

新加坡特殊二语环境下 “古文”教学的对策探讨

Teaching of Classical Chinese Prose under Bilingual Environment in Singapore

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在新加坡这个特殊的二语环境下，古文教学主要面对诸多困难。本文首先辨析“文言文”“古代散文”“古文”几个名称的区别，既而从古文的文体特征出发，确立该文体教学的基点；以古文的文学性教学为目标，以问题导向学习为主要教学方法，总结出适用于不同类别古文的教学策略，包括结构图和魔法帽等。通过问题导向学习，激发学生主动探究古文的热情、培养学生对于古文“知趣”的思考能力、以及批判性和创造性思考的能力；强化学生后认知的能力。通过对古文的深入理解，提升鉴赏能力，真正提高学生的人文修养。

The teaching of classical Chinese prose in Singapore involves challenges peculiar to the bilingual environment, which suggest a need for new strategies based on a crucial recognition of the difference between teaching literature and teaching language. The paper argues for a key pedagogical approach based on the teaching of literary aspects in ancient prose with the help of problem-based learning. This would also involve systematic classification in order to consolidate different strategies suited for different types of Classical Chinese Prose. These strategies include mind mapping, five thinking hats and so on.

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[关键词] 古文教学；新加坡；思维图；
五顶思考帽

Through an approach of problem-based learning, one may motivate students to explore ancient-articles more enthusiastically, foster their critical thinking and creative ability, thereby enhancing cognitive ability, and increasing their interest in learning ancient articles. Through the reading, understanding and analysis of subtle words, one may improve on students' ability in literary appreciation, and prompt them to explore more sophisticated interpretation, thereby enhancing their cultivation in the humanities.

Key words: teaching of Classical Chinese Prose; Singapore; mind mapping; five thinking hats.

Following its independence in 1965, Singapore government has implemented a bilingual policy in education. English became the primary learning language for students who also had to study a Mother Tongue based on their respective ethnic identity. This policy has a fundamental impact on Singapore's Chinese-language community and Chinese language teaching here. While the Chinese form the largest ethnic group in society, Chinese language has by and large been relegated to being a secondary 'Mother Tongue' language, as schools teaching more than one subject in the Chinese medium were phased out by the 1980s, though Special Assistance Plan schools would maintain a relative higher standard for Chinese language as a subject. In 2015, Ms Ho Peng, the Chairman of the Board of Directors for the Singapore Centre for Chinese Language, said that in Singapore, "Chinese is not a second language. Its position is somewhere between a first and second language. It would be said to be a '1.5' language." Based on such a perspective, Singapore's Chinese language teaching may be considered to be a relatively unique form of 'second language' teaching.

Singapore has a total of six public universities: National University of Singapore (NUS), Nanyang Technological University (NTU), Singapore Management University (SMU), Singapore University of Technology and Design (SUTD), Singapore Institute of Technology (SIT) and Singapore University of Social Sciences (SUSS). Among these six universities, four offer Chinese Studies with the Literary History module being compulsory; classical Chinese writings, embedded within this module, have become

a necessary part of learning. Other modules related to Classical Chinese Writings are also offered as elective modules. Students in the Chinese Studies Departments are mostly local Singaporeans, but a small number also comes from Malaysia, China, Hong Kong and Taiwan.

In order to gain some insights into the current situation in teaching of classical prose at the Chinese departments in Singapore universities, I conducted two surveys with 41 students of the Chinese department at National Institute of Education, Nanyang Technological University in 2016 and 2017, at the end of first semester in year one and at the end of the second semester in year two respectively. The first questionnaire was mainly about one's interest level and objectives in learning classical prose, the experience in classroom learning and the content, with a choice out of four levels, in order to understand the problems that students face in learning classical prose. All 41 questionnaires given out were returned, giving a return rate and effective rate of 100 per cent. Based on analysis of the collated survey data, the interest among Singapore undergraduates in classical prose is generally not high, with 32 students indicating interest at an average level, 5 indicating "completely not interested" and only 4 choosing "very interested". They generally feel that classical prose is too difficult to decipher and the subject matter would also be too unfamiliar. Given such an environment, how should universities teach "Classical Chinese Prose"? How should universities lead students through different layers of language, history and culture to understand the deeper meanings behind the words while studying "Classical Chinese Prose"? This is unquestionably a considerable challenge.

