

BELONGING IN THE CHINESE CLASSROOM: MOTIVATING STUDENTS AND HELPING THEM SUCCEED!

LUCY WICKS

L.WICKS@UCL.AC.UK

LWICKS@DIDCOTGIRLS.OXON.SCH.UK

BEFORE WE BEGIN...

PLEASE WRITE YOUR NAME ON A POST IT (IN ENGLISH!)

THEN DIVIDE THE POST-IT INTO 3 SECTIONS:

IN TOP SECTION. DRAW ONE 爱好 YOU DO:

IN THE MIDDLE. WRITE WHAT YOU ATE 昨天晚饭:

IN THE BOTTOM. WRITE/DRAW 你害怕的东西 :



ABOUT ME

20+ YEARS TEACHING CHINESE. SPANISH. GERMAN AND FRENCH

5 YEARS TEACHER EDUCATOR (ML PGCE OXFORD. ECT FACILITATOR)

CURRENT HEAD OF MANDARIN. DIDCOT GIRLS' SCHOOL (0.4FTE)

PROJECT AND NETWORK COORDINATOR. NCLE (0.6FTE)

MSC STUDENT MOTIVATION IN CHINESE (OXFORD)

AIMS OF THE SESSION:

1. Your own context -issues of student motivation or retention?
2. The power of ‘Belonging’ (theory)
3. My MSc enquiry and findings from research
4. Practical idea to enhance your students’ belonging (small tweaks and bigger ideas!)
5. Further reading/action



HOW MOTIVATED WERE
THEY IN CHINESE?

HOW WAS THEIR
CONFIDENCE IN THEIR
OWN ABILITY?

WHAT DID YOU TRY IN
ORDER TO HELP THEM?
HOW SUCCESSFUL WAS
THIS?

THINK ABOUT 1 OR
MORE STUDENTS IN
YOUR OWN
CLASSROOM WITH
WHOM YOU FELT
DISCONNECTED

PLEASE SHARE WHATEVER YOU FEEL
COMFORTABLE TO WITH SOMEONE
ON YOUR TABLE.

WERE THEY LIKE THIS
FOR ALL TEACHERS?
WHO DID THEY RESPECT
AND WHY?

WHAT OTHER REASONS
FOR THEIR LACK
OF MOTIVATION
EXIST?

WHOSE OPINIONS DID
THEY TEND TO
FOLLOW?

