Research on the application of situational teaching method in primary school Chinese language teaching

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ABSTRACT

How effective is situational teaching in elementary school Chinese language instruction? Situational teaching emphasizes learning within meaningful, real-life contexts and is grounded in constructivist and situated cognition theories. This quasi-experimental study investigated 150 fourth-grade students across three urban primary schools in Henan Province, China, comparing situational teaching with conventional methods over an eighteen-week semester. Students in the experimental group received structured situational lessons twice a week, incorporating life-based and problem-based scenarios, while control classes followed standard instruction. Data were collected through standardized writing assessments, classroom observations, and student interviews. Results indicate that students receiving situational instruction scored significantly higher on writing tests, demonstrated greater intrinsic interest in learning Chinese, and nearly doubled their weekly classroom contributions. The largest gains were observed in content development and text organization, while mechanical writing skills improved less. These findings provide robust evidence for the benefits of situational teaching, highlight key implementation factors, and offer practical guidance for teachers seeking to enhance engagement and learning outcomes in primary school Chinese education.

Keywords: Situational teaching; primary Chinese education; writing development; student motivation

INTRODUCTION

Primary school Chinese language education plays a fundamental role in the development of students' literacy, cognitive abilities, and communicative competence. As a core subject in basic education, Chinese not only supports students' academic learning but also shapes their language expression, cultural understanding, and thinking patterns at an early stage. In current classroom practice, however, Chinese language instruction in many primary schools continues to rely heavily on a teacher-centered approach. Lessons are often organized around teachers' explanations of texts, followed by students' note-taking and mechanical practice, with limited opportunities for active participation or authentic language use. This instructional model has long been regarded as efficient and manageable, particularly in large classes and examination-oriented educational contexts.

With the advancement of educational reform and the increasing emphasis on quality-oriented education, concerns have gradually emerged regarding the limitations of traditional teacher-centered instruction. Contemporary educational goals highlight the importance of student engagement, creativity, critical thinking, and the ability to apply language flexibly in real-life situations. Research suggests that overly passive learning environments may reduce students' motivation and hinder the development of higher-order language skills, especially in writing and oral expression (Chen, 2020; Zhang, 2021). As a result, exploring more studentcentered and context-sensitive instructional approaches has become an important issue in primary school Chinese language education. Against this background, situational teaching has attracted growing attention from educators and researchers. Situational teaching refers to an instructional approach that deliberately embeds learning content within meaningful and context-rich scenarios. In Chinese language classrooms, this approach may involve role-playing daily communication, recreating narrative settings, or designing scenario-based reading and writing tasks. Through participation in these simulated or semi-authentic situations, students are encouraged to

experience language use in a more natural and purposeful manner, rather than merely memorizing isolated vocabulary or sentence structures.

Advocates of situational teaching argue that learning within meaningful contexts can enhance students' interest and motivation, promote deeper comprehension, and facilitate long-term retention of knowledge. By activating learners' prior experiences and connecting new knowledge with familiar situations, situational teaching is believed to make learning more vivid and memorable (Zhu, 2023; Sun, 2023). In addition, situational teaching is often associated with increased classroom interaction and a more dynamic learning atmosphere, which may provide students with greater opportunities to practice language use and express their ideas. The theoretical foundation of situational teaching is closely aligned with constructivist learning theory. Constructivism emphasizes that knowledge is actively constructed by learners through interaction with their environment rather than passively transmitted by teachers. From this perspective, effective learning occurs when learners are actively involved in meaning-making processes and when new information is connected to existing cognitive structures. Situational teaching reflects these principles by transforming abstract linguistic knowledge into concrete learning experiences, enabling students to construct understanding through contextualized language use and social interaction.