Where current research related to tertiary education is concerned, specialised studies on the teaching of classical Chinese prose is relatively limited. Even less may be seen of research on teaching of classical Chinese prose to learners from a second-language learners. Of existing research regarding the learning of Chinese as mother tongue, one may cite Wen Zihui's "Problems and Solutions in the Teaching of Ancient Prose in Tertiary Education of the Mother Tongue", Peng Anxiang's "New Flowers Blooming in Old Trees: An Analysis of Strategies for Reforms in Teaching of Ancient Prose in Language at University", and Liut Tao's "Comment on the Teaching of Chinese Ancient Prose". These reports have pointed out that due to vocabulary, sentence structure, grammar and content or values of speech in ancient Chinese prose being markedly different from that of modern prose, it is not easy even for first-language learners to master.

What more then for learners of a second-language background? This paper hopes to make a contribution to the field by exploring strategies in teaching classical prose in second-language environment, based on an understanding of the characteristics of classical Chinese prose, coupled with traditional theories of *wenzhang xue* or the study of articles, as well as the approach of problem-based learning.

1. Terminology Differentiation

Confucius once said: “Necessary it is, to have names properly defined!” (Analects: 142) There are three commonly used terms that refer to “Classical Chinese Writings”. They are “Ancient Chinese 文言文”, “Ancient Prose 古代散文” and “Classical Chinese Prose 古文”. So what is Classical Chinese? Prof Wang Li 王力, an expert on ancient Chinese language, once pointed out: “Ancient Chinese is an ancient Chinese written language based on pre-Qin oral language. It also includes the language used by subsequent generations of authors in their works emulating the past.” Ancient Chinese thus refers to works written in Classical Chinese, in terms of the writing style and habit of writing. Another term which is relatively close to Classical Chinese is “Ancient Prose” or *gudai sanwen*, which specifically refers to works that did not place emphasis on specific regulations of rhythm and rhyme. These are works written in Ancient Chinese which do not place importance on *duizhang* 对仗, the matching of words in sense and sound. Ancient Prose is especially important in differentiating from ancient parallel prose or *pianwen* 骈文 which has rhyme and places importance on matching of words in antithesis. So what is “Classical Chinese Prose”? Generally, they are considered to refer to Classical Prose, but excluding ancient parallel prose. However, such an understanding is not precise enough. Classical Chinese Prose is different from the average prose written in Classical Chinese. They have their own characteristics, with a key characteristic being “elegance”. In simple terms, Classical Chinese Prose refers to Classical Prose that are classics which had already been selected by preceding generations based on aesthetic value. As one reviews the texts taught in universities comprehensively, one would find that they are all classical works from various dynasties. Therefore, based on a finer differentiation among the terms, it is obvious that “Classical Chinese Writings” would be a more accurate term for such works.

Now that the nomenclature is established, the logic should become clearer. With regards to the creation and appreciation of Classical Chinese

Writings, the most significant contributors, without a doubt, would be the Tongcheng School 桐城派 from the Qing Dynasty. Its representative, Fang Bao 方苞, once advocated the method of “Yi Fa 义法”. In his *Youshu Huozhizhuan hou* (Additional Commentary after Reading the Book on Profiteers), Fang Bao said: “Since Sima Qian’s publication of the Yi Fa regulations from the Spring and Autumn Annals, they had become a source of deep interest for the literati. Yi is what is referred to as ‘discussion of substance’ within the *I Ching* (Book of Changes). Fa is what is referred to as ‘commenting in an organised manner’ within the *I Ching*. Yi is the basis of the classics, the organised manner of approach binds them systematically and thus the text body comes into being through a proper format 《春秋》之制义法，自太史公发之，而后之深于文者亦具焉。义即《易》之所谓“言有物”也。法即《易》之所谓“言有序”也。义以为经而法纬之，然后为成体之文。 Therefore, it would be seen that one must appreciate the two facets of both “commenting in an organised manner” “言有序” and “discussion of substance” “言有物” before one could appreciate the beauty of “Classical Chinese Prose” and explore its meaning. However, this is easier said than done and is especially challenging for non-first-language students of Classical Chinese Writing.

2. Problem-Based Learning and Structure Charts

Problem-based Learning (PBL) refers to the use of practical questions as a core approach by teachers in their process of teaching, to encourage students to conduct focus group discussions while cultivating their learning initiatives, critical thinking and problem-solving capabilities. It is based on the perspective of social constructionivism which is of the view that knowledge is a process created by the social environment and is not merely a direct process of obtaining (Wood, 2003).

