2002 NFLRC Summer Institute:
Web-Based Workshops for Advanced Reading & Writing

August 5–16, 2002

Evaluation
Kristine Wogstad
St. Paul Public Schools, St. Paul, Minnesota

Contents

Introduction ..................................................................................................................................... 1
Period of Coverage ...................................................................................................................... 1
Brief Description ........................................................................................................................... 1
Objectives of the Workshops ....................................................................................................... 2
Choice of the World Wide Web as Instructional Medium .......................................................... 2
Course Design .............................................................................................................................. 3
Instructional Sequence ................................................................................................................ 3
Course Adaptation ....................................................................................................................... 10
The Instructors ............................................................................................................................. 11
Activities During the Workshops ................................................................................................. 11
Results of the Workshops and Conclusions .............................................................................. 12
The Evaluator ............................................................................................................................... 17
References .................................................................................................................................... 17

The contents of this NetWork were developed under a grant from the Department of Education (CFDA 84.229, P229A020002). However, the contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the Department of Education, and one should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government.
INTRODUCTION

All evaluations are informed with the experience and perspective of the evaluator, of course. The particular experience that I bring to this evaluation is that I participated in the Chinese section of the 2002 NFLRC Summer Institute. As this implies, I am a non-native-speaking teacher of Chinese. Over the last 22 years I have taught in college and high school programs. For 3 years I was part of the teaching team for an intensive summer institute in mainland China. In addition, I am one of those non-native-speaking teachers who has long recognized a need to improve in reading and writing. I would have taken this workshop even if I had not been asked to evaluate it. Finally, even though I have years of workshop participation behind me, this has been my first Web-based experience. I have had even less experience setting up this kind of workshop and I have no personal knowledge of many aspects of this year’s workshops for non-native Chinese and Korean teachers. As a result, whenever such background information is necessary, I will quote from the 2001 evaluation of these workshops by Stephen Fleming, one of the principal developers of these Web-based workshops and of Kan Na! Authentic Chinese reading (Fleming, Hiple, & Ning, 1999), the CD-ROM used in the Chinese workshop. Besides previously acting as developer and evaluator, Mr. Fleming has prepared instructors and been an instructor himself. I bring the perspective of a non-native-speaking teacher who has successfully completed the workshop and who has interviewed the other non-native-speaking participants.

PERIOD OF COVERAGE

This evaluation covers two Summer Institute workshops offered by the University of Hawai‘i National Foreign Language Resource Center (NFLRC) in Summer 2002. These Web-based workshops, the “Web-Based Workshop for Advanced Reading & Writing Development & Maintenance in Chinese” and the “Web-Based Workshop for Advanced Reading & Writing Development & Maintenance in Korean,” were held from August 5th through 16th, 2002.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION

The workshops comprised two distinct two-week intensive language courses, one in Chinese and one in Korean, offered free of charge by the NFLRC to non-native-speaking teachers currently or imminently in service teaching these language at the K–16 level. The workshops were co-sponsored by the NFLRC and the National Security Education Program (NSEP). These intensive courses, delivered over the World Wide Web, focused on the development and/or maintenance of communicative language skills at the advanced level, with a strong emphasis on written communication.
The Chinese workshop this year used a series of oral interviews on the CD-ROM Kan Na! Authentic Chinese video (Fleming, Hiple, & Ning, 2000), for the core activities. The Korean workshop used the CD-ROM Hangul-ro boja! Authentic Korean reading (Joo, Kim Yuen, & Hiple, 1999) for the core activities.

