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# Strategies To Encourage Chinese Immersion Students To Speak More Chinese In The Classroom

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STRATEGIES TO ENCOURAGE CHINESE IMMERSION STUDENTS TO SPEAK  
MORE CHINESE IN THE CLASSROOM

by

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A capstone project submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Teaching.

Hamline University

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## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **Introduction to the Capstone**

#### **Introduction**

As a Chinese immersion teacher who has a passion for teaching and the spread of Chinese culture, I am always interested in learning effective strategies that contribute to the improvement of my students' Chinese language proficiency. Also, I am committed to using only Chinese for classroom instruction and interactions. And I expect Chinese immersion students, especially third grade and above, to hear, understand and use Chinese exclusively at all times in school from the first day of instruction. However, Chinese immersion students speaking English in the classroom is extremely common. Many Chinese immersion teachers, including myself, are desperate for effective strategies to increase students' use of Chinese language in the classroom. With this in mind, I embarked on my capstone journey. The research question of my capstone is what strategies can Chinese immersion teachers utilize to encourage third grade students to speak more Chinese in the classroom?

The purpose of chapter one is to provide the context for my capstone question. The first section of this chapter talks about my experience with Chinese immersion classroom which aims to present the story of my journey to my research question. In order to present a rationale for doing my study, the subsequent section of this chapter provides

reasons why it is necessary to increase immersion students' use of Chinese language in the classroom. The last section of this chapter demonstrate guiding questions of my study.

### **Experience With Chinese Immersion Classroom**

Born and raised in China, I received traditional teacher-centred education which focuses on rote learning and memorization my whole life. My first experience with Chinese immersion classroom is volunteering in a kindergarten Chinese immersion classroom when I studied in the United States as a college exchange student for one year. Before volunteering there, I cannot help but ask myself how this full immersion program works for American students who have little or no Chinese background. I was also curious about what teaching methods the Chinese immersion teachers would utilize. Are these Chinese immersion students taught like how I was taught back in China? Is the Chinese immersion classroom just a copy of traditional classroom in China? Having lots of questions in mind, I could not wait to see what the Chinese immersion classroom looks like.

Volunteering in that kindergarten Chinese immersion classroom proves to be an eye-opening, inspiring and unforgettable experience for me. It was also the first time I witnessed what student-centred classroom was like.

This kindergarten classroom was decorated with a cornucopia of Mandarin words. The teacher taught students all academic subjects in Chinese. Her teaching methods emphasized hands-on activities and group activities. And she made full use of technologies such as smartboard and ipad to help students learn Chinese. In addition, she tailored her



lesson to meet students' diverse interests as well as demonstrating direct connections between school and everyday life. For example, When I first went there, those 5- and 6-year-olds were diligently writing intricate Chinese characters. Suddenly, a student noticed that a large butterfly has landed on the teacher's arm. The teacher quickly brushed it off as her students huddled around to get a good look at the intruder. The teacher used the moment to teach her students several words they don't know in Chinese, like "scared" and "butterfly." "Were you scared when you saw the butterfly?" the teacher asked students in Chinese. Most of them raised their hands. Is the butterfly poisonous, one student asked in Chinese. And the teacher assured them that it was not. I found that these kindergarteners understood about 90–95 percent of what the teacher said to them. I was amazed how fast they learn. It dawned on me that young children are more apt to learn a language fluently, even one as difficult to master as Mandarin, if they start speaking it at a young age.

When I was volunteering there, I truly enjoyed working with those children. Helping them become lifelong learners and making a positive difference on them gave me a deep sense of achievement and fulfillment. By the time I need to return to China, I was so confident in the Chinese immersion program that I was determined to become a Chinese immersion teacher. After graduating from college in China, I decided to come back to the United States to pursue my master's degree in teaching and accomplishment my dream of becoming a Chinese immersion teacher.

Full of anticipation, I embarked on my journey of student teaching in a third grade Chinese immersion classroom in the autumn of 2016. Throughout my student teaching, I

have had opportunity to teach diverse groups of students, including those performed below grade level, and those who were gifted. I utilized a variety of teaching methods to cater to all types of learners. I actively engaged students' minds by incorporating movements, art, music, crafts, enjoyable activities and cooperative learning project. And I created interdisciplinary subjects or theme-based units, such as reading a story about sharing 12 cookies and figuring out how to equally share those cookies among increasing number of children. I felt that most of my lessons were successful because students were engaged and met content objectives.

However, what frustrated me was that students tend to speak English in the classroom. Most of the students in the classroom I student taught in only spoke Chinese when they were called on in class by the teacher. For the rest of time at school, they spoke English. One student didn't even bother to try and always waited for the teacher to translate his English into Chinese for him.

At first, I thought only students in this classroom had that issue. But after I observed other third grade Chinese immersion classrooms in this school, I came to realize that this problem is very common. When I was volunteering in the kindergarten classroom, I also found that those kindergarteners spoke English in class. But obviously, when they first start in Kindergarten, they will not be producing words in the target language. So they will be focusing more on comprehending the language when spoken to.

Nevertheless, these third graders have started the program in Kindergarten and they should have enough vocabularies built up to be able to get their point across by using only Chinese. Why do they still speak English whenever possible? I talked to my co-

operating teacher about this problem. Unfortunately, she did not seem to have effective strategies to deal with this problem, nor did other Chinese immersion teachers I discussed this problem with. I wonder what Chinese immersion teachers can do to encourage third grade Chinese immersion students to speak more Chinese in the classroom. This question has motivated me to embark on this research journey.

### **Why Increasing Use Of Chinese Language In The Classroom**

Why is it necessary to increase immersion students' use of Chinese language in the classroom? There are two types of Chinese immersion program, one-way and two-way. One-way means the program focuses on teaching English speakers Mandarin Chinese. Two-way means the program is meant to go both ways, students who enter speaking only Chinese will also learn English, while students who come in only speaking English will also learn Chinese. It generally involves equal numbers of English-speaking students and Chinese-speaking students. Two-way immersion program is more likely to be adopted in communities which include large numbers of Chinese-speaking students.

The majority of Chinese immersion programs are one-way because few communities have enough Chinese speakers to make up half the students. Most students in the one way program and some students in the two way program have little or no Chinese background and their parents do not speak English. So they have little exposure to Chinese at home. If students don't make the most of the opportunities to practice speaking Chinese at school, fewer chances are left for them to use Chinese. Of course, input is necessary for a language learner to acquire a new language. However, studies have shown that lan-

guage learners can often achieve high levels of comprehension in the second language without ever achieving a moderate level of production (Swain 1985, 1995). Merrill Swain's Output Hypothesis argues that without production (output) expectations that correspond to the input that the language learner receives, the student's conversational abilities in the second language will lag far behind their comprehension abilities. Second language production, or output solicited from the language learner, is what most effectively drives the development of a second language (Swain 1985, 1995). It's like that old saying, "If you don't use it, you'll lose it!"

In addition, the Research conducted by American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL, 2010) indicates that in order for students to develop language and cultural proficiency, significant levels of meaningful communication and interactive feedback in the target language must be provided for effective language instruction. Also, the K-16 Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21st Century emphasize that target-language interaction plays a crucial role in language learning. As a result, ACTFL recommends that language educators and their students use the target language as exclusively as possible (90% plus) at all levels of instruction during instructional time and, when feasible, beyond the classroom. Thus, it is of great significance for Chinese immersion teachers to contemplate how they can increase students' use of Chinese language in classroom interactions so that students can promote Chinese language proficiency.

## Guiding Questions

After student teaching in a third grade Chinese immersion classroom, I noticed that third grade Chinese immersion students always prefer to speak English in the classroom rather than stay in the target language(in this case Mandarin Chinese). This leads me to my research question: what Chinese immersion teachers can do to encourage third grade students speak more Chinese in the classroom? I find this worthy of study because Chinese immersion students speaking too much English in the classroom is a common issue for Chinese immersion programs and many Chinese immersion teachers do not have enough effective strategies to get students to speak more Chinese in place. In addition, I hope to discover the factors that discourage students from using Chinese language in the classroom. Is it because of motivation? If motivation is not necessarily the only reason, what other factors can be? Is it because of the exhaustion of thinking in another language all day long, and then having to verbalize in another language? And Mandarin Chinese is not even remotely related to English, which adds to the difficulties for students. Also, is it because students are afraid of making mistakes and thus being made fun of by classmates? I believe only when I clearly know the reasons, can I find the solutions to the problem.

## Summary

In this chapter, I have provided background information about why the research question is important to me and rationale for doing this project. In the Chinese immersion school I once student taught at, third grade Chinese immersion students hardly spoke

Chinese in the classroom, which is a common problem for Chinese immersion program. And the majority of them have little or no exposure to Chinese language outside school, which means classroom is the only place where these students have the opportunity to practice speaking Chinese. And second language production, or output solicited from the language learner, is what most effectively drives the development of a second language. In order to help students become proficient in Chinese language, it is important for Chinese immersion teachers to know how they can increase student's use of Chinese language in the classroom. Considering that some Chinese immersion teachers might not have effective strategies in place, I hope that my project about what Chinese immersion teachers can do to encourage third grade Chinese immersion students to speak more Chinese in the classroom can provide them with some useful ideas to solve this problem.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **Literature Review**

#### **Introduction**

The aim of this research is to answer the research question: what strategies can Chinese immersion teachers utilize to encourage third grade students to speak more Chinese in the classroom? The first section of this chapter presents researches that have been conducted to examine factors discouraging students from speaking target language in the foreign language classroom. The second section demonstrates findings from researches that have been conducted about why students need to speak more target language in the foreign language classroom. The third section provides a description of Second Language Learning and Teaching Standards. The subsequent section presents characteristics of effective foreign language instruction, including teacher perceptions concerning effective foreign language teacher, student perceptions concerning effective foreign language teacher and characteristics of effective foreign language instruction guidelines. The final section looks specifically at strategies that contributes to increasing use of target language in the classroom.

## **Factors Discouraging Students from Speaking Target Language**

Generally speaking, with foreign language teachers' encouragement and efforts, foreign language students are always expected to be able to fully contribute in speaking the target language. However, the foreign language classroom may be a frustrating place when most students remain silent in class, and only a small proportion of them actually participate (Garton, 2002). Despite the students being aware of the importance of spoken Chinese, and knowing the fact that participation is encouraged, many Chinese immersion teachers still experience a great deal of quietness in the Chinese immersion classroom. In order to explore strategies that can effectively increase use of target language in the classroom, it is essential to first understand the reasons why students are reluctant to speak the target language in the classroom due to the difficulties of finding the solutions without knowing what caused the problem. This section of the chapter will present researches' findings in regard to factors discouraging foreign language students from speaking the target language in the classroom.

### **Lack of Motivation**

Motivation is a key term in language learning. And its meaning varies from person to person. Williams and Burden (1997) define motivation as a state of cognitive and emotional arousal which leads to conscious decision to act and gives rise to a period of sustained intellectual and /or physical effort in order to attain a previously set goal. In other words, motivation is a vehicle that helps us achieve our goals. First, we feel interested and set a goal and decide to take an action accordingly. Then, we try to maintain our



interest and strive to reach our goal. This process plays an important role in language learning since it makes language learning more meaningful. Slavin (1997) describes this process in a general sense: “motivation is what gets you going, keeps you going and determines where you are trying to go”. As Slavin stated, motivation provides students with a direction to follow. Wlodkowski (1999) suggests that motivation reveals the reasons why people act and think as they do. These viewpoints of motivation are supported by Brophy’s approach to motivation (1998): “Motivation is a theoretical construct used to explain the initiation, direction, intensity, and persistence of behaviour, especially goal-directed behaviour. In the classroom context, the concept of student motivation is used to explain the degree to which students invest attention and effort in various pursuits, which may or may not be the ones desired by the teacher”.

Considering the significant role motivation plays in driving students to do something, it goes without saying that Chinese immersion students are likely to be unwilling to go out of their way to take on the challenging task of speaking Chinese which is their second language if they lack motivation.

### **Lack of Confidence**

Another factor that contributes to the reluctance of Chinese immersion students to speak Chinese is the lack of confidence in using Chinese as a tool for oral communications. MacIntyre, Clément, Dörnyei, & Noels (1998) studied the impacts of self-confidence on oral performance. According to their study, the language learners’ willingness to communicate was determined partly by their self-confidence. Park & Lee (2005) also ex-

amined the relationships between language learners' anxiety, self-confidence and speaking performance. The results of their study demonstrated that self-confidence had a major influence on language learners' oral performance. They came to the conclusion that if the language learners were more confident, they would have better oral performance.

Since Chinese language is not remotely related to English language which is most Chinese immersion students' first language, it is likely that Chinese immersion students do not have confidence when they speak Chinese. Due to lack of confidence, Chinese immersion students might avoid speaking Chinese as much as possible.

### **Shyness**

Shyness is another influencing factor which could cause Chinese immersion students to be reluctant to speak Chinese. A study carried out by Abebe and Deneke (2015) revealed that students' shyness had affected their involvement in classroom discussions and students tend to talk less when they feel shy. However, shyness, according to Slavin (1997), is a behavior that could be the result of any one or a combination of the following factors: social introversion, unfamiliarity with academic discourse, lacking confidence in subject matter, and/or communication apprehension. Thus, these factors, which are likely to give rise to shyness, could affect students' willingness to communicate in target language.

### **Fear of Making Mistakes and Being Laughed At**

The issue of being afraid of speaking target language for fear of making mistakes concerns language learners. And this anxiety factor is also apparently related to certain

aspects of learners' culture, such as the desire to be right and perfect and fear of losing face (Cohen, 1998). Abebe and Deneke (2015) conducted a study to examine whether students' fear of making mistakes affect students' classroom participation. The findings of this study indicate that there is a close correlation between fear of making mistakes and students' feeling of stress, anxiety or nervousness while speaking target language. The results of the study also suggest that students are afraid of making mistakes because they think their mistakes make them feel incompetent, distort their images in front of classmates. Moreover, fear of being laughed at is one of the causes that contribute to students' unwillingness of speaking target language.

### **Lack of Topical Knowledge**

Bachman and Palmer (1996) define topical knowledge as knowledge structures in long-term memory. In other words, topical knowledge is the speaker's knowledge of relevant topical information. The information that topical knowledge provides enables language learners to use language with reference to the world in which they live. Bachman and Palmer (1996) state that topical knowledge has effects on speaking performance. This finding is consistent with that reached by Abebe and Deneke (2015) who also found that one of the reasons why students were unable or reluctant to speak target language was that they did not know what to say during the class discussions. Abebe and Deneke (2015) assert that knowing what to say is as important as knowing how to say.

### **Lack of Linguistic Aspects (vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation)**

Researches indicate that students' lack of linguistic aspects, including vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation, negatively affect their willingness to speak the target language. Abebe and Deneke (2015) argue that lack of vocabularies is a major struggle for language learners and language learners often feel nervous speaking the target language because they do not have enough vocabularies. This causes lots of troubles when it comes to talking to each other in the target language. Additionally, the study conducted by Abebe and Deneke indicates that students are reluctant to speak the target language because they don't have exact words to express their ideas. This finding is in line with Cortazzi and Jin (1996) who state that students' inadequate vocabulary is one of the reasons why students are silent listeners rather than active participants in the oral second language classroom.

In regard to linguistic difficulties, according to a study conducted by Tanveer (2007), grammar has been found to be one of the most important aspects that the second language learners find difficult when learning to speak a second language. Tanveer (2007) revealed that many students in his study don't speak the target language because they are scared that they would make noticeable grammatical errors. Tanveer (2007) also reported that the students in his study experience grammatical difficulties which can lead to the impression that students are not capable of communicating in the second language.