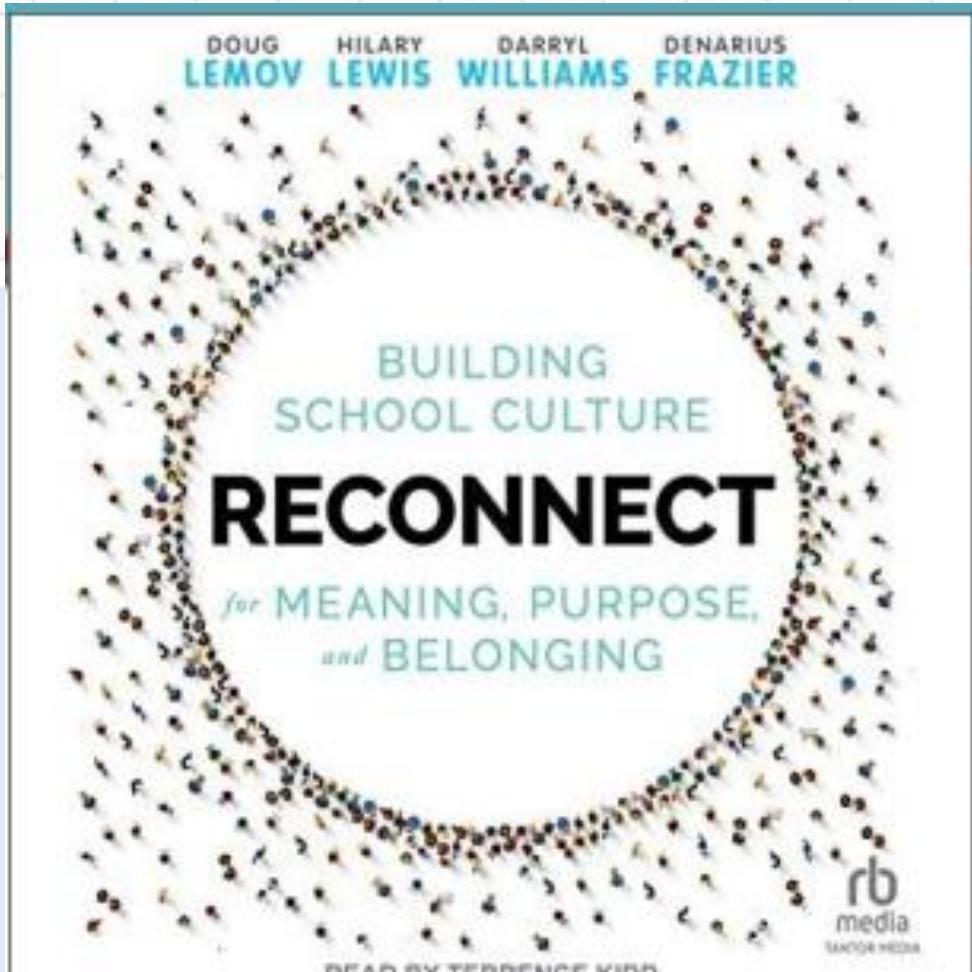
BELONGING

"Cohesion and trust occur when group members send and receive small, **frequently occurring** signals of belonging."

"Our social brains light up when we receive a **steady accumulation** of cues: we are close, we are safe, we share a future."

"Ultimately, never forget that the best pastoral care for students from the most deprived socio-economic backgrounds is a great set of examination results."

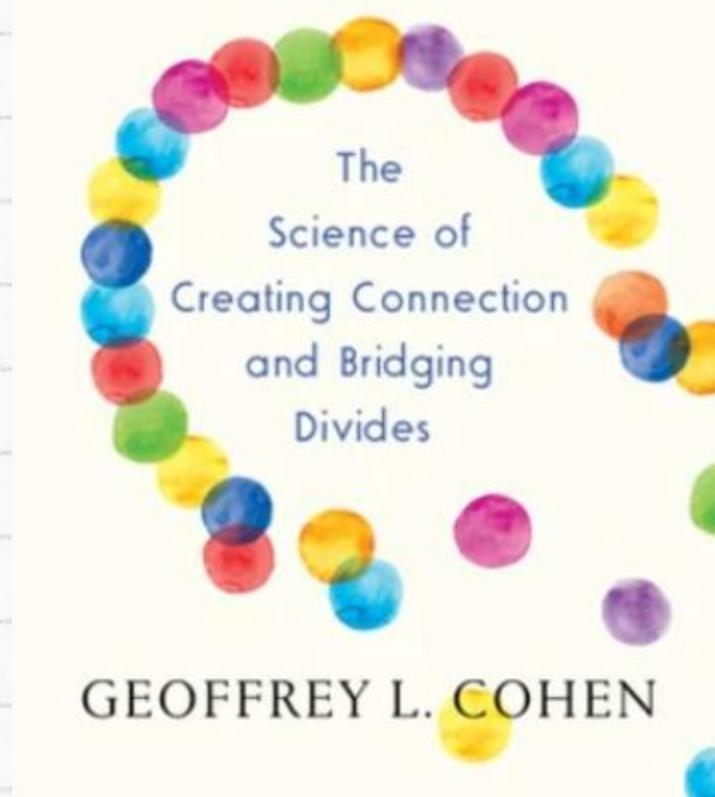
- John Tomsett, Headteacher



1. Belonging is a Fundamental Need
2. Perceptions Shape Belonging
3. Small Acts Have Big Impacts
4. Connection Requires Effort

"A beacon of hope for a fractured world."
—ADAM GRANT, #1 *New York Times* best-selling author of *Think Again*

BELONGING





PLACE AND BELONGING IN SCHOOL: WHY IT MATTERS TODAY

CASE STUDIES

<https://neu.org.uk/sites/default/files/2023-04/Belonging%20research%20booklet.pdf>

The Belonging Challenge

- 1 in 4 young people feel they do not belong in school: a figure which is rising.
- Children from disadvantaged communities are twice as likely as their more advantaged peers to feel they don't belong and four times more likely to be excluded.
- Black Caribbean and special educational needs children are more likely to be excluded than their peers.
- Young people who experience a sense of exclusion from school or society seek 'belongingness' elsewhere.

The Belonging Opportunity

A sense of belonging has been linked to:

- ✓ Increased student motivation.
- ✓ Increased staff well-being, motivation and retention.
- ✓ Reductions in student absenteeism.
- ✓ Other positive social outcomes e.g. health and well-being.
- ✓ Improved academic achievement.
- ✓ A growing sense of agency in students and staff: a belief that they can make a difference.