OBJECTIVES OF THE WORKSHOPS

These workshops were specifically aimed at maintaining and developing non-native-speaking teachers’ proficiency in listening, reading, and writing in Korean and Chinese. The target level was advanced, corresponding to paragraph-level narration, description, comparison, or instructions on a wide range of everyday topics. Chinese and Korean are both languages belonging to Category IV, the highest level of difficulty designated by the US Interagency Language Roundtable. (Fleming, 2001)

CHOICE OF THE WORLD WIDE WEB AS INSTRUCTIONAL MEDIUM

Written communication in Korean and Chinese poses special challenges for the non-native learner. The gap between the non-native learner’s spoken and written skills may be great, and advanced non-native learners can particularly benefit from focused instruction in the written modality. Since writing involves a process of drafting and rewriting, the writing skill cannot easily be addressed in a workshop shorter than two weeks. Yet since populations of non-native-speaking teachers of Chinese and Korean are scattered widely, gathering teachers from schools nationwide together for a two-week workshop at a single location would be an expensive proposition. Since the World Wide Web easily facilitates text-based interaction, the Web was viewed as a viable option for offering a workshop for non-native-speaking teachers of Chinese and Korean. By offering Web-based workshops, considerable resources were conserved. Individual participants were able to access the course using computers at home or work. Since the workshops were based on pre-existing language course “shells,” development costs were very minimal. The only other costs to the institution were for Web site technical support, instructor training, and for the instruction itself.

Learners in a Web-based reading and writing class receive more practice reading and writing than they probably would in a traditional reading and writing course, especially if their reading and writing is done not just for the teacher but for all participants in the course, as was the case in these workshops. The World Wide Web also offers participants a useful anonymity in which they are perhaps more free to interact with each other, with the advantage of viewing each participant’s posting as well as formulating their own responses and postings in the privacy of their own homes or offices. Participants have some flexibility to concentrate on the areas of the course which are particularly challenging or useful to them without being left out of the conversation.
Advanced Web-based Chinese and Korean reading and writing courses that have been offered at
the University of Hawai‘i since spring semester 2000 formed the basis for the workshops. These
courses were created as an outgrowth of two earlier projects: “Performance-Based Multimedia
Materials for Mandarin Chinese and Korean via an Integrated DC-ROM and World-Wide Web
Delivery Format” and “Disseminating Technology-based Models for Distance Education in
Critical Languages.” The Web-based courses embedded the self-instructional material in a group
learning environment.

Prior to the development of the Web courses, UH had produced a set of self-instructional CD-
ROMs in Chinese and Korean, with some focused on reading authentic texts and some focused
on listening (video interviews). The Web-based classes were conceptualized as communities for
learners who would benefit even more from the CD-ROMS if they joined with other learners to
engage in preparatory activities before “entering” the CD-ROM, and then followed up with
language practice activities following each use of the CD-ROM. The sequence of instructional
activities in both the Chinese course and the Korean course was based on a pedagogic approach
grounded in schema theory. Some of the key concepts guiding the design of the courses were:

- Readers understand a text through a process of interaction between text-based elements
  (structural and linguistic components) and reader-based elements (behaviors and
  strategies such as deploying background knowledge and hypothesizing). The most
  successful readers are those who employ these skills actively and consciously (Carrell
- A reader reading alone has access only to his own reader-based elements. A group of
  readers sharing information can strengthen each other’s comprehension and contribute to
each other’s learning. Creation of community for the sharing of knowledge is vital for
good course design.
- An instructional sequence should begin with what learners already know, rather than the
  instructor’s assumptions about what learners know. Learning activities should, to the
greatest extent possible, be personally meaningful and communicative.

In Figure 1 the sequence of instruction for each unit is presented in a schematic form from
Fleming (2001); a written description follows. In the written description, the portions in italics
reflect generic descriptions from material available on the course Web site explaining how the
instructional sequence works, and the portions in roman text are my own comments and, in
some cases, examples of participant postings from the 2002 workshops.
Figure 1. Flow chart of instructional activities in Web-based courses. (Fleming, 2001)

Warm-up activities/word bank

Participants share linguistic and real-world background knowledge by filling out Web forms with vocabulary and sentences. Participant responses are checked by the instructor and then stored in a class “word bank” which remains permanently accessible. In the Chinese Family unit, for example, students were to generate questions on family terms as well as family background and family routines (see Figure 2).
Preparatory activities

Participants complete a preparatory matching task at the baseline level (rather than the target level) of the lesson. The task often involves matching a graphic image with a written description of that image. The description is usually also available in audio format. Instant feedback is provided with a “check answers” button employing javascripting.

