

CHINA

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**Rewrite the Lives of Children with Hearing
Impairment: A Case Study of an LRC teacher**

Summary

"LRC" (Learning in Regular Class) refers to integrating children with disabilities into regular school classes for their learning. This paper is a report on my study aimed at analyzing the experiences of an LRC teacher in Chinese school. The object chosen for study is a teacher who taught children with hearing impairment in LRC environments. I conducted this study through 7 intensive interviews with teacher, parents, director for LRC projects in Beijing, in addition to a large collection of relevant data including written documents and audio-visual records.

I will present my findings in the following aspects:

- 1) The attitude changing of the teacher towards LRC. There are 3 phases from total rejection to sympathetic acceptance, to positive participation in the practice.
- 2) Characteristics desirable or essential for an LRC teacher to be successful. These include the sense of responsibility, searching for the resources initially, and self-reflectivity.
- 3) The external elements for an LRC teacher to be successful. Teacher training is the most important thing, then the change of the students could make the teacher feel the life become more meaningful, at last the infection of excellent special educators could push the teacher into the LRC project.
- 4) Some efficacious strategies for LRC teaching. These include teaching the children to verbalize the thinking process while they are resolving problems, training them to use mathematic gestures to help themselves think logically, encouraging their fellow students to be involved and to offer assistance and support, and teaching the students in accordance to their aptitudes.
- 5) Some efficacious strategies for LRC management. These include how to create a non-discriminatory atmosphere in which students realize that everyone is different and has his/her special needs, how to create an equal environment, which means that every student in the class enjoys the right of being cared by the teacher, and the right of obtain success.
- 6) The main stresses of LRC teachers encounter are: be lack of understanding by the colleagues,

shoulder too heavy working burdens, and suffer too many visits and inspections.

7) Main obstacles in LRC students' development. These include they are unable to transit smoothly from kindergarten to primary school, they could be puzzled by unwanted visits, they could be cumbered by choosing a school having experience or near the home. At last, LRC students would draw more time and energy from teachers, so it might block the development of the most intelligent students.

Practice of special education such as LRC is still an innovation in China. Much support and involvement from teachers and the general society is needed. Much study and research also needs to be carried out. It is my hope that the analyses and findings presented here will serve as a basis for my further research in relevant areas.

Opening words: The story of a girl and starfishes

"When the tide recedes, thousands of starfishes are scattered along the beach. They will be exposed to the glare of the sun and die soon afterwards. With a small spade in hand, a little girl is digging out dying starfishes from the sand in earnest. And then she tosses them back to the sea one by one. An old man, taking a stroll on the beach, passed by the little girl. Shaking his head, he remarked, 'there are so many starfishes, how can you help all of them?' The little girl looks up at the sparkling blue sea and looks again at the starfish in her hand, saying, 'yes, I can't help all of them, but for the starfish in my hand, I save her life.'"

The story was told by my colleague Mrs. Peng Xiaguang at a seminar in September. By quoting this story, she wished to hearten all the people who pursue the career of special education. I was shocked by the story, not only because it is thought provoking and appealing, but also it coincides with my recent research experiences.

From July on, I have been collecting materials about a teacher, whose name is Xu Wenqi. With the accumulation of data and further exploration into the research, I find myself more attracted by my research object, because of appreciation as well as respect. The several deaf children's life has been enlightened by the dedicated teacher, like the starfishes returning to the bosom of the sea.

This research is just a case study of an LRC (Learning in Regular Class) teacher. It is not intended to prove that other teachers have similar experience and feelings. However, I believe if a task is assumed by a small number of people, even just one person, it still demonstrates a certain possibility, which in turn needs perfect explanation. Besides, this disquisition is not an end to my research but an attempt to propose ideas and provoke controversy, on which I would like to base my further research.

Why should I conduct research on LRC?

The idea of conducting systematic and intensive research on LRC sprang from my curiosity when I was a grad student two years ago. Once I went to a school to investigate into LRC. Three teachers made comments like this, "if I could choose, I wouldn't teach the students who are LRC students. It is too difficult! I can't do like A and B (both of the teachers enjoy high reputation in this field.) I simply can't do that'. (2000-4-12, MX Primary School, research data) The purpose of that research is to learn what arrangements and adjustments the school has made to meet the needs of LRC students. Hence I didn't inquire into these problems, but it did impress me: why do they think it is so "difficult"? Is it because they don't have sufficient teaching ability? Why can't they teach like A and B? Is it the case that A and B have certain characteristics that they don't possess? (2000-4-12, research log) Prompted by curiosity, I began to pay attention to research in this field. Before I set forth what I have learned, I would like to acquaint you with the general situation of the development and research in this field in China. In that case, you will have a complete understanding of the background of the research.