In recent years, a growing number of studies have explored the application of situational teaching in Chinese language education. Many of these studies highlight its positive influence on classroom atmosphere, student participation, and learning motivation. Descriptive research and teaching reflections generally report that students respond more actively when learning tasks are embedded in meaningful situations, particularly in reading comprehension and writing activities. These findings suggest that situational teaching holds considerable pedagogical potential in primary school Chinese instruction. However, existing empirical research remains limited in scope and methodological rigor. While several studies have attempted to examine the effects of situational teaching, many rely on small samples, short intervention periods, or subjective evaluation methods such as teacher observation and student self-report. Comparative studies contrasting situational teaching with traditional instruction are relatively scarce, and quantitative evidence regarding learning outcomes remains insufficient. As a result, conclusions about the effectiveness of situational teaching are often suggestive rather than definitive.

Although situational teaching has been widely discussed and increasingly applied in primary school Chinese classrooms, existing studies still provide limited comparative evidence under controlled conditions. In particular, further empirical research is needed to examine its instructional effects while accounting for students' initial abilities, thereby offering clearer guidance for classroom practice. In response to this research context, the present study investigates the application of situational teaching in primary school Chinese language instruction through a comparative research design. By examining students' writing performance, learning interest, and classroom engagement, the study seeks to evaluate whether situational teaching produces measurable advantages over conventional instructional approaches. At the same time, attention is given to classroom interaction patterns in order to better understand how situational teaching influences the teaching– learning process.

By integrating outcome-based measures with classroom process analysis, this study aims to contribute empirical evidence to the existing literature and provide practical insights for teachers. Through a more systematic examination of situational teaching, the study seeks to support evidence-based instructional decision-making and promote the effective integration of situational approaches into primary school Chinese language education.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Situational Teaching Method

Situational teaching method has to deal with practical restrictions that could prevent its application. Literature recognizes some problems that teachers encounter when using this method, and it's important to know about these difficulties to have a reasonable evaluation of feasibility. Resource constraints are also a concern. Good ones require things like props, pictures, technology or room which may not be ready in any school. Zhu (2020) has also noted that schools with fewer resources were not able to execute the richer scenarios cited in the

literature. Less complicated verbal scenarios require fewer resources, although the effectiveness of these verbal scenarios is also not obvious in comparison with more elaborate designs.

In situational teaching, there are issues with the evaluation. The complex of skills gained through situational learning and contextual understanding, adaptable communication, problem-solving within real-world constraints do not come through in traditional tests. Alternative tests like portfolios and performance tasks may solve these limitations although they require skill and time, which teachers may lack. Gao (2020) identified the fact that new methods of teaching have conflicts with old methods of assessing students, and it revolves around standardized tests. Success cannot be achieved without more than teaching skills. The teachers should be able to generate exciting circumstances, provoke active learning, monitor the dynamic mood in the classroom, and modify easily in regard to what the students speak. A lot of teachers have been trained to concentrate on direct teaching and do not have examples of a situational teaching style. Additionally, some teachers have beliefs about teaching and learning that favor teacher-centered approaches, which can create resistance to methods that place students in the role of active constructors rather than passive recipients.

Practical problems do not deny the possible worth of situation-based teaching, but they stress reasonable expectations and suitable assistance. It will probably need something besides new techniques, maybe some investment in teachers, resources, and changing how we test. This paper is an inquiry on whether when proper preparations have been undertaken to ensure that everything is in place and that teachers have been given adequate time to prepare, the benefits of situational teaching are clearer and are therefore worth all these efforts.

Situational Teaching Method in Primary School Chinese Language Teaching

Situational teaching has been widely discussed in the field of primary school Chinese language education as a student-centered instructional approach that emphasizes learning within meaningful contexts. In Chinese language classrooms, situational teaching typically involves the creation of realistic or semi-realistic scenarios that encourage students to use language for communication, expression, and problem-solving (Tan, 2024).

These scenarios may include role-playing daily life situations, reconstructing story contexts, or engaging in scenario-based reading and writing activities.

