

## LiD used to teach English in China

### LiD used to teach English in China



In Guizhou University in south-eastern China we use LiD as part of a program called HILL. HILL stands for Holistic Integrated Language Learning. We use this to teach English.

There are two major sources of inputs used by the students. First, is the “Learning in Depth” topic that every student is assigned and second are the Delta Stories that are used.

Learning in Depth has been taken from a program developed in Canada where K-12 students become domain experts by repeated research and reporting on a single topic from kindergarten through the 12th grade. “Learning in Depth is a simple though radical innovation in curriculum and instruction designed to ensure that all students become experts in something during their school years. Each child is given a particular topic to learn about through her or his whole school career. Over time each student builds a personal portfolio on their topic. In the HILL program we took a list of topics from the LiD web site and deleted some items that we felt were less relevant in China. A few items were combined. There is nothing special or profound about this list. Some otherwise potential topics tend to be too general and others too specific.

We do about half of the classroom work in groups lead by a TA. Every TA is free to make changes to the LiD topic list. They are encouraged to experiment with it after consultation with the students and the lead teacher.



As applied in HILL each student is responsible for a two minute oral presentation to their group every other week. Some students present in week one and others in week two and so on. The use of the LiD topics has been very interesting. So far, we have noticed that about half way through the semester the students begin to complain. They claim that they have found everything they can about their topic and request a new topic. The TA’s politely refuse and the students then start to find a creativity that they did not know they had. An example of this is that a student had the topic of “animal migrations” and he decided that “people” are a kind of animal so he started to give presentations on things like “The Trail of Tears” and other deeply meaningful and interesting topics. At the end of the first semester of the HILL program we did some video interviews of students. One of the questions we asked was, which part of the HILL program did you like the best? One student responded that she liked everything but she especially loved the LiD topics because they all became researchers.

In fact, according to my observations, the LiD presentations varied greatly from not very interesting to captivating. In most cases, they improved over time as social pressure kicked into the process in a subtle way.

