice

- ▶ The 'who' issues
- ▶ 3. Involve *everybody* as practitioners developing their own understandings
- ▶ 4. Work to bring people *together* in a common enterprise
- ▶ 5. Work cooperatively for *mutual* development

Exploratory Practice

- ▶ The 'how' issues
- ▶ 6. Make it a *continuous* enterprise
- ▶ 7. *Minimise the burden* by integrating the work for understanding into normal pedagogic practice

(Allwright and Hanks, 2009: 260, original emphases)

Tackling disruptive behaviour

- ▶ Need to consider the wider context
- ▶ Take students' views seriously
- ▶ No formal teaching
- ▶ Podcasts and extra worksheets put on Showbie 
- ▶ Students also encouraged to listen to other relevant songs 

Creating songs

- ▶ Download Audacity
- ▶ <http://sourceforge.net/projects/audacity/>
- ▶ Plug a USB microphone into your computer and record yourself
- ▶ Import royalty free backing tracks from
- ▶ <http://incompetech.com/music/royalty-free/>

Perceiving tones

- ▶ Get the learners to come up with their own names and gestures for the four tones
- ▶ Arch Chinese tone perception game
- ▶ http://www.archchinese.com/mandarin_chinese_tone_drill.html
- ▶ Students discuss with each other which tones they find most difficult to recognise

Wider focus on pronunciation

- ▶ Dictation exercise
- ▶ Students asked to write down what they think they have heard
- ▶ They compare their transcripts with each other
- ▶ Special focus on breakdowns in intelligibility
- ▶ Real cause of breakdown is arguably inadequate lexical knowledge



- ▶ 你好！我叫姚明，我家三口人，我的生日一月十日，我的爱好打乒乓球，没有妹妹，没有宠物，我喜欢看电视因为好玩，不会游泳，我喜欢吃饺子，我喜欢喝水，因为好喝，我喜欢中文，因为很酷，我们班有四四八个学生

Practitioner Research

- ▶ Can only provide 'provisional specifications' and it is up to other teachers to weigh up the extent to which these are relevant to their own teaching context
- ▶ When published typically takes the form of narrative accounts
- ▶ The significance of such research lies in its relevance to language pedagogy and not to our theoretical understanding of the second language classroom

(Adapted from Ellis, 2012)

Criteria for judgement

- ▶ 'Subjectivity, feasibility, trustworthiness, and resonance of research outcomes with those in the same or similar social situation' (Burns, 2005: 61)

Your turn

- ▶ Are there any burning issues you would like to research in your classroom?

Thanks for listening

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References

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