Existing studies generally suggest that situational teaching can enhance students' learning interest and classroom participation. By embedding language content in familiar or engaging situations, students are more likely to perceive learning tasks as meaningful rather than mechanical (Li, 2020). Research has shown that situational teaching may be particularly effective in writing instruction, as contextualized prompts help students generate ideas and express emotions more naturally. Similarly, in reading instruction, situational activities such as dramatization and perspective-taking have been found to support deeper text comprehension (Li, 2023). However, much of the existing research in this area remains descriptive in nature. Many studies rely on teaching cases, reflective reports, or questionnaire surveys, focusing primarily on teachers' or students' perceptions (Liu, 2020; Lu, 2023). Although these studies provide valuable insights into classroom practice, empirical evidence based on comparative or quasi-experimental designs is relatively limited. As a result, while situational teaching is widely recognized as pedagogically valuable, further research is needed to clarify its instructional effects under more controlled conditions, particularly in primary school Chinese language contexts.

Constructivist Learning Theory and Situated Cognition Theory

Why does embedding learning in situations matter? The theory behind it comes from various ideas that, although they started from different places, all lead to the same result when it comes to learning well. Constructivist learning theory is the main theoretical basis for situational teaching (Meier, 2016). Constructivism is derived from Piaget's work and further developed by Vygotsky; it holds that people actively create knowledge via interactions with their surroundings, instead of merely acquiring data from outside sources. According to this view, meaningful learning happens when new information gets linked up with what we already know in real-life situations that make sense and give us reasons to care about them. Students come across new vocabulary in a simulated market setting; they aren't just rote memorizing words, they are forming links among language forms, social settings, and communication purposes.

Situated cognition theory extends on constructivism by saying that knowledge is always connected to the places where we learn and use it (Roth & Jornet, 2013). Brown, Collins, and Duguid put forward this view, stating that learning and cognition are essentially located, and knowledge can never be completely separated from the actions and environments where it forms. It challenges the conventional educational assumption that the abstract knowledge learned in classrooms can easily apply to the real world. Imagine the difference between learning how to swim by reading about it versus actually being in the water. Abstraction is missing out on something important that only real-life situations give us. Situational teaching aligns closely with both constructivist learning theory and situated cognition theory. By designing context-based learning activities, situational teaching allows students to participate actively in meaning-making processes and apply language knowledge within realistic scenarios. Through interaction, collaboration, and reflection, students are encouraged to construct understanding rather than memorize isolated language forms. In primary school Chinese language teaching, such an approach supports not only language acquisition but also the development of communicative competence and contextual awareness.

Research Gaps

Although situational teaching in primary school Chinese language education has been widely discussed from theoretical and practical perspectives, empirical evidence remains limited. Most existing studies rely on descriptive analyses or perception-based data, with relatively few comparative investigations conducted under controlled conditions. In addition, prior research often reports implementation difficulties without examining instructional outcomes when basic preparation and support are in place. As a result, it remains unclear to what extent situational teaching can produce measurable learning benefits compared with conventional instruction. This gap highlights the need for systematic empirical research focusing on both learning outcomes and classroom processes.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design and Overall Framework

This study adopted a quasi-experimental quantitative research design with a control group and an experimental group. The primary objective was to determine whether situational teaching produces measurable learning advantages over conventional instruction in primary school Chinese language teaching. Although qualitative insights may enrich understanding, the core concern of this study is effectiveness rather than perception, which justifies the quantitative focus. An 18-week intervention period, equivalent to one academic semester, was selected to balance practical feasibility and scientific rigor. Shorter interventions may capture novelty effects rather than stable instructional impact, whereas longer interventions increase risks of attrition and contamination. A full semester allows situational teaching practices to be established and their effects to be reflected in observable learning outcomes.

Participants and Research Context

The participants consisted of 150 fourth-grade students (aged 9–10) from three urban primary schools in Henan Province, China. Grade 4 was selected because students at this level have acquired basic literacy skills while still undergoing significant development in writing and expressive ability, making them suitable for examining instructional effects. Purposive sampling was employed to select schools with comparable student populations and resource levels in order to reduce contextual confounding variables. Two intact classes were selected from each school, with one class assigned to the experimental condition and the other to the control condition. This school-level matching helped ensure that institutional differences did not bias the comparison. The final sample included 75 students in the experimental group and 75 students in the control group, with a balanced gender distribution (52% female, 48% male). Baseline Chinese language achievement showed no significant difference between groups ($p > 0.05$). All participants were native Mandarin speakers with no identified learning disabilities. Power analysis indicated that the sample size provided sufficient statistical power (0.80) to detect medium-sized effects at $\alpha = 0.05$.

