

Connecting Language and Culture from Day One: Effective Approaches to Teaching Culture in Asian Language Classrooms

Montgomery College Professional Development Workshop 1

February 14, 2025

Welcome!

- Welcome to the Professional Development Workshop series for Montgomery College Asian Language Faculty!

Workshop	Date	Title
Workshop 1	Friday 2/14 3:00-5:00pm EST	Connecting Language and Culture from Day One: Effective Approaches to Teaching Culture in Asian Language Classrooms
Workshop 2	Friday 3/7 3:00-5:00pm EST	Sustaining Cultural Understanding: DEIAJ Strategies in the Language Classroom
Workshop 3	Friday 4/11 3:00-5:00pm EST	Promoting L2 learners' pragmatic agency: concept-based language instruction (C-BLI) in Asian Language Classrooms

Agenda

- Welcome to the first workshop session!

Time	Topic
3:00-3:15pm	Welcome and Introductions
3:15-4:00pm	Lecture: <i>Connecting Language and Culture from Day One</i>
4:00-4:10pm	Questions, Discussions, and Next Steps
4:10-4:55pm	Language-specific Breakout Rooms
4:55-5:00pm	Summary and Conclusion

Introductions

Norms

- As a participant, these are the norms that I agree to uphold:
 - Be respectful to ALL participants
 - Have positive intent
 - Actively participate in all activities
- After the workshop, we will share the slides with you via email.

Purpose

- The purpose of this workshop series is to explore the following topics:
 - Activating prior knowledge
 - Teaching language functions, structures, and vocabulary
 - Promoting speaking and supporting oral proficiency
 - Teaching cultures/intercultural communication, including to Novice learners

Learning Outcomes for Today

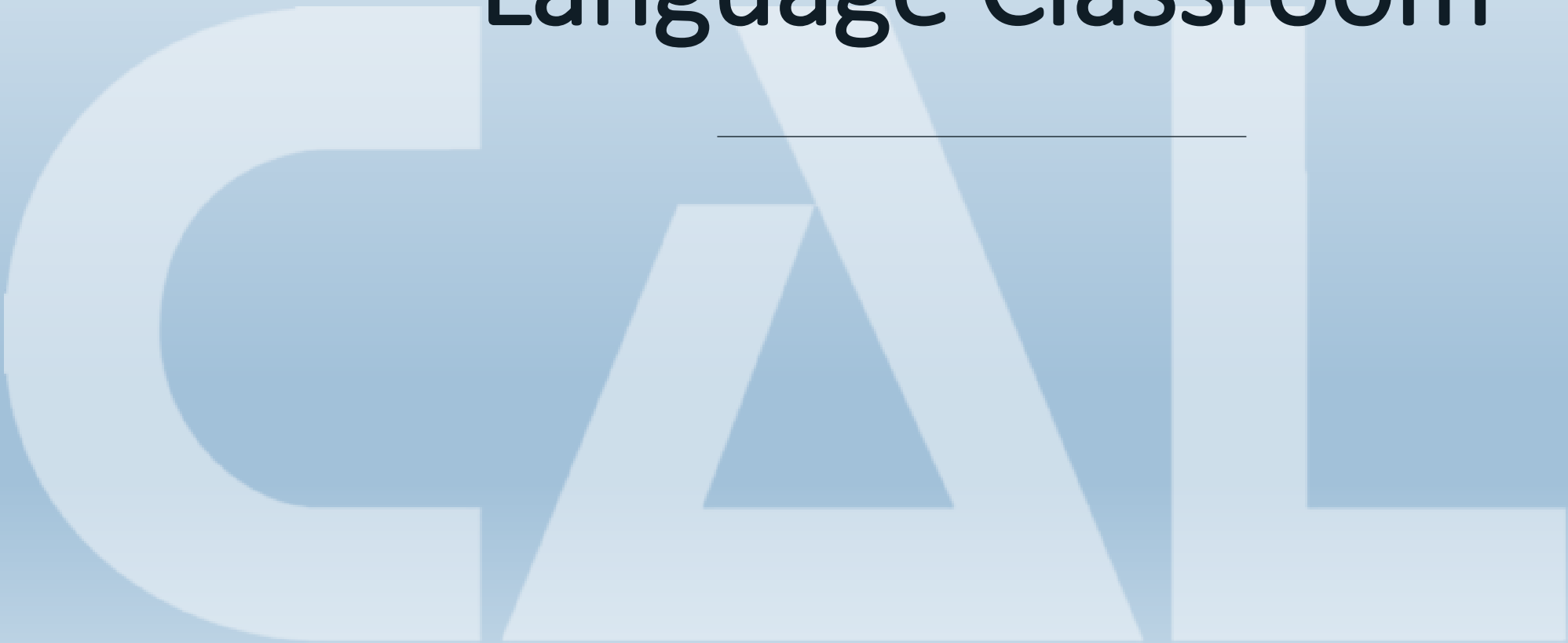
- By the end of today's workshop, you will be able to:
 - Understand the importance of teaching culture in the language classroom
 - Learn about best practices for teaching culture in language classroom
 - Discuss how to apply principles of teaching culture in your own classrooms

Introductions

- Facilitator introductions:
 - Elyssa Sun, Center for Applied Linguistics
 - Liping Yu, University of Washington
 - Dr. Sea Hee Choi, University of Washington
 - Jung Hee Kim, University of Washington
 - Dr. Rie Tsujihara, University of Washington
- Participant introductions:
 - Tell us your name and your role/teaching context at Montgomery College.



