



中华人民共和国教育部
Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China



CASE STUDY: CHINA NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR EDUCATION RESEARCH

China National Institute for Education Research (CNIER) is the research arm for the Central Government's Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China. The CNIER is tasked education reform and development. Through their rigorous investigation and testing of academic methodologies the CNIER ensured that China remains a world leader in education. Catherine Davis and the Allegravita team was hired by CNIER to develop and pilot English language curriculum, teacher training, and assist with internal education research.

Curriculum development, training and research.

OUR PLAN:

In 2006, Catherine Davis and team was engaged by CNIER to develop and pilot a national Kindergarten-to-8th-Grade ("K-8") English-language curriculum based on innovative collaborative learning approaches. In conjunction with the English curriculum, we developed a teacher training curriculum focusing on collaborative and communicative methodologies.

IMPLEMENTATION:

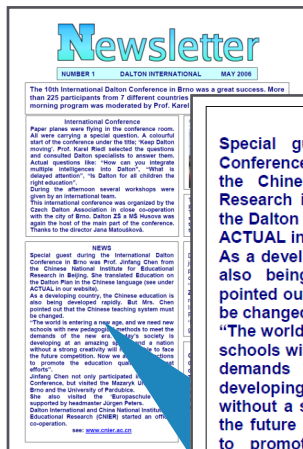
The programs were piloted in tier one and tier two cities throughout China in the lead-up to the 2008 Olympic Games. In addition to the curriculum development and training, Catherine assisted CNIER in publishing research findings, establishing international partnerships, and well as speaking at CNIER and Ministry of Education symposia.

Additionally, Catherine and her team assisted with text book content development and selection and created a teacher implementation manual to assist in the application of innovation methodologies.

RESULTS:

The revised curriculum introduced different methods and techniques for language instruction. As the program grew in scale, Catherine and her team trained government officials, school administrators, and select teachers in presenting methodologies and in use of the implementation manual to supplement current materials. Key schools in practically every province of China were trained by Catherine and the Allegravita team with CNIER leaders.

As part of our work with CNIER, we assisted in developing the partnership between the famous Dalton International program and in the preparation of published research on all our work.



NEWS
Special guest during the International Dalton Conference in Brno was Prof. Jinfang Chen from the Chinese National Institute for Educational Research in Beijing. She translated Education on the Dalton Plan in the Chinese language (see under ACTUAL in our website).

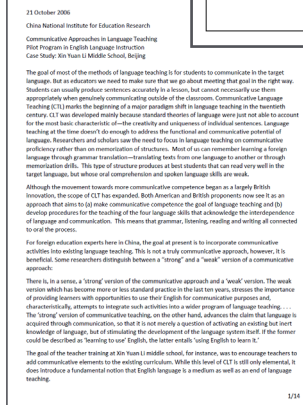
As a developing country, the Chinese education is also being developed rapidly. But Mrs. Chen pointed out that the Chinese teaching system must be changed.

"The world is entering a new age, and we need new schools with new pedagogical methods to meet the demands of the new era. Today's society is developing at an amazing speed, and a nation without a strong creativity will not be able to face the future competition. Now we are taking actions to promote the education quality with great efforts".

Jinfang Chen not only participated in the Dalton Conference, but visited the Mazaryk University in Brno and the University of Pardubice. She also visited the 'Europaschule Wien' supported by headmaster Jürgen Peters.

Dalton International and China National Institute for Educational Research (CNIER) started an official co-operation.

see: www.cnier.ac.cn



The goal of most of the methods of language teaching is for students to communicate in the target language. But as educators we need to make sure that we get about meeting that goal in the right way. Students can usually produce sentences accurately in a lab, but cannot necessarily use them appropriately when genuinely communicating outside of the classroom. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) marks the beginning of a major paradigm shift in language teaching in the twentieth century. CLT has developed mainly because standard theories of language were just not able to account for the most basic characteristics of the creativity and uniqueness of individual sentences. Language teaching at that time does not do enough to address the functional and communicative potential of language. Researchers and scholars see the need to focus in language teaching on communicative proficiency rather than on memorization of structures. Most of us can remember learning a foreign language through grammar translation—translating from one language to another or through memorization drills. This type of structure produces at best students that can read very well in the target language, but whose oral comprehension and spoken language skills are weak. Although the movement towards more communicative competence began as a largely British initiative, the scope of CLT has expanded. Both American and British proponents now use it as an approach that aims to (a) make communicative competence the goal of language teaching and (b) develop procedures for the teaching of the four language skills that acknowledge the interdependence of language and communication. This means that grammar, listening, reading and writing all contribute to oral proficiency.

For foreign education experts here in China, the goal of present is to incorporate communicative activities into existing language teaching. This is not a truly communicative approach, however. It is beneficial. Some researchers distinguish between a "strong" and a "weak" version of a communicative approach.

There is, in a sense, a "strong" version of the communicative approach and a "weak" version. The weak version which has become more or less standard practice in the last ten years, stresses the importance of providing learners with opportunities to use their English for communicative purposes and, characteristically, attempts to integrate such activities into a wider program of language teaching. ... The "strong" version of communicative teaching, on the other hand, believes the claim that language is acquired through communication, so that it is not merely a question of activating an existing but inert knowledge of language, but of stimulating the development of the language system itself. If the learner could be described as "learning to use English, the latter entails "using English to learn."

The goal of the teacher teaching at Xun Yuan Li middle school, for instance, was to encourage teachers to add communicative aspects to the existing curriculum. While this level of CLT is still only universal, it does introduce a fundamental notion that English language is a medium as well as an end of language teaching.