Intervention and Control Conditions

The experimental group implemented situational teaching throughout the semester, with at least two situational lessons per week. Based on Zhu's (2023) typology, three main types of scenarios were incorporated, including life-based situations and problem-based situations embedded within reading and writing instruction. Each situational lesson followed a structured three-phase model: introduction (activating prior knowledge), engagement (active participation in the scenario), and reflection (consolidating learning outcomes). Remaining lessons followed the regular curriculum to ensure content coverage.

Teachers in the experimental group received eight hours of targeted professional development prior to the intervention, covering theoretical foundations, scenario design, facilitation strategies, and assessment considerations. Biweekly support meetings were held to maintain consistency and address implementation challenges. Teachers in the control group continued with conventional instruction, primarily involving direct teaching and textbook-based exercises. No additional training or restrictions were imposed. Teaching logs confirmed a clear contrast between conditions, with situational activities occurring in over 50% of experimental lessons and fewer than 10% of control lessons. Implementation fidelity was monitored through teacher logs and structured classroom observations, yielding an average fidelity score of 82%, indicating acceptable adherence to the instructional model.

Measurement Instruments and Data Collection

Three instruments were employed to assess learning outcomes and classroom processes. Writing performance was measured using a standardized writing task administered at three time points, evaluated with an analytic rubric by trained raters (inter-rater reliability ICC = 0.89). Learning interest was assessed using a 20-item selfreport questionnaire covering intrinsic interest, perceived value, and engagement behaviors (Cronbach's α = 0.84). Classroom interaction patterns were documented using a systematic observation protocol, with interobserver agreement exceeding 85%. Data were collected at the beginning, middle, and end of the semester. Ethical approval was obtained, and informed consent and student assent were secured. All data were anonymized and collected during regular school hours to minimize disruption.

Data Analysis and Validity Considerations

Data analysis involved descriptive statistics, ANCOVA, repeated-measures ANOVA, and correlation analysis. ANCOVA was used to compare post-test outcomes while controlling for pre-test scores and demographic variables. Effect sizes (Cohen's d) were calculated to assess practical significance. Instrument validity and reliability were established through pilot testing and expert review. Construct validity of the questionnaire was supported by factor analysis, and test–retest reliability of the writing assessment was satisfactory (r = 0.82). Potential sources of bias, including teacher expectancy effects and sampling limitations, were acknowledged. While these factors may limit generalizability, they do not undermine the internal validity of the comparative findings within the study contexts.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Set Up Baseline Equivalence

Before looking at the effects of interventions, we checked that the experimental and control groups were similar at the start. Groups had no significant difference on pretest writing scores (M = 64.8, SD = 12.3 vs. M = 65.2, SD = 11.8; t = 0.21, p = 0.84), learning interest (M = 3.42, SD = 0.68 vs. M = 3.38, SD = 0.72; t = 0.36, p = 0.72), or classroom participation frequency (M = 2.1 vs. M = 2.0 contributions weekly; t = 0.45, p = 0.65). Demographic characteristics such as gender distribution and previous performance were also identical. And this baseline equivalence makes for fairer group-to-group comparisons. Table 2 shows the summary of the main outcomes measures between experimental and control groups.

