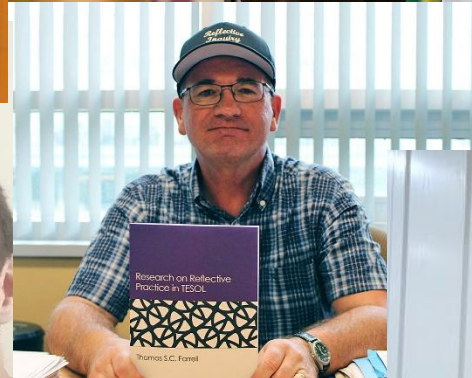


Engagement & Communication in online (and offline) classes

Ross Thorburn
September 24th 2020

TEFL Training Institute





online school

10,000 teachers

100,000 students



LaSandra



teacher

Jessica/Jes



student

materials

Look at the picture. Say the sentence.



Be quiet.



6

Time to eat!

A Look and say.



1 a _____



2 _____



3 _____



4 _____



5 _____



6 _____



7 _____



8 _____



9 _____



10 _____



11 _____



12 _____



Now write an invitation card. Choose and write where YOUR home is.

To: _____

From: _____

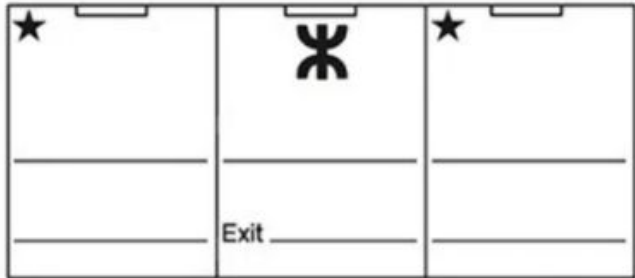
You are invited!

Please come to my birthday party on _____ at _____



Directions:

Take the MTR to _____



Typical classroom interaction

1. Teacher: So, you've got to say, is there, is there a clothes shop?
2. Student: Is there a clothes shop, yes there is. You can buy a coat...
3. Teacher: On the...
4. Student: On the first floor.
5. Teacher: Is there a gift shop?
6. Student: Yes, there is. You can buy a present on the first, floor.
7. Teacher: Is there a bookshop?
8. Student: Yes, there is. You can buy a storybook. It is on the fifth floor.
9. Teacher: Is there a pet shop? Is there a pet shop?
10. Student: Yes, there is.
11. Teacher: Is there? Is there a pet shop? I want to buy a dog.
12. Student: No there isn't.
13. Teacher: Is there a sports shop?
14. Student: Yes, there is. You can sportswear on the third floor.

observing unseen



Initial reflections

opportunity observe the classroom
huge variety of teachers
opportunities to test out activities



not very much communication
materials dominating the classroom interactions
materials often from offline coursebooks



What communication happens in
online language classes?

Do materials / coursebooks affect
this communication?

How can teachers get students
to communicate more?



What are we doing today?



What is
communication
?

Do activities
and materials
impact
communication
?

What can
teachers do to
encourage
communication
?

Final Thoughts

What is
communication
?

Do activities
and materials
impact
communication
?

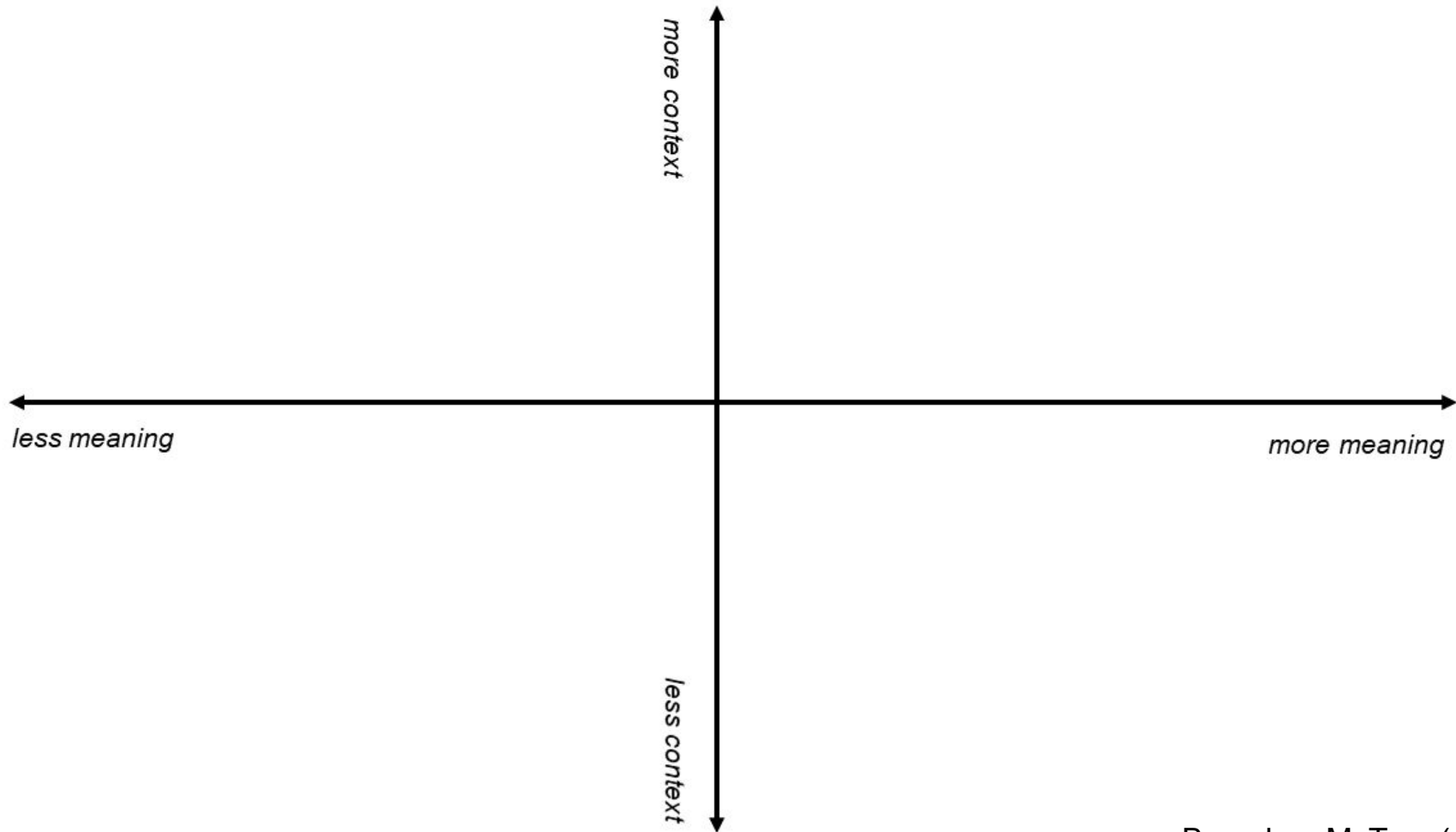
What can
teachers do to
encourage
communication
?

Final Thoughts

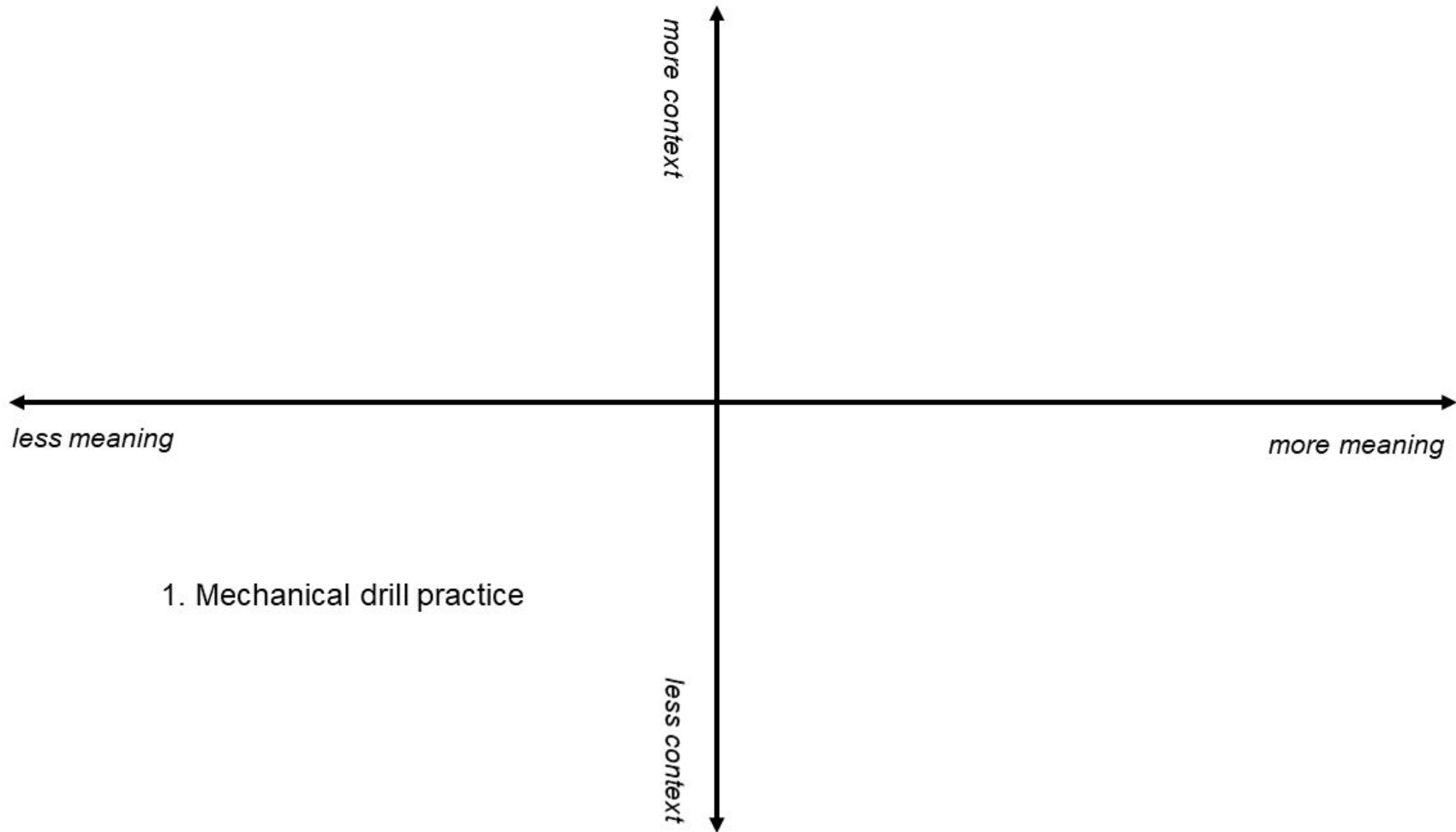


What is “*meaningful communication*”?

What does this look or sound like?



Based on McTear (1975)





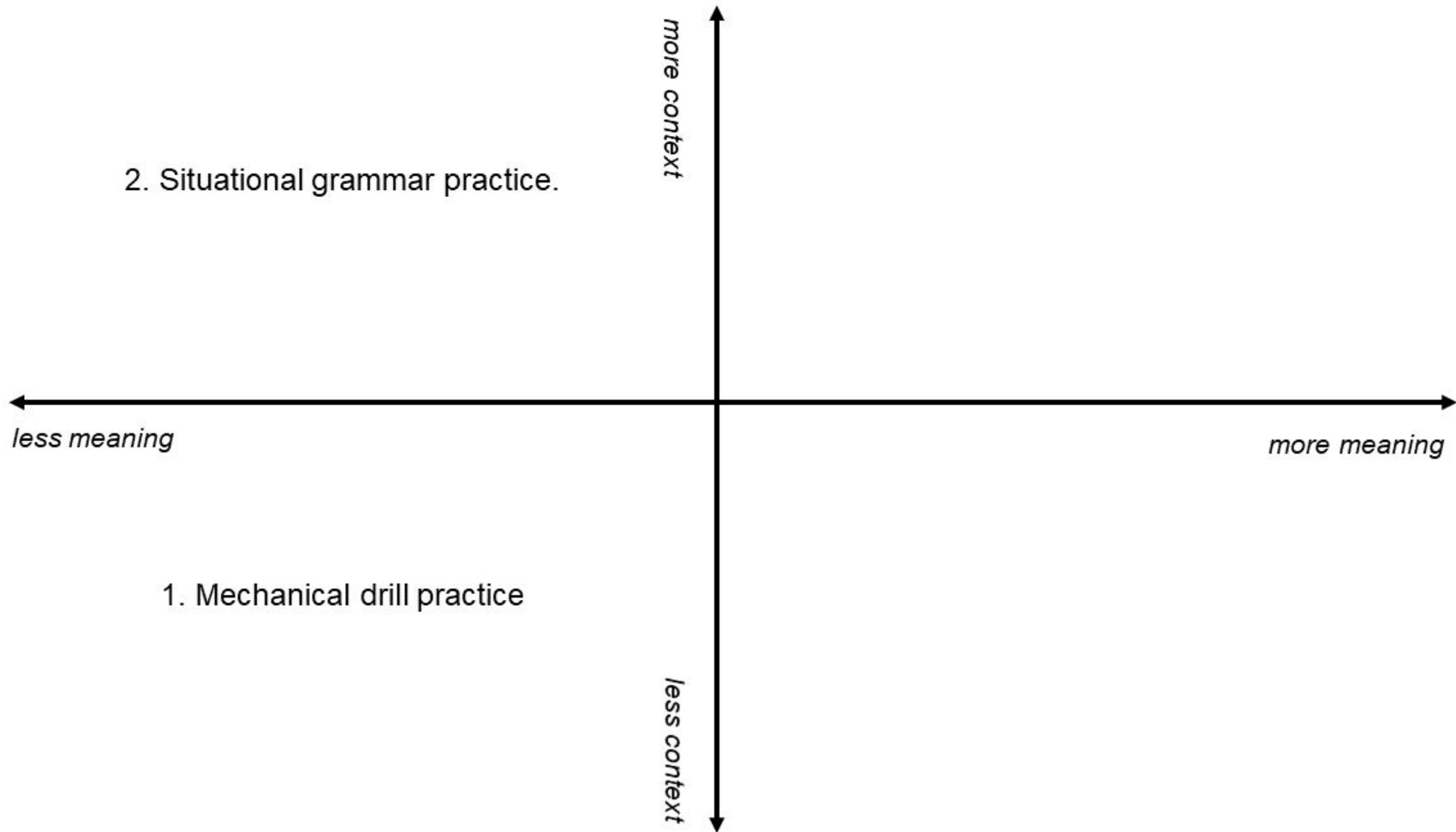
I like cats

I like dogs

I like cats

I like dogs

Mechanical drill practice





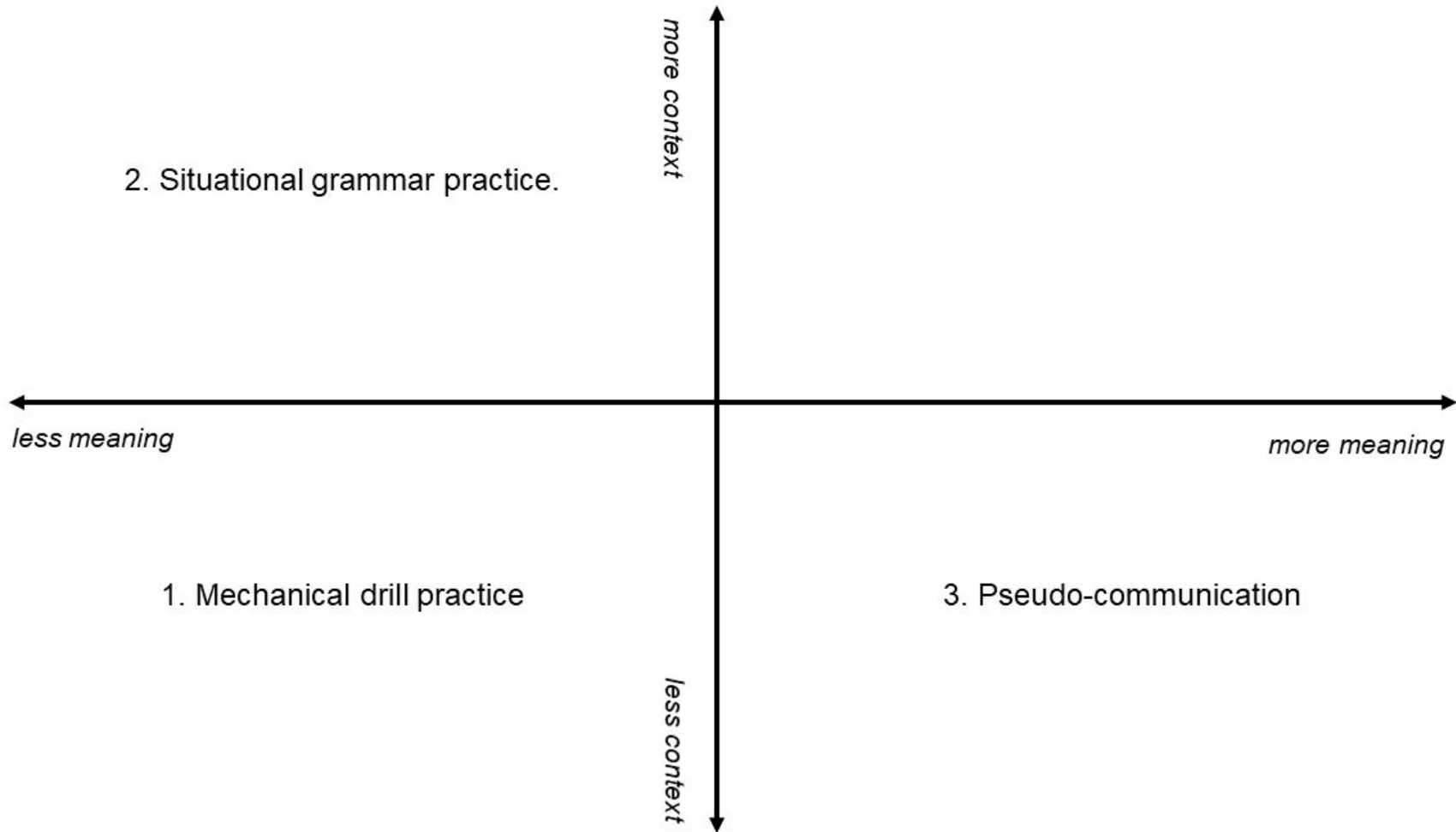
That's one dollar please

Thank you

Bread please

Here you are

Situation grammar practice





Do you have any pets?

Very good

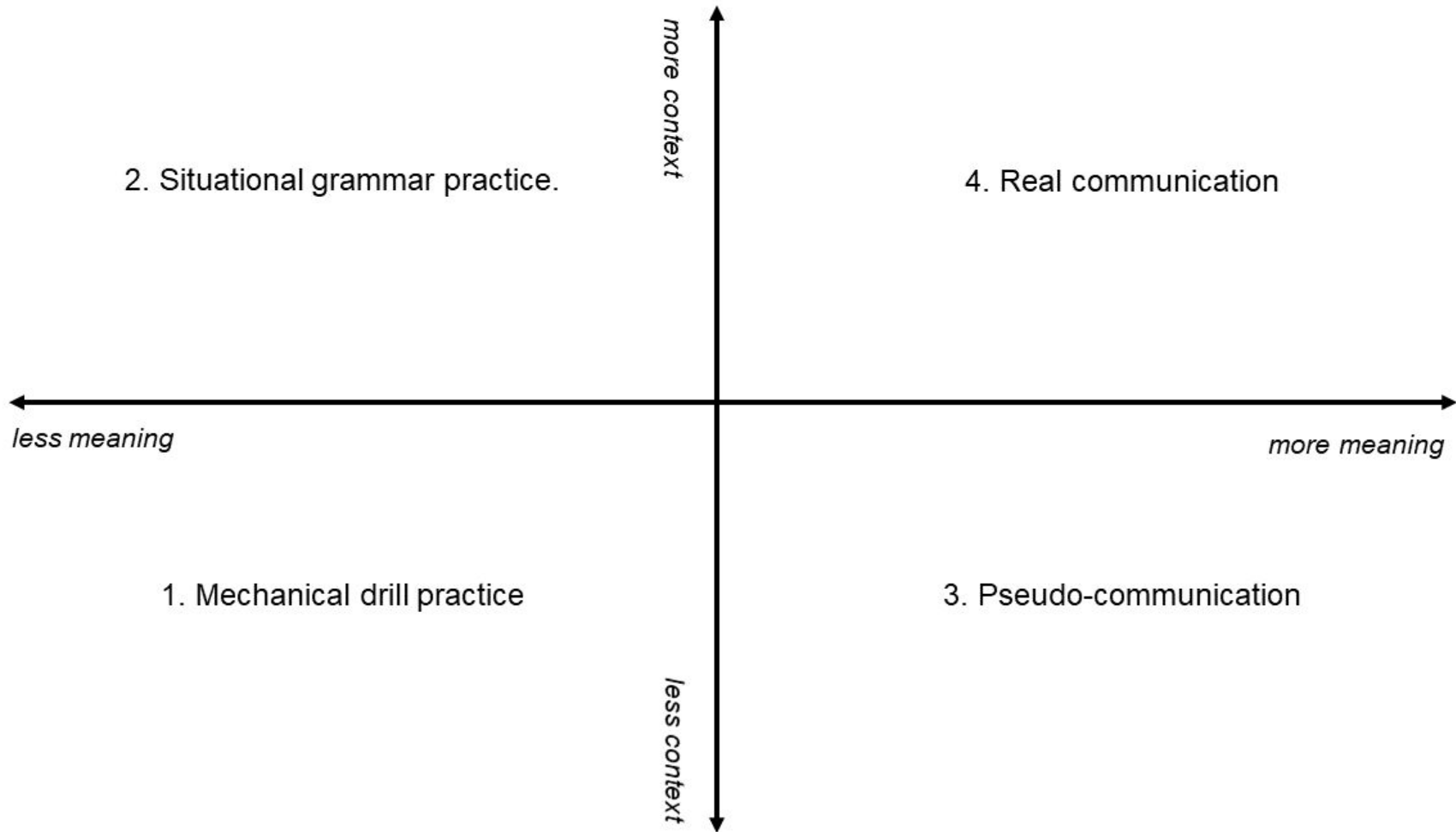
Yes, I have a dog


Pseudo-communication

1. Initiation
Do you have any pets?

3. Feedback
Very good

2. Response
Yes, I have a dog





Please help
checking
my writing?

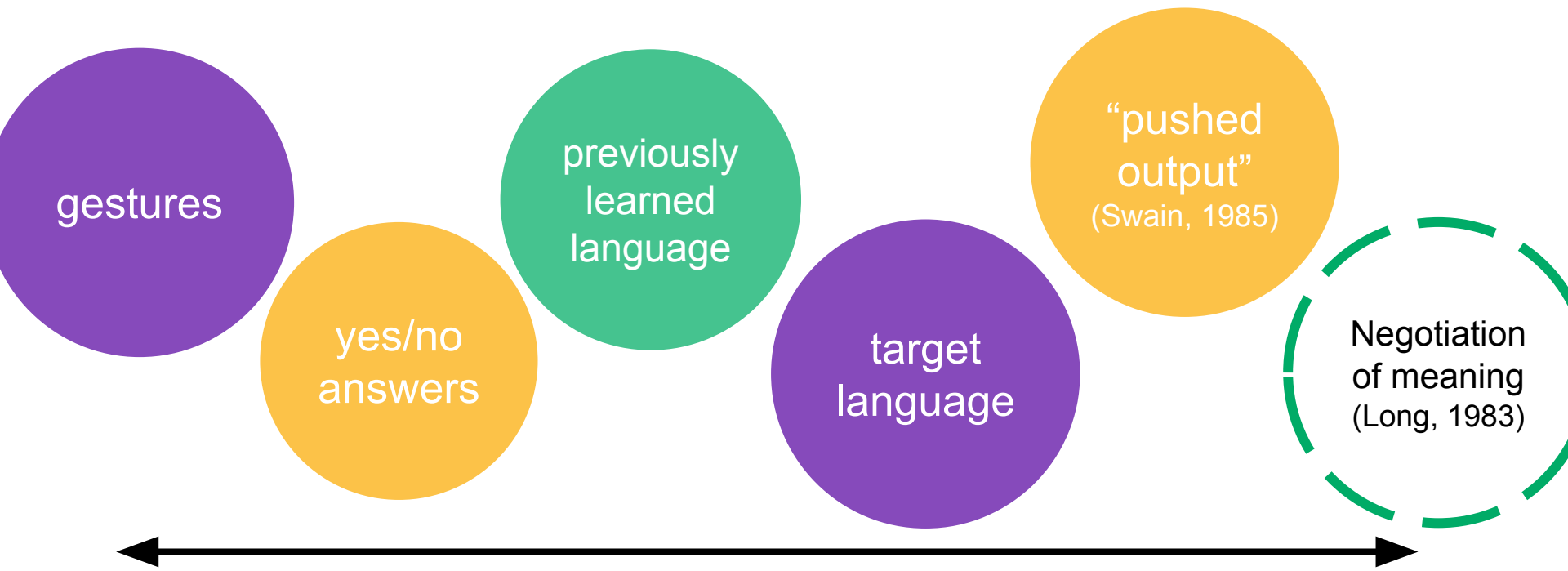
Sure. I think you
spelled this wrong

Real communication



How can students *meaningfully communicate*?





(relatively) less complex speech

(relatively) more complex speech

What is
communication
?

Do activities
and materials
impact
communication
?

What can
teachers do to
encourage
communication
?

Final Thoughts

Now write an invitation card. Choose and write where YOUR home is.

To: _____

From: _____

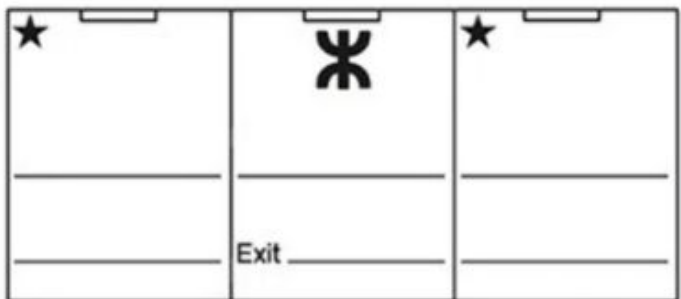
You are invited!

Please come to my birthday party on _____ at _____



Directions:

Take the MTR to _____



Now write an invitation card. Choose and write where YOUR home

student's name

To: _____

From: _____

You are invited!

friend's name

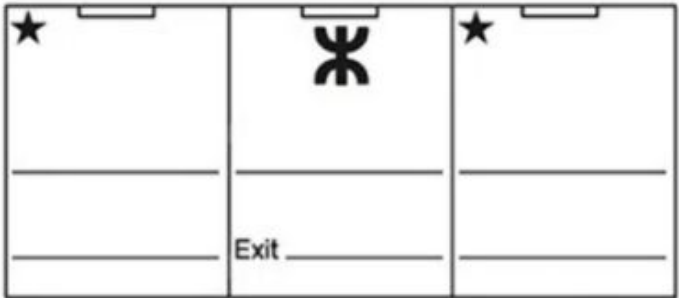
my birthday party on _____ at _____



Directions:

Take the MTR to _____

student's birthday





Finish your task.

**Say some things you want to buy
and finish the dialogue.**



Is there ...?



Shopping List:
a coat
a present
a storybook
trainers

Yes, there is / are.
No, there isn't.
You can buy ...
on ... floor.





Finish your task.

**Say some things you want to buy
and finish the dialogue.**



mall map

Is there ...?



Shopping List:
a coat
a present
a storybook
trainers

shopping list

Yes, there is / are.
No, there isn't.
You can buy ...
on ... floor.

sentence stems








List and describe.

Check

My Favourite Weekly Food List

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Breakfast							
Lunch							
Dinner							



Finish your task.

Task 1

Design a shopping centre and introduce it to your teacher. (You say and the teacher types.)

_____ Shopping Centre Directory			
...	...		
3/F			
2/F			
1/F			
G/F			



Finish your task.

Design a shopping centre and introduce it to your teacher. (You say and the teacher types.)

_____ **Shopping Centre Directory**

instructions

blank shopping
mall plan

...	...		
3/F			
2/F			
1/F			
G/F			



What is
communication
?

Do activities
and materials
impact
communication
?

What can
teachers do to
encourage
communication
?

Final Thoughts



the
teachers

In total, ***seventeen*** teacher-student
pairs

- from *US, UK* and *South Africa*
- mostly *female*
- 3 had a recognized TEFL qualification



the
students

- all *Chinese*
- 65% male, 35% female
- Distributed evenly between tier 1, 2 and 3

Principle #1 : ask questions you don't know the answer to

Principle #2 : use motivating tasks with tangible outcomes

Principle #3 : make tasks culturally relevant to students and teachers

Principle #4 : Avoid sentence stems in communicative activities

Principle #5 : Put communicative activities at the start of lessons

Principle #6 : Get students to instruct and teacher to draw

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Finish your task.

**Say some things you want to buy
and finish the dialogue.**



Is there ...?



Shopping List:
a coat
a present
a storybook
trainers

Yes, there is / are.
No, there isn't.
You can buy ...
on ... floor.



Mainly display questions

1. Teacher: So, is there a coat? Is there a coat?
2. Student: Yes, there is.
3. Teacher: You can buy one on...
4. Student: You can buy coat on... You can buy coat on first floor.
5. Teacher: On the first floor, fantastic, good. On the first floor, great. Alright. Is there a present?
6. Student: You can... You can. You can buy, buy present on. You can buy present on a fourth floor.
7. Teacher: On the fourth floor, lovely. Is there a storybook?
8. Student: You can buy storybook on fifth floor.
9. Teacher: On the fifth floor, fantastic. Is there trainers?
0. Student: Trainers. You can buy trainers on on second floor.



Finish your task.

Task 1

Design a shopping centre and introduce it to your teacher. (You say and the teacher types.)

_____ Shopping Centre Directory			
...	...		
3/F			
2/F			
1/F			
G/F			

Mainly referential questions

1. Teacher: What about a Minnie Mouse... Sorry?
2. Student: (draws in extra borders on the diagram) One, two, three...
3. Teacher: You want more shops?
4. Student: And dancing!
5. Teacher: A dancing shop?
6. Student: No, dancing, oh... (L2)
7. Teacher: A dance school
8. Student: No. No. A [pause] dancing school
9. Teacher: A dance school. Dance school, okay. (Types "Dance School")
Good, very, very nice. I like the shopping center. Do you like it?
10. Student: Yes, and... Sing. Sing school.
11. Teacher: Singing school. Okay.

Mainly referential questions

1. Teacher: What about a Minnie Mouse... Sorry?
2. Student: (draws in extra borders on the diagram) One, two, three... **Student taking control**
3. Teacher: You want more shops?
4. Student: And dancing!
5. Teacher: A dancing shop?
6. Student: No, dancing, oh... (L2)
7. Teacher: A dance school
8. Student: No. No. A [pause] dancing school
9. Teacher: A dance school. Dance school, okay. (Types "Dance School")
Good, very, very nice. I like the shopping center. Do you like it?
10. Student: Yes, and... Sing. Sing school.
11. Teacher: Singing school. Okay.

4. Pushed output

5. Reformulation

6. Pushed output

7. Reformulation

8. Accurate form

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Finish your task.

Task 1

Design a shopping centre and introduce it to your teacher. (You say and the teacher types.)

_____ Shopping Centre Directory	
...	...
3/F	
2/F	
1/F	
G/F	

Tangible outcome

1. Teacher: Alright, what else do you want? You've got two more.
2. Student: Eh, I go to the park!
3. Teacher: The Park? You want to have a park in your shopping center?
4. Student: Yes.
5. Teacher: Okay, so we'll say an indoor park. Okay. What do you want to have in the park?
6. Student: The many flower.
7. Teacher: Many flowers. Okay, cool alright. What is your shopping center called?
8. Student: Called?
9. Teacher: What's the name of your shopping center?
10. Student: The [pause] oh the first-floor park is, oh, ha.
11. Teacher: Do you have a name?
12. Student: Eh, the name is the [pause] good shopping

Tangible outcome

1. Teacher: Alright, what else do you want? You've got two more.
2. Student: Eh, I go to the park!
3. Teacher: The Park? You want to have a park in your shopping center?
4. Student: Yes.
5. Teacher: Okay, so we'll say an indoor park. Okay. What do you want to have in the park?
6. Student: The many flower.
7. Teacher: Many flowers. Okay, cool alright. What is your shopping center called?
8. Student: Called?
9. Teacher: What's the name of your shopping center?
10. Student: The [pause] oh the first-floor park is, oh, ha.
11. Teacher: Do you have a name?
12. Student: Eh, the name is the [pause] good shopping

Negotiation of meaning




Successful outcome



List and describe.

Check

My Favourite Weekly Food List

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Breakfast							
Lunch							
Dinner							

No tangible outcome

1. Teacher: Cake. It was... I ate cake. Today is my birthday. Today is my birthday. So, I ate cake. What will you eat tomorrow? Tomorrow is Sunday. What will you eat?
2. Student: Mushroom
3. Teacher: Mushrooms, okay. And what did you eat for lunch on Tuesday? Tell me what you ate for lunch.
4. Student: Pizza
5. Teacher: Oh yum, pizza, I like pizza. What about Wednesday?
6. Student: Chicken
7. Teacher: Good, you eating some good lunch. Chicken, yes. What about Thursday?
8. Student: Tomato
9. Teacher: I ate tomato
10. Student: I make us tomato and a rice.

No tangible outcome

1. Teacher: Cake. It was... I ate cake. Today is my birthday. Today is my birthday. So, I ate cake. What will you eat tomorrow? Tomorrow is Sunday. What will you eat?
2. Student: mushroom
3. Teacher: Mushrooms, okay. And what did you eat for lunch on Tuesday? Tell me what you ate for lunch.
4. Student: Pizza
5. Teacher: Oh yum, pizza, I like pizza. What about Wednesday?
6. Student: Chicken
7. Teacher: Good, you eating some good lunch. Chicken, yes. What about Thursday?
8. Student: Tomato
9. Teacher: I ate tomato
10. Student: I make us tomato and a rice.

nothing meaningful
being understood

Principle #1 : ask questions you don't know the answer to

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Principle #6 : Get students to instruct and teacher to draw



List and describe.

Check

My Favourite Weekly Food List

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Breakfast							
Lunch							
Dinner							

Not culturally relevant to teacher

1. Teacher: What did you have for breakfast today?
2. Student: Today I eat, I eat, what.
3. Teacher: Sorry?
4. Student: (types “麻团” translated “hemp ball”)
5. Teacher: Hemp ball... Was it nice?
6. Student: Yeah
7. Teacher: Excellent. What did you have for lunch?

Not culturally relevant to teacher

1. Teacher: What did you have for breakfast today?
2. Student: Today I eat, I eat, what.
3. Teacher: Sorry?
4. Student: (types 麻团 translated hemp ball)
5. Teacher: Hemp ball... Was it nice?
6. Student: Yeah
7. Teacher: Excellent. What did you have for lunch?

pseudo-communication



Finish your task.

Task 1

Design a shopping centre and introduce it to your teacher. (You say and the teacher types.)

_____ Shopping Centre Directory	
...	...
3/F	
2/F	
1/F	
G/F	

Culturally relevant to student and teacher

1. Teacher: Do you go shopping with Mum?
2. Student: Yes and Dad and my sister
3. Teacher: Ah, does daddy like to shop?
4. Student: Yes
5. Teacher: Really? What does daddy like to buy?"
6. Student: Daddy likes, Daddy likes cinema.
7. Teacher: Daddy likes to go to the cinema. And what do we do in the cinema?
8. Student: Watch a movie. It's very big.
9. Teacher: Watch a movie or watch a film. It's very very big, you're right. Do you like going to the cinema?
10. Student: No. I'm crying.
11. Teacher: Why do you cry in the cinema?"
12. Student: I'm scared

Culturally relevant to student and teacher

1. Teacher: Do you go shopping with Mum?
2. Student: Yes and Dad and my sister
3. Teacher: Ah, does daddy like to shop?
4. Student: Yes
5. Teacher: Really? What does daddy like to buy?"
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9. Teacher: Watch a movie or watch a film. It's very very big, you're right. Do you like going to the cinema?
10. Student: No. I'm crying.
11. Teacher: Why do you cry in the cinema?"
12. Student: I'm scared

shared understanding
about shopping malls

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Finish your task.

**Say some things you want to buy
and finish the dialogue.**



Is there ...?



Shopping List:
a coat
a present
a storybook
trainers

Yes, there is / are.
No, there isn't.
You can buy ...
on ... floor.



With sentence stems

1. Teacher: So, you've got to say, is there, is there a clothes shop?
2. Student: Is there a clothes shop, yes there is. You can buy a coat...
3. Teacher: On the...
4. Student: On the first floor
5. Teacher: Is there a gift shop?
6. Student: Yes, there is. You can buy a present on the first, floor.
7. Teacher: Is there a bookshop?
8. Student: Yes, there is. You can buy a storybook. It is on the fifth floor.
9. Teacher: Is there a pet shop? Is there a pet shop?
10. Student: Yes, there is
11. Teacher: Is there a sports shop?
12. Student: Yes, there is. You can sportswear on the third floor.

With sentence stems




- | | |
|---|-----------------------|
| 1. Teacher: So, you've got to say, is there, is there a clothes shop? | 1. <i>Initiation</i> |
| 2. Student: Is there a clothes shop, yes there is. You can buy a coat... | 2. <i>Response</i> |
| 3. Teacher: On the... | 3. <i>Initiation</i> |
| 4. Student: On the first floor | 4. <i>Response</i> |
| 5. Teacher: Is there a gift shop? | 5. <i>Initiation</i> |
| 6. Student: Yes, there is. You can buy a present on the first, floor. | 6. <i>Response</i> |
| 7. Teacher: Is there a bookshop? | 7. <i>Initiation</i> |
| 8. Student: Yes, there is. You can buy a storybook. It is on the fifth floor. | 8. <i>Response</i> |
| 9. Teacher: Is there a pet shop? Is there a pet shop? | 9. <i>Initiation</i> |
| 10. Student: Yes, there is | 10. <i>Response</i> |
| 11. Teacher: Is there a sports shop? | 11. <i>Initiation</i> |
| 12. Student: Yes, there is. You can sportswear on the third floor. | 12. <i>Response</i> |



List and describe.

Check

My Favourite Weekly Food List

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Breakfast							
Lunch							
Dinner							

Without sentence stems

1. Student: Today? Today I have milk and stamp board
2. Teacher: I'm sorry?
3. Student: stam pan?
4. Teacher: Oh, steamed bun
5. Student: Steamed bun
6. Teacher: Yeah. B, U, N. Bun. And lunch?
7. Student: In lunch, I, I, I eat this too. I eat school lunch. I eat school lunch
8. Teacher: Are the lunches in school good?
9. Student:
10. Teacher: It's a surprise every day?
11. Student: Yes

Without sentence stems

1. Student: Today? Today I have milk and stamp board
2. Teacher: I'm sorry?
3. Student: Stam pan?
4. Teacher: Oh, steamed bun
5. Student: Steamed bun
6. Teacher: Yeah. B, U, N. Bun. And lunch?
7. Student: In lunch, I, I, I eat this too. I eat school lunch. I eat school lunch
8. Teacher: Are the lunches in school good?
9. Student: I don't know what is school lunch
10. Teacher: It's a surprise every day?
11. Student: Yes

Negotiation of meaning

pushed output

Principle #1 : ask questions you don't know the answer to

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Now write an invitation card. Choose and write where YOUR home is.

To: _____

From: _____

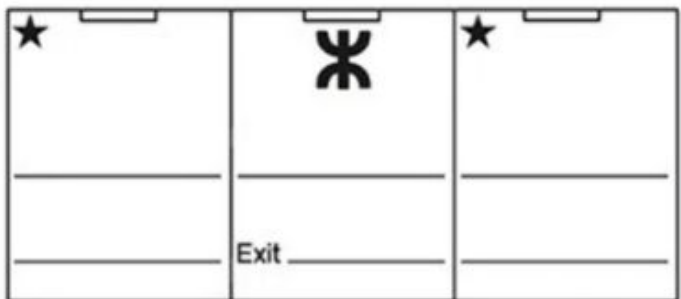
You are invited!

Please come to my birthday party on _____ at _____



Directions:

Take the MTR to _____



From the end of class

1. Teacher: Where is, you're going to put where is your home?
2. Student: Please come to my birthday party on. Birthday party.
3. Teacher: Put today's date, the tenth of the tenth, two thousand and nineteen at ten AM (writes "10/10/19" "1000 am"). Where's your house, are you going to go here or here?
4. Student: Left, left
5. Teacher: So that can be your house and that can be my house. How am I going to get to your house?
6. Student: Take the MTR to...
7. Teacher: Say exit one
8. Student: Exit one
9. Teacher: Turn...
10. Student: Turn left. My house is opposite the restaurant.

From the end of class

1. Teacher: Where is, you're going to put where is your home?
2. Student: Please come to my birthday party on. Birthday party.
3. Teacher: Put today's date, the tenth of the tenth, two thousand and nineteen at ten AM (writes 10/10/19 "1000 am"). Where's your house, are you going to go here or here?
4. Student: Left, left
5. Teacher: So that can be your house and that can be my house. How am I going to get to your house?
6. Student: Take the MTR to...
7. Teacher: Say exit one
8. Student: Exit one
9. Teacher: Turn...
10. Student: Turn left. My house is opposite the restaurant.

Teacher chooses student's birthday!

From the start of class

1. Teacher: Okay, when's your birthday?
2. Student: Home
3. Teacher: What month? January February March April? What month is your birthday?
4. Student: [nods]
5. Teacher: December?
6. Student: [nods]
7. Teacher: December, okay. So, we'll just say the party is on the twentieth of December...
8. Student: No
9. Teacher: No? No. When? When's your birthday?
10. Student: Erm [Pause]
11. Teacher: January, February, March, April, May, June.
12. Student: [nods]
13. Teacher: June?
14. Student: [nods]



From the start of class

1. Teacher: Okay, when's your birthday?
2. Student: Home
3. Teacher: What month? January February March April? What month is your birthday?
4. Student: [nods]
5. Teacher: December?
6. Student: [nods]
7. Teacher: December, okay. So, we'll just say the party is on the twentieth of December...
8. Student: No
9. Teacher: No? No. When? When's your birthday?
10. Student: Erm [Pause] *Student taking control*
11. Teacher: January, February, March, April, May, June.
12. Student: [nods]
13. Teacher: June?
14. Student: [nods]

Negotiation of meaning

Principle #1 : ask questions you don't know the answer to

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Finish your task.

Task 1

Design a shopping centre and introduce it to your teacher. (You say and the teacher types.)

_____ Shopping Centre Directory	
...	...
3/F	
2/F	
1/F	
G/F	

Teacher controlling the pen

1. Teacher: Ground floor we're going to have a dog shop.
2. Student: Dog shop
3. Teacher: Yeah. Like, dog food, dog everything. Dog games, dog place to play if it's raining. Dog shop, dog gym. Ha-ha. A Dog gym.
4. Student: (draws on the screen something that looks like '∞')
5. Teacher: Another dog shop? No no no no. We can only have one dog shop. One big dog shop.
6. Student: It's a ca-, candy shop.
7. Teacher: Oh, a cat shop? Okay okay okay.
8. Student: Candy, candy shop! This is candy.
9. Teacher: Okay, alright, so we've got dogs, we've got candy...

Teacher controlling the pen

1. Teacher: Ground floor we're going to have a dog shop.
2. Student: Dog shop
3. Teacher: Yeah. Like, dog food, dog everything. Dog games, dog place to play if it's raining. Dog shop, dog gym. Ha-ha. A Dog gym.
4. Student: (draws on the screen something that looks like '∞') **interruption**
5. Teacher: Another dog shop? No no no no. We can only have one dog shop. One big dog shop.
6. Student: It's a ca-, candy shop. **interruption**
7. Teacher: Oh, a cat shop? Okay okay okay.
8. Student: Candy, candy shop! This is candy. **interruption**
9. Teacher: Okay, alright, so we've got dogs, we've got candy... **understanding**

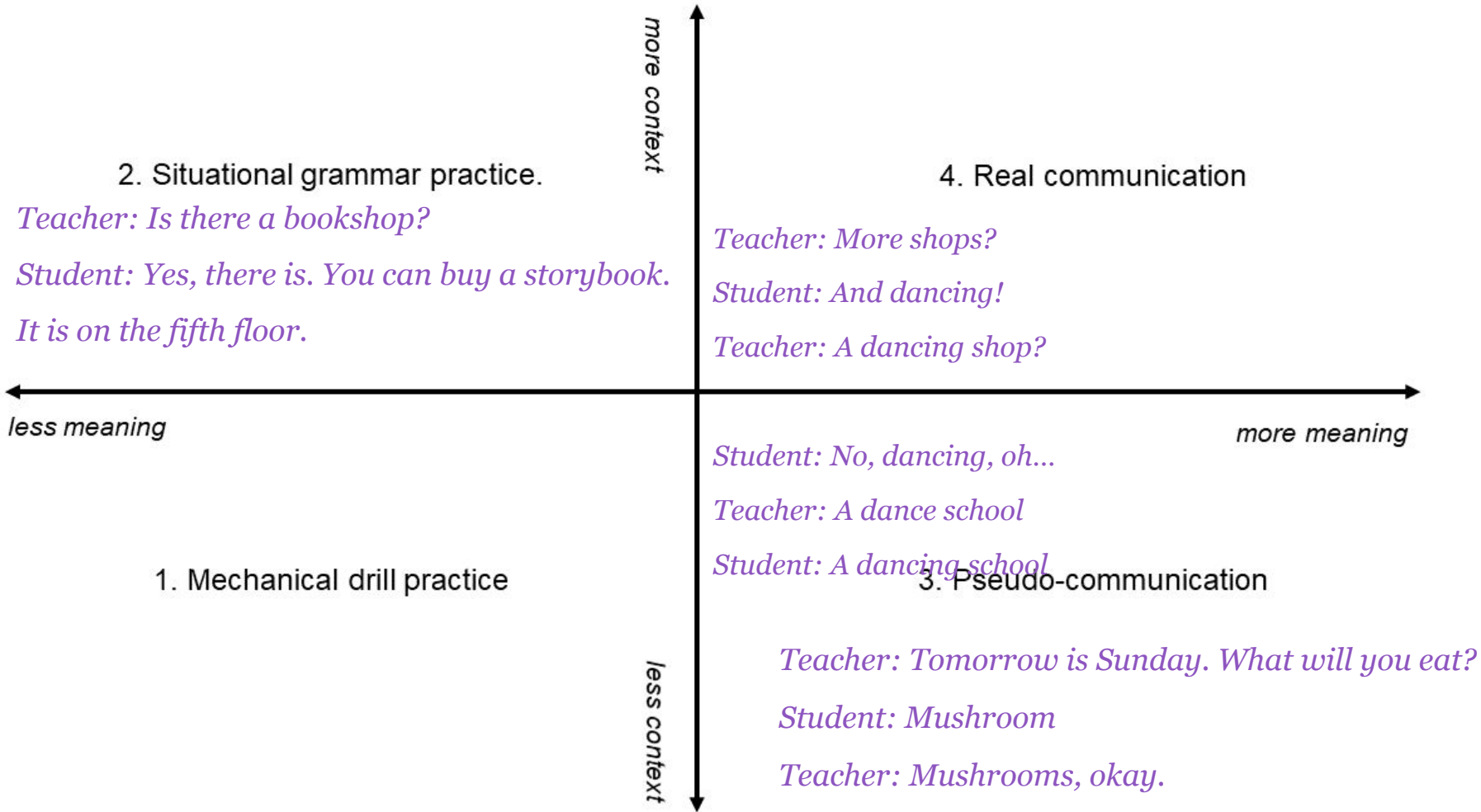
Student controlling the pen

1. Teacher: Can you fill in some different shops? What would you like to have?
2. Student: So I... Sweet shop (While Non-verbal sweet shop)
3. Teacher: Anything else?
4. Student: Toy shop (Writes toy shop, then book shop). Mmm, clothes shop (writes clothes shop). Sports wear (writes Sports wear)
5. Teacher: Very good, awesome. Sportswear shop. And what would be on the third floor?
6. Student: Erm, is a supermarket. (Writes supermarket)
7. Teacher: Excellent, well done. Really good job, well done. So, what is on the second floor? [Pause] What is on the second floor?
8. Student: A clothes shop and a sportswear shop
9. Teacher: Okay, what is on the ground floor?
10. Student: Is a sweet shop.
11. Teacher: And what is on the third floor?
12. Student: A toy shop and a book shop

Student controlling the pen

1. Teacher: Can you fill in some different shops? What would you like to have?
2. Student: So I... Sweet shop (While Non-verbal sweet shop)
3. Teacher: Anything else?
4. Student: Toy shop (Writes toy shop, then book shop). Mmm, clothes shop (writes clothes shop). Sports wear (writes Sports wear)
5. Teacher: Very good, awesome. Sportswear shop. And what would be on the third floor?
6. Student: Erm, is a supermarket. (Writes supermarket)
7. Teacher: Excellent, well done. Really good job, well done. So, what is on the second floor? [Pause] What is on the second floor?
8. Student: A clothes shop and a sportswear shop
9. Teacher: Okay, what is on the ground floor?
10. Student: Is a sweet shop.
11. Teacher: And what is on the third floor?
12. Student: A toy shop and a book shop

**Display questions
only**



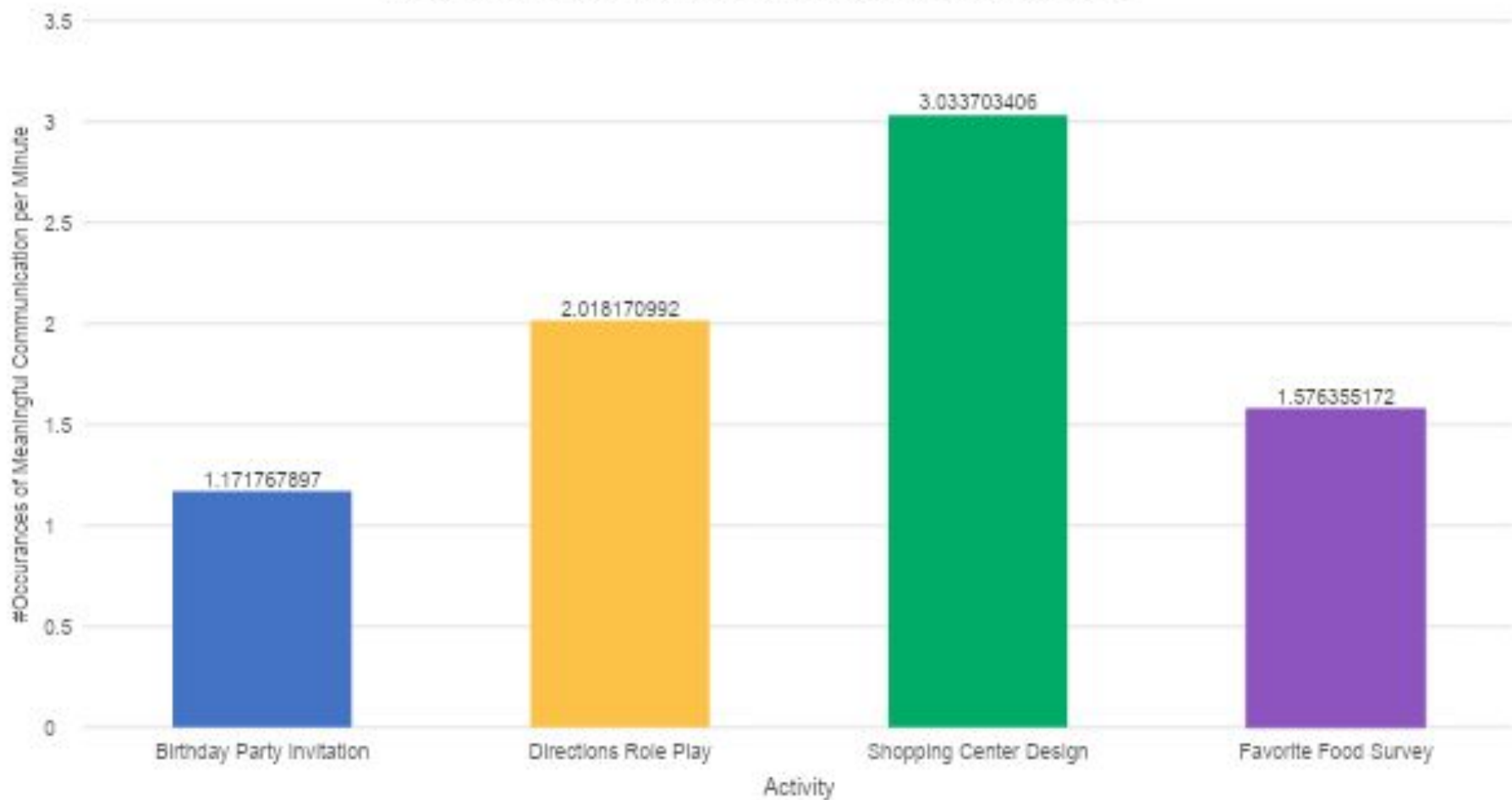
What is
communication
?

Do activities
and materials
impact
communication
?

What can
teachers do to
encourage
communication
?

Final Thoughts

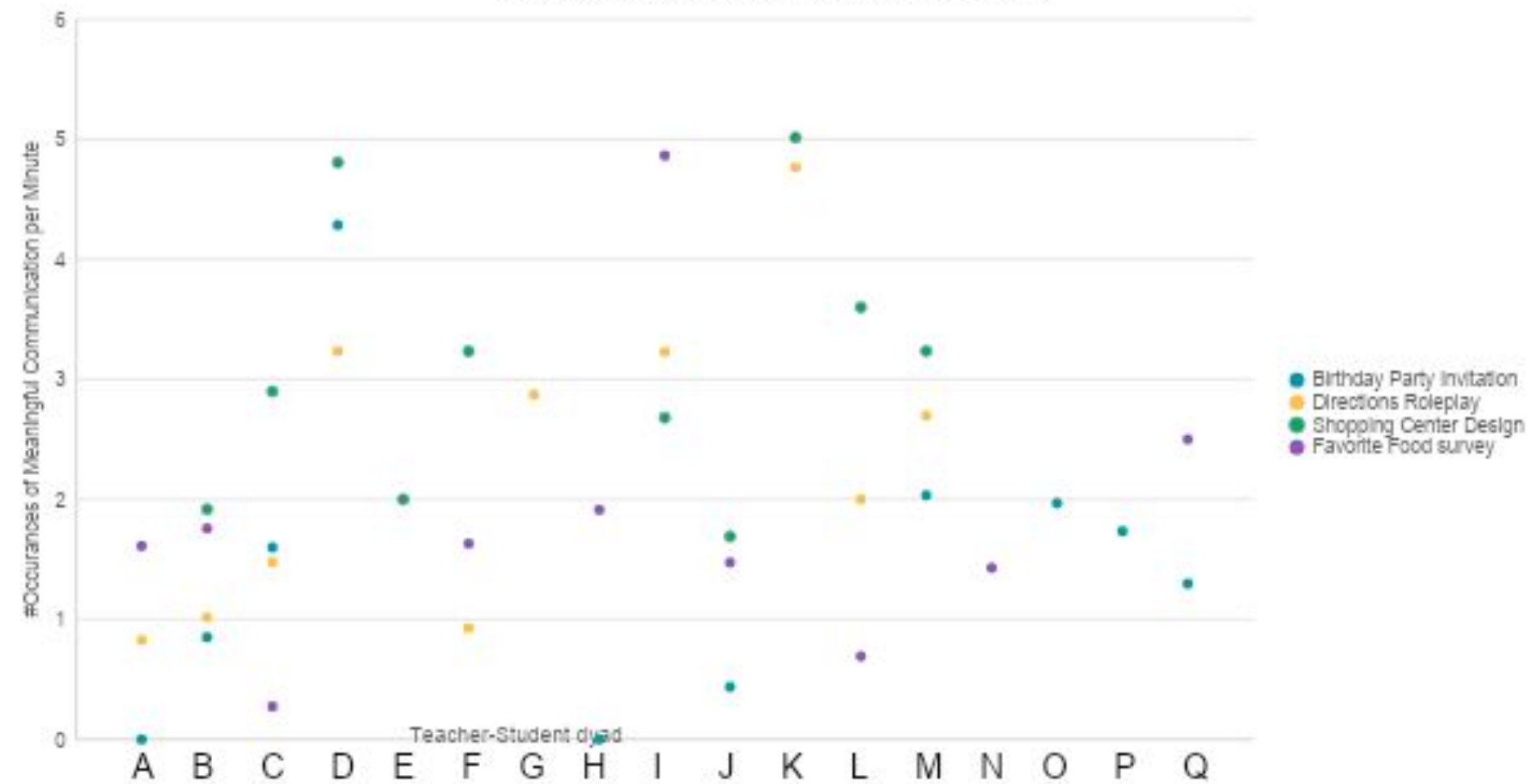
Average Meaningful Communications Per Minute



Meaningful Interactions Distribution



Comparison of Teacher-Student Dyads



**Individual
students?**

E





Finish your task.

**Say some things you want to buy
and finish the dialogue.**



Is there ...?



Shopping List:
a coat
a present
a storybook
trainers

Yes, there is / are.
No, there isn't.
You can buy ...
on ... floor.



Role of the student

1. Teacher: Can I go and what a movie? Can I go to the cinema?
2. Student: Where is the cinema? Yes, go to... Yes, there is, on the, there is on the gift shop. Oh no! Third floor, happy restaurant.
3. Teacher: Cinema, watch a movie.
4. Student: No, you can't. No, you can't.
5. Teacher: There's no cinema. There isn't a cinema. Alright, can I buy a cake? Where can I buy a cake?
6. Student: The cinema, the cinema, damage to eyesight.
7. Teacher: Yeah, it's bad for your eyes.
8. Student: Don't go to the cinema! Don't go to the cinema!
9. Teacher: Can I buy a cake?
10. Student: No, you can't.
11. Teacher: I can!
12. Student: The cake, don't eat cake. Cake is very yummy but is very, is very bad. Bad! Bad food bad food. Don't eat the bad food.



Can you remember?



Principle #1 : ask questions you don't know the answer to

Principle #2 : use motivating tasks with tangible outcomes

Principle #3 : make tasks culturally relevant to students and teachers

Principle #4 : Avoid sentence stems in communicative activities

Principle #5 : Put communicative activities at the start of lessons

Principle #6 : Get students to instruct and teacher to draw

Final thoughts



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