Importance of Culture in the Language Classroom



Activate Prior Knowledge

- Why is it important to learn culture when learning a foreign language?
- What effective ways are there to teach culture in a language classroom?
- What role do authentic materials (e.g., movies, books, songs) play in teaching culture?

Defining Culture in Language Classrooms

- Through language learning, **students gain a knowledge and understanding of the cultures** that use that language.
- Students cannot truly master the language until they have also mastered the cultural contexts in which the language occurs.

Ways of Thinking about Culture

1. **Surface culture** (visible and explicit):

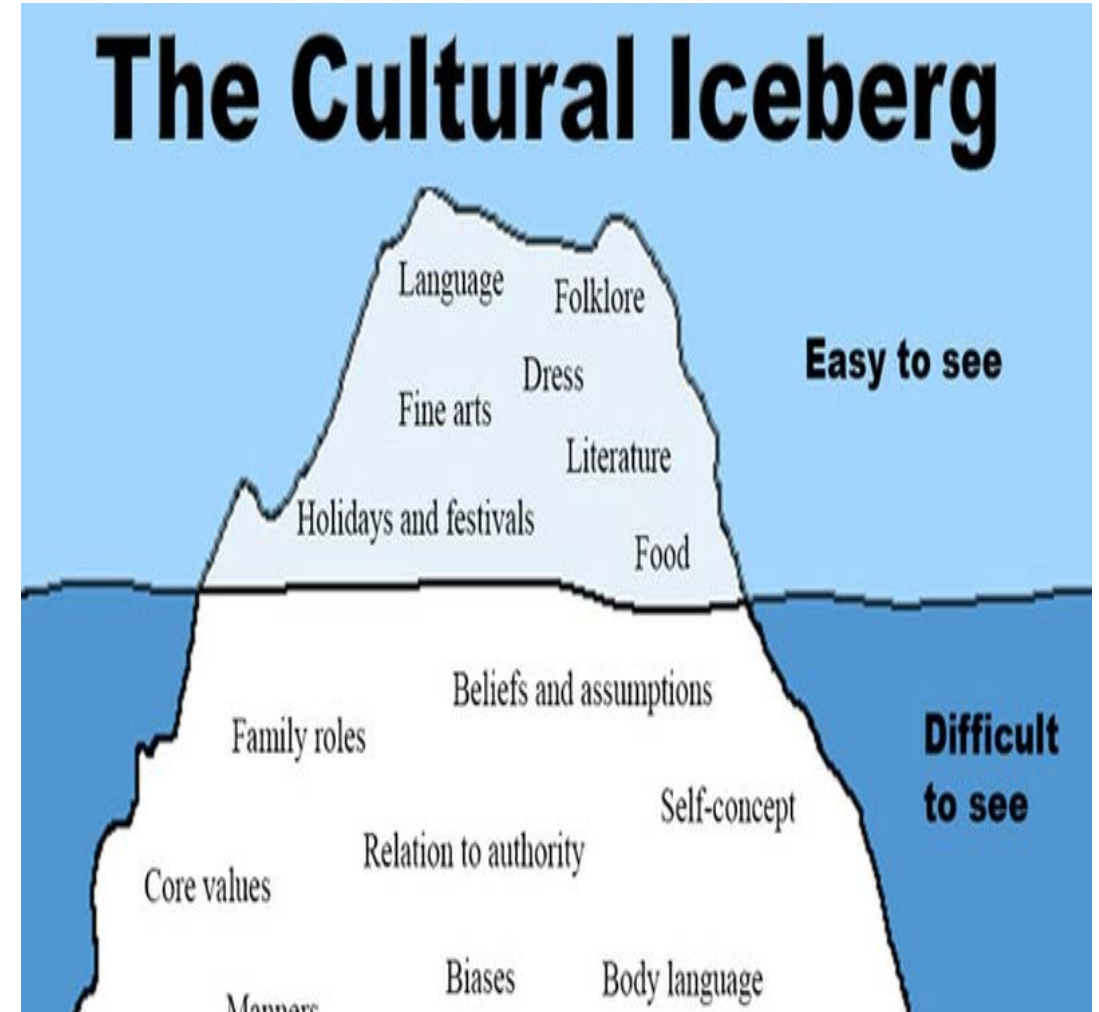
- Language, food, customs, art, music, and observable behaviors

2. **Shallow culture** (invisible):

- Unspoken rules and social norms

3. **Deep culture** (invisible):

- Implicit beliefs and worldviews



Different Aspects of Culture

- **Products** are the tangible or intangible creations of a particular culture.
- **Practices** are patterns of social interactions and behaviors.
- **Perspectives** are the philosophical perspectives, meanings, attitudes, values, beliefs, ideas that underlie the cultural practices and products of a society.

