When I was university student, I went to China to learn Chinese. At that time I was a ‘high beginner level’ student. Before going to China, I took a Chinese lesson about four months but I only knew few of normally used words. Literally I just ‘have some simple oral communication abilities using basic learned phrases and sentences. So I got placed in a beginner class.

My Chinese teacher was a graduate student of that university. She majored in teaching, so her class was quiet organized and easy for me to understand. I think her teaching type was almost traditional one. Class layout gave focus to teacher and board and all information came from teacher. She mostly stood in front of us and told us information. Then we just wrote what she said. And she usually focused on grammar, words and phrases on a textbook and lectured about them. What I usually did in her class was to see and read descriptions on my textbook following her instructions. During the class I took notes and after class I tried to memorize them.

Like everything I think her way of teaching has strengths and weaknesses. The strength of her teaching for me was its familiarity. Because I was not confident about my Chinese and I got easily discouraged at that time, the familiar, practiced way of learning relieved me a lot and made me study harder with confidence. As I used to do to learn something, I listened to her carefully and reviewed the lesson every day. So I got good grades in tests and then it became my motivation. Also she was generous with compliments, so I could move forward without frustration. I got more and more confident about myself. And actually I am a visual type learner, don’t like doing activities in class and already got used to learning things by that way of teaching so it was helpful for me to build a foundation of Chinese smoothly.

But I think her way of teaching had more weaknesses than strengths. She didn’t encourage us to speak Chinese and mostly told about grammar. Actually we had little chance to use Chinese during the class except reading textbook. So when I tried to make Chinese friend or speaking Chinese in real life, what I learned from the class was not very useful. When I visited Chinese diner for the first time, I can speak only few words and after finishing my semester when I visited Chinese diner at last time I can order some food with a sentence which I learned not from the class and textbook but from my real communication with native friends. What I need to do for my real Chinese communication was practical experience. And about the textbook contents, many native friends I met in China said that what I learned from the textbook was literary Chinese so they didn’t use a lot in a real life. As a result I think It was a relationship with many Chinese friend to make me improve my Chinese not the class at that time.