

Chinese students' linguistic and cultural adjustment to total English immersion
in the United States, 1988-89.
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RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ENGLISH INSTRUCTION

Suggestions based on this study are relevant to English instruction both in China and Japan:

1. Include authentic English models and meaningful use of language as essential parts of all instruction;
2. Reading instruction should concentrate on contemporary materials from countries where English is a native language;
3. In the absence of native or near native speakers of English as teachers, or in schools where teachers are not very proficient in English, instructors could allow for ample exposure to English speaking persons through mass media and tapes. In addition, students could be encouraged to utilize good English sentences (as contained in textbooks and other reading materials) as competencies by making statements about their own lives as variations of such basic sentences. Improvement can come as teachers and students, alike, experiment with communicating orally while increasing their exposure to native English models on television, radio, in films and on tapes; and,
4. Vocabulary words should be defined in English as often as possible to avoid the matching up of English words with meanings in the home language. Once students gain control of a fairly consistent vocabulary, they can be encouraged to use those words in order to associate new words when they have to look up the English definition, not a home language translation, in standard English-only dictionary. Translation in the home language should be used to gain the meaning of the definition if unknown English words reused to define the new words(s). In this way, English will be mastered in terms of English contexts, not in terms of meanings in the home language.

More valuable use could be made of all the human effort, motivation and intelligence spent on learning how English makes sense in terms of rules and meanings in the home language by using this energy and time to develop a viable, meaningful, competence in English. It is necessary for students who are going to study in the United States to have English training before coming here. Adjustment to total English immersion should take place much earlier for students who have been trained than for those who have not.

The key to using a language for communication is practice with the structures in which actual information about the speaker/writer and his/her world is being transmitted. As learners practice meaningful use of English with a few structures, their minds and bodies become accustomed to the rhythms that are natural to people who speak the language as natives. Control of a few rhythms contains the essence for learning to control all of the remaining structures. If instructors would allow for this kind of early use of English, their students could go beyond the limits imposed by present methodology, and the present goals of English education in China or Japan. Language is a tool of communication. Practice makes perfect, and students should have more opportunity to practice their English, especially talking to people whose native

language is English. For example, it could be very useful to help students set up English clubs where English could be spoken among the students. A different, enhanced, perspective of English might be the fortuitous result of the suggested changes accompanied by an increase in actual English proficiency by Chinese/Japanese students. Undoubtedly, Chinese and Japanese universities as well as educational personnel in other settings, will benefit from these findings both in terms of English difficulties that Chinese and Japanese students may have and the suggested instructional background for total immersion.