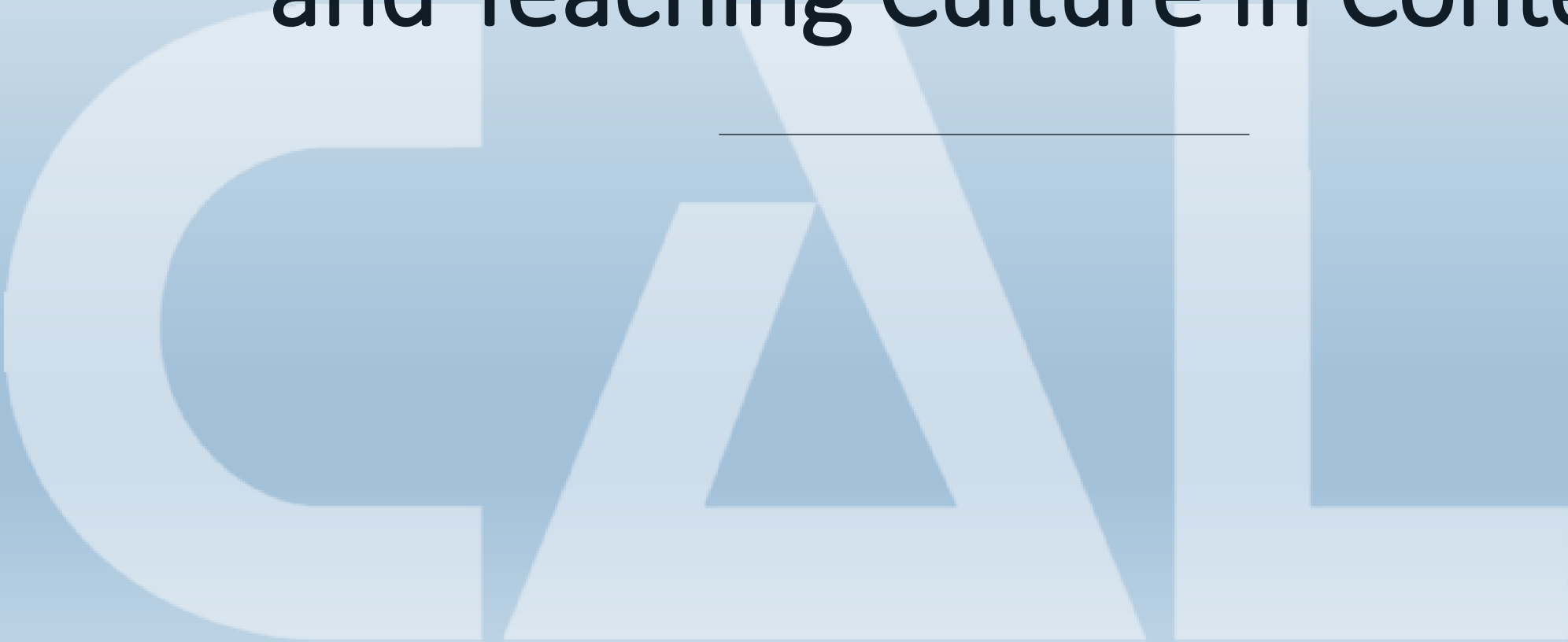
Why We Teach Culture in the Language Classroom

- It helps students develop the ability to interact effectively and appropriately with people from other linguistic and cultural backgrounds.
- It is essential for establishing effective, positive relationships across cultural boundaries, required in a global society.

How to Teach Culture in the Language Classroom

- General principles and guidance on teaching culture:
 - Integrate culture into language teaching and teaching culture in context
 - Demonstrate culture through language functions, structures, and vocabulary
 - Highlight the relationship between language and cultural practices/perspectives
 - Make comparisons and connections within and between cultures
 - Provide opportunities for observation, reflection, and interaction