LRC (Learning in Regular Class) refers to integrating children with disabilities into regular school classes for their learning. By the early 80's in 20th century, LRC has emerged in the rural areas in China because children with disabilities in those areas didn't have access to special education schools, which centers on big cities (Chen Yunying, 1996). Regular schoolteachers began to enroll children with disabilities according to their conscience. In 1988, the former National Ministry of Education director Mr. He Dongchang for the first time brought up the term "Learning in Regular Class" on the first National Special Education Conference (Chen Yunying, 1997). The spot check in 1989 revealed that there were over 8,000,000 school age children with disabilities, among whom only 1% received education while 45% couldn't go to school, the remaining studied at regular classes or special classes in normal schools. This demonstrates that the mere establishment of schools offering special education can't fill the crying needs in China. In view of the fact that we have about 1,000,000 primary schools all over the country, if we set up special education classes or learning in regular class programs in every primary school, the educational rights of children with disabilities will be guaranteed (Chen Yunying, 1996). In 1994, National Ministry of Education enacted a document concerning a tentative attempt to originate the LRC project. Since then, children with disabilities have benefited more from the compulsory education and LRC has developed conspicuously. By the year 2000, a pattern for special education has been formed in the country, with special education schools as the backbone and learning in regular class program being the principal part. And there are 214,417 children with disabilities learning in regular primary schools, accounting for 69% of all the children with disabilities (Chinese Educational Almanac, 2000). In the meantime, researchers have been concerned about balancing the needs of students with disabilities and normal students to ensure that normal students' study is not affected. It may well be concluded that "the most influential educational reform and practice in special education in Mainland China is LRC program, and it has been attracting

researchers' attention and stimulating them to explore further...A comprehensive survey of the experiment and research in this field in Mainland China comprises objects, teaching contents, teaching methods, educational management, evaluation, unsolved problems, etc." (Su Lingxin, 2000).

Among a multitude of researches in learning in regular class, research on teachers fall into the following four categories. (Category of the first significance is how to train LRC teachers. The main viewpoints are summarized as follows: First, special education should be added to the curriculum of teachers college; governments of different levels ought to preside over training courses, training programs need to be strengthened to help teachers; schools commit themselves to promoting research and inviting experts to guide the teachers.

Secondly, discussions should be hold on what kind of teaching skills these teachers need to have, the main points read: Teachers should master the basic notions of special education; they ought to learn fundamentals of the mental and physical development of children with disabilities; moreover they are supposed to cultivate the ability to sort out and evaluate children with disabilities at the initial stage; and the ability to design IEP (individualized educational plan), etc.

The third focus is on the educational policies teachers implement. From these disquisitions, we know that the most widely used strategies are group teaching, co-learning, after-class tutorship, etc.

Teachers' attitudes towards the handicapped students are the fourth point. Researchers don't share the same views here. Some believe that teachers hold an optimistic attitude towards this project (Liu Chunling, Du Xiaoxin & Yao Jian, 2000; Zhang Ningsheng, 2002) while others are more pessimistic (Wei Xiaoman & Yuan Wende. 2000).

Although these researches are conducive to my understanding of the general situation, still I don't think that they can answer all my questions. First, most of the data provided are statistics taken from questionnaires or merely theoretical assumption. As to questions like, what kind of training have the teachers received, what effect the training has had on the teachers, what are the qualities required of the teachers in addition to expertise, what educational strategies do the teachers employ, what problems have the teachers encountered in their work, etc, no one has ever carried out a thorough and explanatory research. However, these problems can be treated properly by means of qualitative research method. This is my motive for conducting research on LRC.

Next, since teachers spend a lot of time with students in such classes, that is to say, teachers play a pivotal role in the students' studies. If we find out more about teachers' needs and try to facilitate them with all kinds of support available, students will the be ultimate beneficiary.

* Literature comes from *Chinese Journal of Special Education*, 1994-2002; *Special Education Research*, an informal publication, 1992-2002; *Modern Special Education*, 1995-2002.

Last, in my opinion teachers are the key to such a project who advance its association with the society, since the program concerns various sections of society, e.g. the decision-making government sections, the educational administrative sections, research organizations, communities, etc. And as the executors of the project, their experience can appropriately account for the effect and indicate the present problems and how to improve, etc. These are not only reasons inspiring me to study teachers in this field, but also the purport of the research.

What do I want to learn? How can I learn it?

When I began my research, I was puzzled. "What on earth do I want to know about the teachers?" In my planning stage, the theories I have learned, the books I have read, my experience have had more and more evident influence on my choice.

In the atmosphere stressing on the quality of education, more researches are conducted on teachers, especially successful teachers or named expert teachers. We discuss the developmental stages of expert teachers, individual characteristics, teaching and management capabilities, hoping to find factors that are conducive to the cultivation of green hand teachers so that we can raise educational quality faster and thoroughly. Therefore, this research was intended to discuss the following questions initially:

What characteristics are required of successful teachers in this field?

What other factors can help teachers to achieve success?

What teaching and class managing strategies do the successful teachers employ?

What are the main problems of LRC in the teachers' eyes?

Since I assume that knowledge is multi-layered and constructed, when I began to conduct the research, especially when I had a face-to-face conversation with the interviewee, new problems arose and new concepts popped up now and then. Consequently the conceived research plan has changed. These issues will be discussed in the section "what have I discovered?"

