

# **Bringing Foreign Language Learning into Students' Real Lives: Building Facebook- based Online Community**

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# Foreign Languages Teaching Approaches

- 🌐 Grammar-Translation Approach
- 🌐 Audio-lingual Approach
- 🌐 Communicative Approach
  - 🌐 Total Physical Response
  - 🌐 Task-based / Functional-Notional
  - 🌐 Computer-assisted Language Learning

# Computer-mediated Communication & Foreign Language Learning

- 🌐 CMC enhances second language acquisition: notice of form, participation and production, pragmatics, cultural sensitivity, learning strategies (Wauschauer, 1997, 2000);
- 🌐 CMC supports zone of proximal development (Thorne, 2002)
- 🌐 CMC provides a relaxing and flexible learning environment and supports real-time communication in the target language.

# Remaining Issues in CALL

- **Class project-based**
  - Lack of autonomy
  - Lack of authenticity
  - Limited exposure to language input
  - Limited chance to produce the target language
  - Limited teacher's involvement & supervision
  
- **Free communication**
  - Lack of structure
  - Lack of learning objectives

# Facebook Phenomenon

- 🌐 175 million active users worldwide
- 🌐 Multiple language platforms
- 🌐 Support personal profiles, status, photos, messages, chat, various groups & events
- 🌐 Important social networking tool: keep connected, less formal than email and less intimate than phone and text, prompt responses








# Context of the Project

- 🌐 **An urban university: students live on or off campus; most have part-time jobs and maintain a busy daily schedule;**
- 🌐 **Beginning-level Chinese classes: 5 out of 25 are Cantonese heritage speakers;**
- 🌐 **The majority of students are active Facebook users: 14/22 check Facebook at least once a day; all but one use Facebook to get connected with friends.**
- 🌐 **Majority of students have foreign friends on Facebook, but mainly use English to communicate**

# Facebook Project

 [DePaul Chinese Learning Group](#) on Facebook







## Learning Tasks

-  Group wall posts (3~5 times/week)
-  Share videos, pictures, links
-  Events
-  Get feedback from the Instructor and revise
-  Peer revision

## Rules

-  10-week projects
-  All Chinese

# Project Results

-  Total group wall posts: 444
-  Videos posted: 6
-  Pictures posted: 65
-  Links posted: 4
-  Events announced: 3
-  Communication with the instructor & classmates: students added classmates & the instructor as friends, post Chinese on each other's walls, Chinese status



# Facebook-based Learning Community

- formed the identity of Chinese learners through shared experience and interaction on the Facebook
  - Added friends and formed offline learning groups
- Declared learning experience on Facebook status & posted status in Chinese, e.g. “Blas is 学中文” ;
- Commented on each other’s status in Chinese;
- Posted learning resources in personal profiles

# Learners' Perception: Advantages

- 🌐 Used Chinese for practical purposes (update status, describe daily life);
- 🌐 Had to think of and use Chinese more frequently;
- 🌐 Prompt responses from classmates and the instructor;
- 🌐 Support from the instructor (message & chat)
- 🌐 Relaxing environment

# Learners' Perception: Disadvantage




- 🌐 Group wall posting was too artificial, lack of structure
- 🌐 Facebook is too distracting
- 🌐 No chance to practice speaking
- 🌐 Too few native speakers were involved
- 🌐 Anxiety about errors on the group wall

# Bringing Chinese Learning into Students' Real Life

- 🌐 **Authentic purpose: Learning Chinese by using it communicatively;**
  - 🌐 Updated status in Chinese
  - 🌐 Communicated with each other & instructor in Chinese
  - 🌐 Shared fun cultural resources with each other;
- 🌐 **Authentic and Rich Language Input:**
  - 🌐 Exposed to larger vocabulary and more varieties of structures;
  - 🌐 Exposed to more language learning resources;
- 🌐 **Authentic Language Output:**
  - 🌐 Writing in Chinese (vocabulary & structure);
  - 🌐 Fluency

# Pedagogical Implications




**Maintain the group and nurture the formation of identity**

-  Synchronous (chat ) vs. asynchronous (status update, discussions, video contests) activities for different proficiency level
-  Encourage students to organize off-Facebook events
-  Integrate Facebook cooperation in various course projects

**Invite native speakers to the online community**

# Pedagogical Implications

## Instructor's roles

-  **Moderator: create and organize events, maintain information flow, coach student group leaders**
-  **Resource: language and culture input, Q & A section**
-  **Friend: status update/comments, wall posting, pictures, chat**



# Final Thoughts

Foreign language learning can be seamlessly integrated in students' daily life through Facebook;

The existence of an online community provides great support for students with more learning difficulty and help students form the identity of Chinese learners/users and reduces the anxiety of learning a difficult foreign language;

The community members' relationship is vital to maintain the community.

# Thank you!

Should you have any question,  
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