Additionally, pronunciation plays a vital role in causing stress for second language learners as well. Jacobson (2013) states that pronunciation is an important issue across language groups because of its immediate effect on interaction. When you feel

somebody does not understand you, you need to improve your pronunciation within a second, which is often hard and stressful. Jacobson (2013) also points out that students are afraid of being laughed at or of being criticized by others due to inaccurate pronunciation.

### **Fear of Negative Teacher Traits**

Negative lecturer traits affect students' participation in the classroom as well. Many past researchers mentioned that negative lecturer traits discourage students' participation (Tanveer, 2007). Similar to the previous studies, the study conducted by Abebe and Deneke (2015) also found that negative lecturer traits like having poor teaching skills, having poor communication skills, being impatient, lack of classroom management and organizational skills, always calling on the same students and playing favorites deter students from participating.

Another negative teacher trait that discourages language learners' participation is teacher's harshness and strictness. According to a study conducted by Abebe and Deneke (2015) many students agree with the statement " I am reluctant to participate in class because I am afraid of my language teacher' harsh comments and negative gestures"and they expressed that they get more anxious when their language teacher is very strict. Meanwhile, lots of students reveal that they feel relaxed when their language teacher responds in a friendly way.

### **Fear of Negative Teacher Feedback**

Most students welcome and long for their teachers to give them feedback on their performance. However, the authoritative, embarrassing and humiliating attitude of the teachers towards students, particularly when they make mistakes, can have severe consequences on learners' cognition and their willingness to communicate in the class (Harmer 1991).

Moreover, all speaking production should not be dealt with in the same way. Harmer (1991) asserts that the decisions that the teachers make about how to react to students' performance will depend upon the stages of the lesson, the activities, the types of mistake made and the particular student who is making that mistake. If the teachers correct whenever there is a problem, the conversational flow as well as the purpose of the speaking activity will be destroyed (Harmer, 1991). If the students are corrected all the time, they can find this very demotivating and become afraid to speak. Baker and Westrup (2003) suggest that the teachers should always correct the students' mistakes positively and with encouragement.

### **Fear of Negative Teacher Evaluation**

Littlewood(2007) asserts that fear of negative evaluation is a source of anxiety in the second language classroom. More than two thirds of students in Littlewood's (2007) study feel worried that they can't speak English well because they think their teacher will get a bad impression concerning their performance. Additionally, these students are reluctant to speak the target language because they believe that the teacher evaluates them

negatively if they make mistakes and this is more likely to influence their end-of-course results. This seems to indicate, as found by Littlewood (2007), that language anxiety is negatively correlated with language course grades. And these findings suggest that assessment type and teachers' attitude towards assessment can significantly contribute to language learners' anxiety.

### **Lack of Practice Due to Class Time and/or Class Size**

Lack of practice is another cause of students' reluctance to speak the target language in the classroom. One of the reasons of students' lack of practice is inadequate class time. According to the study conducted by Abebe and Deneke (2015), more than three fourths of second language learners report the allotted time for practicing the target language in class is not enough. Hence, they didn't have much practice of oral language in class due to the limited class time. What is worse, they do not have many chances to speak the target language in their daily life. Moreover, some students feel anxiety because their teacher doesn't give them enough time to process the questions that he/she asked. Because it is their second language, students need more time to think, to put their thoughts into words, to make sentences before they can speak in class. However, they were not given enough time to respond.

The class size is another reason contributing to students' lack of practice. Littlewood (2007) states that the big class size discourages students from expressing views as it is extremely threatening for children to face a large number of people by themselves while speaking a foreign language which they may expose their weaknesses by making

mistakes very easily. Students are therefore unwilling to speak the target language in class due to big class size.

According to what has been discussed above, students' unwillingness to speak the target language are caused by various factors coming from both students themselves such as shyness and lack of confidence and external environment such as negative teacher traits and large class size. These factors discouraging students from speaking the target language should all be taken into consideration when teachers contemplate strategies to increase use of target language in the classroom. But one might wonder why students need to speak more target language in the classroom. The subsequent section looks into reasons for speaking more target language in the classroom.

### **Reasons for Speaking More Target Language**

Before embarking on the journey to find effective strategies, we need to be convinced that it is necessary to increase students' target language use in the classroom. This section demonstrates reasons found by researchers for speaking more target language in the classroom. Nowadays, more and more foreign language teachers attach great significance on developing students' communicative abilities. The Proficiency Guidelines developed by American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL, 1985) and ACTFL's development of National Standards (1994) have promoted an emphasis on oral proficiency. Current textbooks and methodologies claim that oral proficiency is one of their major goals in foreign language study. This goal aligns with surveys of foreign languages students which consistently find that the main reason why students enroll in a for-



foreign language course is to learn to communicate in that language (Bell, 2005). Furthermore, Krashen (1985) states “We teach language best when we use it for what it was designed for: communication.”

Indeed, oral proficiency seems to be commonly accepted as a major goal of most foreign language programs throughout the United States. When it comes to Chinese immersion program, according to Asia Society (2012), regardless of the program model chosen, all Chinese immersion students are expected to demonstrate high proficiency in Chinese, at or above level expectations in English language and literacy as well as subject-matter achievement.

There are lots of theories and researches indicate that the more foreign language input language learners are exposed to, the greater will be their proficiency. Krashen (1985) argue that exposing learners to extensive periods of comprehensible target language input will ensure mastery of the target language.

However, studies have shown that language learners can often achieve high levels of comprehension in the second language without ever achieving a moderate level of production (Swain, 1995).

Merrill Swain’s Output Hypothesis argues that without production (output) expectations that correspond to the input that the language learner receives, the student’s conversational abilities in the second language will lag far behind their comprehension abilities. Second language production, or output solicited from the language learner, is what most effectively drives the development of a second language (Swain 1995). Swain (1995) believes that producing the target language is an important aspect of the learning

process and learners must be provided opportunities to produce written and spoken output related to the input.

Similar to Swain, Met and Rhodes (1990) state that opportunities to communicate in the target language are important to develop oral proficiency. Met and Rhodes (1990) note that “both research and experiential data suggest that the amount of time spent on language learning and the intensity of the experience have significant effects on the acquisition of significant levels of foreign language proficiency”. Intensity refers to time on task and use of the target language for communication. Thus, it is hypothesized that the more students hear the target language in meaning-filled contexts and the more they use it in realistic interactions, the greater will be their linguistic growth.

Shekan (1998) summarized the following aspects of output that facilitate foreign language acquisition:

- Output can elicit feedback from others, with which the learners can improve their second language skills;
- Output forces syntactic processing, which means that the learner must pay attention to the grammar, and can test out hypotheses with it;
- Producing a fair amount of output facilitates applying the existing knowledge of the language in a more automatized manner;
- Producing output helps the learner to develop discourse skills;
- Producing a fair amount of output gives learners the opportunity to move away from standard conversations and develop their own personal voice

into a conversation.

As was mentioned in Shekan's summarization, output can elicit feedback from others, which language learners can use to improve their output in the future. As actual improvement may need several repetitions of comparable utterances and responses that contain feedback, it is important that language learners regularly find themselves in situations where they can or need to produce output on which feedback is given. Situations as such can be excellently created in a foreign language classroom by using the target language for communication. Shaken (1998) also emphasizes that students' oral participation can help students fill the gap between what they want to say and whether they are able to say it. Furthermore, it is a common belief that participation in verbal interaction offers language learners the opportunity to follow up on new words and structures to which they have been exposed during language lessons and to practice them in context.

Additionally, Wong-Fillmore (1985) asserted that target language use will result in increased motivation as students realize the immediate usefulness of target language. Such support for exclusive target-language use has led language professionals, publishers and teachers to accept target language use as best practice in second and foreign language learning and teaching. Moreover, Dickson (1996) states that using the target language promotes natural acquisition and that use of the mother tongue undermines this process by diverting attention from the object of pupils' learning. And Dickson (1996) suggest to use target language as much as possible in the classroom if teachers want students to

progress rapidly. Otherwise, the students will not be able to get used to the language and interact to each other.

It can be concluded that students' target language use is essentially important in the second language classrooms. This claim also complies with the conceptualization of the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach of teaching English, which sees language being taught as a system for expressing meaning (Nunan, 1999). It is believed that when students engage in the classrooms with their teachers or among peers, they are compelled to be involved in the 'negotiation of meaning', that is to express and clarify their intentions, thoughts and opinions (Lightbown & Spada, 2006). In turn, the students 'communicative competence' or what they need to know to communicate, can be developed in the classrooms (Lightbown & Spada, 2006). Therefore, students' oral contribution is of great importance for language acquisition.

Despite all these benefits of increasing the use of target language in the classroom mentioned above, there is a lack of spoken Chinese practice due to class time and class size for Chinese immersion students (Jacobson, 2013). Moreover, according to Asia Society (2012), limited exposure to Chinese language outside the classroom is a serious obstacle in the development of their communicative competence, which is troubling for Chinese language learners when they are required to speak.

There are two types of Chinese immersion programs in the United States—one-way Chinese immersion program and two-way Chinese immersion program. One-way Chinese immersion program focuses on populations of students who have little or no exposure to Chinese language when they enter the program. Two-way Chinese immersion

program involves equal numbers of English-dominant and Chinese-dominant students and is more likely to be adopted in communities which include large numbers of Chinese-speaking students. The majority of Chinese immersion programs in the United States are one-way because few communities have enough Chinese speakers to make up half the students.

According to a study conducted by Jacobson (2013), when asked whether they practice Chinese outside the classroom, the majority of the Chinese immersion students (81.6%) respond that they don't have the opportunity to speak Chinese outside the classroom. Moreover, since most parents of Chinese immersion students do not speak Chinese, they cannot help their children with their Chinese. Thus, if Chinese immersion students do not make full use of the opportunities to speak Chinese in the classroom, little chances are left for them to practice speaking Chinese. In other words, lack of opportunity for practicing Chinese language outside the classroom is another reason that Chinese immersion students need to speak more Chinese in the classroom.

From what has been described above, it can be concluded that it is necessary that Chinese immersion students speak more Chinese in the classroom. But is requiring students to speak more Chinese in the classroom relevant to foreign language teaching standards? What are the foreign language requirements on the national and state level in the United States? To answer these questions, the following section describes second language learning and teaching standards.

## Second Language Learning and Teaching Standards

In order to determine if requiring students to speak more Chinese in the classroom aligns with teaching standards, this section presents second language learning and teaching standards. Despite the difficulty in generalizing which specific teacher behaviors benefit students' second language learning, a movement has taken place in the second language teaching profession to create standards which second language teachers and second language learners may utilize to pursue effective second language teaching and learning in the classroom. The *Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21st Century* was published in 1999 under a collaborative effort to draft standards for foreign language learning. The professional organizations who collaborated in the drafting of these standards include the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) and eight language-specific organizations representing French, German, Spanish and Portuguese, Russian, Classics, Chinese, Japanese, and Italian.

The *Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21st Century* (1999) consist of five general goal areas which shape their guidelines of what learners should know and be able to do. These goals are communication, cultures, connections, comparisons, and communities. Each category is made up of two to three standards with the ultimate goal for students being 'Knowing how, when, and why to say what to whom.' The standards reflect a desire and need to take the language outside of the classroom by not only addressing linguistic and pedagogical issues, but also cultural, societal and interdisciplinary concerns. Each of the five C's with the corresponding set of standards is presented through Appendix A.

While the standards are learner-centered and describe what learners should be able to do and accomplish inside and outside of the classroom, they have direct implications regarding teaching and how to best achieve the goals set out by the standards.

ACTFL has also established a set of standards specifically for foreign language teachers in conjunction with the National Council on the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE). These six standards are similar to the ACTFL standards for learners and reflect the knowledge and skills an effective teacher should obtain. The full-length version of the standards includes each content standard, two to three supporting standards, and supporting explanations and rubrics for each supporting standard. These standards specifically reflect the skills set and knowledge base that foreign language teachers should aim for—according to ACTFL and NCATE. An abbreviated version of the standards is presented through Appendix B.

Based on the above description, we can draw the conclusion, requiring students to speak more Chinese in the classroom aligns with ACTFL and NCATE standards. Additionally, there are lots of valid reasons that explain why students need to speak more Chinese in the classroom. Thus, it is essential that Chinese immersion students speak more Chinese in the classroom. And strategies to increase students' use of Chinese language in the classroom need to be created.

### **Characteristics of Effective Foreign Language Teacher**

When it comes to designing strategies to increase students' use of Chinese language in the classroom, basis that supports strategies need to be provided. This section

presents characteristics of effective foreign language instruction based on teacher perceptions, student perceptions and effective foreign language instruction guidelines to provide foundations to create the strategies.

### **Teacher Perceptions Concerning Effective Foreign Language Teacher**

While there is little agreement regarding which specific behaviors constitute effective teaching, researchers agree at least on some dimensions that describe effective teaching in general, regardless of subject matter. These include enthusiasm, expressiveness, clarity of explanation, and rapport/interaction (Bell, 2005). Researchers also agree that teaching is multidimensional, and that even though these dimensions may vary according to setting and discipline, they are still consistent to some degree across disciplines. Therefore, although foreign language teaching is a complicated, multidimensional process, some teaching behaviors and attitudes of teachers are universally considered characteristics of effective teachers.

A questionnaire research conducted by Bell(2005) includes an extensive profile of teachers' beliefs concerning both abstract principles of foreign language pedagogy and second language acquisition theory. Bell (2005) collected data by means of a questionnaire to which 457 postsecondary foreign language teachers of French, German, and Spanish who are members of ACTFL responded. After an extensive literature review to determine issues in second and foreign language learning, Bell personally developed an 80 item questionnaire that covered the following categories relevant to second language acquisition and foreign language teaching: 1) learning objectives related to the Standards



for Foreign Language Learning (National Standards, 1999) , i.e., Communication, Cultures, Connections, Comparisons, Communities; 2) corrective feedback; 3) theories and teacher behaviors related to communicative approaches; 4) focus on form in classroom second language acquisition; 5) individual learner differences in FL learning; 6) strategies for foreign language learning; 7) theories about second language acquisition; 8) teacher qualifications; 9) assessment in foreign language teaching.

The 457 foreign language teachers who responded to Bell's questionnaire agreed with the majority of items related to the Standards for Foreign Language Learning (National Standards, 1999), theories related to communicative approaches to foreign language teaching which is based on the idea that learning language successfully comes through having to communicate real meaning and encourages students to communicate more frequently and more meaningfully, small group work, negotiation of meaning, strategies for foreign language learning, and teacher qualifications. However, Bell (2005) states that "there is still major uncertainty in the profession as to the place and role of error correction in foreign language teaching and learning, how and when focus on grammatical form should be implemented, and the effects of learning differences among individual learners".

Brosh (1996) also collected data on the characteristics of an effective language teacher from foreign language teachers. Two hundred foreign language teachers in Israel were randomly selected to complete the survey. Unlike Bell's (2005) instrument which used Likert-type questions, Brosh (1996) provided teachers with a list of 20 characteristics and asked them to choose the three most important characteristics and to rank order

those three. The first three items are included to provide a sense of the instrument: 1.) Prepares and organizes the lesson, 2.) Acquainted with the curriculum, 3.) Helps students after class time (p. 136). Of the 20 total items, only five were specific to language learning.

The results of Brosh's (1996) questionnaire demonstrated that the item that participants chose as most important was the teacher's command of the target language. The second most crucial factor for teachers was the instructor's ability to transmit knowledge comprehensibly while motivating students to do their best. The participants ranked the ability to provide students with successful experiences as the third most important characteristic.

### **Student Perceptions Concerning Effective Foreign Language Teacher**

The research on the effectiveness of language teachers has shown that students and teachers do not always agree about what makes for effective teaching (Brosh, 1996).