Integrating Culture into Language Teaching and Teaching Culture in Context



The What and the Why

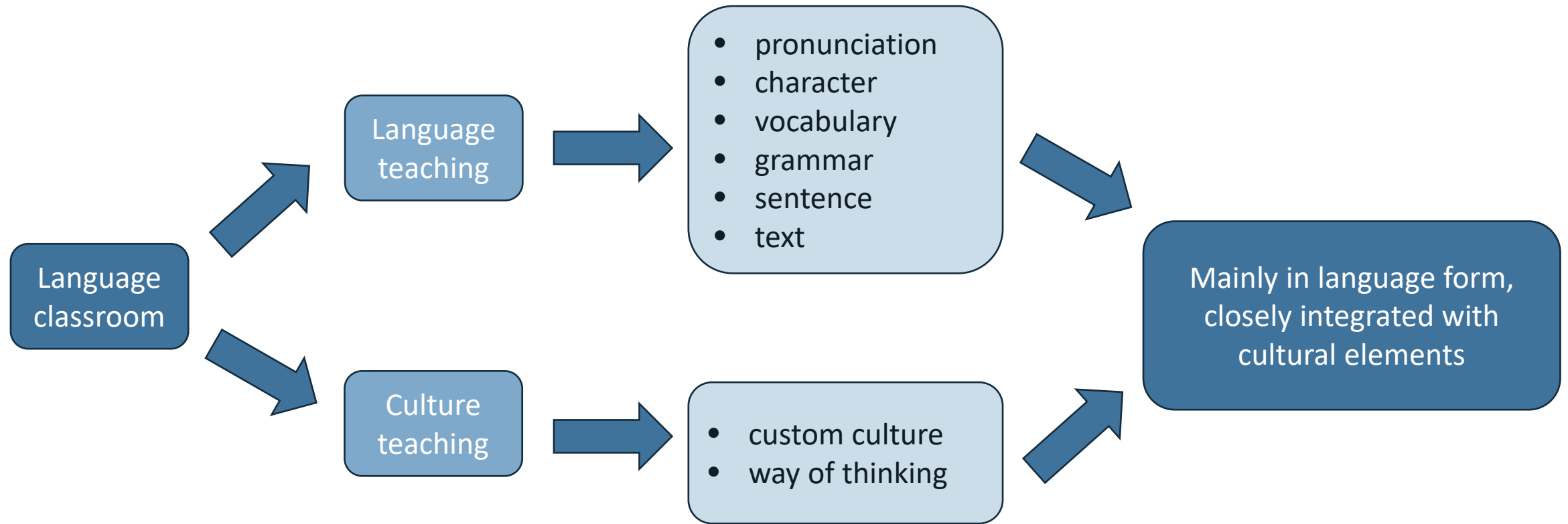
- Culture should be taught when it's relevant to the aspect of the language being taught.
- Integrating culture into language teaching enhances students' understanding of both the language and the cultural context in which it is used.

The How (1/2)

- Lessons should be immersive, interactive, and contextualized.
- Think about connections to unit and lesson themes and topics.
- Use authentic materials, cultural celebrations, idioms, comparisons, and technology.

The How (2/2)

- Use characteristics of the language to attract students to elements of the culture:



Example in Chinese: Teaching Chinese Culture in IC

- Cultural items reflected in the textbook: "Integrated Chinese" (IC)

IC Lesson	Language Functions	Related Culture
L1: 你好 "Hello"	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 初次见面怎么打招呼, 怎么问姓名• "是"	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Greeting culture (姓名文化, 打招呼的变化)
L2: 家庭 "Family"	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 介绍家人	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Culture of family members• Superiority/Hierarchy in a family: 长幼有序, 男尊女卑
L7: 学中文 "Learning Chinese"	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• "哪里, 哪里"• 大家好!	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Culture of modesty (回答别人赞美时要谦逊)• Importance of family (重家庭的观念)
L14: 过生日 "Birthdays"	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 吃生日蛋糕• 苹果, 梨, 和西瓜• 他是前年生的, 属狗。	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Birthday customs (过生日的习俗)• Culture of gift-giving (什么东西不能送)• Culture of Zodiac (属相的文化)

Example in Chinese: Teaching Culture through Greetings (1/3)

- Nǐ hǎo!
- 你好!
- nín hǎo
- 您好!



Example in Chinese: Teaching Culture through Greetings (2/3)

Asking Names in a casual way:

- Nǐ jiào shén.me míng.zi?
- 你 叫 什么 名字?
- Wo jiào_____.
- 我 叫 LN+ FN。
- Wo jiào Wáng Péng.
- 我 叫 王朋。

Example in Chinese: Teaching Culture through Greetings (3/3)

Asking Names in a formal way:

- Qǐngwèn, nín guìxìng
- 请问, 您贵姓?
- Wǒ xìng LN, nǐ.ne?
- 我姓 LN, 你呢?
- Wǒ xìng LN
- 我姓 LN.

Example in Chinese: Teaching Contextualized Culture

Adj. Predicate

Tā gāo bù gāo? (Is he tall?)

Tā hěn gāo. (He is very tall)

Tā bù gāo. (He is not tall)

(fù, shuài, bái, měi)



tall	+	-	-
rich	+	-	+
handsome	+	-	-
meet	+	-	?