During the process of problem-based learning, teachers must play the dual role of encourager and observer. When they design problems for students to solve through cooperation in their focus group discussions, it is most important for the students to develop the ability for self-directed learning. Therefore, the aim of PBL is capability learning and not merely acquisition of knowledge. The use of PBL in the teaching of Classical Chinese Prose may arouse students’ interest in learning about classical texts from eras long past; students may hence develop a sense of participation and achievement; this would systematically guide students on a meticulously

process to appreciate the deeper meanings, literary techniques and aesthetic aspects as part of Classical Chinese Prose. By strengthening students' post-cognitive capabilities in gathering information, analysing texts, constructing hypotheses and applying investigative thinking, allowing them to connect the past and present and to reference the past as a way of understanding the present, one would not only improve their appreciation of "Classical Chinese Prose"; the students' reflection on social life and reality would also be stimulated.

What classical Chinese prose presents is the observation and reflection on the world by intellectuals of ancient China. To students of today in modern Singapore, that is undoubtedly a distant and unfamiliar world which would not arouse their interest immediately. Therefore, in order to help them master classical prose, one has to stimulate the interest of students in participating, to inspire their desire in self-directed learning and guide them in discovering, analysing and solving problems. Problem-based Learning (PBL) hence provides a useful path.

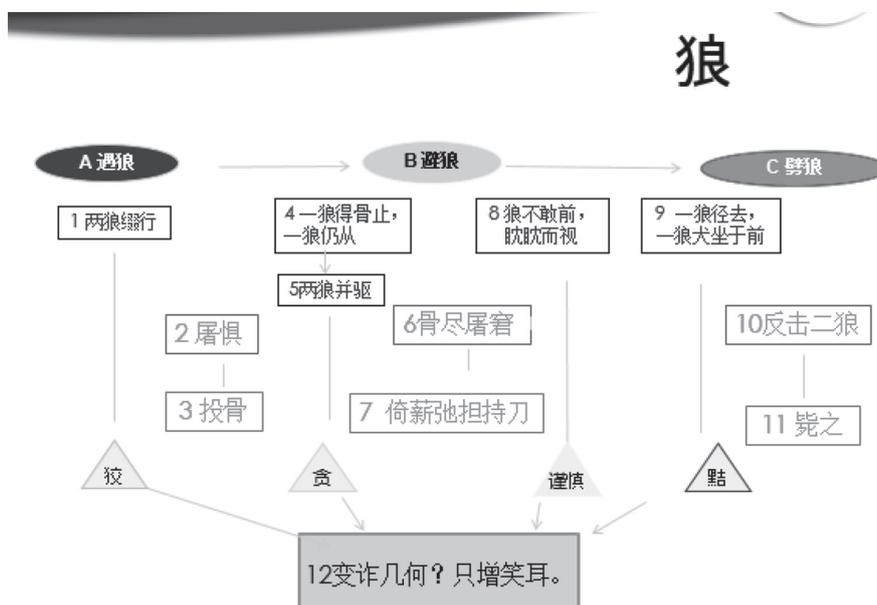
Typically, Classical Chinese Prose are rigorous in structure and concise in writing, with a striking and vivid literary style. They pay special attention to "commenting in an organised manner" (I Ching) which means that they follow a fixed narrative structure in organising their content. Relatively short texts generally follow an idealised three-part structure which is figuratively described as "Phoenix Head", "Pig Stomach" and "Leopard Tail". What is termed as the phoenix head refers to how the beginning of a good prose is often beautiful, exquisite and attractive just like the pretty and delicate head of a phoenix; what is termed as a pig stomach refers to how the prose is filled to the brim with rich content, just like a pig's stomach; leopard tail refers to how the ending of the prose is, like a sweep of the leopard's tail, concise, powerful and despite an abrupt ending, leaves its sound lingering in one's ear, giving the readers much room to digest and reminisce on.