Table 2: Summary of Outcome Measures

Outcome	Experimental	Control	t	p	Effect
Writing (Pre)	64.8 (12.3)	65.2 (11.8)	0.21	0.84	n.s.
Writing (Post)	73.2 (10.5)	67.8 (11.2)	4.52	<0.001***	Medium+
Interest (Pre)	3.42 (0.68)	3.38 (0.72)	0.36	0.72	n.s.
Interest (Post)	4.02 (0.65)	3.45 (0.70)	4.89	<0.001***	Medium+
Outcome	**Experimental**	**Control**	**t**	**p**	**Effect**
Participation (Pre)	2.1/week	2.0/week	0.45	0.65	n.s.
Participation (Post)	3.6/week	2.3/week	5.23	<0.001***	Medium+

Note: Values in parentheses are standard deviations. ***p < 0.001. n.s. = not significant. Effect size:

Small (d=0.2), Medium (d=0.5), Large (d=0.8)

Impact on Writing Ability

The main question: Does situational teaching improve writing? And the answer is obviously yes. ANCOVA showed that there was a highly significant group effect after taking into account the pre-test scores, $F(1,147) = 20.38$, $p < 0.001$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.12$. Experimental condition students got much better post-test writing scores ($M = 73.2$, $SD = 10.5$) than control students ($M = 67.8$, $SD = 11.2$). Adjusted mean difference of 5.4 points corresponds to a medium-to-large effect size (Cohen's $d = 0.76$). From looking at how much they grew, the experimental students got better by an average of 8.4 points between taking the test before and after, but the control students only got 2.6 points better. It appeared slowly; mid-point evaluations revealed that experimental students were starting to take the lead, and this gap was getting bigger as the term went on. The data demonstrates there are cumulative benefits – initial situational experiences accumulate to yield ever-more varied outcomes.

A look at the rubric sub-scales revealed distinct patterns to what situational classrooms encourage and what they don't. The biggest improvement was on idea development ($d = 0.79$) – coming up with ideas that are relevant to the task and providing supporting details and meaningful elaboration. Students in the situational teaching classrooms simply wrote better essays, with more detailed descriptions, concrete examples and complete development of the theme. Organization was not far behind with a sizable improvement ($d = 0.68$), students in the experimental group tended to have better logic structurally, with smoother transitions and a more coherent overall structure. On vocabulary and sentence structure there was a moderate improvement ($d = 0.46$ and $d = 0.54$, respectively). Students in the situational teaching classes tended to use some different words and construct more complex sentences, but the improvements weren't as large as for ideas and organization. For conventions – spelling, punctuation, grammar – there was minimal improvement ($d = 0.21$) and results remained about the same as the pre-test in both groups.

This difference has important meanings. Situational teaching seems to improve the development of higher order composing processes better than mechanical accuracy. Students gather thoughts and experiences when they interact with situations before writing, which results in better content. The scenarios also represent organizational structures – narratives have beginnings, middles, and ends; problems have contexts, complications, and resolutions – which the students take on board and use. But the right spelling and punctuation need focused attention and practice that situation activities might not give. Table 3 shows the size of effects for each writing dimension, indicating which areas of situation teaching have the most significant influence.

Table 3 Effect Sizes by Writing Dimension

Writing Dimension	**Exp. Gain**	**Ctrl. Gain**	**Cohen's d**	**Interpretation**
Content Development	+2.3 pts	+0.6 pts	0.79	Large
Organization	+1.9 pts	+0.5 pts	0.68	Medium-Large
Writing Dimension	**Exp. Gain**	**Ctrl. Gain**	**Cohen's d**	**Interpretation**
Sentence Structure	+1.4 pts	+0.6 pts	0.54	Medium
Vocabulary	+1.0 pts	+0.3 pts	0.46	Small-Medium
Conventions	+0.3 pts	+0.2 pts	0.21	Small

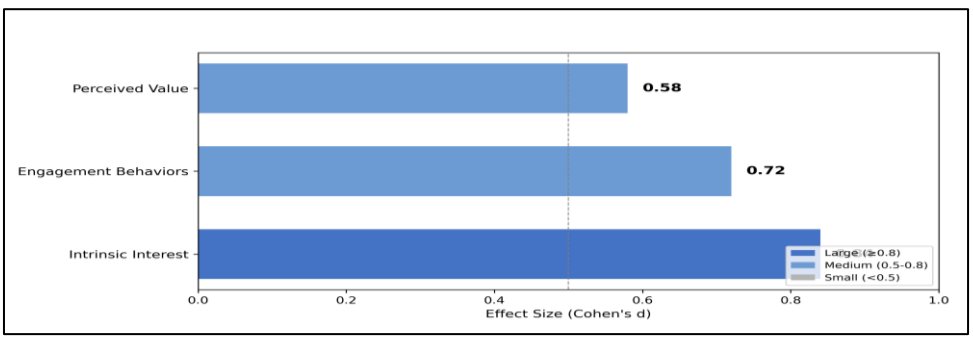
Note: Scores are out of 20 points per dimension. Effect size thresholds: Small (0.2), Medium (0.5), Large (0.8).