My major in my graduate years is deaf education; so I am familiar with psychological development of deaf children and the educational principles of deaf children. That's why I want to conduct my research on teachers who have taught deaf students. Undoubtedly I will have more common ground with such teachers, which is a great help for me to understand them. Furthermore, to achieve my research goal, I hope to find a "successful" teacher who is experienced in this field. The definition I give for "successful" is "having received awards endowed by Beijing municipal government and bearing high fame." I happened to meet such a teacher, Mrs. Xu Wenqi, last year. She suits the demands perfectly. She retired last October and has been awarded for her contribution to special education several times. She has been invited to be a special education itinerate teacher by a certain school district. Besides, it is hard to find other research

objects, for I am busily engaged in my work, so I decide on Mrs. Xu. On July 11, I told her my intention on phone and she accepted my request. "I am glad to talk about it with you, there is nothing special, I'd like to tell you what I know." (2002-7-11, Mrs. Xu, telephone records) We interviewed 4 times: 2002-7-18, 2002-7-23, 2002-8-5, 2002-8-23.

I also take a random sample of 2 students out of the 13 deaf students ever taught by Mrs. Xu and asked Mrs. Xu to contact their parents for me. The students are Wang and Li, Wang was Mrs. Xu's first LRC student, and she is a high school student now; Li is still a 5-grade student, and he was taught by Mrs. Xu from 1-4 grades. Thus I made an interview schedule with the parents, for Wang's mother, 2002-7-20; for Li's mother, 2002-8-2. Talking with the parents was included in my preparation for the research, for the following two reasons: first, to enrich my materials, secondly, to learn what characteristics a successful teacher have from the parents' angle and how the parents evaluate the work of the teachers. In my interview, Mrs. Xu mentioned Ye Liyan several times and talked about his influence. Therefore, I also decided to interview Ms. Ye on September 4, who happens to be one of the originators of promote deaf children to learn in regular class in Beijing. And he is still one of the people in charge of the LRC program. As a result, in the interview with Mr. Ye, I mainly inquired about the following questions: the training of teachers who would like to accept handicapped students in regular class; the characteristics required of such teachers; the teaching strategies teachers employ in such cases and problems in such a project in Beijing.

In my former research plan, I intended to go to the school where Mrs. Xu taught before she retired. The idea was dismissed because of the change of school principal and personnel as well as some other restricting factors, so the specific methods and interviewees changed in accordance with the new problems.

How did I collect and sort out my data?

My data can be classified into three main types:

1. The result of intensive interviews:

Once the interviewee agreed, I used my tape recorder to record the interview. Meanwhile, I put down the key words on paper. This material has played a key role in my research. I made very clear mark about the time, date, place, people, and theme of the tape and interview record. At the same time, I tried to mark down the interviewee's expression, motion, and the change of intonation.

2. Other related information:

In addition to being interviewed, Mrs. Xu also gave me her teaching materials, including disquisitions, teaching plans, tapes shot in class, etc. What's more, at my request the school principal offered me other related materials, including IEP for LRC students, personal information of

individual deaf students, educational reform disquisitions, etc.

3. Research log:

Research log records my reflection and arrangement each time after I sort out my interview materials, or finish reading literature, or watch videotapes. The analysis and collecting are synchronized. As to the collected materials, I deal with it immediately like this: initial analysis of the original materials, classifying the files, description work or chart making indicating people, date, situation, source, etc. Then I read these materials carefully, and compare the registered concepts with the theme according to the situation, time, and place. At the same time, classification is carried out repeatedly and accumulation of materials continues.

What have I discovered?

1. The attitude changing of a teacher towards LRC:

This is a question that I have not considered during my research. During the visiting to Mrs. Xu, in order to make the talking natural, I asked her: "When did you start to work as an LRCteacher?" I was wrong when I considered that the answer I got would be a simple one. "Mrs. Xu was telling the her experiences continuously, during which I had a strong feeling: Well, is it not the attitude changing of a teacher towards LRC!" (2002-7-18, research log)

The attitude of Mrs. Xu towards LRC can be divided into three phases: total rejection, sympathetic acceptance, and positive participation. In 1991, Mrs. Xu was the teacher in charge of 1 grade, in which a deaf girl called Wang studied. After Mrs. Xu knew this, she firstly thought about finding the girl's parents and suggested them to send the girl back to the school for the deaf: "I think that the deaf child is not able to hear and speak, how can they keep up with the class? What's more, I am not able to teach them. The school for the deaf is the only place for them to learn". (2002-7-18, Mrs. Xu, intensive interview) Since being not familiar with the deaf child, and never heard of LRC, Mrs. Xu believed that studying at school for the deaf is the most reasonable choice. (2002-7-18, Mrs. Xu, intensive interview)

Wang's mother found Mrs. Xu, and told her that Wang had been trained at a rehabilitation center for deaf children, although her pronunciation was not clear, she could still communicate by reading lips and using the remaining hearing. Wang's mother also told there was the case in foreign country that deaf child studied at normal school reported by a newspaper. Wang's mother found Mrs. Xu for several times, imploring Mrs. Xu to accept her child. Due to the sympathy for the child, Mrs. Xu agreed to accept Wang: "I know the parent is not easy, and it was reported that such child is able to study at normal school, so I will try." (2002-7-18, Mrs. Xu, intensive interview) Mrs. Xu accepted Wang, while she did not know what method should be adopted to teach the deaf. Therefore she took the method of "after-class tutorship". When the class was over, Mrs. Xu kept Wang staying and had lesson for her, talking, writing and explaining. Although

such method could help Wang on her study, it cost large amount of time and energy for both child and teacher, and made them exhausted. Through teaching, Mrs. Xu realized gradually that only as the teacher finds out a suitable way of teaching, is the deaf child able to study at normal school. (2002-7-18, Mrs. Xu, intensive interview)

