

Some findings from previous research  
about character learning/teaching  
strategies

# Learning strategies (by learners)

**Shen's top 30 commonly used strategies (2005) N:95 university students**

*25 of 30 are cognitive strategies (memorise, comprehend, enhance attention, etc) ; and 5 are metacognitive strategies (monitor, plan, evaluate, assess)*

**Kan et al (2017) N: 11 adult distance learners**

- More **metacognitive strategies** (e.g. I test myself to check if I have learnt the character)
- **Cognitive strategies** (e.g. I try to visualise the character and compare it with a familiar shape)
- **Memory/social/compensatory strategies:** (e.g I repeat the sound when the character is first introduced (M); /I listen to conversation by native speakers (S); I focus on how the character is used in context (C)

**Table 2.** Comparison of the ranking of our character learning strategies with Shen's ranking (2005, 57). N: 11 for percentage inside the brackets; 8 for percentages outside the brackets.

Ranking/Strategy group	Item No	Our strategy items	% score $\geq 3^*$	Shen's top 30 ranking and item wording
1 (Metacognitive)	Q11**_10	<b><i>I test myself to check if I have learnt the character(s)</i></b>	100% (100%)	<b>13</b> 'Quiz myself'
2 (Memory)	Q10***_1	<i>I repeat the sound when the character is first introduced</i>	88% (92%)	<b>1</b>
3 (Metacognitive)	Q10_13	<b><i>I try to find a connection between the new character and previously learned characters</i></b>	88% (91%)	<b>24</b> 'Finds the connection between the new character and previously learned radicals in terms of sound, meaning and shape'
4 (Cognitive)	Q10_12	<i>I try to visualise the character and compare it with a familiar shape</i>	88% (84%)	<b>8</b>
5 (Social)	Q11_6	<b><i>I listen to conversation by native speakers</i></b>	75% (64%)	<b>30</b>
6 (Metacognitive)	Q11_14	<b><i>I use an online dictionary to find out how the character is used in context</i></b>	75% (54%)	<b>[not in top 30]</b>
7 (Compensatory)	Q11_13	<i>I focus on how the character is used in context</i>	75% (72%)	<b>9</b>
8 (Cognitive)	Q10_3	<i>I practice the tone and associate it with pinyin</i>	75% (75%)	<b>2</b>
9 (Cognitive)	Q11_1	<b><i>I say the character when writing it (either on digital device or paper)</i></b>	63 (63%)	<b>22</b>
10 (Metacognitive-Cognitive-)	Q10_7	<b><i>I use pinyin input on my computer/digital device to choose/identify new characters</i></b>	63% (50%)	<b>[not in top 30]</b>

## Teaching strategies (by teachers)

### Instructional strategies in UK schools –

Preston (2018) (N: 12)

