Classroom Strategies for Teaching and Learning the New Chinese GCSE Writing

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- Memory experiment + group discussion on vocabulary teaching
- Vocabulary building - importance of context and recycling
- Reading and Translation
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- Group discussion on writing teaching
- Some example activities on writing
- Revision steps and writing worm map
Overview of GCSE Chinese & the Writing Paper
## Specification at a glance

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Examination 25% of GCSE</td>
<td>Non-exam assessment 25% of GCSE</td>
<td>Examination 25% of GCSE</td>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Foundation Tier 35 minutes including 5 minutes’ reading time</td>
<td>Foundation Tier 7-9 minutes (+ 12 minutes’ preparation time)</td>
<td>Foundation Tier 45 minutes</td>
<td>Foundation Tier 1 hour</td>
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<tr>
<td>Higher Tier 45 minutes including 5 minutes’ reading time</td>
<td>Higher Tier 10-12 minutes (+ 12 minutes’ preparation time)</td>
<td>Higher Tier 1 hour</td>
<td>Higher Tier 1 hour 15 minutes</td>
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<td>1) My life and my friends</td>
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<td>My hobbies</td>
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<td>My friends</td>
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<td>My leisure time</td>
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<td>2) Where I live</td>
<td>My house</td>
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<td>Weather, landscape and geography</td>
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<td>My town and city</td>
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<td>Festivals</td>
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<td>3) Travel and holidays</td>
<td>Transport</td>
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<td>Holidays</td>
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<td>4) School</td>
<td>My day</td>
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<td>In classroom</td>
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<td>My school</td>
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<td>Extra-curriculum</td>
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<td>5) Future plans</td>
<td>Work experience and gap-year</td>
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<td>Life after secondary school</td>
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<td>Job and career choices</td>
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<td>6) Technology and global issues</td>
<td>Internet, mobile technology and social media</td>
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<td>Weather and environmental issues</td>
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<td>Public welfare and voluntary work</td>
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## Paper 4: Writing – format of the papers

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<th>Foundation Tier</th>
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<td><strong>Q1</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Q2</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Q3</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Q4 (=HQ1)</strong></td>
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# Paper 4: Writing – format of the papers

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<th>Higher Tier</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Q1</strong> (=FQ4)</td>
<td>Structured writing task: Students respond to 4 compulsory bullet points which are in English. Required to write approx. 75 characters in total. Choice of two questions on different topics. 16 marks</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Q2</strong></td>
<td>Open-ended writing task: Students respond to 2 compulsory bullet points which are in English. Required to write approx. 125 characters in total. Choice of two questions on different topics. 32 marks</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Q3</strong></td>
<td><strong>Translation</strong>: From English into Chinese (Mandarin) 40 words minimum. 12 marks</td>
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Experiment & Group discussion
Memory experiment & Group discussion

- Memory experiment
- Group discussion:
  - What is the implication of the experiment on vocabulary learning?
  - How do you teach new words? What is the most effective way of recycling?
13 commonly made mistakes in L2 teaching by Gianfranco Conti


5. Too much single-word teaching

As I repeat ad nauseam in my blogs (e.g. [here](https://gianfrancoconti.wordpress.com/2017/07/15/13-commonly-made-mistakes-in-modern-language-instruction/amp/)), teaching single words is less effective than teaching them through functional chunks, i.e. phrases used in the performance of communicative functions ([list of communicative functions](https://gianfrancoconti.wordpress.com/2017/07/15/13-commonly-made-mistakes-in-modern-language-instruction/amp/), here). Why? Firstly, because our brain’s working memory can only process 4 items at any one time, so better learning four items consisting of chunks of three or four words than four items consisting of one, as this will result in less cognitive effort when creating sentences. Think of the processes involved in creating and uttering a sentence (listed in the figure below), how cumbersome it can be to a novice as s/he executes each stage using single words.
Example - Memory game (red is learnt)

Step A: divide students into two or more groups, show a group of phrases on screen (use slide show to time it - one word fly in at a time) and see which group remembers the most phrases

E.g. 妈妈的房间、骑自行车、空气很好、中文电影、

买一送一 、……

Step B: each student uses one or more phrases they remember to make up a sentence, and write it down

Step C: swap the sentence with the person sitting next to them, and read it out to each other.

Step D: if possible, display those sentences for all to see
Importance of context in vocabulary recycling
Theme 1: Identity and culture

Topic 1: Me, my family and friends

Vocabulary

Match the following words/expressions that are related to family with their English counterparts.

A) 家 1. age
B) 宠物 2. birthday party
C) 孩子 3. kind
D) 结婚 4. child/children
E) 朋友 5. family
F) 年龄 6. friend
G) 生日会 7. married
H) 岁 8. pet
9. guest
10. years old
Importance of using different contexts/scenarios to recycle

Because 42% of what we learn is usually lost within 20 minutes from first memorizing it, 64% after 9 hours and 80% after one week without consolidation.

Complete the following sentences with the options provided in the box. Put the appropriate letter in the space provided.

A. 爸爸和妈妈有两个孩子
B. 没有弟弟
C. 因为我的爷爷奶奶都住在北京
D. 我和妹妹都在上海出生

1. ________, 也在上海长大。
2. ________, 一个女儿，一个儿子。
3. 我只有一个哥哥，________。
4. 我们全家要去北京过春节。________。
Using Word Cloud – Word ItOut
https://worditout.com/word-cloud/create
Reading into translation
&
Spot differences in translation
Matthew writes to his teacher Mrs Huang about his exchange visit to Beijing. Read the text and complete the two tasks.

