Lessons learned from a year of teaching in China

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Where Do People Fail To Attain A High School Qualification?

% of 25-34 year-olds with an education level below upper secondary in selected countries*

- China: 64%
- Indonesia: 60%
- Mexico: 54%
- Turkey: 50%
- Brazil: 39%
- Spain: 34%
- Italy: 26%
- South Africa: 23%
- Norway: 19%
- France: 15%
- United Kingdom: 14%
- Australia: 13%
- Germany: 13%
- United States: 10%
- Ireland: 10%
- Canada: 7%
- South Korea: 2%

*2014 or latest year - upper secondary education corresponds to the final stage of secondary education in most OECD countries.

Source: OECD
Education in China

Students work hard from the very beginning.
It is all about the Gaokao
The *Gaokao* creates considerable pressure for students, parents and teacher.

*Why?* It is a life-changing evaluation.

*How?* Cramming including memorization and practice

*Concerns?*

- No strong focus on critical thinking.
- Lack of consideration for students' emotions, values and personalities.
English Language Abilities

Students learn to read, write and listen to English. They often do not have as much practice speaking English.

Beijing will hold English listening comprehension test twice a year for students who take part in the Gaokao starting from 2017 and include oral English tests into the exam from 2021, Beijing News reports.

Beijing also plans to include oral English starting from 2021, with the score for oral and listening components totaling 50 points. The Ministry of Education has been pushing for reforms in the national exam, especially for the English language.
How are the students different? # gross generalizations

Identified from personal observation, interviews with eleven American faculty teaching in China, and from discussions with twenty-four post-secondary Chinese students at Renmin University.

- Patience
- Focus on memorization and structured problem solving.
- Critical thinking skills
- Revere instructor
- Hesitant to share diverse points of view orally.
- Expectations
  - “talk and chalk” lecture
  - All about academics
Instructional Strategies

Know your students and work to develop a personal relationship with them.

Experiences, Goals
Instructional Strategies

Be true to your teaching style but provide clear guidance on classroom and learning expectations.

Ease into controversial topic discussion through anonymous commenting technology.
Instructional Strategies

Use foreign experts

Encourage, expect self-reflection
Other strategies?