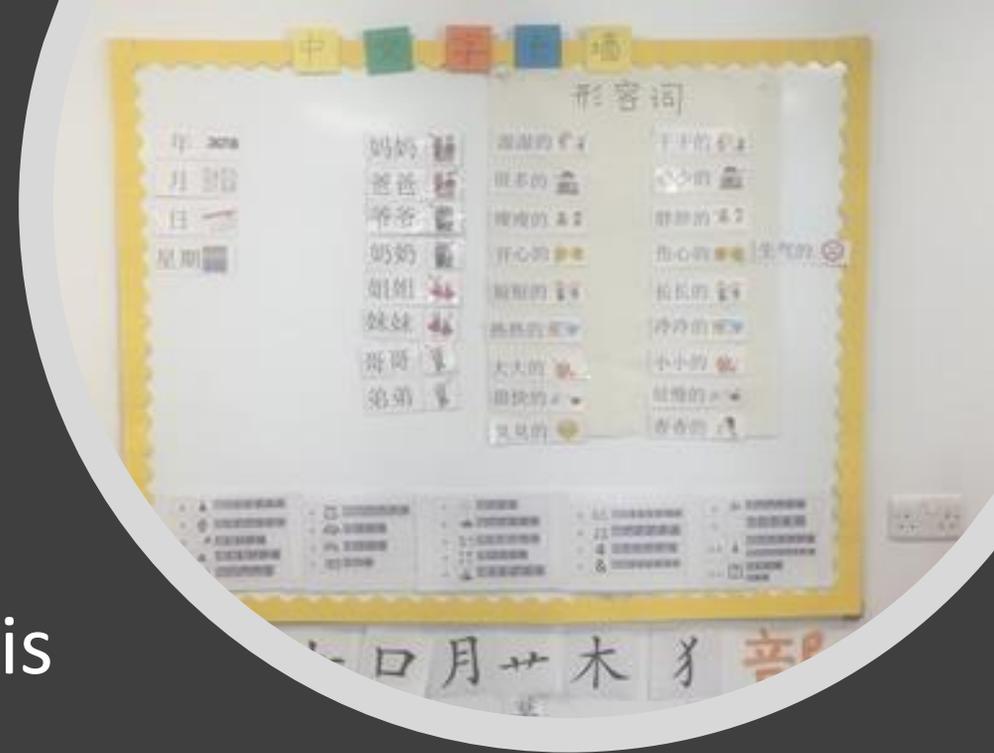
#### *Procedure related:*

- Most teachers introduce characters and pinyin at the same time, but some teachers choose textbooks that do not print pinyin over characters.
- When teaching characters, majority teach stroke -> radical -> whole; but four think stroke order unnecessary; 80% think teaching radicals are vital.
- Re how to teach radicals, some do it systematically (raise their orthographic awareness), whilst others do it when they appear in the course.

# Chan Lü's research (2019)

One of the findings/recommendations is the importance of **print input**, which is implemented in Kensington Wade school in London.

Book: *Chinese Literacy Learning in an Immersion Program*



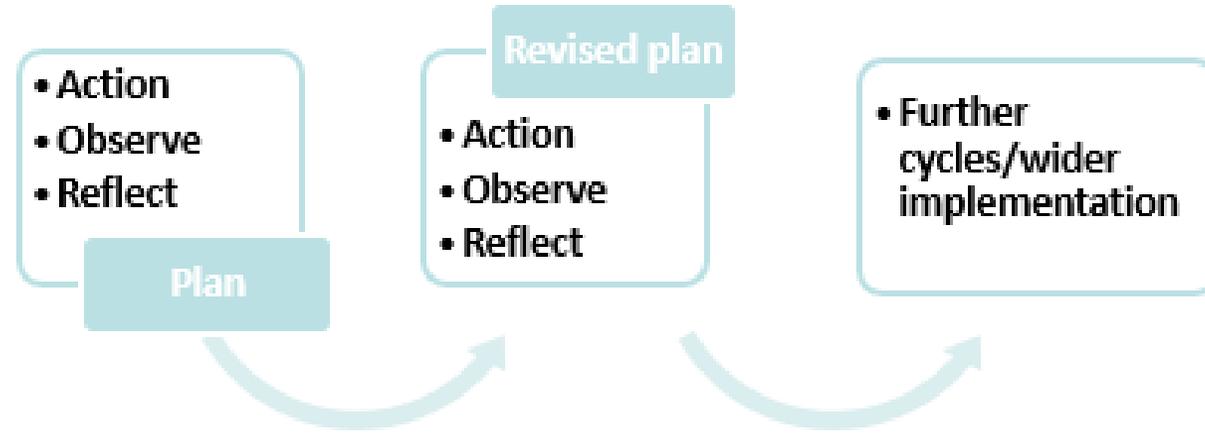
# Most popular teaching strategies by MEP Teachers

## - Recent survey (N = 36)

Code	Item	Mean	SD	Median	Mode
Q9	I give examples of learnt characters that share the same radical used in the new character. - I never or almost never do this	3.39	0.49	3	3
Q15	I ask pupils to make up an expression or simple sentence with the new character(s). - I never or almost never do this	3.33	0.63	3	3
Q2	I show and teach the character, pinyin and tone at the same time. - I never or almost never do this	3.28	0.78	3	4
Q8	I ask pupils to write each new character stroke by stroke (on paper or on a digital device) many times. - I never or almost never do this	3.25	0.73	3	4
Q5	I focus first on the radical (the part that indicates the associated meaning). - I never or almost never do this	3.22	0.68	3	3
Q21	I read aloud and ask the class to repeat after me. - I never or almost never do this	3.18	1.19	4	4

The questionnaire contained 34 strategies based on previous research (Shen 2005; Kan et al 2017; Preston, E. 2018)

Next step:  
Action  
research ...



- Which methods are more effective (in both short and long-term?)
- How do we find out?

# Action research 'cycle'

- Plan
  - Teacher 'notices' or identifies an issue/problem
  - Looks for solutions (literature/colleagues)
  - 'Research as practice' rather than 'research on practice' (McAteer, 2013).
  - Devise intervention to implement in own context (can be qualitative/quantitative/mixed-methods).
- Action
  - Deliberate/carefully-planned/Observation/Documentation (context – who, where, when/actions – what/implementation – how/opinions of participants)
- Reflection
  - What have you learned that you previously did not know?
  - Was the experience positive/negative/mixed?
  - How do your findings relate to others' findings?
  - What are the participants' perceptions? How do they relate to yours?

Now hand over to the four teachers, each of who carried out an action research