

## First Day Student Culture Shock

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The beginning of any new academic semester is fraught with inevitable required adjustments. The post-graduate non-English major students (pgs) at Sun Yat-sen University are no exception. They are required to take one semester of oral English with a foreign teacher. Most pgs have had prior undergraduate experiences with this inconsequential course where the grade does not count and more often than not, the foreign teacher has a guitar and only knows how to teach English songs. The pgs have a very strong preconceived idea of what to expect from their oral English class and the expectations are not very high.

On the very first day of the Holistic English class, all of this changes. All preconceived ideas fly out the window. The process begins as the students approach the classroom. As the pgs approach their 4<sup>th</sup> floor oral English classroom they are confronted by a 200 cm x 200 cm banner.



They have no idea what “Chingland” means and “Chinglish Spoken Here” goes directly against and is directly opposed to their prior teaching that Chinglish is no good. For up to sixteen years of prior English education the students have been told the 4 Great Lies; 1) You must master English; 2) Chinglish is no good; 3) You can only make your English better speaking with a native English speaker and 4) Everyone in China needs to learn English. This huge and startling banner is the pgs first indication that something may be different with this oral English class..

As they approach the classroom door they look puzzled and double check the room number. There is a sign on the door identifying the room as a “Lab” but oral English is not a lab class so they are confused.



As the pgs open the door, their jaws drop, they freeze in position and get a “deer in the headlights” look. Again, they step back and double check the assigned classroom number. Then they ask each other if they are in the right building.



As they slowly enter the room there is a Chinese buzz. The foreign teacher actually looks like a real professor. The professor loudly announces, “This is an English class and this is an English classroom. Why am I hearing Chinese? If you want to practice your Chinese leave.”

A hush falls over the room. The pgs ask permission to be seated. The professor advises that those pgs who have brought their books and a writing utensil may be seated. All others must leave and never return unprepared again. Those who did not bring their books or writing utensils are told to leave but they remain frozen in time and space. The

professor explains that coming to a pg class at China's #8 most famous university unprepared is intolerable kindergarten behavior and the guilty students are ordered to leave. Sometimes an entire first class must be cancelled and rescheduled at a punitive evening time.

On the very first day of the semester the professor draws the line in the sand and demands that the pgs act like mature, responsible, serious students or get out. They have never had such an experience in their prior 16 years of education. They are in shock! They are shown the course rules in their workbooks and the professor goes over each rule in detail.

**You must carry your own textbook to gain entry to the movie and discussion class. No book – no entry. There are limited seats and they are reserved for class members.**

**Do not be late for the movie or discussion class. Late – no entry. It is rude to enter the movie after it has begun. This disturbs the entire class and show a lack of respect for your classmates.**

**Come to class prepared. If you have not done the homework you may be expelled from the class.**

**No mobile phones. If your mobile phone rings or if the light is seen during the movie or discussion class the phone may be confiscated and will not be returned to you. Change your mobile phone language to English and answer your phone “hello” from now on.**

**If you do not understand a movie watch it again on the school web site. Or ask your teacher for permission to download it to your memory stick so you can watch it as your convenience. If you do not understand a homework assignment, ask the teacher to explain it to you again.**

**Use “Google – English” search engine for internet research assignments. Using a Chinese search engine will not help you to improve your English.**

**You have been given a free red hat that says “SPEAK ENGLISH.” Wear it at all times on campus.**

The professor explains that this may be an English class but English in a vacuum is worthless. In this class the students will also learn good manners, good work skills and western expectations of a mature young adult. At this point many students doubt that they want to stay in this class. It was supposed to be a “no sweat” easy class where a student

could catch up on some lost sleep. But this grumpy old foreign man who looks like father Christmas at best or Mr. KFC at worst, is strict, even harsh.

Fortunately, the professor knows how to bring the pgs out of shock and within minutes the classroom is filled with laughter as everyone settles down to begin their semester of fun with English acquisition.

**The students are encouraged, by subsequent email, to post their first day culture shock experience at <http://chinaholisticenglish.com>**

The following student posts are representative:

Vita class13

September 20th, 2009 at 6:58 pm

Although English is very important for me, I don't like it. In my opinion, learning English is very dull, tedious, and so on. But when I enter the classroom, everything is changed. The room is full of bright color, very beautiful. And a lovely foreign teacher aloud speaks English to us. It is fresh for me. Then he tells us that you can study English in a relaxed station, such as seeing a film, talking interesting topic with your friend. You don't need remember grammar, listen the English again and again. Suddenly I feel learning English may be interesting. Maybe I can speak English fluently in some day.

Benclass3

September 20th, 2009 at 10:40 pm

When I walked into the classroom, I thought I was in the wrong place. I hadn't seen such a classroom before. So I checked the class number several times, then the teacher came....

Lucy Class O2

September 28th, 2009 at 12:14 am

Seeing the poster on the door on which there was 'Holistic English Lab', I could not stop laughing. Let me tell you why. We have been in school since we were five or six years old, which implies we are skilled at passing all kinds of exams without actually taking in the knowledge. And suddenly, there comes a naive teacher who uses his heart to prepare for his classes. I felt pity for this teacher's hard work at that moment because very few would take it seriously.

However, my view totally changed after the first class. The teacher, a Father-Christmas-like American, is the most devoted teacher I have ever seen in my entire life. Even a foreigner could work so hard at improving our English, and I can't see any reason why we do not endeavor ourselves.

Summy Class3

November 4th, 2009 at 12:30 am

So last Saturday morning is my first day student culture shock. At first I was really scared by Martin's severe attitude to the students who were late. In China, most professors have been used to that and they never explain how bad this behavior is, so finally students just take it for granted. In my opinion, teacher should make their students aware that being on time is very important. If students do not realize that they will make some big mistakes in their left lives, especially in work.

Another difference I found is that in western culture students are encouraged to think and talk freely and to open their mind to find various creative ideas. What teachers teach is not only knowledge but also how to learn and how to create.

TOM-13

September 20th, 2009 at 1:38 am

When I knocked the door nervously and then came into the door, oh, what I saw was Santa Claus! I was told to show him the workbook before I realized that he was not Santa Claus actually. After being permitted to be seated, I found professor was really strict because any one broke the rules would be punished.

I had to say that Professor Martin Wolff was the first foreign English teacher I had ever met and was shocked not for his strictness because it was reasonable but for his humor in English lessons and totally different style of teaching! I never saw a Chinese teacher say "I like teaching and speaking with student even though I had retired." I have to say that I just like him though my English is just so so. I could use supercalifragilisticexpialidocious to describe professor and enjoyable to the post-graduate students.

Charlie.15

September 20th, 2009 at 8:22 am

Chinglish ? What is Chinglish? Looking at the words in a remarkable red banner, I was puzzled.

With doubts I knocked the door. A man looked like Santa Claus queried me: "Where is your yellow book, no book, no come!". Oh, I was rather taken aback; it took me back into the real world "He is not Santa Claus but my rigorous oral English teacher!"

With beating hearts and some nervousness, we began the class. Wow, so different, so funny and so unexpected. Professor Martin brought us a friendly entertainment atmosphere instead of a rigorous academic education. I was greatly fascinated by this "art work".

During the class, I got that the aim of “Holistic English” was to facilitate us self-study, increase our knowledge or expand our world view, and also to embolden us in developing an ethical standard , increase confidence in oral communication..  
Now, I was little nervous but much confidence.

Carter class1

September 20th, 2009 at 9:26 am

I entered a strange classroom for oral English and had a special experience there last Monday afternoon. All the seats were surrounded in circles next to desks and many colorized banners were pasted on walls in the classroom. A dumpy oldster with white hair and a red hat who was pretty much the same as the KFC but looked so strict was walking up and down. It was my first time to near a foreigner for such a long time. I was a little nervous and perplexed but sometimes the oldster was humorous and the classroom was filled with laughter. Maybe my mute English will be improved here, I look forward to it.

Terry09

September 20th, 2009 at 9:27 am

Our first English class was cancelled and rescheduled at the night because we did not bring our books. We began to know this was a first class that different to all the class I have acquired. When we had prepared our English book and come back to 4th floor oral English classroom, we felt shock and within minutes the classroom is filled with laughter, and teacher is very strict, interesting and responsible. I really hope we can have a enjoyable time together.

Jenny.Class1

September 20th, 2009 at 9:29 am

I've been studying English for about 16 years. During these years, I've been taught in approximate ways so the fun of English learning fades day after day. But the first day of this new semester, something changed. I met my first foreign teach, Doctor Wolff, kind of strict. But he's one of the most responsible English teacher I've ever seen. Honestly, I did shock at the beginning. However, when I looked around the room, everything attracted me, colorful phases on walls, smart red hats neatly placed on clean desks...Doctor Wolff treats us like his child and I always believe that every father loves his kids. Holistic English is a new approach for me to experience, I do wanna to follow our teacher and enjoy the new journey.

Vivian class9

September 20th, 2009 at 9:35 am

The first glance of the HEL is very impressive; it is more like a café than a traditional teaching lab. And what is more impressive me is that, because of some misunderstanding, there are 30 students fail to bring their textbook, and unlike the other teacher, martin strictly insist us to get our book before we enter class room. This is the fist time that I know the power of principle, because students learned that they should do well preparation before they start. This is the most precious thing that I got from martin on my first class day.

Andy\_Class 3

September 20th, 2009 at 9:38 am · Edit

Yes, yes, I must say that the things written in this article is actually true. Yes, I am in shock. I had several foreign teachers before, but none of them like Prof. Martin. Prof. Martin is really a special teacher. Did your English teacher tell you a password in the first class before? Supercalifragilisticexpialidocious! Did your oral English teacher tell you the questions of your final exam in the first class? And one of the questions is a tongue twister? I know that I will have special English classes I never imagined before. It may bring me a new attitude about learning English. I really look forward to my oral English classes.

Tom\_class14

September 20th, 2009 at 9:41 am

I was taught by foreign teachers during my middle school time. But I don't like to be taught by them. They often asked us to sing songs and to play games, which were so boring. I felt that they treated us as babies and the class looked like a kindergarten. On the first day of Holistic English, I changed my thought. Mr. Wolff is not a young boy. All the foreign teachers I have met before are also students learning in China. Mr. Wolff is a real old teacher teaching in china. I am looking forward to a new experience with foreign teacher.

Rachel-Class1

September 20th, 2009 at 9:59 am

On the first day of the new semester, I found my learning experiences for 16 years past wasn't applicable here. Chinglish wasn't allowed before but here is just a Chingland. Classes were begun in conventional classrooms before but here is just a tearoom, and you can help yourself with tea and biscuit if you like. And most important, Pro. Martin is terribly strict, even if he looks like Santa Claus. Distinct with other oral English teachers, he told us he

would just teach right English and wants us to be successful. I think I have to adjust to this new situation as soon as possible, and keep high alert to his calls and assignments at any time.

Jim-Class2

September 20th, 2009 at 10:06 am

When I came into the classroom, I was surprised. On the walls there are many sentences which encourage us speaking English out bravely? But when I heard what Pro.Martin said, I was shocked deeply. In his class, you can make mistakes. If you do not make mistakes and correct, you will never learn the oral English and you maybe miss a high-pay job. As Martin said, do it when you can. Do not regret when you can not.

Ricky class 9

September 20th, 2009 at 10:11 am

I just arrived in the classroom on time. But when I came into the door, the vision before my eyes had shocked me deeply. The red caps, the slogans all over the walls, the strange locations of the desks and chairs, all the things gave me a feel that our oral English teacher this semester must be different from others. Predictably, Mr. Wolff told us something new and many instructions, from which I can see he is a strict but kindness teacher. I look forward to the next class.

Jane.Y-class8

September 20th, 2009 at 10:13 am

Mr. Wolff is my first foreign teacher. But the more important thing is, he is the first teacher who has shocked and changed me so much in the first class. "I'll not teach you any English; you're here not to study English, but to acquire English." He said quite seriously after some brief introductions in the first class. Well, to acquire English! That means, we will learn English without lots of forced memorizing, and gradually be able to use it through casual talks! I got excited at once and I knew I would like the course.

Jane Class Two

September 20th, 2009 at 10:53 am

What an impressive English class I had last Monday morning. It's totally different from my preconceived idea of the oral English class. We always study English instead of using English in our life, but on the first class Pro. Martin changed the situation. He is a responsible teacher, he taught us not only about how to improve our oral English, but also told us other things such as how to be a good employee when we work for a foreign company. It's really

useful to all of us. Thanks to Pro. Martin, i am looking forward to the next class.

John Class13

September 20th, 2009 at 10:56 am

At the time I first entered this “Holistic English Lab” I was shocked. Is it a classroom? An old man with white beard ordered us to sit where there’s a red hat. “Unbelievable! Do you think you are in a kindergarten? You are not told to do this!” Oh, what a serious guy.

Soon I find this old man-our Professor Martin Wolff, is very humorous and kind-hearted, but he is much more strict. If you are late, out; If your phone rings in the class, give it to him without returning, otherwise, out; and something like that. Jesus! “Precept upon precept, line upon line, here a little, and there a little”. Aren’t we Chinese crazy? We will never obey these rules for learning our own language. However, I shall do all my best to obey the instructions from this strict and respectable (I say respectable because he spend his weekend on giving lessons to the students who are late or absent) man, and try to enjoy the fun he promised to bring us.

Cindy-class2

September 20th, 2009 at 11:06 am

My first oral English class was unforgettable, what shocked me most is the rigorous atmosphere, which made me realized that oral English class is not just play English game or sing a English song like before, it requires us to do our utmost to practice our oral English.

Of all the past 10 years, we’ve learned English on the purpose to pass the exam, which made me ignored the practice of oral English. but this class provides us a precious chance for us to practice, especially with professor Wolff’s strict requirements, which not only taught us how to practice English, but also taught us the attitude toward life, how to experience it, and how to face it..

Kate class1

September 20th, 2009 at 11:18 am

Maybe I will never forget my first foreign oral English class on 14th of September in the Sun Yat-sen University. I was totally shocked when I stepped into the class because I wondered whether the class was the very classroom as the baubles and red hats appeared before me. However, the most thrilled moment was that when Professor Martin said “Out!” to me and my other two classmates. I almost could not believe it. No textbook, no entry,

and no excuse. But in fact I agreed with what the professor said to us. And I liked the style of strict requirement and the style of teaching.

Alex class1

September 20th, 2009 at 11:19 am

My first impression about this course came from the notice about the workbook. I could predict the seriousness of teacher on this course and his students. The first sight of the classroom was indeed a shock to me. "Welcome to the Chingland!" It implies that we students are encouraged to talk freely in this room without worrying about making any grammar or pronunciation mistakes. However, from Mr. Wolff's introduction I know it won't be easy to pass this course, as creating holistic English atmosphere in China and bathing in it need much effort and discipline.

Silvia class 9

September 20th, 2009 at 10:25 pm

How amazing This was the deepest impression of my first oral English class. Hardly saw the Slogan "Holistic English" on the wall outside the classroom when I asked my classmates what the meaning was. But we all had no idea. However, I found the answer from my first class. Professor Martin looked so energetic as well strict, so I felt nervous. However what strike me most was what he said. He told us we should creat a friendly environment for studying English, which I had never heard before. For example, we can change our language in our mobile phone from Chinese into English. Also, we can send message to our friends in English. It seemed as if it's a trivial, but I believed if all of us formed the habit, we would create an English learning environment for ourselves step by step. It's true that we would derive benefits from this method one day.

Gertie Class18

September 26th, 2009 at 3:06 pm

When I entered the Holistic English Lab for the first moment, I realized it was unique. Colorful maxims on the wall, red chairs round several desks and freely used water made me feel it was a comfortable classroom with a conversational atmosphere. In the classs, Professor Matin told us a lot about his family and talented students, and his humor made us blur out laughter a lot. Besides, I was shocked by his attitude that "so-so" is a big NO NO! I was aware of the significance of forming a strict and serious attitude towards my study and future jobs. "Don't take your face to the class!" Marin said. I realized, prompting our English speaking skill is not the only goal, but building confidence and courage to speak.

Not English learning but English acquisition will bring us progress. Henceforth, I will try my best, wishing I can improve my oral English with the help of our strict but nice Professor Martin.

Jerry Class02

September 27th, 2009 at 10:53 am

When I came into HEL , I was impressed by the decoration and display of this classroom. There are many colorful sentences posted on the wall and red hats written "SPEAK ENGLISH" prepared at each seat. At the beginning of the class, our teacher, Mr. Wolff shared stories about growth of his sons. He emphasized that positive attitude is very important for us to deal with the relationship between employee and employer. To be honest, Mr. Wolff is different from those foreign teachers who only teach us English songs, he wants to tell us how to be a mature and responsible man, and help us make big improvement and become successful like his sons. In a word, Mr. Wolff is a nice and responsible teacher, I am glad to be his student and looking forward to next holistic English class.

Kate.15

September 20th, 2009 at 1:27 pm

It was my first experience to have an oral English class like this, I felt excited and nervous in that day. The environment of the classroom is free and comfortable. My oral English teacher Dr. Martin is strictly but humorous for all of his students. He made strict rules for us to learn English ,so at the beginning of class, all of us felt nervous for this class, and sometimes we do not know what did he said. Quickly, Dr. Martin made us go out of this feeling. The oral classroom and the Professor were all special for me; it was an unforgettable experience for the beginning of my postgraduate life.

Leon class4

September 23rd, 2009 at 2:59 pm

If someone asked me the impression of my first oral English class, I would tell him only one word: shocking. I guess it's pretty much the same with most of my classmates, as we seldom have the opportunity to learn English as vividly as this. Talking about shock, there were two times when I was amazed. The first was when Professor Wolff said "you will eat, drink and sleep English". Well this is the principle that I never heard from all my teachers, a little crazy but definitely attractive! It will be a great experience if we followed this rule. The second one is the story of one successful student of his. The story is small but the philosophy in it

is big, letting me know how important it is to be acquainted.  
Hoping the next class bring us more.

Jane-Class 1

September 20th, 2009 at 1:38 pm

What? Chinglish spoken here? When I first saw these words, I sneered, this is what my prior teachers told me not to do. Then I push the door open, I was a little surprise about the scene, the desks and chairs are placed not the same as I thought. But guess what? I like it! At the same time, I saw my foreign teacher, a man with a big red T-shirt. At first, I am a little afraid of him, because he seems to be too harsh. As the class continued, I finally realized that all these things are done for many reasons. The professor asks us to speak Chinglish in order to encourage the student to speak, no matter how worse his pronunciation is. The teacher is humor and conscientious, I began to think that this class will be fun.

Ross Class01

September 20th, 2009 at 1:54 pm

Actually I was kind of hoping that the oral English teacher would be a beautiful fairy lady with a wave of blonde hair, so when I saw Professor Martin standing at the front of the classroom greeting us, I felt a little disappointed (LOL). His luxuriant mustache was the first thing that impressed me. The mustache is so thick that his mouth is almost hidden behind it. I figured that he must be a good-tempered teacher which was later proved wrong. He turned out to be a very strict teacher whose class has many rules and regulations for the students to follow. That's the second thing that impressed me. The strict tones of his got me very nervous at first, especially when I was asked to change my English name because it was actually a girl's name. I felt quiet embarrassed at that time. And at the same time everyone else was sitting in his chair, afraid of being criticized of doing something wrong.

The tense atmosphere suddenly changed as soon as the class began. Professor Martin changed to a man who talks like our parent (in a good way of course). I could feel that he cares about us and he was doing his best to impart to us the secrets of how to learn English. The words he said were very stimulant and the man has such a wonderful sense of humor which could be counted to be the third thing that impressed me that day. I suddenly began to love this class and Martin. Professor Martin has so many interesting stories to tell because he has so many experiences and has been to so many places. He said that he was retired but not tired. He said a teacher should stop teaching whenever he stops learning. I guess that might be the reason why he chose to be a teacher after his retirement. The class was ended in a very relaxed air and we talked

about the funny experience we just had during the class all the way back.

Kevin.class18

September 26th, 2009 at 8:57 pm

Frankly speaking, I felt something different the first time I saw the oral English classroom with a big red sign writing “WELCOME TO CHINELAND”. It’s so special and makes me curious to get in and have a look. After getting in the classroom, I was amazed by its fancy decoration. There were so many slogans around and also beautiful plant on the desk. Then our teacher came, a kindly old man with Bushy white beard, just like the Father Christmas. The old man told lots about himself and the class. He was a strict old man and had many rules for the class., something was quite incomprehensible from our point of view and that shocked us. But I didn’t think that I will hate it. Oppositely, I would get use to it and enjoy it, because I believe it can promote my oral English.

Jessica-Class 2

September 20th, 2009 at 3:57 pm

Holistic English course is more than an English course! Not only can we speak English, but also we can see English, smell English and drink English. Professor Wolff is as “harsh” as it can be. However, it is just because of his stricture that we’ve gained things more than English knowledge merely from the first day class, things that will aid us in our lifetime. Try your best to be as punctual and precise as you can. This is what Professor Wolff taught us in the first class. I have faith in myself that I can gain a lot from this course.

Angellu

September 20th, 2009 at 4:02 pm

On the very first day of my postgraduate semester I was in shock. Actually, I was puzzled by the banner with the phrase “WELCOME to CHINGLAND, Chinglish Spoken Here” in front of the oral English classroom, and I thought that might be something different. Then, I entered the room and I thought I met the legendary Santa Claus. However, I found I made quite a mistake later, and the foreign teacher actually was a real professor. He deeply impressed me, and I thought I would remember the professor Martin Wolff all my life. I had never met such a professor and I thought that would become a different and meaningful experience in my postgraduate semester and even in my life. Now, you see, I practice the tongue twister “How much

wood could a woodchuck chuck if a woodchuck could chuck wood” every day.

Alex Class 18

September 26th, 2009 at 12:01 pm

It is really a “first day shock” to me and everything is unbelievable. On my way to the classroom with other guys, I didn’t know anything about the course yet. After all, this is just another English course like one of those courses before and I guess there’s nothing different. But when I saw that “Chinglish” flag on the wall, I said to myself, “Wow, maybe there IS something different.” And so it is. The so-called “classroom” was more like a tea house, with colorful papers on the wall....

Susan class14

September 20th, 2009 at 4:02 pm

Before I went into the classroom of oral English on Thursday afternoon, I was tired and sleepily. But, it stimulated me as soon as the decoration of the classroom appeared in front of my eyes. Motto boards almost occupied the whole sidewall and the desks on which there each were six red hats with letters “SPEAK ENGLISH” were not placed in right order. Another one that attracted me simultaneously was Professor Martin. He was a fat man with bushy beard for which we almost could not see his mouth and he had a loud and clear voice. Just as he said, he was really a strict professor. You were allowed to be in the classroom unless you had the workbook and were not be late. During the class, do not nap or even inattentive, otherwise you will miss some important information. So, we should be serious every second and I believe that like teacher, like pupil.

Sabrina class3

September 20th, 2009 at 4:11 pm

It’s really a culture shock! As prof.Wolff said that most of us had never had such an experience in our prior 16 years.

I was shocked when I came in the classroom. There are seven tables in room and every table has six seats with a red hat belong to each seat. Subsequently, we know that this especial red hat is a symbol that denotes we are Prof. Wolff’s students.

My dear Prof. Wolff is a kindly man, he told many interesting stories made we laugh. But he is also a strict man. When he saw someone hadn’t took the oral book he shouted:”out!”

What a exciting class it was! Our dear Prof. Wolff said that as long as we follow his arrangement our English will be better and better! I believe!

Moon

September 20th, 2009 at 11:10 pm · Edit

If I was ordered to choose a word to describe my oral English on the first day, I think “interesting” will be the most appropriate one. When I entered the classroom with my classmates, the special scene made me surprised: six red hats with “speak English” putting on the table which soon after we knew we must wear anywhere and anytime, a small potted plant placing on our desk, colorful boards with motivated proverbs being hung on the white wall, and our teacher, Dr. Martin, speaking not at the front of the room, but in the middle of it. In a word, I never entered this kind of classroom and experienced the comfortable atmosphere of learning.

I fall in love with the special oral English class on the first day.

Shirley2\_class4

September 23rd, 2009 at 1:20 pm · Edit

I had thought that the oral English classes were just easy jobs for me after having learnt English for thirteen years. But when I stepped into the classroom, I realized I was wrong. The atmosphere actually shocked me. The long time of studying English in a rigid and non-incentive way has worn out my passion for English. Martin made me to reconsider the meanings of learning English. I forgot something important in the course of English study. They were proud, happiness and encouragement. I showed my appreciation for Martin. I thought I would find these significant feelings in Holistic English.

## **WHAT IS HOLISTIC ENGLISH?**

The chief editor of a major Asian linguistics journal suggested that Holistic English is just rearranging furniture. There are scholars who simply refuse to acknowledge the difference between language learning and language acquisition.

Holistic English is language acquisition. The emphasis is on comprehensible input in a friendly environment. Due to a paucity of English reading materials and the complete absence of any English acquisition library, English movies with English subtitles provide the medium of comprehensible input. Holistic English treats the language as an inseparable whole, as opposed to the traditional Chinese English learning curriculum of dissecting language into four separate and disconnected parts, i.e. reading, listening, writing and speaking.

Holistic English encourages language acquisition for communication purposes. The traditional Chinese curriculum mandates learning English to pass a multitude of exams and results in Mute English, knowledge about English but functional illiteracy.

The goals of Holistic English are developing confidence, intrinsic motivation, self-discipline, autonomous learning skills, creative thinking and increasing world view.

The goals of the traditional Chinese curriculum are memorization of language rules, vocabulary lists and set phrases.

The contrast between Holistic English and the traditional English learning curriculum is stark and it does shock the students on the first day.