“RELATEDNESS”

A BASIC PSYCHOLOGICAL NEED

- The need for social connections, belongingness, and meaningful relationships with others.
- Feeling understood, cared for, and connected to others in a way that satisfies the desire.

SELF-DETERMINATION THEORY OF HUMAN MOTIVATION (Ryan & Deci, 1985)

INTRINSIC MOTIVATION

RELATEDNESS

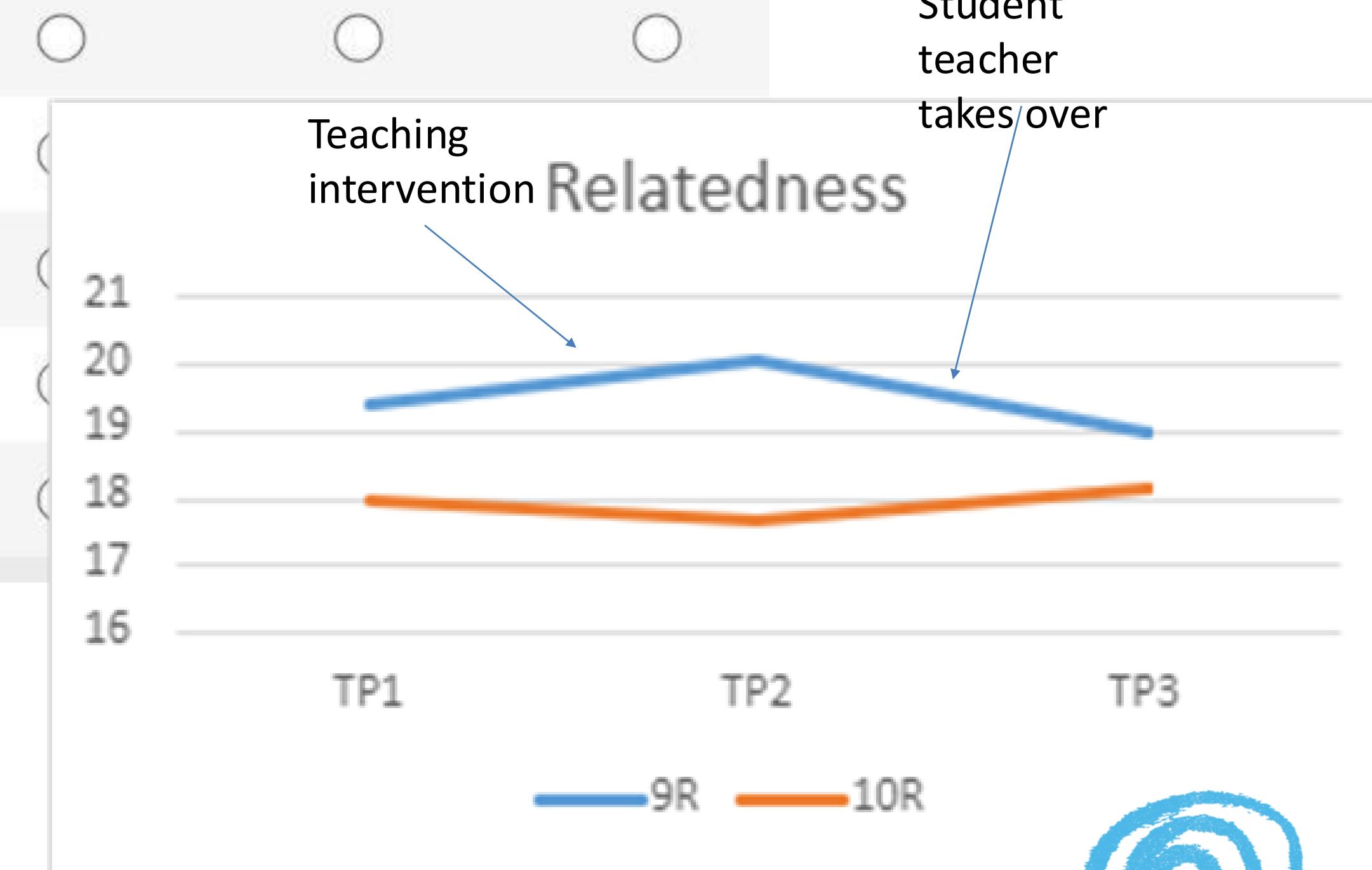
COMPETENCE

AUTONOMY



With the other students in the class I feel:

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Always
11) Supported	<input type="radio"/>				
12) Understood	<input type="radio"/>				
13) Listened to	<input type="radio"/>				
14) Valued	<input type="radio"/>				
15) Safe	<input type="radio"/>				



BARRIERS TO 'RELATEDNESS' IN OUR CLASSROOMS

- Curriculum time Vs Content
- Anxiety about speaking in TL, poor attendance
- SEND / Cultural "differences"
- 'Tutor groups' Vs 'option groups'
- Behaviour policy –e.g. silent independent work or uniform checks





Which parts of the curriculum do your students find:

- a) Relevant?
- b) Less relevant?

What have you already tried to make lessons more relevant?

How successful were you? (Can you share resources?)

How much time do you spend planning and resourcing lessons every week?

SMALL TWEAKS TO LESSONS...



GET THEIR FEEDBACK REGULARLY,
PUT THEM IN CHARGE OF THEIR LEARNING JOURNEY

SHARE DETAILS AND PICTURES ABOUT YOUR OWN LIFE AND/OR LEARNING JOURNEY.

ASK/TELL THEM "WIIFM?"
(*What's in it for me?)

TEACH FRIENDSHIP AND COMMUNICATION EXPLICITLY –
CHANGE SEATING OFTEN, USE GROUPWORK.
REWARD TEAMWORK

MORE TWEAKS...

PEER NOMINATIONS
CELEBRATE MISTAKES

BE CURIOUS!
DO YOUR HOMEWORK - TALK
TO OTHER TEACHERS AND
PARENTS, KEEP NOTES.

USE THEIR NAMES IN YOUR
WRITTEN / SPOKEN EXAMPLES
AND IN ASSESSMENTS

BUILD IN A ROUTINE FOR 'CATCHING
UP' PEOPLE WHO WERE AWAY LAST
LESSON.
E.G. "IF I WERE TO EXPLAIN LAST
LESSON TO SOMEONE WHO WAS
AWAY..."

CLASS SURVEY,
LEADING TO
NOTEBOOK

SPECIAL PERSON
INTERVIEW

VENN DIAGRAM –
RELATE TO
REAL/FICTIONAL
CHARACTERS

MFL/CHINESE
SPECIFIC IDEAS
(WITH EXAMPLES)

WHICH OF THESE DO
YOU WANT TO HEAR
ABOUT FIRST?

HEXAGON – INTERVIEW
FOLLOWED BY GROUP
ACTIVITY

ALLOW THEM TO
DESIGN A UNIT (INCLUDING
HOMEWORK TASKS)

PLAY CRAZY CIRCLE!

MICHELLE



她是英国人。

她游泳游得比较慢。

她在海边游泳。

她叫 Michelle。

她和家人一起游泳。

MALIA



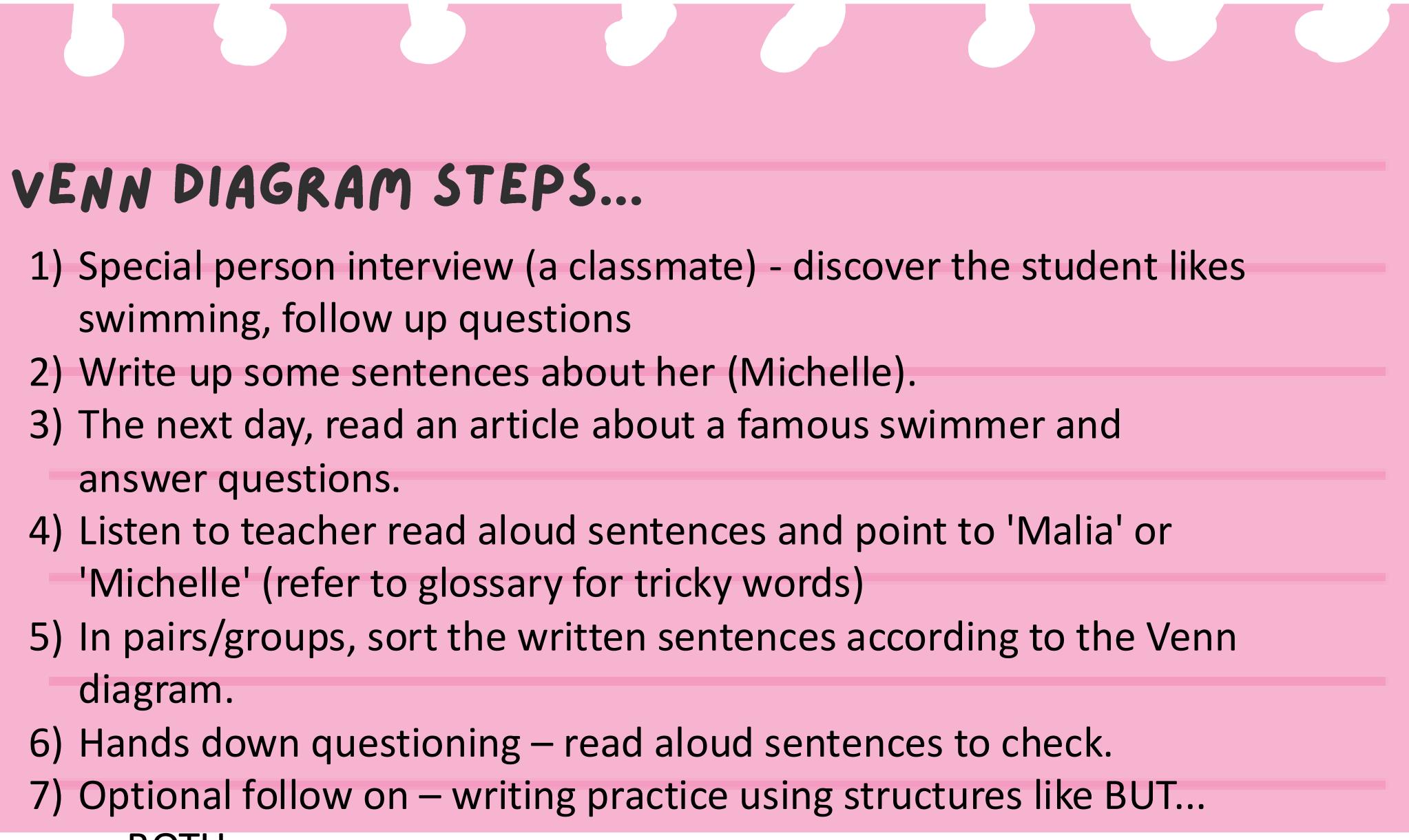
她游泳游得非常快。

她是法国人。

她在游泳池游泳。

她叫 Malia。

她赢了游泳的金牌。



Example: Special Person Interviews



Find out about each other

今天 我们 要。。。
学习 :

Some facts about each other!

练习:

Likes/dislikes
Question forms

首先

然后

最后

- Guess the mystery person by understanding some sentences

- Interview the mystery person

- Interview your classmates to find out what you have in common

她是谁？

1. 她喜欢看书。
2. 她不喜欢狗。
3. 她喜欢吃橄榄 (gan lan
- olives)
4. 她最喜欢的动物
(dongwu) 是猪 zhu

Special Person Interview

1. 你最喜欢吃什么？
2. 你不喜欢吃什么？
3. 昨天晚上你吃了什么？
4. 你喜欢喝咖啡吗？
5. 你喜欢不喜欢中国菜？

The Hexagon Game

1. Now working in pairs, ask each other the questions from the interview in Chinese and write 1-2 words in English/Pinyin near your number
2. Then get together with a bigger group and see if you can get ALL of your hexagons to tessellate (you are allowed to place one next to another if you have the same or similar answers to at least 1 question.

**Display hexagons to
remind students about
their shared interests.**



Crazy Circle – choose a sentence to read aloud, if it's true for you, stand up and change seats!

我喜欢看书。

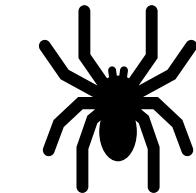
我不喜欢狗。

我喜欢吃.. (eg. 橄榄 gan lan - olives)

我最喜欢的动物 (dongwu) 是 (eg. 猪 zhu)



我害怕 haipa (scared of) (eg. 蜘蛛 zhizhu)



昨天晚上我吃了..

你的爱好是..



Takeaways

- “Every day is a school day”, aim to learn as much about them as we expect them to learn from our lessons!
- To feel a sense of Belonging, students should ‘relate’ to both classmates, their teacher AND the content they are learning.
- Belonging is a key component of motivation which can lead to attainment and well-being in students and teachers!

**THANK YOU
VERY MUCH**

IOE Annual Chinese Teaching
Conference Feedback Form 2025
(Workshop 4-Lucy Wicks)