On 1993, the training program for the teacher of regular class was held at Beijing. Mrs. Xu was recommended to attend the training by educational official of the school district. Mrs. Xu had benefit greatly from this training. She had applied the methods learned from training into the teaching practice, and obtained good effect. Wang's study performance became better and better, and was able to communicate with other teachers and students smoothly. "You really see the difference of the child, and the pleasure can not be expressed by the words." (2002-7-18, Mrs. Xu, intensive interview) In the following several years, Mrs. Xu had taught 12 deaf students. "I am really very glad when I see the changes of these children, although it is very hard, I have love it." (2002-7-18, Mrs. Xu, intensive interview)

From refusing to total rejection to sympathetic acceptance, to positive participation in the practice, Mrs. Xu's attitude changing towards LRC has direct connections with the grasping of the basic theories of LRC and teaching methods of deaf education. "If I did not attend the training, and no one instruct me, it would be impossible for myself to achieve anything. Without the sense of accomplishment, it would be difficult to have affection towards LRC." (2002-7-18, Mrs. Xu, intensive interview)

Although there is no one to conduct the phase analysis for the attitude changing of the LRC teacher, the investigation made by Liu in 2000 at Shanghai shows that "the effective training" and "normal teacher accepting disabled child" were relevant (Liu Chunling, Du Xiaoxin & Yao Jian, 2000), there was significant difference between the teachers with and without training. There is common viewpoint between the investigation result and my conclusion.

2. Characteristics of an LRC teachers to be successful

Some characters possessing by Mrs. Xu contribute a lot to the fact that she is able to teach the deaf child well at regular class. First of all, "the sense of responsibility". "The sense of responsibility" has been mentioned by Mrs. Xu, the parents and Ms. Ye for several times. "As a teacher, the basic requirement is having the sense of responsibility. No matter what kind of child, the teacher has the responsibility to teach him/her well when he/she in your class" (2002-7-23, Mrs. Xu, intensive interview). Ms. Ye commented, combining with his experience of instructing LRC teachers "the successful teachers are those with responsibility, they do not teach for the only purpose of teaching, but teaching by their hearts." (2002-9-4, Mr. Ye, intensive interview) "Mrs. Xu is the teacher with most responsibility I have ever known. She did tutorship for my child every day, and then let my child's classmates to teach her words and sentences...She thinks out every possible way to make the child study." (2002-7-20, Wang's mother, intensive interview)

"As a teacher, the most important is the sense of responsibility. It all depends on whether you treat every child equally, no matter he/she is deaf or not, and you will teach them same." (2002-8-2, Li's Mother, intensive interview)

From the above recites, it can be seen that "the sense of responsibility" has two meanings at least: firstly, whether the teacher can treat every child equally, without discrimination for the children with disabilities. Secondly, whether the teacher has ever considered all the possible teaching methods and strategies making the child learn.

The second characteristic is to search for the resource initially and take advantage of the resources. The work of LRC will not be accomplished by individual efforts, it depends on the cooperation of professional team consisted by the administrative officials, special education experts, doctors, psychologists etc. However under the current situation of China, such kind of team has not established yet. Then what shall the LRC teachers do as meeting difficulties? "Asking when unknowing. I like to ask questions when I were in the training class. Anytime I met difficulties and problems I will call the experts like Mr. Ye for the solution, although that will cause trouble for them, anyway I must make it clear and get the problem solved. Actually, they are warmhearted. •••And I always look through materials, knowing what teaching methods adopted by others." (2002-7-23, Mrs. Xu, intensive interview) Being able to search for the resource initially and take advantage of the resources, Mrs. Xu gradually held "the human resource network" and "the material resource network" for herself. The human resource network includes education specialist for the deaf, specialist for LRC, administrative official of the district education committee being responsible for LRC etc. The "the material resource network" includes the relative information concerning psychology development of the deaf child, language training for the deaf child, LRC theory, as well as the class records of Mrs. Xu during these years' practices. All these materials have efficiently help Mrs. Xu to resolve the problems on teaching. "At present, when I meet problem, I will call them, and they will solve the problem for me", "The two cases of materials will help the young teachers without exaggeration." (2002-7-23, Mrs. Xu, intensive interview)

The third character is being good at self-reflectivity. Self-reflectivity is a prominent characteristic of expert teachers, which is reflected as the timely feedback and improvement of the teaching practice. "I often think about what is right and what is wrong during my teaching practice, and what improvement can be made." (2002-7-23, Mrs. Xu, intensive interview) "I like to contemplate, and after the training, I've read some books and always think what improvement can be made on my teaching method." (2002-8-5, Mrs. Xu, intensive interview) For Mrs. Xu's self-reflectivity, the parent has some experiences as well, Wang' mother commented that: "Mrs. is responsible for her teaching, and she is different from other teachers, who seldom to reflect after teaching. Mrs. Xu will reflect. She can teach Wang successfully, besides the sense of responsibility, the more important is that she is able to think over the problems." (2002-7-20, Wang's

mother, intensive interview)

3. The external elements for an teacher to be successful

Besides the characteristics possessed by the LRC teacher, the external elements shall not be ignored, as considering the success on teaching.