Changes in Learning Interest

In addition to developing skills, did situation-based teaching increase students' interest in learning Chinese? Repeated measures ANOVA showed that there was a significant interaction effect between time and group, $F(2,296) = 15.82$, $p < 0.001$. Experimental students had an increasing trend from the baseline (M=3.42) to the midpoint (M=3.78) and then to the post-intervention (M=4.02), which means they gained 0.60 scale points over the course of a semester. Control students changed little (M = 3.38, 3.42, 3.45). Post-intervention between-group difference was large ($t = 4.89$, $p < 0.001$, $d = 0.76$). Some interesting patterns of the type of motivation promoted by situational teaching were found in the analysis of the subscales. The largest improvement ($d = 0.84$) was observed in the intrinsic interest of the Chinese language learning. Experimental classroom students were significantly more prone to similar statements like I would look forward to Chinese classroom and Learning Chinese is fun. And this is relevant on the basis that as we all comprehend in the research, which is internal motivation that results to greater participation, longer lasting efforts and greater longterm results as compared to external motivation researching on grades and rewards.

Engagement behaviors, such as voluntary reading outside of class, also rose considerably ($d = 0.72$) in Figure 1. Students started looking for Chinese books, articles, or other materials all by themselves much more often after they had that situation-based teaching. The perceived value of Chinese language skills improved a little bit but it was still considerable ($d = 0.58$). Students began to view Chinese language proficiency as more crucial for their future, although this instrumental motivation did not increase as much as intrinsic pleasure. What could account for these increases in motivation? Situational teaching probably attends to some psychological needs that regular instruction usually ignores. Scenarios give natural reasons to learn, solving the constant student question of "why do we have to know this?" They provide suitable challenges inside interesting settings, possibly creating the absorbed engagement typical of fun activities. And collaborative scenarios meet social needs, turning learning from a solo battle into a group quest.

Figure 1 Effect sizes for learning interest subscales



Classroom Interaction Patterns

Observation data showed obvious changes in classroom participation. Experimental classrooms: In the experimental classroom setting, the mean verbal contributions increased by 71% ($t = 5.23$, $p < 0.001$, $d = 0.73$) between 2.1 at the start and 3.6 at the end of the experiment. Control classrooms had little change (2.0 to 2.3, $t = 1.12$, $p = 0.27$). The difference between the groups at the end of the semester was significant ($t = 4.85$, $p < 0.001$).

In other aspects besides regularity, the involvement of people varied in an unquantifiable way. Within the context of gaining situational teaching, students had a more likely chance of initiating conversations rather than merely responding to what was being stated by the teachers. They expressed their questions as a scenario: What would have happened on the condition that the character had something different in mind? Why did the shopkeeper do that? They provided unsolicited opinions, they went on top of other ideas, they discussed actually with others, rather than merely repeating things. Teacher-led classroom interactions that were controlled were predominant. The usual pattern was teacher asking questions with expected answers, students answering judged right or wrong, little student-to-student talking. Students would speak mostly to answer a question directly or read out loud if they were called on. Spontaneous contributions were uncommon, the discourse structure made students into respondents instead of initiators. The change in participation wasn't the same for all students. Experimental classrooms, usually silent students started participating too, maybe due to scenarios offering natural ways to join in. A shy student may hesitate to answer an abstract grammar question but happily share what she would say to a story character. Contextual scaffolding seemed to ease the way for involvement. Teachers said students who hardly ever talked during regular classes got much more involved in situations.