Demonstrating Culture through Language Functions, Structures, and Vocabulary




The What and the Why

- Allows students to learn both linguistic and cultural perspectives simultaneously.
- Helps students communicate effectively in real-life situations while respecting cultural norms.

The How

- Research and brainstorm on connections between culture and different aspects of the language.
- Use authentic resources and materials to demonstrate how different aspects of the language appear in products/practices of the target culture.
- Engage students in activities that allow them to apply their cultural knowledge:
 - **Role-Playing**
 - **Real-Life Scenarios**
 - **Storytelling**

Example in Chinese: Teaching Culture through Structures

Target language structure: A**就是**B 

Activity about foreign words in Chinese (from English, French, Korean, Japanese):

- 巧克力, 咖啡, 奶昔, 三明治, 可乐, 汉堡
- 卡路里, 维生素, 蛋白质, 巴士, 吉普车, 卡车, 地铁, 高尔夫, 乒乓球, 迪斯科, 迷你裙, 皮夹克, 沙发, 马拉松, 幽默, 何可, 朋克, 博客, 逻辑
- 霸凌? 坦克? 克拉? 阿司匹林?

Example in Chinese: Teaching Culture through Greetings

IC-1 Lesson 13 问路 “Asking for Directions”

- 常老师：小白，下课了？上哪儿去？
- 白英爱：您好，常老师。我想去学校的电脑中心，不知道怎么走。



Elements of Culture

• How to address a person:

- 老/小 + Surname: (小白, 老王, *老欧阳, *小诸葛)
- Surname + position/title: 常老师, 李医生, 张律师, 王校长, 习主席

• How to greet a person:

- What they just did: 下课了？
- What they are about to do: 上哪去？
- What they are doing: 您散步呢。
- Special circumstances: 您核酸了吗？

Example in Chinese: Teaching Culture through Numbers

- Culture reflected in numbers (IC-1 Lesson Three):
 - Lucky number? Taboo numbers? Cursing numbers?
 - Lucky numbers: 66, 888 (fafafa), 999 (long and long)
 - 99 roses



Using Authentic Resources with Novice Learners

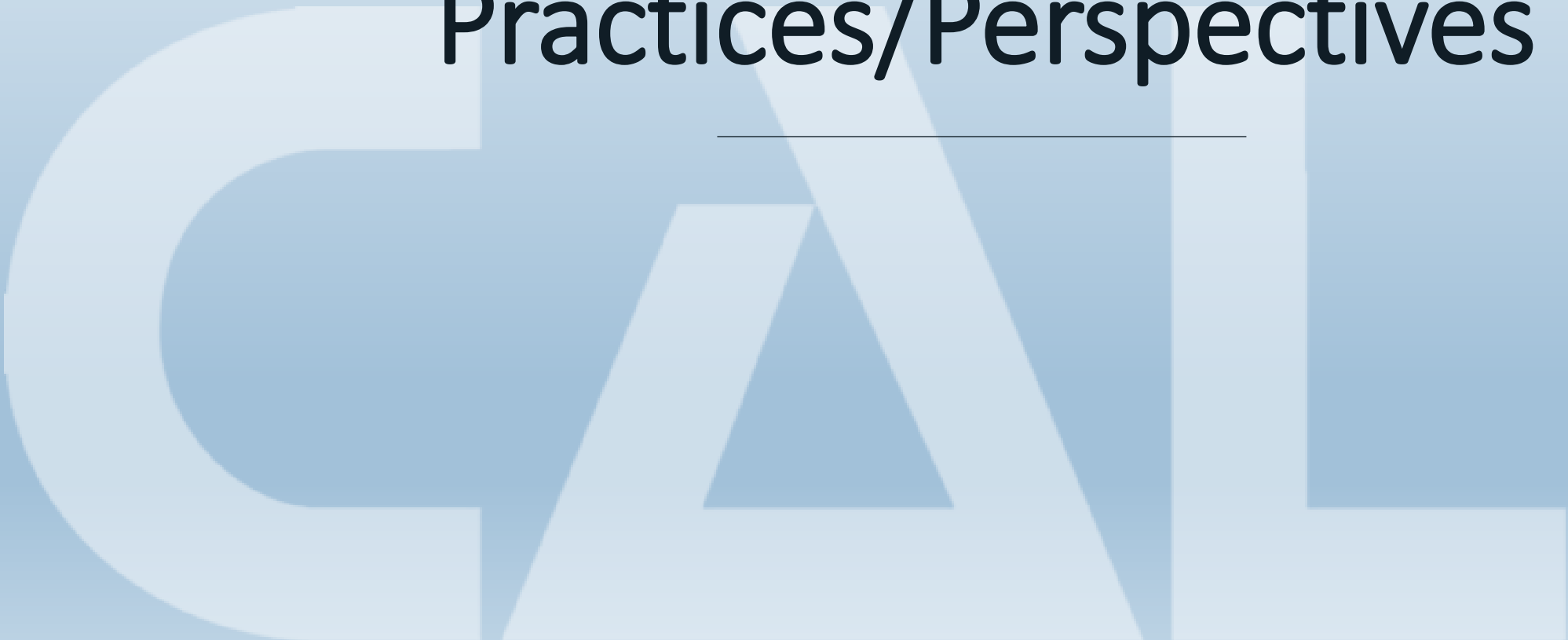
- Recommendations for Novice learners:
 - Start with introductory, non-verbal processing tasks
 - Follow with more challenging processing tasks
 - Introduce interpersonal and presentational tasks that students can accomplish to boost confidence
 - Build toward tasks of increasing difficulty across the communicative modes
 - Anticipate and plan for language needed to comprehend and discuss cultural practices, products, and perspectives