During the teaching practices of Mrs. Xu, the training affected her mostly. "Before training, I am just spending my time and energy fruitlessly, I really do not know how to teach. While after training, I understand that, well, the development of the deaf child is like this, I'd better pay special attention to their inner language." (2002-7-23, Mrs. Xu, intensive interview) "If there was not training, only with my own efforts, it is possible to achieve something, but not today's achievement, it may not be better than this." (2002-8-5, Mrs. Xu, intensive interview) Mr. Ye mentioned that: "For all these years of managing LRC project in Beijing, the deepest impression is that training for the teacher is the crucial step, since the teachers are the direct performers of LRC, and nothing can be achieved, if the teacher is not qualified." (2002-9-4, Mr. Ye, intensive interview) It was 1993, when Mrs. Xu accepted systematic training that was held by Beijing Education Committee, experts were invited to give lessons for LRC teachers who taught deaf students. All the classes were arranged on Sunday, once for every two weeks. In this training, the teachers were not only required to attend the classes, but also required to write papers for a regular time. By this way, it can supervise and urge the teachers to study, and deepen the understanding of the classes. What's more, Beijing Education Committee also assigned tasks for the four schools of the deaf to support the LRC schools. Mrs. Xu's school will be in the responsibility of the Beijing Fourth School for the Deaf, which had sent an excellent teacher to listen to classes of Mrs. Xu and they exchanged experiences with each other. Thus, Mrs. Xu can learn not only for training, but also from the direct instruction.

The second element is the change of the students. "For so many years, I can keep teaching all the times, and teaching with great interest, which will be un-separated with the changes of the students." (2002-7-23, Mrs. Xu, intensive interview) The changes of the students bring not only the feeling of achievement for Mrs. Xu, but make her find the meaning of her life. I ask Xu: "Do you feel like that the lives of yours and those of the deaf children have blended together, and you step into the lives of each other, don't you?" Mrs. Xu nodded: "Yes, I believe that the lives of these children will change, so do I, and I feel my life become more meaningful." (2002-7-23, Mrs. Xu, intensive interview)

The third element is the infection of the "model". "I admire Ye Liyan all the time. I can tell a story: at that year, it required to write a thesis, and I don't know how to write, so I call Mr. Ye for instruction. Mr. Ye made an appointment with me for the discussion. Unexpectedly, it was snowing at that day, and the traffic is very difficult. I thought to cancel the appointment. But to my surprising, Mr. Ye walked to my house. You know the way is so long and hard for

walking! Without any complain, he told me how to write the thesis, and how to teach the child. I was so moved. Since we were not knowing each other very well, and why should he walk so long to teach me in the snowing day. Why? It was all for the children! For LRC! I was so moved, really, at that time, I was thinking that I will make my best efforts, or I will not worthy of the efforts made by Mr. Ye!" (2002-7-23, Mrs. Xu, intensive interview) During the interview, I've thought about the "social study" theory. As a "model", Mr.Ye had deeply infected Ms.Xu by his love for the deaf children, and the earnest to the work, as well as the "lesson in the snow". Besides the knowledge and skills, if the personality "model" can be provided in the training for the teacher, it may urge the progress of the teachers more effectively. (2002-7-23, research log)

4. Effective teaching strategies

LRC cannot be realized, if the teacher is not able to transfer the theory into practical teaching strategies, regardless how many basic theories of LRC and deaf education he/she grasped. For Mrs. Xu, a successful and experienced teacher, what are the most effective teaching strategies she has?

Firstly, "verbalize the thinking process of resolving problems". The subject Mrs. Xu teaching is the mathematics, which requires the logic and abstract way of thinking. This is just the weak point during the psychological development of deaf children. "Verbalize the thinking process of resolving problems," means to understand, analysis, judge, reasoning and answer the question with accurate mathematics language, and express out the connotative thinking process. (Mrs. Xu's paper) Deaf children do not willing to "verbalize the thinking process of resolving problems" normally, while the unclear express will affect the preciseness of the logic thinking. "Verbalize the thinking process of resolving problems" is the breakthrough point to cultivate the mathematic ability of the deaf student, since it will apply language, as well as large amount of mathematic knowledge and skills, and will enhance the ability of various aspects. Mr. Ye has mentioned that: "Actually, all the methods adopted by these teachers, apply a basic theory of education for the deaf, that is all the teaching shall combine with the language development of the deaf child. This language is not only the "spoken language", but also the "internal language". (2002-9-4, Mr. Ye, intensive interview) The deaf child shall purposely learn to express the matters in the world, and purposely learn to deduce the sequence and rationality of matter development with language symbols. The "verbalize the thinking process of resolving problems" adopted by Mrs.Xu just embodies the application of this teaching method in the normal school teaching.