Meanwhile, longer Classical Chinese Prose would typically follow a four-part structure of "Beginning, Continuation, Shift and Closing". "Beginning" refers to the origin of the matter, or in other words, the beginning of the prose. "Continuation" refers to the continuation of the narrative, the extension of the "Beginning". "Shift" refers to a turn in the narrative or meaning. "Closing" refers to the conclusion, a commentary on the event and often has the purpose of highlighting the theme of the prose and ending it. Classical Chinese Prose generally has a rigorous structure in concise

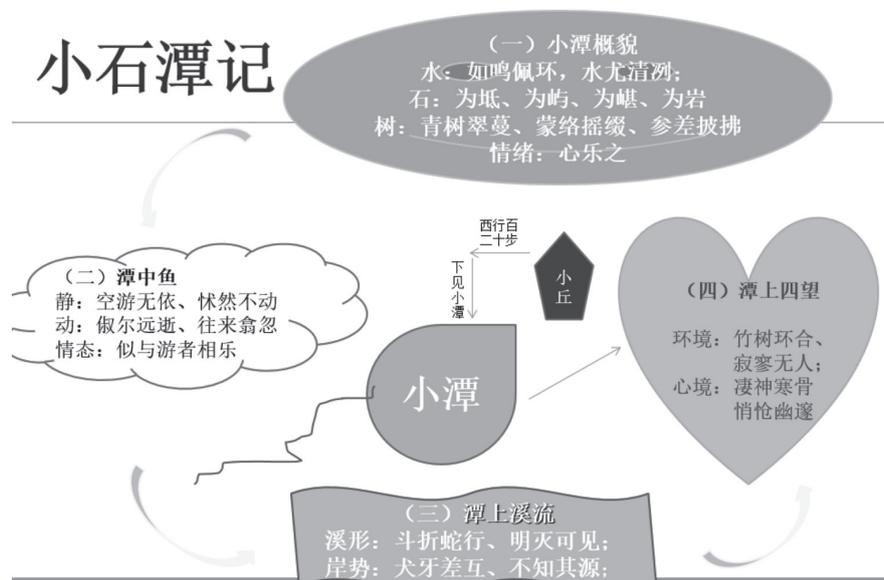
writing and a striking and vivid literary style. Furthermore, the “Beginning, Continuation, Shift and Closing” structure is actually a manifestation of logic and principles. There would be hint of the closing within a beginning, just as there is reminder of the beginning within the closing. They are well-balanced and complement each other. The continuation and shift complement the beginning and closing. All are interconnected and closely linked. The four are interdependent, each having its purpose and closely tied to the rest in some logical sense.

After much trial in the classroom, we found a structure chart provides an especially effective and efficient method in the teaching of students about the abovementioned structure of Classical Chinese Prose. Structure charts follow the methodology of problem-based learning. It encourages students, based on their own understanding of the particular text, to draw out their own structure charts and hence, in doing so, allows them to grasp the narrative “method” (organisation) of the prose. In the drawing of structure charts for Classical Chinese Prose, one would follow the mind-mapping method developed by British education expert and psychologist Tony Buzan (2006). Before the class begins, each student would be given a piece of A4-size white paper and colour pencils of multiple colours. During class, I would first go through the text and explain the meanings of the references; after that, I design two or three guiding questions on the structure of the prose, and encourage them to draw the structure chart based on keywords and pictures. Beyond these keywords, the students may list out other key details and connect them to the most relevant theme. If one needs to highlight the “Beginning, Continuation, Shift and Closing” of the prose and list them out in a certain sequence, they would list them out using Arabic numerals after completion of the structure chart. Each “sub-theme” would be differentiated by using a different colour. As much as possible, symbols should be used as representation for keywords as they would deepen one’s mental impression of those words. To use as example a relatively short text, *Liaozhai Zhiyi - Wolf* (Strange Stories from a Chinese Studio - Wolf), its structure would be divided into three segments in the following order - “Encountering Wolves”, “Avoiding Wolves” and “Slaying Wolves”. Each segment would be further divided into the wolves’ movements and the hunter’s counter-reaction. Through such reflection, one may contrast the wolves’ greedy, cunning and aggressive nature with the hunter’s reticence and tolerance. After these episodes of interaction, the hunter seizes the

opportune moment to kill two wolves, thus displaying the wisdom and courage as human being. A teacher could set the following leading questions to guide students in their thinking: 1) How is the wolves' greedy and cunning nature illustrated? 2) What situations did the hunter encounter since his first meeting with the killer wolves? What would his inner thought processes be? The structure chart would look something like the following.



It is demonstrated through practice that under our guidance, students would basically all be able to complete a structure chart as individual or as a group under our guidance. The following standard chart is what a group of students drew for the text entitled Notes of the Little Rock Pond, clearly expressing their understanding of the author's journey and emotions.



Once students are able to draw their own structure charts, it would help them better understand the flow of the text and appreciate the narrative techniques within.

3. Commenting on What is There: Five Thinking Hats

According to the ancient Chinese notions of literature, there is a difference in expectation and understanding between the literary genres of prose and poems. Generally speaking, poems are said to emphasise more on ideals and to follow from emotions. On the other hand, works of “prose” are generally meant to elucidate or convey moral thoughts. Therefore, it is especially important for one to understand the meaning behind the words written in Classical Chinese Prose. This is also the part where second-language learners find most challenging. In my many years of teaching, I find teachers could use the five thinking hats methodology to encourage students to think independently, to help them formulate multiple levels of thought and delve deeper into the meaning behind the prose so as to gain a personalised understanding of them ultimately.

The “thinking hat” teaching method originated from British Professor Edward De Bono’s “Six Thinking Hats” thought training methodology. It is a comprehensive way of thinking about problems. Six hats of different

colours (Blue, red, white, black, yellow and green) represent six different directions in thinking. To accommodate Chinese cultural sensitivity and the characteristics of Classical Chinese Literature, I have removed the green hat – as it sounds similar to an idiomatic expression referring to being a cuckold in adultery. This leaves me with five thinking hats. The blue symbolises the colour of the sky and represents dispassionate observation and thinking; the red symbolises the colour of emotions and represents the immediate instinct and impression; the black symbolises doubt and questioning, representing critical thinking; the white represents balanced and objective thinking; the yellow is a dazzling colour and represents positive thinking filled with creativity. The actual learning process is as follows:

Before the class begin, a teacher could prepare five hats of the following colours: Blue, red, black, white and yellow. The first step would involve the removal of any obstacle in reading that students may have with Classical Chinese Prose. The teacher would either explain the meaning of the text, or adopting the method of ‘flipping the classroom’, allow students to conduct self-learning based on my instruction; after which, the students would feedback on whatever problems they face. The above two methods are meant to build a strong foundation for further deep learning that lies ahead for the students. The second step is to divide the students into groups of five. To facilitate the usage of the Thinking Hat methodology, whereby students of complementary capabilities are to mix for the sake a better brainstorming process and more effective peer learning, each group would consist of students with thinking habits representing different strengths. The third step is to distribute the different colour hats. Students with different thinking habit should be given different colour hats. For example, those students who are more sensitive to details, with a keen eye in observation, would be given red hats. Those with better knowledge of Classical Chinese would be given white hats. Those who like reverse thinking or are strong in critical thinking would be given black hats. Those who have an active mind and love creativity would be wearing yellow hats. Finally, those students who are more popular and have leadership qualities would be given blue hats. The fourth step would be for me to set up some guiding questions that slowly lead students step by step to mull over the interesting aspects of Classical Chinese Prose. I would go on to illustrate this using the following story of “Buying a Wooden Box and Returning the Pearls”, a fable from pre-Qin philosophers:

A person from the State of Chu once sold a pearl to a person from the State of Zheng. The Chu citizen carved a box out of magnolia to house the pearl. He infused the box with fragrance of cinnamon and mountain pepper, adorned it with jewellery and precious jade, decorated it with roses and tied it up with emerald. The Zheng citizen bought the box and returned the pearl. Thus, it would be said that the Chu citizen is a good seller of boxes but not pearls.

楚人有卖其珠于郑者，为木兰之柜，熏以桂椒，缀以珠玉，饰以玫瑰，辑以翡翠。郑人买其椟而还其珠。此可谓善卖椟矣，未可谓善鬻珠也。(Collected Annotations on *Han Fei Zi*: 668)

The teacher distributes the five different colour hats to the students of the various groups. He would then appoint the student wearing the blue hat to be responsible for controlling the sequence and direction of discussion within his group. He would also be responsible for managing the time and progress of the discussion. The group discussion should typically start from the student wearing the red hat who would be asked to share his overall thoughts after reading the fable. The leading question would be “What do you think is the moral of this fable?” or “What do you think this fable is a satire of?” While sharing his or her own impression, the student needs not go through too much logical deduction. His possible answer could be that the Zheng citizen was stupid to have abandoned the valuable pearl for the worthless wooden box and that the action was equivalent to abandoning the forest for the tree. After this, the student wearing the white hat would lead the group in clarifying the difficult words and sentences within the text so as to achieve a most objective and accurate understanding of it. Then the teacher would ask the following guiding question: “Does this fable only mean to criticise the Zheng citizen? Who else does it criticise?” While encouraging the student wearing the black hat to lead the group in applying more critical thinking way to discuss the fable, the following view may be given: The author has also criticised the businessman from the State of Chu for being good in selling the wooden box but not his most valuable merchandise, the pearl. This is also a form of failure. At this point, the teacher would continue to give questions like: “What would be one’s judgement in the modern day of the businessman from the State of Chu?”; “Is the action of the Zheng citizen really foolish?” This time, the teacher let the student wearing the yellow hat lead the discussion in a more well-rounded and

creative manner. Perhaps the students would realise that in today's society, the success of some merchandises' marketing strategies is similar to that of the Chu citizen selling pearl. For example, MacDonald's and Starbucks would often launch some limited edition gifts. Many consumers would flock to the outlets, not for the sake of the burgers and coffee respectively, but for the complementary gifts that come with every purchase. Meanwhile, we would judge the actions of the Zheng citizen who bought the wooden box and return the pearl with a more lenient and open mind. For example, he could be an actual art connoisseur who does not place much importance on the actual or monetary value of the item but more on the artistic value of it. Through these four rounds of discussion, the students' understanding of this short fable would be greatly enriched and their knowledge would not merely be limited to understanding its given moral message. The usage of five thinking hats in the teaching of Classical Chinese Prose can be a useful tool in demonstrating parallel thinking to students while enabling them to continuously deepen their understanding of the rich meanings behind those texts. The five different colour hats also make it easier to conduct differential teaching and cooperative learning, encouraging students to use different perspectives to think about a problem while listening attentively to the viewpoints of others so as to promote peer learning.

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Lord Ling of Jin was no good ruler. He levied heavy taxes in order to lavishly decorate the walls of his palace with painted patterns. From atop his terrace he shot pellets at people, so that he could watch how they tried to escape from the pellets. When the cook did not thoroughly stew bear paws, Lord Ling executed him and put the body in a reed basket, and had women pass through court carrying the basket. When Zhao Dun and Fan Hui saw the dead man's hand and asked what had happened, they were deeply dismayed. They were about to remonstrate, when Fan Hui said, "If our remonstrances are not heeded, then there is no one who can follow us. I beg leave to go first. If I am not heeded, then you can follow." Over three

stages he advanced, but only when he reached the eaves did the lord look at him. The lord said, "I know my mistakes. I will correct them." Fan Hui bowed, touching the ground with his forehead, and replied, "Who among men is without mistake? Having erred and being capable of rectification – there is no virtue greater than that. As it says in the Odes, "There is none who does not have beginnings, few are those who fulfil the aims to the end." If it is so, then those who can make good on their mistakes are few. If my lord can persist to the end, then the altars of the domain will have a solid foundation. Surely it is not only your subjects who rely on that! As it also says in the Odes, "The ritual vestment had holes—It was Zhongshan Fu who mended it. This is about being able to make good one's mistakes. If my lord can do so, then the ritual vestment will not fall into disuse.

Still the lord did not correct his mistakes. Zhao Dun remonstrated to him several times. The lord loathed this and sent Chu Ni to murder him. When Chu Ni went just before sunrise, the doors of the bedchamber were open. Zhao Dun was fully dressed in official robes and was about to go to court. It was still early, and he was sitting with closed eyes. Chu Ni withdrew and sighed, saying, "He who does not forget reverence is the master of the people. To murder the master of the people is not loyal; to discard the ruler's command is faithless. To be guilty of either of these is worse than death." He smashed his head against a locust tree and died.

In autumn, in the ninth month, the Prince of Jin entertained Zhao Dun with wine. The prince had hidden armoured soldiers who were going to attack him. Zhao's aide on the right, Timi Ming, learned of this, rushed forward, and ascended the steps, saying, "For a subject waiting on a ruler at a feast to drink more than three rounds is not in accordance with ritual propriety." He then helped Zhao Dun step down. The lord whistled for his fierce hounds. Timi Ming wrestled with them and killed them. Zhao Dun said, "He deserts men and uses hounds—fierce, to be sure, but to what avail?" All the while fighting and struggling, they came out. Timi Ming died defending Zhao Dun.

Earlier, Zhao Dun had hunted at Mount Shou. While lodging at Yisang then, he saw Ling Zhe, who was starving, and asked what ailed him. Ling Zhe said, "I have not eaten for three days." Zhao Dun gave him food, but Ling Zhe set half of it aside. When asked about it, he said, "For three full years I have been in service. I do not yet know whether my mother is still alive. Now that I am close to home, I beg leave to send her this food." Zhao Dun had him finish eating, then prepared for him a bamboo basket filled

with food and meat, put it in a sack, and gave it to him. Later, he joined the ranks of the lord's armoured attendants. He turned his dagger-axe against the lord's men to defend Zhao and thereby saved him. Zhao asked why he did that, and he replied, "I was the starving man at Yisang." Zhao asked his name and where he lived, but he withdrew without telling him. Then Zhao himself fled.

On the day of yichou, Zhao Chuan assassinated Lord Ling at Taoyuan. Zhao Dun returned before leaving the mountains of Jin. The scribe wrote, "Zhao Dun assassinated his ruler," and showed the record at court. Zhao Dun said, "This was not so." He replied, "You are the chief minister. Yet fleeing you did not cross the domain border; upon returning you did not chastise the culprit. If you are not responsible, who would be?" Zhao Dun said, "Alas! As it says in the Odes, "I so cherished him that I bring sorrow upon myself." That describes me indeed!" Confucius said, "Dong Hu was a worthy scribe of ancient times: he did not conceal anything in his rules of writing. Zhao Xuan was a worthy high officer of ancient times: he bore a guilty verdict for the sake of those rules. What a pity! Had he crossed the domain border, he would have been absolved."

Zhao Dun sent Zhao Chuan to welcome Gongzi Heitun at Zhou and established him as ruler. On the day of renshen (third day of the tenth month), they offered sacrifices at the Martial Temple.

晋灵公不君。厚敛以彫墙。从台上弹人，而观其辟丸也。宰夫胹熊蹯不孰，杀之，寘诸畚，使妇人载以过朝。赵盾、士季见其手，问其故而患之。将谏，士季曰：“谏而不入，则莫之继也。会清先，不入，则子继之。”三进及溜，而后视之。曰：“吾知所过矣，将改之。”稽首而对曰：“人谁无过！过而能改，善莫大焉。诗曰：‘靡不有初，鲜克有终。’夫如是，则能补过者鲜矣。君能有终，则社稷之固也，岂惟群臣赖之。又曰：‘衰职有阙，惟仲山甫补之。’能补过也。君能补过，衰不废矣。”

犹不改。宦子骤谏。公患之，使鉏麇贼之。晨往，寝门辟矣。盛服将朝，尚早，坐而假寐。麇退，叹而言曰：“不忘恭敬，民之主也。贼民之主，不忠；齐君之命，不信。有一于此，不如死也。”触槐而死。

秋九月，晋侯饮赵盾酒，伏甲将攻之。其右提弥明知之，趋登曰：“臣侍君宴，过三爵，非礼也。”遂扶以下。公噬夫爇焉。明搏而杀之。盾曰：“弃人用犬，虽猛何为！”斗且出。提弥明死之。

初，宣子田于首山，舍于翳桑。见灵辄饿，问其病，曰：“不食三日矣。”食之，舍其半。问之，曰：“宦三年矣，未知母之存否。今近焉，请以遗之。”使尽之，而为之箪食与肉，寘诸囊以与之。既而与为公介，倒戟

以御公徒，而免之。问何故，对曰：“翳桑之饿人也。”问其名居，不告而退。——遂自亡也。

乙丑，赵穿攻灵公于桃园。宣子未出山而复。大史书曰：“赵盾弑其君。”以示于朝。宣子曰：“不然。”对曰：“子为正卿，亡不越境，反不讨贼，非子而谁？”宣子曰：“乌呼！‘我之怀矣，自诒伊戚，’其我之谓矣！”孔子曰：“董狐，古之良史也，书法不隐。赵宣子，古之良大夫也，为法受恶。惜也，越境乃免。”

宣子使赵穿逆公子黑臀于周而立之。壬申，朝于武宫。(Annotation on *Chunqiu* and *Zuozhuan*: 655-663)

This is an extremely famous extract from the *Zuozhuan* 左传 (The Commentary of Zuo Qiuming). The language used here is concise and beautiful, its narrative winding, complete and continuous. It is ideal material for the enjoyment of interesting aspects of Classical Chinese Prose.

Upon the teacher going through the text, allowing students to understand its apparent meaning, thinking hats would be distributed to them to start brainstorming. The teacher would first ask the student wearing the red hat the following question: “Within this text, which character left you with the deepest impression?” Possible answers would include Duke Ling of Jin for not acting like a ruler or Zhao Dun 赵盾 for his loyalty. After this, the teacher would ask the student wearing the white hat to lead the group in understanding the difficult words, once more so as to help them gain a more accurate grasp of the text meaning. The student wearing the black hat would then lead the group in discussing how to explain historian Dong Hu’s 董狐 view that Zhao Dun had committed an act of regicide. Is there any clue that supports the judgement of the historian? A possible viewpoint would be that the historian thought that as long as Zhao Dun, a high-ranking court official, did not leave the state of Jin, he should bear chief responsibility for the governance of the state. Therefore, when Zhao Dun did not pursue the ruler’s own paternal younger male cousin for regicide, he must be held responsible for the crime. Finally, the teacher would give further guidance and ask what sort of responsibility Zhao Dun should bear for the rebellion caused by the regicide. The student wearing the yellow hat would lead the group in a further discussion which would lead them to realise that not only did Zhao Dun not prosecute Zhao Chuan

赵穿after his act of regicide, he actually went on to appoint Zhao Chuan the important task of welcoming and establishing the position of the new ruler. Therefore, it would be viewed that Zhao Dun could not completely shirk away his guilt in the whole regicide affair. Once the students have understood the text to such a standard through the usage of the five hats methodology, the teacher would connect it to the *Chunqiu* record about “Zhao Dun Committing an Act of Regicide Against His Ruler Yi Gao 赵盾弑其君夷皋”and the explanation found within the *Zuochuan - Xuangong sinian* 左传·宣公四年 (The Commentary of Zuo (Qiuming) - Fourth Year of Duke Xuan of Wei) on definitions in *Chunqiu*: “Those who commit an act of regicide or call a ruler by his name are implying that the ruler is incapable; Calling a subject by his name implies that he is guilty 凡弑君，称君，君无道也；称臣，臣之罪也。” Thus, according to the *Chunqiu*, Zhao Dun, as a high-ranking court official, bears a huge responsibility for Duke Ling of Jin not acting properly as a ruler. Hence, the significance of “sublime words filled with deep meanings” may be seen here.

Prose has always held an extremely important place in Chinese cultural tradition. This may be seen in Cao Pi's 曹丕 *Dianlun - Lunwen* 典论·论文 (On the Standards [of Literature - Discussing Literature) which goes: “Proses are important works that relate to governance and are great immortal events 盖文章，经国之大业，不朽之盛事。” Regardless of whether we are teaching such works of prose in a second-language or a unique second-language environment like Singapore, the selected texts are never ordinary Classical Chinese or Classical Prose. They are all classic works that had been selected time and again throughout history. Therefore, the term “Classical Chinese Prose” would direct us to focus on the artistic value of such works while highlighting the motivation in literary teaching. It also makes it easier for us to derive analytical methods from theories and creative practices of our predecessors in the Chinese literary tradition. More specifically, the principles of “commenting in an organised manner” and “discussion with substance” as held by the Tongcheng School from the Qing Dynasty provide inspiration to our current teaching of Classical Chinese Prose in universities.

With the same batch of students as mentioned in the beginning of this article, the second survey was given at the end of second semester in year two after the exercise with structure charts and five thinking hats.

All 41 questionnaires distributed were collected back, giving a return rate and efficiency rate of 100 per cent. The questionnaire asked questions as to whether their interest in learning classical prose had increased, whether the mapping helped them to understand the content and connections in classical prose; whether the method of PBL had mitigated their sense of distance from classical prose and so on. Results shows that 38 students indicated an increase in for learning of classical prose; 40 thought that the mapping helped them in understanding classical prose; 41 students though the method of thinking hats was very interesting, stimulating them to consider the issue from different angle; and 41 of them would choose the strategy of PBL in learning classical Chinese prose. Due to the limited number of questionnaires, I will collect the feedbacks from students in the future research.

Using Problem-based Learning as a core approach, we have come up with a few different teaching methodologies which include structure charts and thinking hats. These help to ignite students' passion to take initiative in exploring Classical Chinese Prose, to cultivate their interest for knowledge, their thinking capabilities in terms of critical and creative thinking skills, as well as strengthening their post-cognitive abilities. Through reading, understanding and analysis of the words, their ability in appreciation of texts would be enhanced. This would arguably enable them to explore the deeper meanings behind Classical Chinese Prose and strengthen their cultivation in the humanities.

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