Blouwolff, R. (2017). Going deep with novice learners: Reimagining a school unit with authentic resources. *The Language Educator*, 42-46.

Retrieved from:
<https://comprehensibleclassroom.com/2013/11/09/see-you-at-actfl/>

Highlighting the Relationship between Language and Cultural Practices/Perspectives



The What and the Why

- Language and cultural practices are deeply intertwined, with linguistic expressions reflecting social values, traditions, and worldviews.
- Understanding these cultural-linguistic connections helps learners not only improve language skills but also navigate social interactions effectively.
- Makes language learning more meaningful for students.

The How

- Highlight the cultural practices or perspectives whenever they are relevant:
 - Greetings etiquette and honorifics
 - Use idioms, proverbs, and metaphors
 - Explore nonverbal communications
 - Share historical and social influences on the language

Example in Chinese: Practices of Gift-Giving

- IC-14 Birthday
 - The culture of gift-giving:
 - Jiu: 酒 (wine) 久 (long lasting)
 - Ping: 苹果 (apple) 平安 (safe)
 - Ji: 桔子 (orange) 吉祥 (luck)
 - Li: 梨 (pear) 离婚 (divorce)
 - Zhong: 钟 (clock) 送终 (funeral)

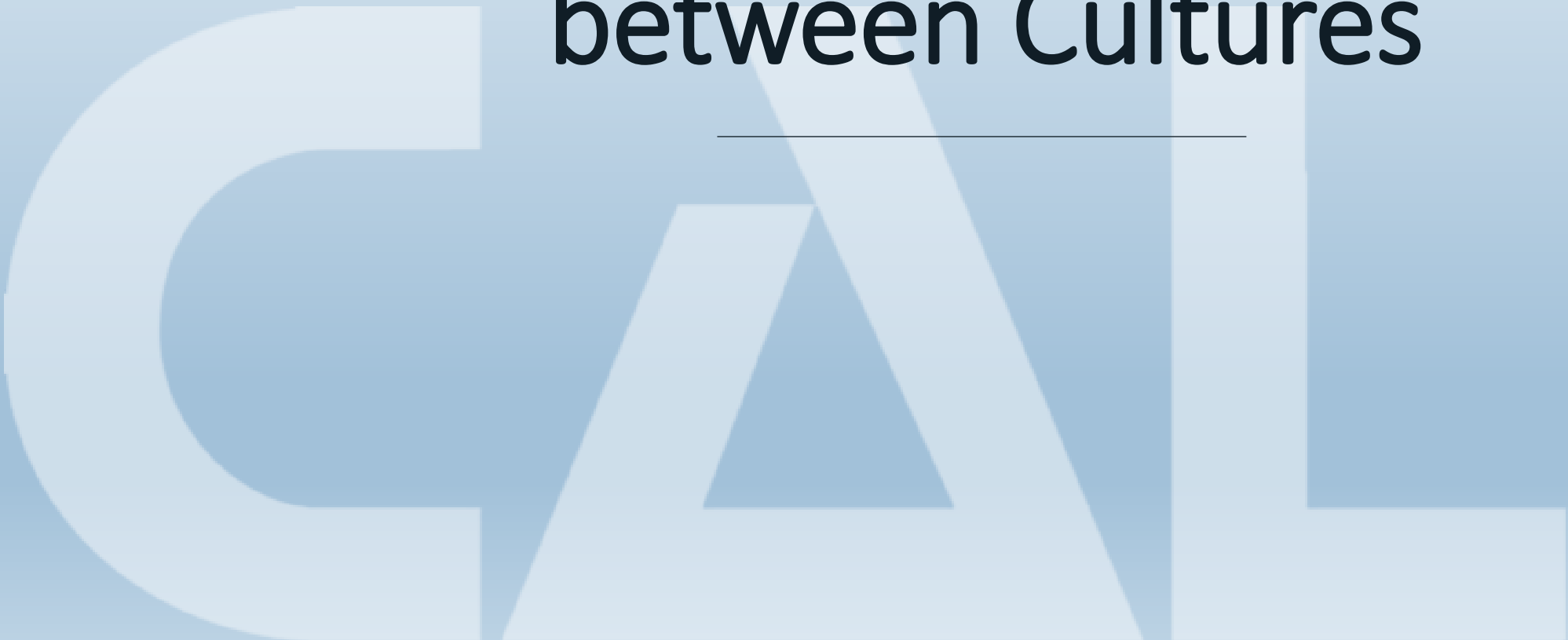


Example in Chinese: Use of Homophonic Words

- The culture of homophonic words



Making Comparisons and Connections within and between Cultures



The What and the Why

- These comparisons and connections can be between cultures (e.g., native culture and target culture) or within cultures (e.g., regional, generational, and social differences).
- Helps students develop intercultural competence and deepen their understanding of both culture.