Secondly, assisting the deaf child's learning by using "mathematic gestures" to deal with mathematic conceptions in the class. These gestures are created by Ma Xinlan, a well-known primary mathematics teacher. Every symbols has its specific mathematic concept, for example: drawing a circle with two hands means "integrity" and "in total", two hands closing in front of the chess, then one hand leaving chess and laying open means "subtract one part from the total amount". Using the mathematic gestures, teacher can give the abstract mathematic concept a

visualized gesture, effectively help the student understand the relations between the numbers and development of the matters. The teaching method of Ma Xinlan had get great achievement on normal students. Mrs.Xu has referred to this method, and see the obvious effect on the deaf child as well. "As mathematic gestures are adopted, the deaf children are able to understand the concept rapidly. You can think about it, what it means by saying 'plus', 'deduct'? It is hard to understand, but when you show these with hands, students are able to understand." Qian Lixia (2001), who investigated LRC practice in western China, also draws a conclusion: "it should apply gestures into the LRC teaching". From this point, it can say that applying gestures in the regular class will be a strategy being worthy of research.

The third strategy is that "every one talks to the deaf student one sentence every day". "The deaf student can not hear what we say, therefore they do not know how to arrange the words. Most deaf student has received the language training, which put emphasis on the pronunciation, while pronunciation is not equal to language. To enable the deaf student speak, it is necessary to create the environment of speaking. What if there are no enough teachers and time? I let every student in the class talk to him/her at least one sentence every day. Then language environment is created, more or less, the development of his/her language ability will be possible." (2002-8-5, Mrs. Xu, intensive interview) The gist of this strategy is still the language development of the deaf students, however, it transfer part of the task of developing the language of the deaf students from teacher to the classmates, which will firstly reduce the burden of the teacher, secondly increase the contact between the normal students and the deaf student, and thirdly create a good language environment for the deaf student. It can be called "kill three birds with one stone", and it is just like one of the derivative form of "co-learning" strategy. Li's mother appreciates this strategy very much: "the classmates of my child is very kind, they teach him speaking every day, and he keeps up with other classmates quickly!" (2002-8-2, Li's mother, intensive interview)

The fourth strategy is "teach the students in accordance to their aptitude", i.e. making different teaching plans according to different learning needs of the deaf children. The teaching shall meet needs of different students, which has been known commonly. LRC requires teacher to make IEP. While in Beijing, the professional team working style is not perfect yet; therefore, IEP was mostly done by the teachers in charge of the class. Although this working method is not in accordance with the IEP policy and procedure, it urges the teacher to comprehensively evaluate the child's needs and make the teaching plan. The IEP making requires more experiences and more acute sense of adjustment. "IEP actually is what Confucius mentioned 'teach the students in accordance to their aptitude'. This knowledge will make the work easy." (2002-9-4, Mr. Ye, intensive interview) "Although they are all deaf students, the situations are different from each other greatly, such as the intelligence, study ability, language ability, cause of deaf, family condition etc, they are totally different." (2002-8-5, Mrs. Xu, intensive interview) Mrs.Xu had taught a class before her retirement, in which there were 3 deaf students. Among them, Li, whose teacher had often changed during his language training, which made his language ability was lower than the

other two. Therefore, Mrs. Xu made different requirements on spoken language training considering their respective cases. "I had consulted the experts in the rehabilitation center, and they told me that it is difficult for the child like Li to speak clearly. Therefore, I required the other two children to pronounce as clear as they could; while for Li, I could only require him to understand the meaning of other people's words. It would firstly waste the time to develop his strong point, and secondly discourage him, if I required Li to do as the other two". (2002-8-4, Mrs. Xu, intensive interview)

From the research articles, successful experiences would be "group teaching, co-learning, after-class tutorship" etc. However, Mrs. Xu. seemed to seldom mention these. I once asked her: "Do you think that strategies like the group teaching, co-learning, after-class tutorship etc. had taken an important role during the teaching?" She answered that: "these strategies I had used in my teaching, but I did not think they were the elite of my teaching strategies. The teachers who are not LRC teachers also use these methods." (2002-8-5, Mrs. Xu, intensive interview) From this point, the effective LRC teaching strategies is the field being worthy of further research.

5. Effective class management strategies

Besides the effective teaching strategies, the suitable class management strategies is also necessary, otherwise it is difficult for the teacher to achieve maximum teaching effects. How to make the students accept the deaf children? Mrs.Xu's first method is to make every student realize that everyone is different, and every one has his/her special needs. "At the moment when the new students came to the school, I said that: look, my eyesight is poor, and I need to wear glasses to see clearly. Who wears glasses in your family? Then the students told me who wearing glasses in their own families. Then I told them that this student had poor hearing, and could not hear clearly, so he needed a special thing called hearing aid. When you play with him in the future, you must not touch it, otherwise he will not hear clearly, just like take off my glasses, I will not see clearly." (2002-8-5, Mrs. Xu, intensive interview) Through such instruction, the normal students could accept the difference with the deaf students within short time, and did not take it as abnormal thing, the deaf students accepted their difference as well. Wang's mother said that: "one time, Wang went shopping with me, the shop assistant asked her 'little girl, what is on your ear?' Wang told her that 'it is called hearing aid.' 'What is it for?' Wang asked 'aunty, why are you wearing glasses?' The shop assistant said 'I can not see clearly, so I wear glasses.' Wang immediately said 'the same with you, you wear glasses for your poor eyesight, I wear hearing aid for my poor hearing.'" (2002-7-20, Wang's mother, intensive interview)