Brosh (1996) relate the results of a questionnaire administered to high school foreign language students and teachers in Israel, and Park and Lee (2005) report on the results of a questionnaire administered to Korean high school English as a foreign language (EFL) students and their teachers. Even though both studies emphasised comparisons between the views of teachers and students, they also include useful data which focuses on student views in particular. Knowledge and proficiency in the target language was selected as the most important factor by high school foreign language students in Korea (Park & Lee, 2005) and Israel (Brosh, 1996). The degree of importance ascribed to the fairness

and organization and preparation attributes varied between studies. Factors found to contribute to different views among specific student populations have included students' learning style, target language competence, and educational experience (Park & Lee, 2005).

Barnes and Locks (2010) conducted a study that uses a questionnaire instrument to measure the importance that students from a Korean university place on a wide range of effective foreign language teacher attributes. Respondents to the study placed high importance on rapport attributes such as friendliness, care, and patience; and delivery attributes which included the provision of clear explanations, error correction, and a participatory mode of instruction. Impartiality, target language knowledge, and good preparation were attributes also rated highly.

### **Characteristics of Effective Foreign Language Instruction Guidelines**

The National Association of District Supervisions of the United States recognizes the importance of the target language as the medium of instruction. In its publication, "Characteristics of Effective Foreign Language Instruction Guidelines" (1992), the Association has listed principles as the characteristics of effective foreign language instruction. The list of principles is presented through Appendix C.

The National association's viewpoint on the significance of use of target language in the classroom aligns with ACTFL's recommendation. ACTFL recommends that language educators and their students use the target language as exclusively as possible (90% plus) at all levels of instruction during instructional time and, when feasible, be-

yond the classroom. In classrooms that feature maximum target-language use, instructors use a variety of strategies to facilitate comprehension and support meaning making. For example, they:

- provide comprehensible input that is directed toward communicative goals;
- make meaning clear through body language, gestures, and visual support;
- conduct comprehension checks to ensure understanding;
- negotiate meaning with students and encourage negotiation among students;
- elicit talk that increases in fluency, accuracy, and complexity over time;
- encourage self-expression and spontaneous use of language;
- teach students strategies for requesting clarification and assistance when faced with comprehension difficulties; and offer feedback to assist and improve students' ability to interact orally in the target language.

Both the national association and ACTFL indicate that effective language instruction must provide significant levels of meaningful communication and interactive feedback in the target language in order for students to develop language and cultural proficiency. Thus, effective foreign language teachers need to be able to get students speak more target language in the classroom.

This section describe characters of effective foreign language teachers from teacher's perspective, student's perspective and Effective Foreign Language Instruction Guidelines. I believe these characters of effective foreign language teachers are also re-

quired to encourage Chinese immersion students to speak more Chinese language in the classroom. The subsequent section presents effective strategies that can increase students' target language use in the classroom.

### **Strategies to Increase Use of Target Language in the Classroom**

This section of Chapter 2 looks specifically at strategies to increase use of target language in the classroom. There are articles that present strategies and activities that have been used successfully by foreign language teachers to increase target language use. Knopp(1994) states that the “language ladder” is one effective strategy for systematically building students' use of the target language in the classroom. A “language ladder” consists of a set of commonly used classroom expressions focused on a common classroom function — that is, a communicative interaction typically used in class, such as “expressing confusion”.

Each day the teacher introduces one expression related to that function which students are expected to learn and use in classroom activities. The expression could be written on a piece of construction paper with the English meaning on the back. The teacher presents the target language expression to the students, repeating it in the target language and also showing its English meaning two or three times while saying it. Adding a gesture and emotive quality whenever appropriate would further reinforce the meaning and would keep the students away from needing the English equivalent. After teaching the expression, the teacher numbers it and posts it under a visual representing the function. The different expressions written on construction paper of various colors under the func-

tion creates the image of the rungs of a ladder — hence the name, “language ladder”, used for this strategy. Once the expressions are posted, students are responsible for understanding and using them in class. Students could also copy them onto a separate page in their notebooks to reinforce them further.

Additionally, Knopp(1994) demonstrates that another way of helping students understand and use the target language is to put an outline of the lesson plan on the board. The outline would be written in the target language and can contain examples to be used in the activities.

ACTFL (2012) presents the following strategies to get students stay in the target language:

- Start the year with an explanation of why staying in the target language is so important and follow up with motivational chats throughout the year. Praise students—individually and collectively —when they make the effort.
- When your students speak to you or ask you something in English, give a quizzical look and say you don’t understand.
- Plan lessons so as to eliminate idle time, which can lead students to chat in English.
- Use activities such as inside–outside circles that allow students to practice common expressions and structures in rapid sequence. This also gives the teacher a chance to listen for places where communication is breaking down.

- Change seating often so students have a chance to pair up with different classmates.
- Encourage students to come up with silly stories as part of a survey or Teaching Proficiency through Reading and Storytelling (TPRS) activities.
- Design info gap activities in a way that students must use the language to obtain the information they're missing. Let students know they could be asked at any moment to report their information to the class.
- Try a reward system in which students can earn points for maintaining the target language. And Play games where use of the first language loses points for the team.
- Post high-frequency phrases around the classroom so students can refer to them if they get stuck.

Additionally, ACTFL(2012) indicates that “creating a classroom environment that reinforces expectations of target language use and maintaining a good relationship with students are also vital ingredients”. For example, teachers can lay a target language line at the threshold of their classroom, or hang a sign with “English” on one side and the target language on the other. That sets expectations for language use at any given moment in the classroom.

Given Chinese immersion teachers do not have enough effective tools to encourage students to speak more Chinese in the classroom, these strategies can be extremely helpful. Whatever the strategies, using Chinese needs to be a conscious decision consid-

ered by both the teacher and the students. Once the teacher helps Chinese immersion students get used to using Chinese, it will be easy for students to use more.

### **Summary**

This chapter reviewed the literature on factors discouraging students from speaking target language in the foreign language classroom and characteristics of effective foreign language instruction. The reasons why students need to speak more target language in the foreign language classroom and second language learning and teaching standards were also explained. Strategies and activities to increase use of target language in the classroom were described. This literature review provides support for a project that looks specifically at strategies to get Chinese immersion students to speak more Chinese in the classroom.

The next chapter will provide a detailed explanation of the project, including the audience for the project, the context of the project, the rationale behind choosing Powerpoint presentation as my culminating project, and a timeline for project completion.



## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **Project Description**

#### **Introduction**

In the literature review chapter, I highlighted the research on factors discouraging students from speaking target language, reasons for speaking more target language in the classroom and characteristics of effective foreign language teacher, in addition to a variety of strategies to increase use of target language in the classroom. The goal is to answer the research question: what strategies can Chinese immersion teachers utilize to encourage third grade students to speak more Chinese in the classroom?

The purpose of chapter three is to provide a detailed description of my project. The main body of this chapter consists of five topics: the research paradigm, project description, the rationale, Participants and setting, and the timeline. The goal of the section of project description is to give reader a clear picture concerning what the project looks like. In order to demonstrate the reasons why this project is important and necessary, the section of the rationale is provided. The rationale for choosing powerpoint presentation as my culminating project is also included in this section. The section of participants and setting answers who the intended audience of my project is, when and where the project will take place. The last section of this chapter gives readers a clear explanation of the timeline of this project.

## **The Research Paradigm**

To stand in front of a group of educators and demonstrate teaching strategies is not an assignment to be taken lightly. Teachers can be a very tough crowd. For example, credibility, relevance, and respect are essential postures one must assume before delivering a training session for staff. But credibility and relevance are subsets of the real issue that supports the professional development of teachers. The real issue lies in the vast differences between child learners and adult learners. Therefore, in this study, I designed my project based on Malcolm Knowles' theory of andragogy which explains how adults learn differently from children to ensure my delivery method follows the very principles of how adults learn.