Core lesson

Participants complete the CD-ROM lesson, which is structured according to a receptive-skill lesson model rooted in schema theory, comprising of the following five stages (please note that the word “text” may also refer to an audio or video segment):

- **pre-activities**: prediction, activating background knowledge;
- **global activities**: identifying and locating topics, “mapping” the text;
• specific information activities: reading or listening for details;
• linguistic activities: learning about linguistic forms in the text;
• post-activities: using knowledge gained in the lesson in a communicative task that is a natural outgrowth of the text.

For the 2002 workshops, the Chinese CD-ROM featured video clips rather than written texts. Participants were to predict what they would hear by first viewing the clip without sound, and then replay the clip with the sound to confirm their predictions.

After working with the CD-ROM, participants join in a “Q & A” forum to troubleshoot any problems they had completing the CD-ROM lesson. Discussion can be in Chinese or English. The question and answer thread provided some interesting discussion (see Figure 3).

![Figure 3. In the “Q&A” forum, discussion generated by the nonstandard accent of a mule cart driver](image)

Participants are assigned a discussion task. They are directed to a specific thread in a small group forum, where they interact with classmates in a role-play or task.
In the Korean course participants were matched with one partner; participants in the Chinese workshop were assigned to a small group of two to three other participants. In each case, these partners or small groups were rotated from unit to unit, so that participants had the opportunity to interact with a larger number of participants. Participants could at all times view (but not join in) the discussions of other groups. Instructors were actively involved in this discussion also.

After the participants have worked on the task, the instructors choose five or six postings from the participant discussion threads that had syntax or usage problems and place them in the next forum, the Grammar Clinic. Participants are directed to respond to two or three of the poorly formed sentences by supplying a correction. Finally, the teacher adds comments to each thread, and everyone reads over the accumulated contents of the forum.

In some instances in the Grammar Clinic discussions, the instructor identified a grammatical pattern or a rhetorical device for participants to use in their own sentences. In each case the instructor would provide feedback to participant postings.
Post-lesson activities

Participants are told in advance of the final writing task of the unit, which is usually a short persuasive essay related to the topic of the lesson. In preparation, participants first read a model text on a topic related, but not identical, to the lesson topic, in which certain linguistic features — usually discourse connectors or other useful tools — are highlighted. Participants complete linguistic exercises based on the highlighted items in the model text to strengthen their familiarity with these items.

Participants complete a final writing task and post the composition to a threaded discussion. Each participant is assigned to respond to two other participants’ writings with appreciations and critiques.

In the 2002 workshop, participants were also asked to generate a word list to use in their essays. The linguistic exercises based on the highlighted items usually took the form of a matching exercise. Participants were given immediate feedback to their postings with a “check-answers” button.

All participants were able to view and respond to every other participant’s essays. Instructors offered critical comments on participant essays. Participants often commented on the information given in the essays, asking for more clarification, or adding their own experience.
继续...

2002 NFLRC SUMMER INSTITUTE: Web-based Workshops
In order to meet the needs of in-service teachers with well-developed language skills, the existing Web-based undergraduate courses were adapted in several ways for the purposes of the Summer Institute:

- the time frame was shortened to two weeks, and the schedule posted in the course Web site was modified accordingly;
- the pace of work was speeded up (i.e., more time was expected each day from the participants);
- quizzes and grading were eliminated to create a more “workshop-like” atmosphere and to save time;
- instructors were trained to meet the participants’ advanced developmental needs by “pushing” for higher-level language in their exchanges with participants.

In response to comments from the 2001 session of these workshops (see Fleming, 2001), the Chinese course covered four units instead of five and the Korean course covered three units. Although quizzes were not required in the course, they were still available online. Participants could take the quizzes and get immediate feedback on their answers by using the “check answers” button.
THE INSTRUCTORS

This information was taken from the Web site of each workshop, available for all participants as an introduction to their instructors.

**Changseob Ahn** is a PhD candidate in the Department of East Asian Languages and Literatures (EALL) at the University of Hawai‘i at Manoa. He finished his BA and MA in Linguistics at University of Hawai‘i. Currently, he is working as a Graduate Assistant (GA) in the Korean section of EALL, where he has taught Korean 202, 201, 111, and 112. He has also taught Korean 399 (online reading & writing course) since last summer. His main interests are teaching Korean as a second language, sociolinguistics, language pragmatics assessment, and Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL). He is also interested in translation and simultaneous interpretation (Korean, Japanese and English). He also has been teaching and coaching many different martial arts such as taekwondo, hapkido, judo, and yoga.

**Stephen Fleming** is Instructor in Technology for Foreign Language Education in the College of Languages, Linguistics & Literature at the University of Hawai‘i at Manoa. He has taught at UH for the past fourteen years, and prior to that was a translator and editor for the Chinese Literature Press in Beijing. For the past six years, under two separate grants from the National Security Education Program, he has developed models for distance education in less commonly taught languages using interactive television and Web technologies, and has also authored self-instructional software for intermediate-to-advanced Mandarin Chinese. The next challenge he would like to take on is the effective integration of spoken communication into Web-based language instruction.

**Haidan Wang** has taught Chinese from beginning to advanced level at the University of Hawai‘i at Manoa and Hawai‘i Pacific University. She is also teaching business Mandarin to China-focused MBA students at Japan-American Institute of Management Science. In addition, she has experience teaching students from elementary to high school. She participated in several federal projects related to teaching Chinese, including Project CLASS (Chinese Language Achievement through Sequential Studies), for which she worked as curriculum coordinator, developing a three-year package with project staff. This curriculum functions as an innovative framework for teaching Chinese to elementary students in the United States. Her research interests focus on cognitive linguistics and on second language acquisition from the cognitive point of view. She is expecting to receive her Ph.D. in December of 2002.

ACTIVITIES DURING THE WORKSHOPS

A portion of the schedule from the Chinese workshop is given in Figure 7. The topics of the units covered in the Chinese workshop were “Getting to Know You,” “Family,” “Occupation” (in the sense of “career”), and “Recipes.” The Korean workshop schedule was similar to the Chinese one, except that they covered three rather than four units. The topics in the Korean workshop were Orientation (self-introduction), Kimchee, and Housing.
RESULTS OF THE WORKSHOPS AND CONCLUSIONS

The information in this evaluative section of the report is based on the following:

- personal experience as a participant in the Chinese workshop
- record of participants’ postings on the workshop site
- written reports from workshop instructors
- telephone interviews with participants
- participant and instructor evaluations and comments posted on the site and sent by email

The Korean workshop

Instructor perspective

Changseob Ahn, the Korean instructor, characterized this year's workshop as “quite different from last year in terms of students’ language ability and participation.” Out of the seven participants only three were actively posting throughout the whole workshop. All but one of the participants were located in Hawai‘i and four had a chance to meet before the workshop began. This allowed the Mr. Ahn to demonstrate the technology: how to create and post writings on the Web, and how to use Korean fonts on the English keyboard. Six of the seven participants began enthusiastically; technical difficulties and lack of time forced one out at the beginning. There was a drop in participation toward the end of the workshop; nevertheless, Mr. Ahn felt that the workshop was successful in terms of the interaction among the participants. But he also expressed
frustration at the lack of communication between himself and participants. His emails were sometimes ignored, leaving him to wonder why; was the material too difficult, were there problems with the technology, or some conflict among commitments? His main concern, however, was that the participants’ Korean was generally not high enough, “two or three of the participants were struggling to understand the contents of the CD-ROM.” He expressed the need for developing a course at the intermediate level.

**Participant reactions**

I was only able to interview two Korean workshop participants, Kalae and Sami, by phone. Only two Korean workshop participants offered their evaluation on the Web site.

Sami felt that the course was very valuable. She is isolated in Alaska and it was her only opportunity to interact in Korean. She felt very limited in her own vocabulary, but enjoyed the grammar and quizzes. She felt more challenged by the essays. Sami was the only participant who did not have the benefit of the pre-workshop training on technology, and felt that the technology was a difficult thing to manage. Her input system was clumsy and she had to monopolize her family computer too long.

Kalae enjoyed the workshop. He felt that it was a good review of grammar. He did not feel especially challenged by the language. He did not utilize the CD-ROM because of time constraints but planned on using it in the future. He felt that the Web-based course was a good forum for both shy and outgoing participants to comfortably voice their opinions on things, it was also a great way to learn to type in Korean.

In her commentary on the Web site, one participant especially liked the instructor's grammar explanations in English. “I struggled with this class since my ability to read, write and understand Korean is very, very limited. Notwithstanding the agony of the past 2 weeks, it has been a worthwhile effort.”

**Conclusions**

The Korean workshop was a valuable experience for those participants who had the time and the ability to follow through with the course. The participants’ language skills were perhaps not all at the advanced level. Not all participants could keep up with the course, and the instructional exchanges seemed limited to the grammatical rather than the discursive. This seems to be a recruitment issue. I am sure that the pool of non-native-speakers of Korean is even more limited than that of Chinese.

**The Chinese workshop**

**Instructor perspective**

The Chinese Instructors, Stephen Fleming and Haidan Wang, were more positive about their workshop. Ms Wang felt that the exchange between teachers and participants was enjoyable and informative. She felt that the workshop forums offered the highest level of exchange between
participants and instructors. She also agreed with a participant’s comment on the need to explore topics that would take participants beyond the affairs of daily life.

Mr. Fleming, an evaluator and instructor-trainer last summer, felt that participants made good use of the Web-based environment, but that the workshop itself was still too short and too fast-paced. “The chief problem is not so much the amount of material covered as it is the lack of adequate time to respond and to develop a real conversation. Perhaps one (or possibly two) units should be covered over the two weeks, with more work assigned in the area of extended reading of authentic texts or viewing of videos, while the pace of progress through the stages of each unit would be slowed. This way, each forum would be given more room to develop as a proving-ground for ideas and a sharing of rich detail.” Mr. Fleming felt that the grammar clinic was more successful because there were more contributions to the Small Group Forum and there was more time for the instructor to review this material in order to prepare the Grammar Clinic items. Although Mr. Fleming had concerns about the difficulties in recruiting and felt that there could have been more participation, he also felt that this was a successful workshop and that it provided a much needed opportunity for teachers to explore using Chinese input and output on the computer.

**Participant reactions**

Participants had different goals and expectations, and although they experienced some frustrations, they were all pleased with the experience and would take the course again. I was able to talk to Rachel, Noreen, José, Elijah and Dexter by phone. (Please note that all names have been changed to preserve anonymity.) They also offered comments on line.

Rachel teaches college level (Chinese 1–3) Chinese. She was interested in developing her own Chinese language skills and in hindsight would like to have had a formal evaluation of her own writing skills. (By ACTFL guidelines and in the form of a private email.) She wanted experience with different topics than she taught. She thought that the grammar clinic was particularly valuable, requiring her to slow down and focus on detail. She felt she got invaluable feedback on what didn’t work. She also felt that she got a lot of experience that she could bring back into her classroom. She had a better appreciation of the time required from her students and the process involved. Rachel “liked the banter between the essays,” she also “liked the teachers’ comments geared at all different levels... the essays were good, the whole point being to communicate. It was equally useful to get back feedback on your own essays and being able to react to other’s essays.”

Noreen is isolated as a high school teacher and has little contact with native speakers. She wanted to have the opportunity to work on a more written rather than spoken style of writing. She had participated in last year’s summer course. She felt that the listening portion of the course was more challenging than the reading portion last year. Noreen found it difficult to make sentences up out of the blue in the Grammar Clinic, but enjoyed watching in, and she appreciated the explanations.

José came in with limited expectations. Not a teacher, he was preparing to leave for China. Quickly frustrated by the character input system he was using, he was forced to abandon the
course after the first week. He did not feel particularly motivated to spend the time or effort on improving his writing skills at this time.

Elijah was preparing to teach Chinese at the high school level in the fall and was interested in getting back into Chinese after a long period without using it. He didn’t have too much time to spend on the course, but he felt that he got out of it as much as he put in. Elijah would have preferred more specific feedback on his grammar. He didn’t want to be asked what was wrong, or told that a sentence was wrong; rather, he wanted to be told specifically what was wrong.

Dexter wanted to brush up on his Chinese after many years of disuse. He hadn’t done a lot of writing in Chinese. He was also interested taking an on-line course. Dexter felt that the instruction was well sequenced and enjoyed each different component.

Renée was interested in developing her Chinese skills, but she also was interested in the Web-based course as an alternative to the limitations of long-distance learning for less commonly used languages available in Philadelphia, where she works as a curriculum specialist. “This course showed me the possibilities of how to use on-line work and it was really interesting, and fun. It’s funny how much people’s personalities kind of come through in this process…”

**Conclusion**

This course is an excellent opportunity for non-native speakers. This course is suitable for advanced non-native speakers and writers of Chinese at various levels of proficiency. It offers a rich language environment and facilitates a valuable exchange of target language in the several different forums. The strength of the course is in the conversation it facilitates among the participants. That all participants are able to “listen in” on the conversation, and in many cases have the opportunity to react to each other makes it interesting and unpredictable. The instructors’ input added another layer of richness to the conversation, stretching the upper level of the class without leaving the lower level out. This year in the News forum, Mr. Fleming showed how usefully flexible this arrangement is. He sparked one of the more interesting exchanges when he happened to announce that someone had been using his social security number.
Everyone, at all levels, found the CD-ROM both useful and enjoyable. Some participants found the listening more challenging, although they felt the exercises were fairly easy. The interviews on the CD are interesting in themselves. The exercises helped focus on language that might have been less accessible. Many participants said that they would return to this CD-ROM in the future.

The Web-based course offered new experiences and challenges for the participants in terms of technology. Participants were very pleased to be able to input and read characters electronically. Exploring different Chinese Web sites in the unit on recipes opened up a new source of authentic materials.

The biggest frustration with the course seemed to be the lack of knowledge and experience with the technology, especially downloading and using the Chinese software and navigating the course Web site. The Web-based course offers many resources that might have been more useful if there had been some pre-course instruction and practice with such things as the on-line dictionaries and student resources. I mentioned that some of the Korean students had gathered in Hawai’i for such training. The need, however, is for something on the workshop Web site; a training program that can be accessed at least a week before a workshop begins. Time to learn the system competed with the time necessary to participate in the workshop.

There was some frustration because the participants resided in all five time zones of the US. Postings that seemed to have been made on time, were not always acknowledged by all participants before the group advanced to the next task. The participants were often scrambling to keep up with their current entries and did not have time to keep going back to earlier threads.
There was a suggestion that it would be nice to have a way to flag new entries so that participants would know to go back and check them out.

A two week workshop seems to be the right length for professionals who inevitably have time constraints. It requires an intensive time commitment to take full advantage of the workshop. That kind of commitment is only possible for a short amount of time. Although participants felt that they were pressed to keep up with the course, they all said that they would not have had the time to commit to a longer period.

There is a need to reach a wider audience for this course. The International Baccalaureate program involves a worldwide network of Chinese high school teachers, many of whom are not native speakers of Chinese. These teachers have very limited opportunities to upgrade their language skills. This course could offer an invaluable opportunity for them to improve their language skills, network with other language teachers, and gather different strategies for writing instruction.

THE EVALUATOR

Kristine Wogstad has been teaching Chinese language and culture at Highland Park Junior and Senior High Schools for 17 years. She has an MA in Chinese from the University of Minnesota. As a graduate student she taught beginning Chinese classes and became the director of the Chinese teaching assistants. For 3 summer quarters she was the Assistant to the Director of the Minnesota Nankai Summer Intensive Language Institute in Tianjian, PRC. Her experiences with students in China directed her attention to the value of authentic experiences in speaking as well as reading and writing. She was a co-author of Kaiming Intermediate Chinese and has developed materials for Exploring the Chinese Written World under Cynthia Ning at the University of Hawai'i. She has taught in the International Baccalaureate Program for 9 years. Given IB’s rigorous second language standards, she thinks that this type of workshop would be welcomed by many of her fellow IB language teachers.

REFERENCES