What made it more effective for implementation?

Analysis of the implementation variable found factors related to better results. Teachers that spent more time on their preparation (over 30 min for each situational lesson) had students that improved more than those that prepared faster ($r = 0.42$, $p < 0.05$). Implementation fidelity—how closely teachers stuck to the situational teaching ideas based on what the people watching them taught—went along with better writing results ($r = 0.56$, $p < 0.01$). Specific practices distinguished the more effective implementations from the less effective ones. Teachers that made connections between the scenarios and what the students already knew or were interested in had better outcomes. It had clear roles and structures of participation which meant that all people took part. It was particularly good to combine individual reflection time and to group discussions. Those whom the teachers made the use of various scenarios throughout the semester performed more favorably than those whom primarily used a single type over the semester - variety appeared to keep people engaged and working on other things.

Interpreting the Findings

What do these results mean? They demonstrate on the most basic level that it works indeed - writing skills, interest in learning, classroom attention actually improve. Not only is the effect size statistically significant, but also the difference in writing improvement (8 points) is an important one that educationally may lead to long-term outcomes in the learning trajectory. Motivational findings are noteworthy as they influence learning powerfully. Among all the sub-scales of interest, intrinsic motivation improved the most. Students started to appreciate Chinese language learning for itself, rather than merely as a means to an end. This distinction does matter. Studies of motivation show over and over again that people who are intrinsically interested do better at sticking with things, thinking about them more deeply, and achieving more in the long run than those who are motivated by external rewards. If situational teaching creates true interest, the benefits could go far beyond what we can measure right now – maybe even throughout many years of school after this.

Participation results are dramatic but need careful interpretation. More talk doesn't necessarily mean more learning. But the move away from teachers talking to students to students talking to each other shows both how much and what kind of change has happened. Students were not merely saying more in the situational classroom, they were socialising differently, asking questions, noticing, kind of piggybacking on what other participants said. This trend is similar to constructivist thought processes regarding learning as a meaningmaking. Verbalization may play significant cognitive role as well in assisting students in the process of clarifying and

solidifying the knowledge by oralizing the idea. Findings on implementation provide helpful recommendations and indicate issues. The only efficient way of situational teaching is that it consumes a lot of preparation a big burden to teachers who are already overworked. There is a connection between fidelity and results, and this implies that when one completes something simply on a superficial level, then there will likely be no actual gain. Schools practicing situational teaching need to provide real support: training, materials, plan time and expectations in the learning process are reasonable. There will be no use in mainly partially adopting the techniques.

CONCLUSION

This paper was meant to evaluate critically the issue of situational teaching in primary Chinese language teaching, which has a great deal of theoretical interest but a dearth of supporting evidence. On one term, we conducted a quasi-experimental survey among 150 fourth-grade students in three educational establishments who received situational teaching, and those who did not receive it. These findings support a partial feeling of optimism about this method of teaching. Students who were taught under situations performed significantly better on their writing tests compared to those that were not taught under situations. There was a medium to large size of effect of 0.76 that put the experimental group at a higher average (8 points more than the control group with 3 points). The most significant improvement was made to the content creation and structuring - a higher order composing skills - but mechanical conventions did not change much. Such tendencies show that situational teaching develops some of the aspects of the writing more than others.

Students who underwent a situational teaching had much greater learning interest. The experimental students indicated that there was an improvement of 0.60 points based on a five-point scale of interest during the semester compared to the control group. The best aspect was that intrinsic interest, or liking Chinese as a subject, had the highest increase. This intrinsic motivation could prove to be highly valuable in education in the long term than simply improvement in skills. The participation on part of the classroom increased significantly. The number of verbal contributions by the students of the situational teaching classes increased by approximately 71 percent to nearly four times. More importantly, the form of participation changed from teachers directing answers to students asking questions, observing, and discussing with each other.There was not much change in the control classrooms. The quality of implementation meant something. The more time teachers took to prepare and were closer to situational teaching principles, the better they achieved results with their students. Certain practices that were associated with success included associating scenarios with what the students were familiar with, providing explicit means of student's participation in the process, combining collaborative and individual work, and various types of scenarios during the course of the term. And these findings are beyond the question of whether or not situational teaching is working or not, they begin to ask how we can have it working.