The theory of Knowles(1980) was based on a few basic assumptions about adult learners: that adults are independent learners, that adults carry with them a lifetime of experiences, that adults must see an immediate application of the learning, and that adults are more driven by an internal as opposed to an external need to learn. From these assumptions, Knowles(1980) generalized four principles that should be considered when developing a training or learning experience for adults: that adults must be involved in the planning of their learning, that experience provides the basis for the learning activity, the professional development must have immediate relevance and impact on teachers' lives, that adult learning is problem-centered.

There are a variety of ways that these principles can guide this project. Considering the vast and divergent levels of experience present in the teaching staff, the experience capital present in the audience must be taken into consideration when building an

effective professional development plan. Thus, diverse strategies were included in the presentation to appeal to both Veterans and newbies, teachers with different philosophies. Also, participants were encouraged to share strategies implemented successfully in their own classrooms after I finished introducing the last strategy presented in the Powerpoint. Since a professional development session at the end of a long day of teaching about some abstract theory or philosophical framework does not go over well, I utilized specific experiences to demonstrate how the information is relevant to the participants and detailed examples to show how a strategy can be implemented in the classroom. At the end of the presentation, participants were given time to analyze, think, reflect, and assimilate the new knowledge they receive at this presentation by completing an exit questionnaire.

### **Project Description**

My culminating project is PowerPoint presentation that demonstrates strategies that have been used successfully by foreign language teachers to increase target language use in the classroom. This powerpoint presentation lasted 40 minutes and was made three times for teacher professional training on professional development days of a Chinese immersion charter school.

This Powerpoint presentation focused on providing Chinese immersion teachers with examples of strategies to increase students' use of Chinese language in the classroom. The advantages of each strategy and what teachers should be mindful of when they use a certain strategy were also included in the Powerpoint presentation.

When it came to the construction of the slideshow, I avoided too small a font to make sure that text can be clearly readable from the back of the room. And I avoided too much text by adhering to the 6x6 rule (no more than six words per line, and no more than six lines per slide). Additionally, given that audiences almost instantly read every slide as soon as it is displayed, if I have the next four points I plan to make up there, they would be three steps ahead of me, waiting for me to catch up rather than listening with interest to the point I am making. Thus, when I planned my presentation, I ensured that only one new point was displayed at any given moment and what should be on the screen was the thing I was talking about. Bullet points were revealed one at a time as I reached them. Charts were put on the next slide to be referenced when I got to the data the chart displays. My job as a presenter was to control the flow of information so that my audience and I stayed in sync. Furthermore, because light texts on dark backgrounds strain the eyes, I minimized this contrast and opted instead for dark text on light backgrounds. Combinations were also avoided, in case of partial color blindness in the audience, include red-green, or blue-yellow. Graphics and pictures were used to illustrate and enhance the message, not just for prettiness. Transitions and animations were inserted sparingly and consistently to avoid distractions.

Before delivering the presentation, I rehearsed my PowerPoint presentation many times. I did not let PowerPoint get in the way of my oral presentation, and made sure I knew how it works, what sequence the slides are in, how to get through it using someone else's computer, etc. I began my Powerpoint presentation with a surprising survey result regarding Chinese immersion students attitudes towards speaking Chinese in the class-

room and an intriguing research finding about the connection between students' target language use and their oral proficiency because the survey and research finding can serve as a hook that would get the audience to sit up and take notice. When I was delivering the Powerpoint presentation, I avoided just reading the slides. For example, when I encountered slides contain lengthy text, I lectured around the material rather than reading it directly. When I wanted the audience to focus attention on me and my words, I temporarily darkened the screen by clicking the "B" button on the keyboard. In order to actively interact with audiences, I had audiences brainstorm other examples of a strategy and included opportunities for questions and comments when I completed presenting a certain strategy.

At the end of every Powerpoint presentation I facilitated, I asked participants to complete professional development exit questionnaires before they leave. The exit questionnaires are utilized for assessment of my presentation and include five simple questions: What did you learn? What worked for you? What didn't work for you? What questions or concerns do you have? Is there anything else you want me to know about your experience today? In order to refine my presentation delivery, I gathered and reflected on these exit questionnaires every time I finished a presentation.

### **The Rationale**

Given Chinese immersion students speaking English in the classroom is a common problem for Chinese immersion school/program, Chinese immersion teachers are in desperate need of effective strategies to increase Chinese immersion students' use of Chi-

nese language in the classroom. This project is important because it provides strategies and activities that have been used successfully by foreign language teachers to increase target language use in the classroom. Since PowerPoint presentation is a common method to share research results and information, has lots of advantages such as providing highlights and improving audience focus by allowing the listeners to have a visual of the subjects the speaker is talking about and giving the speaker a reference point for the subjects that make up the majority of the presentation, and is widely used in teacher training session for professional development days, I decided to choose it as my culminating project.

Due to the scarcity of existing research about Chinese immersion education, the researches included in the Powerpoint presentation consists of research about Chinese/Mandarin education and additional resources about other language immersion education or regular English education. Although some strategies demonstrated in the powerpoint presentation are not designed specifically for Chinese immersion classroom, these strategies can still be utilized by Chinese immersion teachers considering that these strategies are not created for a specific foreign language education and are applicable for all foreign language education.

### **Participants and Setting**

The setting for the Powerpoint presentation on strategies Chinese immersion teachers can utilize to encourage students to speak more Chinese in the classroom is the school library in a Chinese Immersion charter public school located in a residential area

of a midwestern city which is an inner city and low- to moderate-income neighborhood. This Powerpoint presentation was made on professional development days of this school.

This Chinese Immersion charter public school serves 764 students in grades K-8. It has four Chinese immersion classrooms at each grade level, K-5 and two Chinese immersion classrooms at each grade level, 6-8. The student: teacher ratio of 18:1 is higher than the State average. 31% of students are males and 69% of students are females. 10% of students receive free and/or reduced price meals. Minority enrollment is 100% of the student body (majority American Indian and Asian), which is more than the state average. 45.7% of the students are white, and 41.3% are Asian, with 7.6% two or more races. The student body has been growing in its diversity each year. For the 2016/17 academic year, students reside in 97 unique zip codes (40+ cities/towns) within the metropolitan area. This school is a true melting pot of ethnicities. In addition, students are from different socio-economic background.

Because this school is a public charter school, it is tuition-free for all students. Most of this school's operating expenses are paid for with the federal and state funding that the school receives based on the number of students who attend this school. Some expenses are paid for through grants that the school has been awarded and through fundraising. Charter schools are independent public schools. They are part of the state's public school system, but operate independently of the traditional school district in which they are physically located. Therefore, this charter school is its own independent public school district,

This school utilizes one way Chinese immersion program which focuses on teaching English speakers Mandarin Chinese since 90 percent of the student populations in this school have little or no exposure to Chinese language when they enter the program. Students may apply for enrollment in any grade without any prior Chinese language experience. And this school adopts an early total immersion program, which means that all core subject matter is taught in Mandarin Chinese for the full day in grades K-2. Students learn to read and write in Mandarin first. English language arts are introduced for the equivalent of one hour per day beginning in grade 3, and there is an even distribution of English and Mandarin by grades 5-6. Special curriculum areas (art, music, physical education) are taught in English, but they infuse Chinese language and culture into those courses whenever possible. The school's curriculum covers all State Standards and the Core Knowledge Sequence, building both subject area knowledge and Mandarin fluency from year to year and leading to bi-literacy in Mandarin Chinese and English for all students.

The Powerpoint presentation was designed for Chinese immersion teachers of this school. There are 26 Chinese immersion teachers in this K-8 building, 4 of which are third grade Chinese immersion teachers. All of the Chinese Immersion teachers at this school are native speakers, who were born and raised in China.

### **Summary**

This chapter gave an overview of the Powerpoint presentation's participants and setting. The project was described in sufficient details that the reader has a detailed pic-



ture of the project in their mind. This chapter also presented the research paradigm, rationale for the significance of the project and timeline for project completion.