The second method is to create an equal environment. Here, equality means that every student in the class enjoys the right of being cared by the teacher, and the right of gain success. To realize the important of this, Mrs.Xu had experienced a lot. "At the first beginning, I thought I shall treat the deaf student well, and I told other students that any good thing and good chance shall be given to him/her, but the problem arouse: the deaf students never think about others,

and could not get along well with others" (2002-8-5, Mrs. Xu, intensive interview) For this matter, I had heard from the teacher two years ago when I made investigation at MX primary school. "I was afraid that they would be suffered, and required other students to give away any chance to them. But they became selfish." (2000-4-12, MX Primary School, research data) I did not know how the teachers of MX primary school solve this problem. At that time, I was doubt about that: "this sentence implies not only the unfairness for other students, but also indicated that these teachers did not really treat the deaf student 'equally', did not regard him/her as a 'child' firstly, then 'a child with special needs'. Since the children are the same, we have no right to ask them to give up opportunities to others. The teacher just noticed the 'disability' of the deaf children, and treated them with a way of 'unconcerned or obvious discriminated'. Taking special care for the deaf student on any thing, actually means being unequal to other students, which is not good for the psychology development of the deaf students, and not good for they to get along with other students." (2000-4-12, research log) But Mrs. Xu realized the importance of the problem. "From then on, I do not make 'specialty' in the class, although the deaf person need my help more, they should compete with each other. The good things and chances should be shared among them all" (2002-8-5, Mrs. Xu, intensive interview)

6. The stresses of LRC teachers

The stress here means the cases causing uncomfortable for the teacher, and affect the working efficiency. For Mrs. Xu, the most difficult stress comes from being not understood by the colleagues round her. "Being not understood makes me upset the most." (2002-8-23, Mrs. Xu, intensive interview) Some people asked Mrs. Xu that being so tired, just for these children, was it worthy of? Although Mrs. Xu's school emphasized on LRC, not all the teachers have ever taught the deaf students, and with adequate systematic training. Therefore they still do not understand Mrs. Xu. "It is really upset when other people do not recognize your work." But Mrs. Xu also said that "those who had taught the deaf students could understand the meaning of this work, and known it was tiresome, while those had not taught, could not understand it easily." (2002-8-5, Mrs. Xu, intensive interview)

The second stress is the heavy burden of the teacher. At present, there are around 30 even 40 students in every class at Beijing. The workload of the teacher is heavy. The workload will increase if there is a deaf student in regular class. Moreover, the supporting system for the regular class study is not perfect, there are fewer itinerant teachers, and less professional services, therefore teachers always take more tasks than others. In these cases, teachers always feel tiresome. "In the past few years, I could not sleep before 1:00 clock. So tired ", "right now, the LRC teachers in my school have more workload than others. It is uneasy for them." (2002-8-5, Mrs. Xu, intensive interview)

The third stress is that "too many visits and inspections". Though there are many LRC schools, there is a strange phenomenon that not everyone knows about LRC, even in Beijing

among the education circle. The school, in which Mrs. Xu is teaching, has been awarded as "model school", due to the excellent job of LRC. It is often arranged to welcome the visit from other schools, and accordingly, the school is added with an additional inspections inspected by the upper education administrative. On one hand, these visits and inspections promote the development of LRC, on the other hand it interfere the normal teaching progress of the school. For this, Mrs. Xu said emotionally, "My school leaders are not easy, because I have brought many works to the school. I do not mean that it is not necessary, but it does not do good to us with unwanted visits." (2002-8-23, Mrs. Xu, intensive interview)

Facing all these stress, Mrs. Xu is optimizing, "I believe that all these problems will be solved. We shall stick to LRC, by doing so, more and more people will know it, and pay more attention to it, then there will be more solutions for the problems we are facing now."

7. Obstacles in LRC students' development

Inquiry into the main problems of LRC doesn't sound very sensible, for the question is rather broad. In fact, what I try to elicit is Mrs. Xu's response from the teacher's perspective, e.g. the training and professional support teachers call for. But her answer is more complete than I expected, addressing mainly from the students' angle. When I probed further: "what you have mentioned are problems students may stumble upon in their learning. Can you talk about it from some other perspectives, like teacher training, problems hidden in the system of LRC?" She responded: "I think I am not sufficiently acquainted with the whole situation, while I am familiar with the deaf students whom I have taught. Their problems are also problems in learning in regular class." (2002-8-23, Mrs. Xu, intensive interview) Thus I changed my research focus to the present one.