These findings can help teachers who are considering situational teaching to realize that it is a worthwhile endeavor, but it requires some work. The implementation of quality will require some planning time and this can take up to two/three times longer than the routine lesson planning. It will not help much to race through the production of scenarios or simply to exercise the motions with no clear and simple knowledge of what is going on. Teachers also need to begin with one lesson a week at least, with situations, and continue to add on as they gain competency. Situational teaching should not be regarded as a replacement to the other teaching techniques by teachers. Little influence on the rules of writing suggests that this is why mechanical training is still necessary. Content and organization Focused practice Accuracy best results may be achieved by situational activities. It is not replacing all the old ways but bringing on new context-based experiences which make learning to be relevant.

The sample of our urban school only goes so far in our generalizing. These 3 schools that participated are typical of the area but may not represent what all Chinese primary schools are. Rural schools are limited in other ways - there are less resources at their disposal, different preparation of teachers and vastly different background experiences of their students as compared to those of urban counterparts. Schools with lower economic districts or less developed areas might also experience some implementation hiccups that we have not been aware of. We need to be very careful when using what we found out to guess about those places. Though there have been some improvements in methodology compared to earlier studies, this study still can't rule out all threats to validity. Experimental teachers knew that they were doing something different – which could mean that they had extra motivation that makes it hard to know if the intervention worked. It's comparing situational teaching done by

trained, helped, excited teachers against regular teaching where teachers get no special help. A stricter test would be to compare situational teaching to another well-supported innovation. Self-reported interest measures can have social desirability bias. Students may report more enjoyment simply because they thought it was what people were supposed to say, rather than because they actually felt more enjoyment. Including the behavioral observation data gives some protection since the participation frequency is harder to lie about. But still, the feeling of enjoyment is hard to know for sure. We are focusing on 4th grade students which makes it difficult to generalize to other grades. Younger students who are not as literate may react differently to situational teaching; older students under greater exam stress will have fewer opportunities for experience-based methods. A particular grade level can be considered a reasonable beginning point but not an entire picture.

It raises as many questions as it answers, which is a good thing for productive research. Future studies could take this work further in several ways. Replicate in other settings to establish the limits of our findings. Rural schools have limitations that urban schools do not – less resources, different teacher training, students from different backgrounds and experiences. Does situational teaching work as well here? Or does it need resources and knowledge that make it hard for people to use? Different places and areas in other provinces would see if what we found out in Henan works everywhere else in China's schools. Comparative research that directly compares situational teaching to other innovative approaches can provide useful information for making practical decisions. Teachers and schools have to pick from different ways of teaching, each with people who like them and good reasons for using them. How does situational teaching compare to cooperative learning, technology-enhanced instruction, or project-based approaches when compared by similar measures and stringent designs? When does situational teaching come out on top, and when do other options look better? Without direct comparisons, people have to decide without all the facts.

Cost effectiveness research could allow for a systematic assessment of resource allocation choices. Situational teaching requires a lot of investment -time, materials, training on the part of the teacher. Does it have enough advantages over other ways we can use those resources? A comparison of the effect size with the inputs required will help schools make informed decisions and not rely on enthusiasm only. Qualitative research would add to our quantitative results with insights on how it matters and how it works to transmit information not visualizable by numbers. But what does it mean that the students make sense of things in situations? In what ways are they the most interesting moments to them and why? What do teachers think about abandoning traditional methodology in favor of situational one and how do they develop? The research would get some indepth interviews and ethnographic observations that would assist in the development of the theory and give its practical advice. The next step will relate not only to copying, but to the improvement. The more people get to learn about it, they can begin to collaborate to work out more effective ways of using it, discover which of its applications are most effective, and determine how it can be used to get young Chinese students learning and loving their language. The current research provides a realistic foundation to such continuous research.

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