The How

- **Use the 3P framework** (i.e., Products, Practices, and Perspectives) to guide comparisons and connections
- **Use comparison charts**
- **Role-play and scenarios** while noting cultural differences in language use and etiquette
- **Class discussions** on students' cultural observations and experience

with differences

Example in Chinese: Comparing Dining Etiquette across Cultures

Aspect	Chinese Culture	Western Culture
Chopsticks vs. Forks	Chopsticks; never leave them upright in rice	Fork and knife used for most meals
Seating Arrangements	Elders and guests sit first, most honored seat faces the door	No strict seating rules in casual meals
Paying the Bill	Host often insists on paying	Splitting the bill is common

Example in Chinese: Comparing Colors across Cultures

- IC-1 Lesson 9 Shopping
 - The culture behind the colors
 - Salesperson: What color do you like, yellow or red?
 - Colors considered auspicious by the Chinese:
 - 红眼病---Pinkeye
 - 灰色收入-gray income (illegal income)
 - 绿色食品- green food (healthy food)



Providing Opportunities for Observation, Reflection, and Interaction



The What and the Why

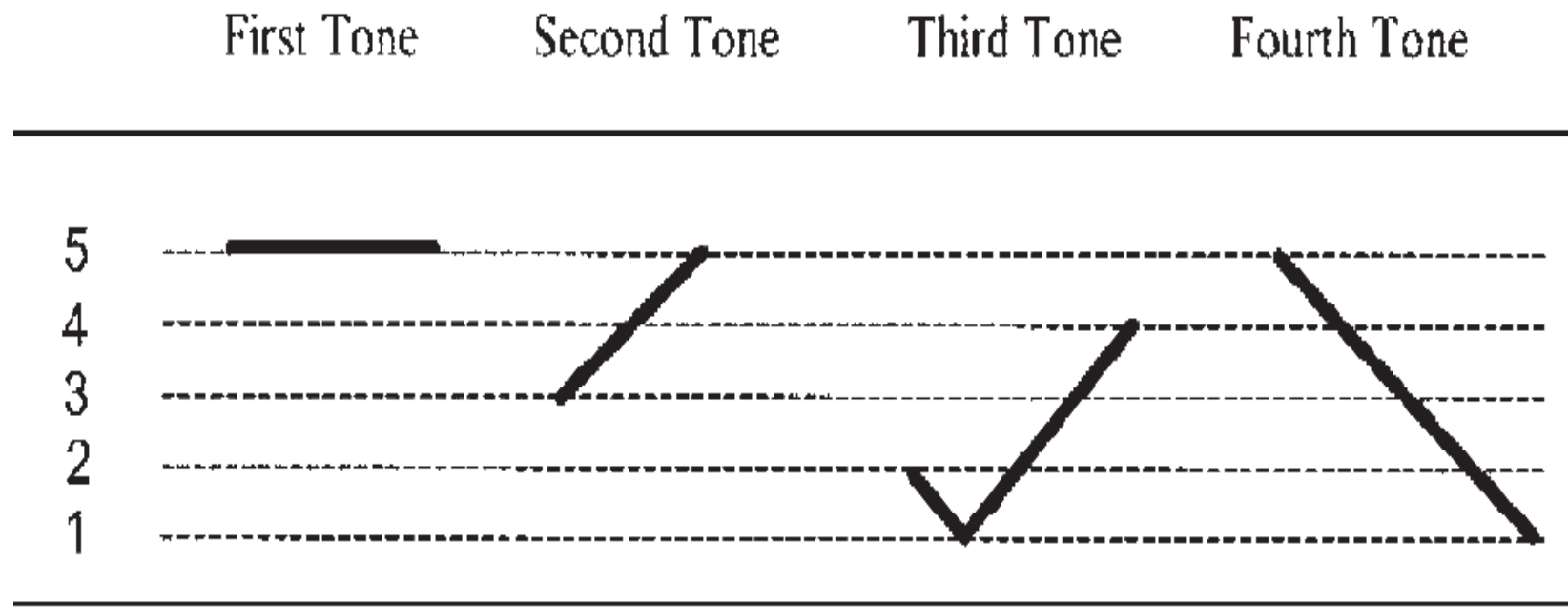
- Develop students' cultural awareness through observations and reflections.
- Enhance students' communication skills and allows them to communicate appropriately and effectively in social settings.
- Engage critical thinking and empathy and prepare students for real-world interactions.

The How

- Observation: expose students to authentic cultural products and practices
- Reflection: encourage students to compare, analyze, and question cultural perspectives
- Interaction: provide hands-on experience with real-life engagement with target culture

Example in Chinese: Tones (1/5)

- Use the classics to practice the tones, and let students experience the beauty of tones



Example in Chinese: Tones (2/5)

- Let students observe and interact with the musical beauty of Chinese through the four tones via:
 - Hundreds of Surnames 百家姓:
 - Tongue twister 绕口令:
 - Tang poetry and Song lyrics:
 - 唐诗宋词:



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Example in Chinese: Tones (3/5)

- Hundreds of Surnames 百家姓:

zhào qián sūn lǐ	zhōu wú zhèng wáng
赵钱孙李，	周吴郑王。
fèng chén chū wèi	jiǎng shěn hàn yáng
冯陈褚卫，	蒋沈韩杨。
zhū qín yóu xǔ	hé lǚ shī zhāng
朱秦尤许，	何吕施张。
kǒng cáo yán huà	jīn wèi táo jiāng
孔曹严华，	金魏陶姜。

Example in Chinese: Tones (4/5)

- Tongue twister 绕口令:



Example in Chinese: Tones (5/5)

- Experience the rhythm and artistic conception of Chinese poetry:



Review, Q&A, and Discussion

Review

- Today, we talked about five general principles and guidance on teaching culture:
 - Integrate culture into language teaching and teaching culture in context
 - Demonstrate culture through language functions, structures, and vocabulary
 - Highlight the relationship between language and cultural practices/perspectives
 - Make comparisons and connections within and between cultures
 - Provide opportunities for observation, reflection, and interaction



Discussion: Activate Prior Knowledge

Please unmute and share out:

- Why is it important to learn culture when learning a foreign language?
- What effective ways are there to teach culture in a language classroom?
- What role do authentic materials (e.g., movies, books, songs) play in teaching culture?

Next Steps

- For the next hour, we will enter the corresponding language-specific breakout room and discuss with the UW professor(s).
- **Guiding questions:**
 - *How are you teaching culture in your classroom now?*
 - *Which authentic materials have you used? How did they work out?*
 - *What was a particularly successful lesson plan that you had where you were able to integrate culture in language teaching?*
 - *Have you led activities such as study abroad, virtual exchanges, or cultural immersion? If yes, was it helpful in strengthening students' linguistic and cultural competencies?*
 - *What are the challenges you have experienced when connecting language and culture in your classroom?*

Conclusion

Summary

- In this workshop, you learned about:
 - the importance of teaching culture in the language classroom
 - best practices for teaching culture in language classroom
 - discussed ways to apply principles of teach culture in your own classrooms

Next Workshop

- We will meet on **Friday, March 7th** at **3-5 PM** (Eastern Time) for our second workshop session!
- Title: *Sustaining Cultural Understanding: DEIAJ Strategies in the Language Classroom*

Contact Us

Email: wsun@cal.org

Telephone: 202-362-0700

Twitter: @CAL_Linguistics

Instagram: @LanguageApplied

Facebook: www.facebook.com/CALLinguistics

LinkedIn: www.linkedin.com/company/center-for-applied-linguistics/

YouTube: www.youtube.com/c/CenterforAppliedLinguistics



Culture in vocabulary: categories vs individuals

月: 1-12 月

星期: 星期一-日

球: 篮球、足球、大/小球

店: 商店、药店、书店、花

语: 英语、汉语、日语、法语

菜: 白菜、中国菜、日本菜

车: 汽车、火车、自行车

- 肉: 牛肉、鸡肉、猪肉
- 机: 电视机、洗衣机、烘干
- 花: 红花, 百合花, 荷花
- 山: 火山、雪山、名山
- 站: 车站, 地铁站、加油站
- 学: 大学, 中学, 小学
- 家: 音乐家, 作家, 画家
- 电: 电话, 电视, 电影,
- 衣: 大衣, 雨衣, 毛衣

Chinese vocabulary with vivid images and strong sense of picture

- specific description: to fire sb: 扫地出门, 炒鱿鱼, 卷铺盖卷走人
- Idioms and proverbs: It is difficult for people to communicate with each other: 鸡同鸭讲, 对牛弹琴,



Example in Chinese: Teaching Characters through Games

- Play word puzzle games with students:
 - 山上还有山 【出】
 - 一人在内 【肉】
 - 半个月亮 【胖】
 - 一人一口 【合】
 - 两个月亮一样高 【朋】
 - 今天心里很高兴 【念】
- 【日】字加一笔变成了什么字？
- 田, 旦, 电, 旧, 由, 申, 甲,
目, 白