First, how can we help students transit smoothly from kindergarten to primary school? Mrs. Xu said: "The major problem lies in the difficulty of helping pupils adapt themselves to primary school soon after they get enrolled. Most of the deaf students come from rehabilitation center for the deaf children, where they have much individualized training instead of group activities practiced in normal kindergartens. Though they have learned some language, adjusting to primary school life is still a tough experience for them, even harder in a short time. As a result, they have problems in their studies and make poor performance socially." (2002-8-23, Mrs. Xu, intensive interview) However, as far as I know, this problem has given rise to much discussion in general education instead of special education in Mainland China. In my opinion the main reasons might be: first, special education in China is conditioned by many factors in spite of more and more stress on early education. The present emphasis is still on nine-year compulsory education (including elementary education and secondary education). Secondly, though LRC concerns the reform of the whole educational system, it is still widely considered as a problem in special education, which has nothing to do with normal education. Thus, less attention is paid to it, which is worthy of notice. Since from the research we have already had, whether a student can

transit smoothly from kindergarten to primary school is closely related to the student's grades, communication and psychological development, but for a deaf student, this issue is more worthy of exploration. Just as Mrs. Xu has mentioned, "their early experience is one teacher tutoring one or several students, so they haven't cultivated the basic learning habits and skills schools demand. That is why it is hard for them to get accustomed to normal school life." (2002-8-23, Mrs. Xu, intensive interview)

Accordingly, Mrs. Xu and some other teachers have taken certain measures, for example, they go to the rehabilitation center for the deaf children to take classes and explain to parents what the deaf students may come across in their learning, etc. These are effective measures. But Mrs. Xu still said that more careful consideration should be given to this issue due to its significance.

The second point concerns the problems deaf students have to confront in their development. Just as what is referred to in the 6th section that teachers have to handle visits and interviews, deaf students encounter the same problem. People are curious about deaf children competent enough to deal with learning in regular class in Beijing. TV station and magazine reporters often interview such students and report their life and study, which unintentionally make the deaf students stars. Although certain interviews and reports can enhance people's understanding of this issue, too much publicity can only harbor students' desire for show and their arrogance as a star. This is very bad for a child's mental development. Though teachers try hard to create an equal atmosphere in class by repeating the tenet "although human beings are different in many ways, but everyone is equal", too much exposure to public attention has very bad influence on students' mental development. "Maybe this is only rare phenomena, hopefully with more and more such cases of LRC, there will be less exposure." (2002-8-23, Mrs. Xu, intensive interview)

The third problem is about the deaf students' choice of schools. The Beijing Education Committee regulates that students have to study in their own school district. Thus two problems ensue: whether a student should choose a school with much experience in special education or decide on one in his or her neighborhood? "There are some students in my class who are from other districts, their parents have to send children to school and accompany them home, which for sure is very time-consuming, and inevitably it affects parents' work. If they don't do so, they are afraid that there might be some danger on the road." (2002-8-23, Mrs. Xu, intensive interview) Mrs. Xu's comments reveal two problems in education in Beijing. First, LRC is not popular yet, and training of teacher is not sufficient. Secondly, the supporting system of learning in regular class is not well organized to extend valuable help to the teachers. There is not yet a system, which can render perfect itinerate teachers and professionals as well as resource rooms, so that parents wouldn't seek far and neglect what lies close at hand.

Fourthly, it is hard for teachers to give attention to all the students' development. Mrs. Xu said: "when I recall my past teaching, I can't help feeling sorry for the smartest students in class.

Because my energy is limited, I can't pay too much attention to them. Although the students learn well, but I think if I had had more time, they would have developed better." (2002-8-23, Mrs. Xu, intensive interview) These words also mirror two facts: first, there are too many students in a class, the variety of students pose a severe challenge to teachers. Secondly, how to deal with the gifted students in the regular class is also problematic. According to the ratio, there must be gifted students in regular class. When we spare no efforts for the special students in class, what else have we done for the gifted ones? I asked Mrs. Xu, "Do you mean that those particularly intelligent students can learn better if they are assigned to other classes?" The answer is definitely yes. "It is preferable to divide the special students and intelligent students into different classes, because they need distinct teaching methods." (2002-8-23, Mrs. Xu, intensive interview)

My reflection

I have been uneasy since I took to writing the research. The teacher, Wang Tianmiao, who taught me qualitative research once said in class "good qualitative research didn't depend on how much information you collected, but how many angels you verified that your data matched with the facts, and whether the result you attained was a result you had spent every effort on". (Class notes)

Though I have written in my introduction part that this research address the case study of teacher, but if I had had more time, I should have interviewed other teachers, thus my research can be complete.

My research approaches seven issues, and each can be a big research topic. But when I made the research plan, I was thinking to cover as many aspects as possible, which predictably makes my research appear too broad, and the research topic wide. What is relieving is that this research is not an end but a beginning.

The main method applied to the research is interview. But as to teaching strategies, management policies and pressure, I should have carried out field study but I couldn't afford the time. This is my biggest regret. Furthermore, though Mrs. Xu presented me two videotapes shot in class, I could hardly find anything valuable because of its blurred pictures and dull sounds.

I can't surpass these limitations; I think what I can do is to accept them.

There will be a national conference on LRC in December. Hopefully it will bring out the full development of LRC. Being the soul of the program, teachers deserve further research. As to my further plan for the program, I hope to deal with the training of such teachers as well as effective teaching strategies and management strategies since training has much positive influence on teacher's development and teachers' attitude towards this issue. On the other hand, there is not

much training in this aspect. Besides, the cultivation of students can't be achieved without teaching and management, and as has been mentioned in "discovery", many effective strategies haven't been devised; researchers should construct effective teaching and management theories through field research.

When I look back on the story of the girl and the starfish, a fresh idea strikes me: Mrs. Xu is that girl, me too, and many other teachers, researchers, parents. We don't have time to sigh: there are so many starfishes, how can we do? What we need to do is just put the starfish right in our hand back to the sea.

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