The following chapter is the final chapter, which focuses on my learnings through the capstone process as a researcher, writer and learner. This final chapter also addresses the possible implications and some limitations of my project. Finally, Chapter 4 outlines some future or related research projects for myself and some recommendations I would have based on my findings.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **Conclusions**

### **Introduction**

This chapter is the last chapter of this capstone. This capstone aims to answer the research question: what strategies can Chinese immersion teachers utilize to encourage third grade students to speak more Chinese in the classroom? This chapter first elaborates my major learnings through the capstone process as a researcher, writer and learner. Then it revisits some of the literature review that proved to be most important for my capstone. Last, it lists possible implications of my project, some limitations this capstone had, some possible further research in the future and some ideas of communicating my study's results.

### **Major Learnings**

As it was stated in chapter one, in the face of the problem that Chinese immersion students hardly speak Chinese in the classroom, I, as a Chinese immersion teacher, constantly strive to seek effective strategies Chinese immersion teachers can utilize to encourage third grade students to speak more Chinese in the classroom. This capstone project provides me with the opportunity to explore a problem of particular personal and professional interest and to address that problem through focused study and applied research. Not only did I gain solutions to the problem that I have been puzzling over for a

long time through the completion of this capstone project, I acquired numerous invaluable learnings as a researcher, writer and learner.

As a researcher, this capstone project encouraged me to think critically and creatively about academic, professional, or social issues and to further develop my analytical and ethical decision making skills necessary to address and help solve these issues. Additionally, my research skills got refined when I systematically worked to discover the answer to our question through goal-setting, purposeful reading, observations, data collection and reflection.

Furthermore, I have learned that systematic research about my students and teaching—through observation, documentation, and reflection—can help me to make informed decisions that support my students' development. It can help me to look at what I do in a fresh way. A systematic study also provides a process for me to become aware of any assumptions and biases I carry with me that may affect how I view and resolve my questions.

This learning was unexpected because I have never thought about implementing systematic research in the classroom to inform and improve my teaching. But in retrospect, I could think of several instances where I observed, documented, and reflected on my students' learning and my teaching. For example, I once had several third graders who struggled to fluently read out loud in guided reading groups and during reading assessments, so I implemented an easy and fun 10 minute intervention Partner Reading. My students are paired up with a stronger reader first reading a text, and then the less confident reader going back and reading the same text with the support of the first reader. It is

simple, the kids enjoy doing it every day, and I enjoy having much more fluent readers who now look forward to reading out loud. Thus, I could definitely see myself using more this type of research to inform and improve your teaching in the future.

As a writer, this capstone project provided me with the opportunity to refine my written skills. I have acquired some writing tips while working on this project. First, I found that I need to take the time to find quality sources. The allure of a quick Google search can be irresistible when in a time crunch, but a project of this magnitude requires credible sources to back it up. Also I found that the sources provided at the end of books or articles can sometimes be a wealth of opportunity. Those lists have directed me to original studies, articles and books written by other experts in the field that I might not have discovered on my own.

Second, it is of great importance to keep it simple and focused. I sometimes suffer from needlessly over-complicating things for myself and my readers, such as examples include too broad a topic, too complex of sentences and too fancy of words. But I found that narrowing the focus of my topics so that the task is manageable can be really helpful since it is much easier to do research on a narrowly selected subject than a broad idea. Third, Involving other eyes in the editing process is necessary. It is difficult for me to catch my own spelling and grammar mistakes, or to know when something I wrote does not make sense. Enlisting the help of friends and colleagues to ensure my writing is clear and concise is extremely useful. Last but not least, writing a quick schedule helped me keep track of time and avoid procrastination. For example, I listed the days I have left and

the time during the day I would be able to work. I also assigned myself time to go to school library, take notes, write an outline, write a first draft, and revise.

As a learner, I have learned to integrate and synthesize prior knowledge and learning from multiple and diverse topic areas. Although I have good disciplinary knowledge, I still found it hard to integrate my learning for use in the real world. And my learning from this program is all too often fragmented into discrete topics. Even when project-based learning was used in individual courses, I never have had the opportunity to incorporate relevant skills from other courses in those projects. This capstone project helped me to go beyond the curricular fragmentation in order to connect their learning and enabled me to apply synthesized knowledge and skills to an initially unstructured authentic problem.

### **Revisiting the Literature Review**

My culminating project is PowerPoint presentation that focused on providing Chinese immersion teachers with examples of strategies to increase students' use of Chinese language in the classroom. The insights and ideas included in the PowerPoint presentation came from those literatures reviewed in chapter two. The part which elaborated on strategies to increase use of target language in the classroom of my literature review proved to be most important for my capstone since it offered examples of strategies that have been used successfully by foreign language teachers to increase students' target language use in the classroom and I included these strategies into my Powerpoint presentation.

For example, Knopp(1994) states that the “language ladder” is one effective strategy for systematically building students’ use of the target language in the classroom.

Knopp(1994) also demonstrates that another way of helping students understand and use the target language is to put an outline of the lesson plan written in target language on the board. Thus, in my PowerPoint presentation, I gave participants specific examples regarding how to create and implement the language ladder and showed participants how teachers can systematically introduce more classroom language through language ladders and through writing the day’s lesson plan on the board in the target language.

Furthermore, Knopp(1994) introduced other effective strategies that contribute to increasing students’ target language use in the classroom, including informal pair interactions, creating going series, providing authentic input in classroom interactions, and keeping track of students’ participation. Accordingly, in my PowerPoint presentation, I demonstrated to my participants that they could increase students’ practice of the target language by organizing informal pairs and more student-to-student interactions, use of English can be reduced and use of the target language can be increased by presenting cultural information in the target language through Gouin series. Also I presented to the participants that instructors can monitor their “teacher talk” and make an effort to provide authentic and appropriate input in carrying out common functions and interactions in class. Moreover, I informed the participants that they can encourage students to use more target language by recognizing and rewarding their efforts to participate in class in the target language.

Additionally, ACTFL(2012) indicates that “creating a classroom environment that reinforces expectations of target language use and maintaining a good relationship with students are also vital ingredients”. Therefore, in my PowerPoint presentation, I provided participants with the example that they can lay a target language line at the threshold of their classroom, or hang a sign with “English” on one side and the target language on the other which can set expectations for language use at any given moment in the classroom.

### **Limitations**

In the end, there were a few limitations to this study. First of all, the strategies to increase students’ Chinese language use in the classroom I collected are all foreign language teachers’ ideas. I did not include students’ idea in regard to what strategies help them to speak more Chinese language in the classroom. However, considering the research on the effectiveness of language teachers has shown that students and teachers do not always agree about what makes for effective teaching (Brosh,1996), it is possible that Chinese immersion students have different perceptions regarding effective strategies to increase students’ Chinese language use in the classroom from their Chinese immersion teachers. If it is, it means that some of the strategies I introduced in my PowerPoint presentation might not work in some Chinese immersion classrooms.

Also, students are so diverse that strategies which work for some students might not work for others. Therefore, I think that Chinese immersion teachers need to take their own students characteristics into consideration and choose the strategies that are more likely to work in their own classrooms.

Another limitation was that some strategies introduced in my PowerPoint presentation were borrowed from Spanish immersion program and French immersion program but have never been tried out in Chinese immersion classroom setting. But Chinese language is remotely related to English, Spanish and French language. For example, Chinese does not have an alphabet but uses a logographic system for its written language. In logographic systems symbols represent the words themselves - words are not made up of various letters as in alphabetic systems. Plus, stress and intonation patterns are different. Unlike English, Chinese is a tone language. This means that it uses the pitch (highness or lowness) of a phoneme sound to distinguish word meaning. In English, changes in pitch are used to emphasize or express emotion, not to give a different word meaning to the sound.

Considering Chinese language is vastly different from alphabetic system language such as Spanish and French, strategies proved to be effective in Spanish and French immersion program might fail to work in Chinese immersion programs. Additionally, increasing target language use during classroom interactions does not happen overnight. As a result, I believe Chinese immersion teachers need to first try out strategies introduced in my Powerpoint presentation and then implement in a progressive manner over a period of time.

### **Implications**

As Chinese immersion teachers, there are some key aspects we must attend to as a result of this study. First of all, in order to increase students' use of Chinese in the classroom, Chinese immersion teachers should be committed to using only Chinese for class-



room instruction and interactions and expect Chinese immersion students, especially third grade and above, to hear, understand and use Chinese exclusively at all times in school from the first day of instruction. And we need to convey our belief that speaking only Chinese in the classroom contributes to students' Chinese language proficiency. For example, we can start the year with an explanation of why staying in the target language is so important and follow up with motivational chats throughout the year. We need to praise students—individually and collectively—when they make the effort. When your students speak to you or ask you something in English, give a quizzical look and say you don't understand. Moreover, Chinese immersion teachers can work with administrators to make a policy which requires Chinese immersion students, especially third grade and above, to speak only Chinese in the classroom.

In addition, we need to work on developing methods to increase our students comfort levels in the classroom. Making sure that students know what mistakes are okay and expected is one way to do that. We also must encourage students to be less inhibited when using the language since that is one of the best ways to learn it. Having days in which student speech is not corrected would be one manner of lowering inhibitions. Students should feel comfortable on those days to use the language to communicate and not worry about accuracy.

Last but not least, we should revisit our lesson plans to ensure that we integrate a variety of teaching methods such as incorporating movements, art, visual presentations, music, crafts, enjoyable activities and cooperative inquiry based learning project that take advantage of students' different learning styles such as visual, kinesthetic or auditory and

tailor our lesson plans to meet their diverse interests as well as demonstrating direct connections between school and every day life, in order to appeal to all of our students which may improve their attitudes as well as serving as a motivator.

### **Suggestions for Future Studies**

There are many other opportunities for future studies in regard to effective strategies to increase Chinese immersion students' use of Chinese language in the classroom. This research calls for more studies on effective techniques to use to motivate Chinese immersion students to speak only Chinese in the classroom. Future studies could explore different techniques to discover which ones are most effective for Chinese immersion program in particular. There also needs to be more research on how to create the least restrictive classroom atmosphere so that students are not afraid of making mistakes while speaking Chinese and they feel comfortable using the Chinese language in classroom. Lastly, future research needs to explore Chinese immersion students' perceptions regarding effective strategies that can motivate them to speak more Chinese in the classroom. Then Chinese immersion students' perceptions can be compared with Chinese immersion teachers' perceptions in regard to effective strategies to increase students' Chinese language use in the classroom.

### **Communicating the Results**

It is necessary that the results of this study be shared and not be forgotten or disregarded. The results of this study will be communicated in three ways. First, I will share the results with other Chinese immersion teachers in my school when I do the Powerpoint presentation on professional development days. In addition, I will discuss my findings

with my colleagues and administrators as well as provide them with a copy of the project description chapter. I will also provide a copy of my capstone to the superintendent and school board. Lastly, I plan to present the results at a school board meeting this fall. My hopes are that the school board and superintendent will recognize the need to increase Chinese immersion students' use of Chinese language in the classroom.

### **Summary**

This chapter is the concluding chapter of my capstone. It consists of my reflection on the capstone process, a revisit of the literature review, possible implications of my project, some limitations of my project, recommendations based on my findings, and a plan for communicating my results. I hope that my capstone project will inspire Chinese immersion Chinese immersion teachers to effectively increase Chinese immersion students' use of Chinese language in the classroom.

## APPENDIX A

### Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21st Century

National Council of State Supervisors for Languages(NCSSFL). (2009). *Standards for foreign language learning in the 21st Century*. Retrieved from [http://www.ncssfl.org/about/index.php?about\\_index](http://www.ncssfl.org/about/index.php?about_index)

Communication: Communicate in languages other than English.

Standard 1.1: Students engage in conversations, provide and obtain information, express feelings and emotions, and exchange opinions.

Standard 1.2: Students understand and interpret written and spoken language on a variety of topics.

Standard 1.3: Students present information, concepts, and ideas to an audience of listeners or readers on a variety of topics.

Cultures: Gain knowledge and understanding of other cultures.

Standard 2.1: Students demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between the practices and perspectives of the culture studied.

Standard 2.2: Students demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between the products and perspectives of the culture studied.

Connections: Connect with other disciplines and acquire information.

Standard 3.1: Students reinforce and further their knowledge of other

disciplines through the foreign language.

Standard 3.2: Students acquire information and recognize the distinctive viewpoints that are only available through the foreign language and its cultures.

Comparisons: Develop insight into the nature of language and culture.

Standard 4.1: Students demonstrate understanding of the nature of language through comparisons of the language studied and their own.

Standard 4.2: Students demonstrate understanding of the concept of culture through comparisons of the cultures studied and their own.

Communities: Participate in multilingual communities at home and around the World.

Standard 5.1: Students demonstrate understanding of the nature of language through comparisons of the language studied and their own.

Standard 5.2: Students demonstrate understanding of the concept of culture through comparisons of the cultures studied and their own (p. 9).

## APPENDIX B

### ACTFL Foreign Language Standards

American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Language (ACTFL). (1999). *ACTFL foreign language standards*. Retrieved from <http://www.actfl.org/files/public/Guidelinespeak.pdf>

#### Standard 1: Language, Linguistics, Comparisons

Standard 1.a. Demonstrating Language Proficiency.

Standard 1.b. Understanding Linguistics.

Standard 1.c. Identifying Language Comparisons.

#### Standard 2: Cultures, Literatures, Cross-Disciplinary Concepts

Standard 2.a. Demonstrating Cultural Understandings.

Standard 2.b. Demonstrating Understanding of Literary and Cultural Texts and Traditions.

Standard 2.c. Integrating Other Disciplines in Instruction.

#### Standard 3: Language Acquisition Theories and Instructional Practices

Standard 3.a. Understanding Language Acquisition and Creating a Supportive Classroom.

Standard 3.b. Developing Instructional Practices that Reflect Language Outcomes and Learner Diversity.

Standard 4: Integration Of Standards into Curriculum and Instruction

Standard 4.a. Understanding and Integrating Standards in Planning.

Standard 4.b. Integrating Standards in Instruction.

Standard 4.c. Selecting and Designing Instructional Materials.

Standard 5: Assessment of Languages and Cultures

Standard 5.a. Knowing Assessment Models and Using them Appropriately. Stan-

dard 5.b. Reflecting on Assessment.

Standard 5.c. Reporting Assessment Results.

Standard 6: Professionalism

Standard 6.a. Engaging in Professional Development.

Standard 6.b. Knowing the Value of Foreign Language Learning (NCATE

Website).

## APPENDIX C

### Characteristics of Effective Foreign Language Instruction Guidelines

National Association of District Supervisors of Foreign Languages. (1992). *Characteristics of Effective Foreign Language Instruction Guidelines*. NADSFL Newsletter.

- The teacher uses the target language extensively and encourages the students to do so.
- The teacher provides opportunities to communicate in the target language in meaningful and purposeful activities that simulate real-life situations.
- Skill-getting activities enable students to participate successfully in skill-using activities. Skill-using activities predominate.
- Time devoted to listening, speaking, reading, and writing is appropriate to course objectives and to the language skills of students.
- Culture is systematically incorporated into instruction.
- The teacher uses a variety of student groups and most activities are student-centered.
- The teacher uses a variety of print and non-print materials including authentic materials.
- The teacher uses explicit error correction in activities that focus on accuracy and implicit or no error correction in activities which focus on communication.



- Assessment reflects the way students are taught. Student tasks and teacher questions reflect a range of thinking skills.
- Instruction addresses student learning styles.
- Students are explicitly taught foreign language learning strategies and are encouraged to assess their own progress.
- The teacher enables all students to be successful. Students are enabled to develop positive attitudes toward cultural diversity.
- The teacher establishes an effective climate in which the students feel comfortable taking risks. The physical environment reflects the target language and culture.
- The teacher engages in continued professional development in the areas of language, skills, cultural knowledge, and current methodology.

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