黄老师：
您好！我来北京一个多星期了，我住在中国朋友小山家。小山的爸爸和妈妈离婚了，他跟妈妈一起住(1)。上个周末，他的爸爸来看我们，还请我们一起去吃北京烤鸭，北京烤鸭比英国的烤鸭好吃多了(2)，晚上我们去看了京剧，我对京剧没有兴趣(3)，因为音乐太吵了。我下个月回英国，我会给您买一个礼物(4)。

此致
敬礼！

马休
8月10日
Theme 1: Identity and culture

Topic 1: Me, my family and friends

Translation

Use the word/phrases from the previous text to translate the sentences.

a) I am going to play tennis with my friend at the school sports hall this afternoon. (和……一起)

b) Many students think that Chinese language is a lot easier than French. (……比……多了)

c) They are not interested in visiting museums. (对……没有兴趣)

d) On my birthday, my grandma bought me a pet dog. (给……买)
Spot the differences in translation

上个周末，我妈妈开车带我和我的朋友去了当地的博物馆。门票虽然很贵，但是我们玩得很开心。......

我妈妈上个周末开车带我、还有我的朋友一起去了市博物馆。虽然门票很贵，但是我们过了很愉快的一天。......

Translate the following passage into Chinese characters.

My mum drove me and my friend to a local museum last weekend. Although the entry fee was very expensive, we had a good time. We had lunch at the Italian restaurant opposite the museum. I am going to start my new part time job next Saturday.

[12 marks]
Writing Tasks
Theme 1: Identity and culture

Topic 1: Me, my family and friends

Writing task

- Short sentences (Foundation tier)
- Short passage (≈ 30 汉字 – Foundation tier)
- Structured writing task (≈ 75-110 汉字 – Foundation and Higher tier)
- Open-ended writing task (≈ 125-180 汉字 – Higher tier)
OR Question 1.2

You write a blog for your Chinese exchange school about where you live.

Mention:

- your town
- positive and negative aspects of your house
- a recent visit you made to town
- where you would like to live in the future.

Write approximately 75 Chinese characters. Respond to every bullet point.

[16 marks]

EITHER Question 2.1

You are writing an article for a Chinese lifestyle magazine.

Mention:

- your opinion about healthy living
- a memorable meal.

Write approximately 125 Chinese characters. Respond to both bullet points.

[32 marks]
Group discussion

• What topics/aspects you find most difficult to teach (and your effective strategies if any)?
• Which is it that your students struggle with the most (and the strategies used if any)?
• What has been your most effective writing activity? And why does it work?
Example: 
Turning a writing task into a speaking activity

Step 1: Provide an example of the activity first (see next slide).

Step 2: Ask each student to write a few sentences on a piece of paper (provide key words and structures recently learnt) about what they want to do in future or what their plan is for the summer holiday.

Step 3: Divide the class into a group of 4 or 5 and name them Group A, Group B, etc.

Step 4: Fold the paper after they finish the sentences and put them into a box. Swap the box with another group.

Step 5: Each student takes one folded paper out of the box from another group, read the sentences, go around to ask all 4 or 5 people in that group questions in Chinese in order to identify the author. The person asking the question must try hard not to give the answer away.
Example for Step 1

Four to five sentences in Chinese about the summer plan, what to do, where to go, who to go with etc.

• 我希望今年暑假去中国旅行。
• 我打算和两个好朋友一起去。
• 我们会从伦敦坐飞机去北京。
• 我们想先参观北京的名胜古迹，然后坐火车去上海。
• 在上海，我们除了要买很多东西，还要吃有名的上海点心。

A series of questions to ask each of the 4 or 5 students in another group to identify the author.

• 你暑假打算做什么？
• 你和谁一起去？
• 你们怎么去？
• 你们想去哪儿？
• 在哪里，你们要做什么？
上个星期六晚上，我参加了我最好的朋友小红十五岁的生日晚会！我的爸爸、妈妈也去了，因为我父母和小红的父母也是好朋友。小红家不大，但是她家有一个又大又美的花园，晚会是在花园里开的。她的三十多个朋友来参加晚会。晚会上有很多好吃的东西，我吃了饺子、牛肉面、还有生日蛋糕。我们大家一起唱歌、跳舞，高兴极了。下个月是我的生日，我也想开一个生日会，让小红和朋友们来我家玩。

珍妮

Q1 珍妮的父母为什么也去了小红的生日会？
Q2 生日会是在哪儿开的？
Q3 珍妮的生日是什么时候？
Q4 珍妮怎么过她的生日？
Read the sample answer to the writing task. Add a few more sentences to the sample answer. For example, you can add one more selling point of the house such as the facilities in this neighbourhood, and what the previous owner thought about the property, using structures such as 有……也有……; 虽然……但是……

Try to put the added sentences into the appropriate positions.

这个房子在伦敦的郊区，小区里又美丽又安静。房子很大，除了有一个客厅、一个书房、一个饭厅、三个卧室和两个浴室，房子后面还有一个花园。以前的人在这里住了八年。欢迎您下个月来英国看房子。
这个房子在伦敦的郊区，小区里又美丽又安静，有地下停车场，也有健身房。房子很大，除了有一个客厅、一个书房、一个饭厅、三个卧室和两个浴室，房子后面还有一个花园。小区附近有超市，也有医院。以前的人在这里住了八年。那个人觉得虽然厨房小一些，但是什么都有，非常方便。欢迎您下个月来英国看房子。
Revision steps & Writing worm map
Questions?

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References: