

## The Current Status of Chinese CALL in the United States

Tao-chung Yao  
University of Hawaii

**Abstract:** The field of Chinese language teaching has been using computer technology to teach Chinese since the 1970s. Chinese CALL started with a few individuals exploring the possibilities of applying technology to Chinese language instruction. The first few programs were all for teaching Chinese characters on the computer. As the technology progressed, a variety of Chinese language instructional software programs also made their appearance. Web technology has made great strides in recent years. Websites can do what CD/DVD can do and more. Web technology has opened new horizons for Chinese CALL. In this article, I will introduce some of the websites for teaching Chinese that are currently available on the Internet. Whenever applicable, I shall make comments on selected websites and also point out what the field of Chinese CALL needs.

**提要：** 中文教学界从七十年代开始就有人用电脑来教中文。早期的中文电脑教学仅限于少数人尝试用电脑科技来教中文。首先出现的几个中文教学软件都是教汉字的。随着科技的发展，中文教学软件也越来越多样化。网路科技不断地在进步，CD/DVD 能做的，现在网路也能做。有些CD/DVD做不到的网路也能做。网路科技为中文电脑家学开辟了新领域。本文将介绍一些目前的中文教学网站，并指出他们的特色。最后对中文网路教学提出一些建议。

**Key words:** CALL, websites, computer-based test, computer-adaptive test, podcasting

### Introduction

Computer technology has been developing rapidly in the past few decades, and has made a significant impact on our lives. The field of Chinese language instruction has also been changing as technology progresses. It has been four decades since Chin-chuan Cheng, the first person to delve into Chinese CALL (Computer-assisted Language Learning) in the United States, designed a program teaching Chinese characters utilizing the PLATO (Programmed Logic for Automated Teaching Operation) system on mainframe computer. Following Cheng's footsteps, other Chinese teachers also tried to use computer for teaching

Chinese as new technologies appeared, such as HyperCard and interactive video, in the past few decades.

The Internet became part of our daily life as we entered the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Chinese language instruction has also entered the Internet era. Due to its slow speed in the early days, Internet was not a very efficient tool to play video or even audio. So the CD was a more desirable technology for language software using sound and video. Many commercial software packages in CD format started to appear on the market. A typical lesson on CD would have sound, color, animation, Chinese fonts, etc.

Web technology has improved greatly in recent years. What we can do with CDs and DVDs on the computer, we can also do on the Internet and more. Although some of the websites for teaching Chinese are designed by individuals, more and more websites are now set up by organizations and companies. Many of those websites require membership and charge a fee. Since I do not have a budget to become a member of all the websites that I wish to review, I am only able to discuss a small number of websites based on their own descriptions and free demo lessons. The websites introduced in this article are limited to those based in the United States, including some websites jointly run by people in the US and China. I wish to point out that some of the websites developed in other countries have surpassed the ones in the USA in terms of scale and scope.

The quality of the websites that I have seen is uneven. Some of them are technologically impressive, but pedagogically not too valuable. I have also seen some websites that fail to take advantages of the technology and merely move book pages to the computer screen. For example, there was a website teaching Chinese strokes by showing the stroke order chart instead of using animated characters. The user had to choose the websites carefully. In this article, I will introduce websites that have special features, including websites showing how a new technology can be used for teaching Chinese, demonstrating a new pedagogical idea, or showing the recent trend of teaching Chinese on the Internet. I will first introduce a few websites serving regular language students then intro-

<sup>1</sup> For a history of the development of Chinese CALL in the United States, read Yao 1996. For a report on the PLATO system and the Chinese course objectives at the University of Illinois, see Cheng 1973. Zheng-sheng Zhang (1998) provided us with a thorough discussion of the issues and practice in the use of computers for teaching Chinese before 1998. To learn more about the early websites for Chinese CALL in the US, read Li (李延凤) (2000) and Yao (2003). For a survey and annotated bibliography of Chinese CALL before 2003, read Bourgerie (2003).

duce some other websites with special purposes.

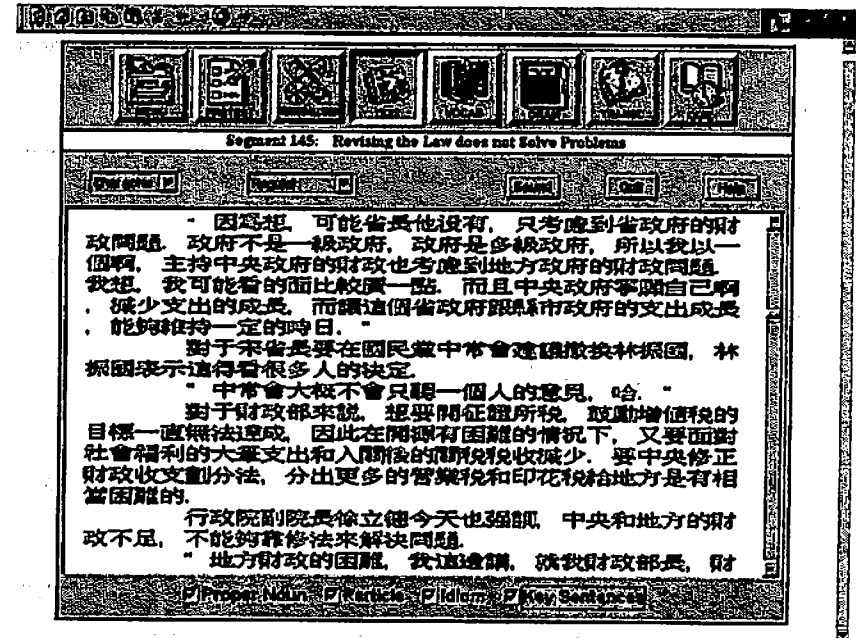
## 1. Websites serving regular language students

### A. Free online courses

#### (1) *ChiNews* (By Ying-che Li)

This website offers advanced reading and listening lessons. The material used are all authentic news gathered by Li from different cities in China and Taiwan. The lessons are grouped according to subjects such as politics, economy, technology, military, etc.

- Special features: The learner can view the text in several forms which include traditional, simplified, pinyin, separated words and color-coded grammar categories (See picture 1).



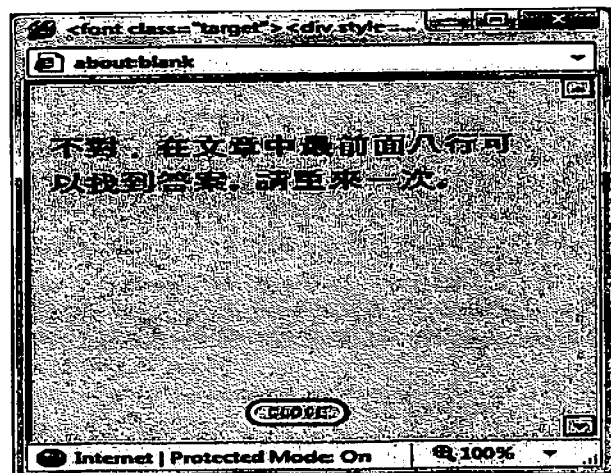
(Picture 1)

#### (2) *LangNet* (By NFLC)

Developed by the National Foreign Language Center (NFLC) at the University of Maryland, LangNet is a language learning supporting system with in-

teractive materials for those who wish to maintain or improve their reading and listening skills. Chinese is one of the many languages that they offer. Each Learning Object (mini lesson) consists of several phases, starting from an over-view and then moving into several learning activities that check the learner's comprehension. As of October 2008, there are more than 400 Learning Objects in traditional characters, and about 300 Learning Objects in simplified characters ranging from 0+ to 4 on the ILR (Interagency Language Roundtable) scale and covering the following five content areas: Culture/Society, Economics/Politics, Science/Technology, Defense/Security, and Ecology/Geography. (Yao 2005) At this time, LangNet is available to US government agencies and selected educational institutions. However, in 2007 NFLC selected 65 lessons at the novice and intermediate levels (0+ to 1+) and made them free to the general public. You can view those lessons online or download them from *Read Chinese!*

- Special features: LangNet offers a great variety of exercise types, including true/false, drag and drop, multiple-choices, matching, etc. But the most noteworthy feature is its feedback technique. Instead of simply saying "Correct" or "Incorrect", LangNet will explain why your answer is correct or incorrect. Also, if you miss the answer the first time, LangNet will direct you to read the critical part of the text that you seem to have misunderstood and ask you to re-try after studying the text further (See picture 2).



(Picture 2)

### (3) *LingNet* (By Defense Language Institute)

LingNet and LangNet started as one project but later became two separate projects. So there are some similarities between the two. While LangNet is only available to selected educational institutions, LingNet is available to anybody who wishes to use it.

LingNet web pages have color photos and are quite attractive.

- Special features: The objectives and the grammatical points of each lesson are listed for easy reference. The student can glance through them and decide if the lesson is of particular interest.

### B. Online courses offered by universities

#### *University of Hawaii's Distance Learning Courses*

The University of Hawaii has been offering online courses through its National Foreign Language Resource Center (NFLRC) in recent years. Five courses are currently available, two at the Third-year level, and three at the Fourth-year level. Students who successfully complete all five of the available online courses can earn the Certificate in Chinese from the Department of East Asian Languages and Literatures.

- Special features: University of Hawaii is a forerunner in offering distance learning opportunities online. Students not only interact with the teacher, but also with fellow students online.

### C. Websites accompanying textbooks

There are numerous Chinese language textbooks on the market currently and many of them come with audio CDs/DVDs. But only a few Chinese language textbooks published in USA have supporting websites that offer their users learning aids online.

#### (1) *Integrated Chinese (IC) Home Page* (By Tao-chung Yao)

Tao-chung Yao used his spare time to set up a simple website that offer learning aids to the Chinese language textbook series which he co-authored. The user will find many useful links on the "Web resources for IC" page which includes websites for teaching stroke orders, flashcards, games, etc. all designed specially for IC.

#### (2) *Practical Chinese Reader: Learning Aids Online* (By Tianwei Xie)

This site contains many useful links which cover "Audio and Video", "Vocabulary", "Characters", "Grammar and Reading", "Study Guides" and "Exercises and Homework." Most of the websites are created by Xie himself.

#### (3) *Chinese Link* (Textbook authored by Sue-mei Wu, Yueming Yu, Yanhui

Zhang and Weizhong Tian; Website contents by Dana Bourgerie, Kitty Shek and Zheng-sheng Zhang)

*Chinese Link* has a beautiful website to support it. It offers "Audio Resources", "Vocabulary Review", "Flashcards", "Grammar Review", "Listening Comprehension Activities", "Reading Comprehension Activities", "Web Activities" and "Web Resources".

## 2. Recent websites with special features and purposes

### A. Websites serving young learners:

#### (1) *Little Linguists Academy* (By Little Linguists Academy, Inc., 2007)

Knowing that one quarter of the world population speaks Chinese and that Chinese is the fastest-growing language studied in the USA, and also knowing that it is easier for children to master a new language than adults, and that children who learn a foreign language score higher on standards test, Little Linguists Academy offers online classes specially designed for children.

- Special features: The classes are geared to children, using songs and colorful drawings as shown in their demo videos.

#### (2) *iChinese* (By American iChinese Language Institute)

One often neglected fact is that the largest group of students learning Chinese in the USA is heritage learners. About 170,000 heritage students are learning Chinese at Chinese schools in 2008. So it comes as no surprise that someone would set up a website to serve that population. *iChinese* is such a website. This site was set up by a group of Chinese teachers in the Boston area. They claim that they can help a heritage child (ages 5 to 12) to master 1,500 Chinese characters in just 9 months.

- Special features: *iChinese* does not teach Chinese characters through the usual route by teaching stroke orders, radicals, pinyin, etc. Rather, it teaches Chinese characters by associating the characters directly with images and pictures, and uses stories to help the students memorize the characters.

### B. One-on-one tutoring websites:

#### *ChineseHour* (By Chinesehour.com, 2006)

This site allows you to learn Chinese anytime during the day on anything that you wish to learn. They will ask what you want to learn, and also show you what you need to do to accomplish your goal. In addition to private classes, they also offer regular classes and classes for businessman and children.

- Special features: People with busy schedules will appreciate the private classes that are tailored to their needs and suit their schedules.

### C. Websites serving more than language students

#### *ActiveChinese* (By ActiveChinese, 2006)

*ActiveChinese* is a website that serves a wide range of people. From its home page, we can see that it serves personal (language learners), educators, parents and organizations. The "Educator" section covers "K12", "Colleges" and "Language schools". Since I am a college teacher, I explored the site for "Colleges" and viewed the free lesson. *ActiveChinese* offers animated dialogs in attractive colors. It also explains language points and offers many exercises, including pronunciation, vocabulary, listening, sentence patterns, communication and writing characters.



(Picture 3)

- Special features: When listening to the dialog, the student can see the Chinese text and pinyin on the screen. As the sentence is being read, the computer shows the tone mark as each word is pronounced. The

tones are represented by different colors: Blue for first tone; green for second tone; red for third tone, yellow for fourth tone and gray for neutral tone. This is an interesting way to help the student pay attention to the tones. (See picture 3)

#### D. Websites using podcasting

##### Learn Chinese Pod (By Quick Mandarin)

*Learn Chinese Pod* is one of the many things offered by a large website called *Quick Mandarin* created by Yao Zhang who has an "adventurous foreign language learning experience". As you can tell from the name, *Learn Chinese Pod* works like other podcasting programs.<sup>2(2)</sup> You may download the scripts and sound files for free.

- Special features: The students can download the sound files and store in iPod which makes listening to the lessons very convenient.

#### E. English-Chinese Exchange Portal

##### CafeMECX (By CafeMECX, 2006)

This site does not teach Chinese but it provides free services to people who wish to do Chinese-English language exchange online. You can find native speakers of Chinese or English to serve as your language exchange partners or as your tutors.

- Technology: The free service is made possible by Skype which allows you to make free phone calls on the Internet.
- Special features: No appointments are needed.

#### F. Websites jointly run by people in the USA and China

In recent years, more and more joint websites between the USA and China came into existence. Such websites can hire Chinese teachers in China to practice Chinese with students in the USA.

##### (1) GuavaTalk (By GuavaTalk, 2007)

*GuavaTalk* offers one-on-one live teaching online and a customized curriculum. They seem to be able to keep their costs low by using free software such as Skype and WiziQ.

<sup>2</sup> For another example of teaching Chinese through podcasting, visit *Learn Chinese Online* (By Los Angeles Chinese Learning Center). Los Angeles Chinese Learning Center also offers customized language classes and private lessons.

- Technology: *Skype* is used to support the interaction between the student and the teacher. *WiziQ*'s online classroom is used for sharing powerpoint and video and whiteboarding during classes.

##### (2) Learn Chinese from Personal Tutors (By ChineseSphere.com, 2007)

This site offers Chinese courses to different clients, including "kids", "adults", "schools" and "corporations". For "kids", their curriculum is further divided into "Pre School", "Primary Grade (K-6)" and "Middle and High School (7-12)". For "adults", they offer "Conversation", "Travel", "Business", "Chinese Culture" as well as "College Chinese". They also offer free trial.

##### (3) Chinesetown.com (By Chinesetown.com, 2008)

This is another site which pays attention to students of different age groups. They try to serve "Adults", "Teens", "Kids", "Schools", "Corporations" and "Library".

From the above descriptions of the currently available websites, we can see that more and more websites are designed to attract different clients. Although the traditional way of teaching Chinese sequentially continues to prevail, we see even more sites now offering one-on-one instruction to suit the learner's needs. In other words, the curricula offered on the Web are shifting from teacher-centered learning to student-centered learning. Also, we see more websites geared towards younger learners. This reflects the fact that more and more children are learning Chinese now. We also see the appearance of websites jointly run by people in the USA and China. Such websites can utilize the educational and technological experiences of the people in both the USA and China and also save labor costs.

### **3. Testing Chinese on the Web**

Testing is an important component of language instruction. How to use the computer to deliver tests has attracted some Chinese teachers' attention. Several standard tests for testing Chinese are available on the Internet now, including both computer-based tests and computer-adaptive tests.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> A computer-adaptive can adjust the difficulty level of the questions based on the answers entered by the test taker. The first computer adaptive test for Chinese, CATRC (Computer-adaptive Test for Reading Chinese), was developed by Tao-chung Yao in 1993 (Yao 1995). Yao's test was created using HyperCard which is now outdated. To make the test easier to use, Alex Chapin of Middlebury College prepared a web version of CATRC (Yao 2001).

### A. Computer-adaptive tests

(1) *Chinese Computerized Adaptive Listening Comprehension Test (CCALT)* (By Chuanren Ke)

After Tao-chung Yao's *CATRC* (Computer-adaptive test for reading Chinese) (Yao 1995), Ke's *CCALT* is the second computer-adaptive test for testing Chinese. While *CATRC* tests a student's reading ability, *CCALT* tests listening comprehension. These two tests complement each other covering interpretive skills. *CCALT* is an on-going project funded by the National East Asian Languages Resource Center at The Ohio State University, and the Graduate College of The University of Iowa. The test items were written by Chinese language teachers that are familiar with the ACTFL proficiency guidelines. A demo version of the test is available on the website. (See picture 4)



Which of the following is the best response?

<input type="radio"/>	Bù shì. Wǒ dì dì yǒu yī gè érzi.
<input type="radio"/>	Bù shì. Tā shì wǒ gēge.
<input type="radio"/>	Bù shì. Wǒ jiā yǒu wǔ kǒu rén.
<input type="radio"/>	Bù shì. Wǒ jiéhūn le.
<input type="button" value="Quit"/> <input type="button" value="Next"/>	

(Picture 4)

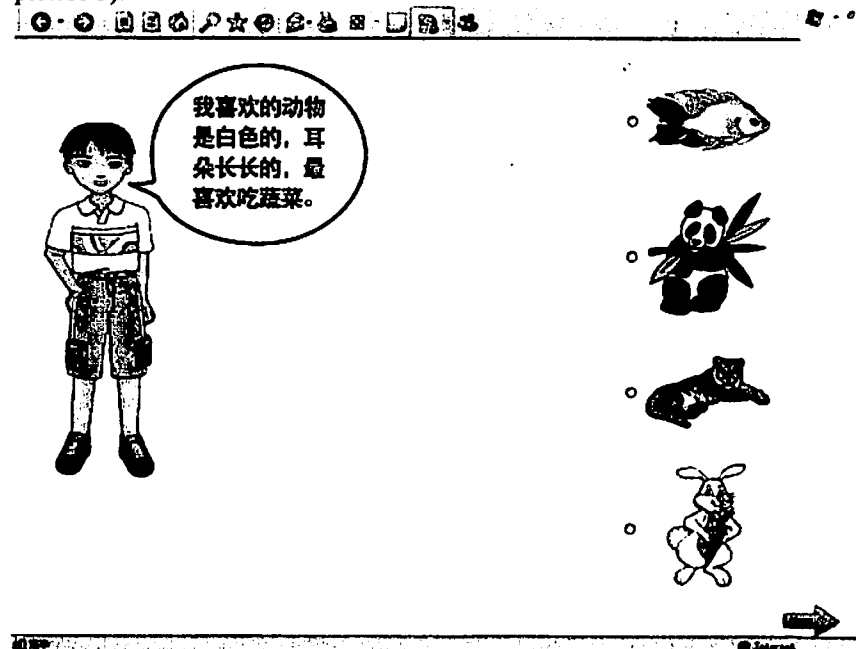
(2) *STAMP (Standards-based Measurement of Proficiency)*

STAMP is a summative assessment tool developed at the University of Oregon. It measures a student's reading proficiency based on ACTFL guidelines for

Novice-Low to Intermediate-High. The Chinese test under the STAMP project was prepared by Madeline Spring. The test items are based on authentic materials. The test items are beautifully designed with color and attractive fonts.

(3) *NOELLA (National Online Elementary Language Learning Assessment)*

Intended to be the elementary-school version of STAMP, NOELLA is another assessment project carried out at the University of Oregon. While STAMP is for reading only, *NOELLA* covers all four language skills (listening, reading, speaking and writing). For the listening test, the computer displays four pictures on the computer screen and also reads a sentence. The student answers the question by clicking on the picture depicting the sentence on the computer screen. For the reading section, the computer screen will display a written text together with four pictures as options, or display a picture with four options in Chinese. The student is to match the Chinese text with the correct picture by clicking it. (See picture 5).

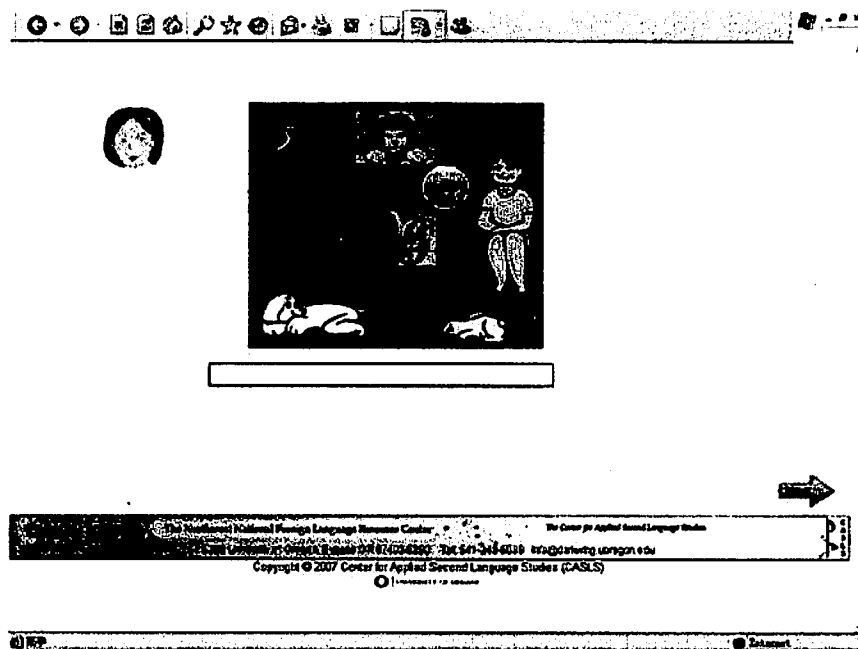


(Picture 5)

While it is relatively easy to test and grade listening and reading online, it is much harder to measure speaking and writing abilities. The speaking answers and writing answers are sent back to the *NOELLA* test center to be graded by a hu-

man.

For testing speaking skills, *NOELLA* asks the student to describe a tiger. For writing, the student is asked to describe a picture in Chinese by typing the answer in the box on the screen. (See picture 6)



(Picture 6)

## B. Computer-based tests

### (1) AP Chinese Tests

The first AP Chinese test was administered in May 2007. It was an iBT (Internet-based test) which covers all four language skills. However it is not a computer-adaptive test, but a computer-delivered test. All test items were delivered through the Internet. The answers were also sent back to the ETS (Educational Testing Service) via the Internet. The scoring of the test was also done by readers on the Internet at home. Because some test centers experienced some technical difficulties for doing the iBT test, the 2008 AP Chinese test was delivered on a CD, rather than through the Internet. The answers were sent back either via the Internet or by mailing the USB keys containing the answers back to ETS. The

scoring of the 2008 AP Chinese test was still done on the Internet. However, all the readers were gathered together for the scoring to assure better communication and prompt technical support. (Yao 2008)

### (2) *Transparent Language*

This section would not be complete without showing the reader at least one free website for testing Chinese. *Transparent Language* offers us some free quizzes on the Web, such as quizzes on "Most Common Words in Chinese", "Survival Phrases for Chinese", "The Chinese Way" and "Beijing Yesterday and Today". For each topic listed above, there are five test formats: "Grammar Exercise", "Multiple Choice", "True/False", "Match the Translation" and "Tone Identification Exercise". All test items use only pinyin.

## 4. The handling of the three modes of communication on websites

This section will examine how websites can be used to develop the student's communication skills according to the three modes of communication as laid out in the *Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21st Century*. The three modes are: Interpretive (listening and reading), presentational (speaking and writing) and interpersonal (listening, speaking, reading and writing). It is relatively easy to find websites to help the student to develop interpretive skills because listening and writing questions can be multiple-choice questions that can be scored by the computer.

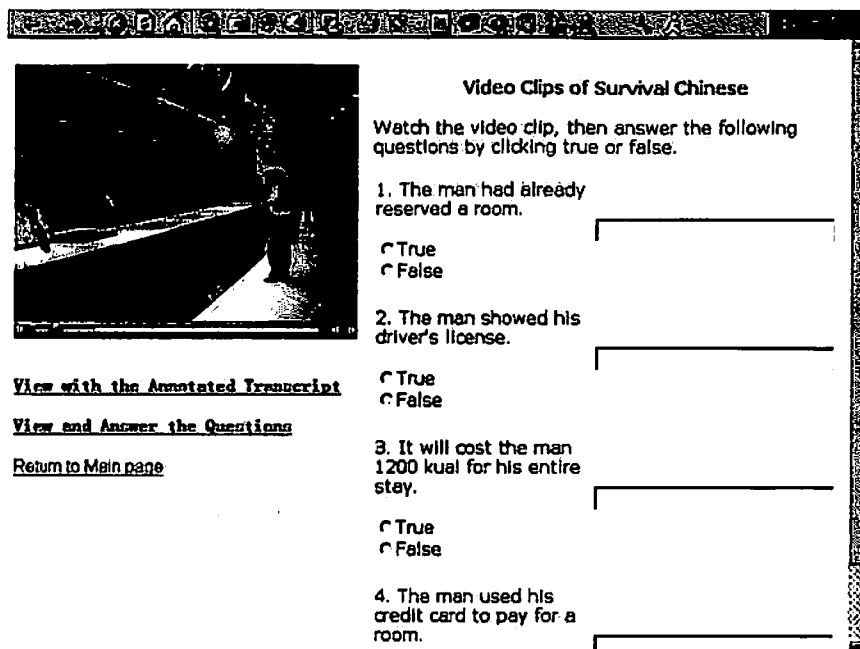
### A. Interpretive

There are many websites for people to practice interpretive skills. I will list two for listening and two for reading here because they have special features.

#### (1) Listening: *Video Clips of Survival Chinese* (By Jianhua Bai)

This site lets the user watch video segments on the screen and also answers the questions on the screen (See picture 7).

- Special features: Instant feedback right next to the answer. If your answer for the third question is incorrect, the computer will display a rather detailed feedback in the box next to it: "No, listen for how many days the man is planning to stay, then multiply by the cost for one night."



**Video Clips of Survival Chinese**

Watch the video clip, then answer the following questions by clicking true or false.

1. The man had already reserved a room.  
☐ True  
☐ False
2. The man showed his driver's license.  
☐ True  
☐ False
3. It will cost the man 1200 kua for his entire stay.  
☐ True  
☐ False
4. The man used his credit card to pay for a room.  
☐ True  
☐ False

[View with the Annotated Transcript](#)  
[View and Answer the Questions](#)  
[Return to Main page](#)

(Picture 7)

(2) Listening: *An Introduction to Chinese Proverbs and Their Origins* (By Jing-heng Ma)

This site contains 15 lessons, one on each Chinese proverb. It is designed for helping intermediate and advance level students to improve their listening comprehension.

- Special feature: Like many other listening exercises on the computer, this site also uses multiple-choice questions. However, unlike other listening exercises which display the four options in Chinese or English on the screen, this site plays the four options for the learner to hear, thus making it 100% listening. The user sees a row of buttons on the screen and clicks the correct one to answer a question.

(3) Reading: *USC Chinese Language Program's Progressive Reading* (By Audrey Li)

The University of Southern California has a wonderful site which contains interesting reading materials. The materials include humorous stories, origins of

idioms, ancient Chinese myths, Chinese poems, etc. It includes a special section on "Progressive Reading".

- Special features: The reading materials in the "Progressive Reading" section are arranged according to their levels of difficulty. The same story appears several times at different levels. When the story appears for the first time, it is simple and easy to comprehend. As the level gets higher, the same story becomes longer and contains more sophisticated vocabulary items.

(4) Reading: *The Chinese Reading World* (by Helen Shen)

This website provides reading materials suitable for students at different learning levels: Beginning (for students who have learned 500-1000 character intermediate (1000-2000) and advanced (2000-3000). The program contains 9 lessons (300 at each level) and 105 tests. Each lesson has a test containing open-ended questions. The student is supposed to enter the answer then check the answer against the sample answer provided on the site.

- Special features: This site allows the user to view the text in HTML format or in GB file. It also provides audio in MP3.

**B. Presentational**

Ideally websites for training a student to develop his presentational skills provide some presentational activities, either speaking or writing, on the web for the student to do. The computer checks the student's answer and offers feedback. However, the computer is not yet able to grade the student's answer in the presentational mode accurately, be it speaking or writing. Currently, speaking and writing answers need to be returned to the test center and be scored by people. For example, AP Chinese tests have questions in the presentational mode. The speaking and writing answers are sent back to ETS to be scored by the test readers.

Most of the speaking exercises that I have seen on the Web ask the learner to say the answer, then play the model answer on the computer to see if one's own answer matches the model answer. Following are two examples for helping the student to develop presentational speaking skills at the novice and intermediate levels:



(1) Speaking: Tianwei Xie's *Learn Chinese*

Tianwei Xie prepared a speaking exercise asking the learner to speak sentences in Chinese based on the English cues. The student can play the pre-recorded model answer to check if his answer is correct.

(2) Speaking: *Chinese Recordings*

*Chinese Recordings* is a website specially designed for the user to practice speaking. The learner first listens to a word or a sentence, then is asked to record it. The student can then compare his own reading with the model reading to check if what he said is correct (See picture 8).

Home Words Sentences Practice Contact

Practice:    00:00:00

Learn Words

kitchen 厨房	garden 花园	tomato 番茄	fruit 水果	beverages 饮料	scissors 剪刀	flower 花	animal 动物	television 电视
flashlight 手电筒	piano 钢琴	musician 音乐家	religion 宗教	police 警察	friend 朋友	teacher 老师	school 学校	hospital 医院
Happy 高兴	Angry 生气	tiger 老虎	paper 纸	window 窗子	bank 银行	water 水	Travel 旅行	Exercise 运动

More

Learn Sentences

What have you been up to? 最近你在做什么?	I like your car. 我喜欢你的车子。	How about a cup of tea? 要杯茶吗?
How late are you open? 你们开到多晚?	If you need help, just let me know. 如果你需要帮忙, 请跟我知照。	What are the side effects of this drug? 这药有什么副作用?
May I have your name and address? 我可以有你的姓名和地址?	How much this cost? 这多少钱?	We are very please with your product. 我们非常满意你们的产品。
Do you have anything cheaper? 你有没有更便宜的?	Have a nice trip. 祝你旅途愉快。	What a surprise to meet you here! 想不到在这里遇见你。

More

(Picture 8)

(3) Writing: *Teacher Xiao's Chinese Classroom* (萧老师的中文教室) (By Yang Xiao)

Every time a new technology appears, someone tries to use it for the purpose of teaching Chinese. When blogs appeared, websites also used them for learning Chinese. Blogs can provide students with a venue to post their writings and prac-

tice their presentational skills. Xiao Yang's blog is one of the many blogs that are now available on the Internet. Xiao notes that her students edit their postings very carefully and try to eliminate all the mistakes before they post their messages on the blog. (Xie and Yao, 2009) (See picture 9)

(Picture 9)

## C. Interpersonal

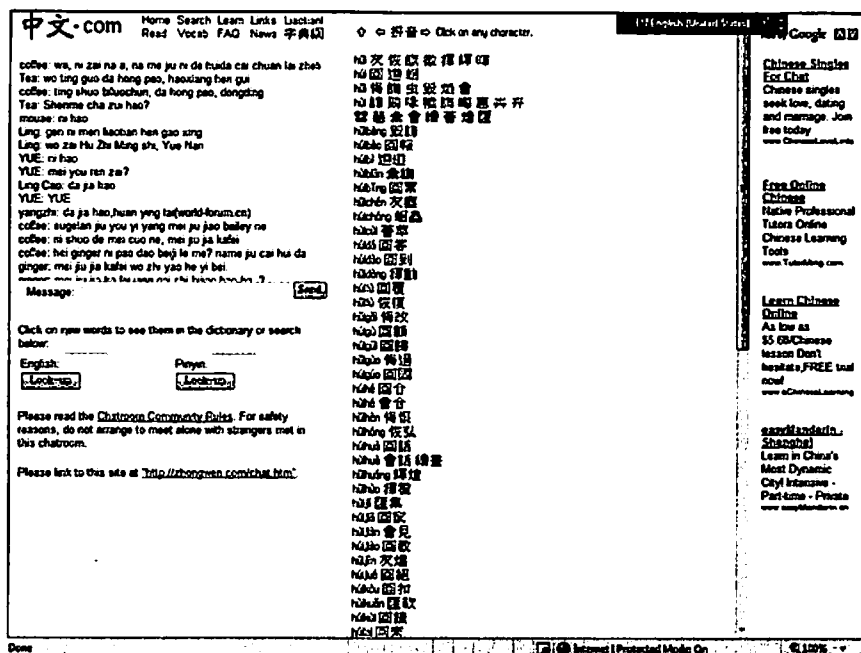
Like blogs which provide a platform for the student to practice the presentational skills, chat rooms provide a place for the student to practice the interpersonal skills. Following is an example which allows the users to practice conversation by typing Chinese.

*Zhongwen.com* (By Rick Harbaugh)

There are many chat rooms where you can chat with people online in Chinese around the world. But not too many of them are serving Chinese language learners. *Zhongwen.com* is a chat room that is very user friendly to beginning learners. It allows you to chat with others in pinyin, so even if you don't know Chinese characters, you can still use this chat room to practice your interpersonal skills.

- Special feature: This chat room comes with an online dictionary. The messages entered are displayed on the right side of the screen. When

you see a word in the message that you don't understand, you can click the word and see its explanation on the right side of the screen (See picture 10).



(Picture 10)

## Concluding remarks

### A. Some observations

To summarize what I have presented on the pages above, I would like to make some observations on the development of Chinese CALL.

Chinese CALL in the United States started in the 1970s. Several Chinese teachers worked individually exploring the possibilities of applying computer technology to teaching Chinese. Very few Chinese CALL materials appeared between 1970 and 1990. Starting in the 1990s, some publishers and software companies started to sell CDs for learning Chinese. Most of the products were technologically sophisticated, but not all of them are pedagogically sound. When the Internet era arrived, many individuals started to set up websites for learning

Chinese. Some of them were done by Chinese teachers, and some of them were done by individuals interested in Chinese. Those sites were often free but often short-lived.

In recent years, we see some large scale websites appearing on the Internet. They are often set up by institutions and commercial companies. Those sites usually require passwords and are not free. Many recent websites are student-centered, rather than teacher-centered. Instead of providing the learner a pre-determined lesson, they teach the students what they want to learn. In addition to regular students, many websites are targeting corporations, travelers, etc. Special one-on-one service makes learning Chinese convenient. It is very encouraging to see many sites now serving young learners. This trend reflects the fact that people start to learn Chinese at younger age now.

### B. A few wishes

#### (1) Need to have more activities for developing presentational and interpersonal skills

When we measure those websites using the three modes of communications (interpretive, interpersonal and presentation), we see that most of the websites are designed for the users to develop interpretive skills (listening and reading). We need more websites that offer activities training the student's presentational and interpersonal skills. While there are Chinese chat rooms and blogs that allow the users to use their interpersonal and presentational skills, most of those sites tend to be for the native speakers of Chinese and are too advanced for beginning students. So we need to have more chat rooms and blogs that are geared to beginning level students. Prof. Tianwei Xie has been using Wimba (voice e-mail) to communicate with his students. This technology could be used to design activities for training interpersonal skills (Xie and Yao 2009).

#### (2) Need to have better feedback

Websites usually serve students learning Chinese independently without personal contact with a live teacher. So it is important that the website can provide feedback that guides the learner to further develop her language skills. Instead of giving a simple "right or wrong", it would be desirable if the websites could analyze the answer entered by the user and guide the learner to study further before giving him the correct answer.

### (3) Need to have a Resource Center

It is a good thing that there are many websites teaching Chinese. But it also makes it hard for the user to choose the right one or a good one. There is a need to have a centralized website, something like "*Software and multimedia database for Chinese language teaching*,"<sup>4</sup> that offers reviews and comments on the existing websites. Ideally, such a resource center should offer the following:

a. A searchable database that includes as many websites as possible. For example, if one keys in "Chinese characters", all the websites that teach Chinese characters will be displayed. If one keys in "kindergarten", all the websites serving kindergarten kids would appear.

b. When the name of a website appears on the screen, it should be linked to the real site. Under the name of the website, there should be comments from people who have used that site, and a place for people to add comments to it.

c. The home page of the resource center can also provide a simple menu listing the major categories of the websites.

d. The home page should also invite people to report any new websites to the resource center.

e. If there is a budget, the resource center might want to commission some reputable teachers to try out those sites and write reviews.

Although this article reports on the current status of websites for Chinese CALL in the United States, I encourage readers to explore websites based in other countries. As pointed out above, they are often better funded and operate on a larger scale. We in the US can learn some new ideas from those websites.<sup>5</sup> At the same time, people in other countries might benefit from the suggestions I have offered in this study. Furthermore, in this era of globalization, such a resource center as that which I previously discussed could serve Chinese language teachers and students world-wide. It is my hope that some individual or organization will find the necessary resources to make this happen.

<sup>4</sup> *Software and multimedia database for Chinese language teaching* is a supplementary website to the TCLT (Technology and Chinese Language Teaching). It lists websites that are related to Chinese language teaching from all over the world. There is also an information sheet for each of the websites listing their authors, media formats, target users, etc. In addition to websites, this database also includes audio CDs, DVDs, PowerPoint presentations, Desktop applications, etc. This database is maintained by Jun Da and De Bao Xu.

<sup>5</sup> Since my article focuses on the US, I will only mention one site that is somewhat related to the US as an example. Chin-chuan Cheng, the grandfather of Chinese CALL in the US, is currently in Taiwan and is the principle investigator of the Digital Archive Project at Academia Sinica. This project, *Digital Resources Center for Global Chinese Teaching and Learning*, provides us with Chinese language learning and teaching resources. In the "Chinese Word-focused Extensive Reading" sections, the user can find reading materials containing a particular expression.

### References

- Bourgerie, Dana Scott. (2003). "Computer Assisted Language Learning for Chinese: A Survey and Annotated Bibliography." *Journal of Chinese Language Teachers Association*, Vol. 38 No. 2, pp. 17-48.
- Cheng, Chin-chuan. (1973). "Computer-based Chinese teaching program at Illinois." *Journal of Chinese Language Teachers Association*, Vol. 8 No. 2, pp. 75-79.
- Li, Yanfeng 李延風. (2000). 美國中文教學網站之分類與評估. 《第六屆世界華語文教學研討會論文集》, 第五冊, p. 73-79. 台北.
- Xie, Tianwei and Tao-chung Yao. (2009). "Technology in Chinese Language Teaching and Learning." in Michael Everson and Yun Xiao (Eds.), *Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language: Theories and Applications*, Boston: Cheng & Tsui Company, pp.151-172.
- Yao, Ted and Mark Peterson. (1986). "Chinese Character Tutor: An Example of Chinese Language Instruction Using Personal Computers," *Journal of the Chinese Language Teachers Association*, Vol. 21 No.2, 1-18.
- Yao, Tao-chung. (1995). "A Computer-Adaptive Test for Reading Chinese (CATRC): A Preliminary Report," *Journal of the Chinese Language Teachers Association*, Vol. 30 No.1, pp. 75-85.
- Yao, Tao-chung. (1996). "A Review of Some Current Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) for Chinese," in Scott McGinnis (eds.) *Chinese Language Pedagogy: Current Perspectives of the Emerging Field*. Columbus, Ohio: Foreign Language Publications, pp. 255-284.
- Yao, Tao-chung. (2001). "Wang shang diannao zishi Zhongwen yuedu ceshi jianjie (網上電腦自適中文閱讀測試簡介 An Introduction to WebCATRC)," in Shi-chang Hsin (ed.), *Di-er-jie quan qiu huawen wanglu jiaoyu yantaohui lunwen ji* (第二屆全球華文網路教育研討會論文集 Proceedings of the Second International Conference on Internet Chinese Education). Taipei: Overseas Chinese Commission, pp.8-14.
- Yao, Tao-chung. (2003). "Meiguo Zhongwen wanglu jiaoxue de xiankuang yu zhanwang (美國中文網路教學的現況與展望 The Current Status and Outlook of Chinese Language Teaching on the Web in the United States)," in Shi-chang Hsin (ed.), *Di-san-jie quan qiu huawen wanglu jiaoyu yantaohui lunwen ji* (第三屆全球華文網路教育研討會論文集 Proceedings of the Third International Conference on Internet Chinese Education). Taipei: Overseas Chinese Commission, pp.10-19.
- Yao, Tao-chung. (2005). "Zhongwen 'yuwang' jianjie (中文"語網"簡介 A Brief

- Introduction to Chinese LangNet," in Shi-chang Hsin (ed.), *Di-si-jie quan qiu huawen wanglu jiaoyu yantaohui lunwen ji* (第四届全球華文網路教育研討會論文集 Proceedings of the 4<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Internet Chinese Education). Taipei: Overseas Chinese Commission, pp.10-18.
- Yao, Tao-chung. (2008). "AP Zhongwen yu diannao ceshi (AP中文与电脑测试)," in Zhang Pu, Xu Juan and Gan Ruiyuan (Eds.), *Advancements and Insights of Digitized Chinese Teaching and Learning*, Beijing: Tsinghua University Press, pp.14-17.
- Zhang, Zheng-sheng. (1998). CALL for Chinese: Issues and Practice. *Journal of Chinese Language Teachers Association*, Vol. 33, No.1, pp.51-82.

#### Websites introduced in alphabetical order:

- ActiveChinese* <<http://www.activechinese.com/>>
- CafeMECX* 汉英堂 <<http://www.cafemecx.com/>>
- Chinese Computerized Adaptive Listening Comprehension Test (CCALT)* <<http://ccalt.com>>
- ChineseHour* <<http://www.chinesehour.com/>>
- Learning Chinese Characters in "Integrated Chinese"* (中文聽說讀寫) <<http://www.usc.edu/dept/ealc/chinese/character/>>
- Chinese Link* <[http://wps.prenhall.com/wl\\_wu\\_chineselink\\_1/39/10025/2566509.cw/index.html](http://wps.prenhall.com/wl_wu_chineselink_1/39/10025/2566509.cw/index.html)>
- ChineseOn.Net* 中国上网 <<http://www.chineseon.net/>>
- Chinese Reading World* <<http://www.chinesereadingworld.org/>>
- Chinese Recordings* <<http://www.obegong.com/class1.php?lang=en>>
- Chinesetown.com* <<http://www.chinesetown.com/>>
- ChiNews* <<http://chinews.hawaii.edu/>>
- Digital Resources Center for Global Chinese Teaching and Learning* <[http://elearning.ling.sinica.edu.tw/eng\\_index.html](http://elearning.ling.sinica.edu.tw/eng_index.html)>
- GuavaTalk* <<http://www.guavataalk.com/chinese/>>
- iChinese* 愛中文 <<http://www.ichinesestudy.org/>>
- Integrated Chinese (IC) Home Page* <<http://eall.hawaii.edu/yao/icusers/>>
- Introduction to Chinese Proverbs and Their Origins* <[http://www.wellesley.edu/Chinese/Chinese\\_Fables/title/title\\_page.html](http://www.wellesley.edu/Chinese/Chinese_Fables/title/title_page.html)>
- LangNet* <<http://www.langnet.org/>>
- Learn Chinese* <<http://www.csulb.edu/~txie/ccol/03/practice.htm>>
- Learn Chinese from Personal Tutors* <<http://www.chinesesphere.com/>>

- Learn Chinese Online* <<http://chinese-school.netfirms.com/learn-Chinese-online.html>>
- Learn Chinese Pod* <<http://www.learnchinesePod.com/>>
- Little Linguists Academy* 小語言家天地 <<http://www.littlelinguistsacademy.com/>>
- LingNet* <<http://onlinelearning.lingnet.org/chinese/lesson0/toc.htm>>
- Los Angeles Chinese Learning Center* <<http://chinese-school.netfirms.com/>>
- NewinChinese.com* <<http://www.easechinese.com/Learn-Chinese-Online-A-68.html>>
- NOELLA* <<http://casls.uoregon.edu/noella.php>>
- NOELLA Demo* <<http://noella.uoregon.edu/noella/do/infopages?forward=demomenu>>
- Practical Chinese Reader: Learning Aids Online* <<http://www.csulb.edu/~txie/pcr.html>>
- Read Chinese!* <<http://readchinese.nflc.org/>>
- Software and multimedia database for Chinese language teaching* <<http://tclt.forlang.mtsu.edu/software/browse.php?tclt=3523515e9b7e4d3d8f82af5ab0fd9acd>>
- STAMP (Standards-based Measurement of Proficiency)* <<http://www.stamptest.net/stamp0708/stamptest/>>
- Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21st Century* <<http://www.actfl.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageid=3392>>
- Teacher Xiao's Chinese Classroom* (萧老师的中文教室) <<http://xiaolaoshi.livejournal.com/friends>>
- Transparent Language* <<http://www.transparent.com/languagepages/chinese/quizzes.htm>>
- University of Hawaii's Distance Learning Courses* <<http://www.nflrc.hawaii.edu/project/399info.html>>
- USC Chinese Language Program's Progressive Reading* <[http://www.usc.edu/dept/ealc/chinese/newweb/reading\\_page.htm](http://www.usc.edu/dept/ealc/chinese/newweb/reading_page.htm)>
- Video Clips of Survival Chinese* <<http://personal.kenyon.edu/bai/vcsc.htm>>
- Zhongwen.com* (中文.com) <<http://zhongwen.com/chat.htm>>