



NATIONAL FOREIGN LANGUAGE RESOURCE CENTER
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

Mandarin Chinese:
Four-Year Instructional Goals, Curriculum Outline,
and Institutional Measures
to facilitate implementation of the curriculum utilizing a performance-based approach

© 2006 Cynthia Ning. Some rights reserved.
See: <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/2.5/>

University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

CONTENTS

Contents	1
Curriculum outline for core language courses.....	2
Level one	2
Level two.....	2
Level three	3
Level four	4
Beyond level four.....	4
Institutional measures to implement the curriculum	4
Assessing student performance.....	5
Classroom observation and feedback.....	5
Convocation of meetings for course coordination and teacher training	5
Selection of course materials	6

CURRICULUM OUTLINE FOR CORE LANGUAGE COURSES

The Chinese core program offers four levels of instruction in Mandarin Chinese, using performance-based methodology (function driven, focusing on authentic texts and tasks appropriate to each level, interactive, student centered standardized assessment instruments will provide pre-instructional/post-instructional performance standards), and with commensurate attention to practical (little c) culture. Specifics of instruction at each level are as follows.

Level one

Profile of incoming students

No or limited previous exposure (0 – Novice Mid levels).

Objectives

After one year of instruction, the student will reach approximately the Intermediate Low level in all four skills. They will be able to express their own meaning in simple sentences using recombinations of known material; identify the main idea of commercials, announcements, and speech directed at them in areas of immediate need; puzzle out salient information in authentic written/printed material relating to survival needs; and write familiar characters and words to supply information on forms and form simple messages.

Instructional outline

Focus on developing vocabulary set in high-occurrence sentence patterns, relating to basic survival situations such as making friends, setting appointments, shopping, getting around town. **Skills getting** activities will include TPR, pantomime, guesswork, etc.; **skills-using** activities include pair and group work aimed at getting students to understand phrases and sentences, and express their own meaning using sentences or pieces of sentences. **Reading** will include authentic material such as signs, money, timetables, menus, notes, etc. Students will be encouraged to skim and scan texts to determine main ideas; occasional texts will also be decoded in entirety for literacy training. **In writing**, emphasis will be on gaining familiarity with the nature and key components of Chinese characters, learning to reproduce key high occurrence characters, and writing simple communications that approximate language previously learned in speaking exercises or in familiar reading texts.

Level two

Profile of incoming students

Ability to converse using skeletal sentences or large chunks of sentences; some ability to make out main ideas of wide range of survival authentic texts (Novice High-Intermediate Mid Levels).

Objectives

At the end of the second year, students will near or reach the Intermediate High level in listening, speaking, and reading, and the Intermediate Mid level in writing. They will be able to get into, through and out of simple survival situations with some facility. They will **speak** consistently in sentences, and will be able to provide some detail in their statements, reaching towards narration and description. They will be able to begin linking some sentences together. **In reading**, they will be able to make out more

detail in a wider range of authentic texts linked to survival situations: advertisements, announcements, instructions, etc. **Writing** is primarily focused on notes, post-cards, brief letters.

Instructional outline

The topic areas treated in Level One will be revisited in greater detail. Students will be encouraged to go beyond the extent of the competence they exhibited in level one, by using fuller, longer constructions and a wider range of vocabulary, and with more accuracy (in pronunciation and structure) than previously. More situations, still primarily linked to survival and daily living, will be added. Classroom activities will provide sustained and extensive opportunity to develop narration and description skills. Reading texts will include a great deal of material not currently available in textbooks, and drawn from current authentic sources (broadcast and print commercials and announcements; messages written by native speakers, etc.) Literacy training texts will be selected from existing teacher-developed published texts containing short, high-interest segments that approximate spoken language.

Level three

Profile of incoming students

Comfortable in survival situations; beginning ability to reach beyond the immediacy of the situation to attempt narration and description, given topics that are concrete and of general interest. (Intermediate Mid-Intermediate High levels).

Objectives

After the third year of training, students will near or attain the Advanced level in listening, speaking and reading, and Intermediate High in writing. Narration and description of concrete topic areas will feature linked sentences and extended discourse, including narration in past, present, and future modes. In reading, students will be able to understand the main idea plus many (but not all) supporting details in a wide range of simple expository texts, including newspaper articles on current events, television and radio news and documentary segments, segments of films and popular fiction featuring narration and description, expository memos and letters, etc. Writings will focus on linked prose on survival issues, and will be extended to include simple expository prose on concrete topics.

Instructional outline

Extensive use of brainstorming to establish threshold level abilities, linking skills (listening to broadcast segments both to train in listening comprehension and as a pre-reading activity, using subsequent reading to instigate speech activities, then writing summaries about oral discussions, then using revised drafts of student writing as classroom texts for reading, etc.) and using paired or group work and community language learning techniques to develop skills in narration and description will provide students extensive and sustained training in understanding and expressing personal meaning in extended discourse. Text materials will include both a sampling of appropriate teacher-prepared texts for literacy training, and a wide range of excerpts from print and broadcast media and personal and business correspondence.

Level four

Profile of incoming students

Students are marginally successful in discoursing on concrete topics using language that give listeners a good understanding of issues along with attendant details, and that is readily comprehensible to most native speakers. (Intermediate High-Advanced)

Objectives

By the end of the fourth year, students will reach Advanced High in listening, speaking, and reading. They will be comfortable in extended discourse on the concrete level, and will gain a tentative ability to handle abstract or professional, specialized topics and to defend opinions. Reading will expand to specialized texts in professional topics---students will be able to understand the main idea and many supporting details of such texts. In writing, students will reach the Advanced level; they will be able to write extended prose on concrete topics. Although they will continue to make mistakes, these will not interfere with comprehension.

Instructional outline

This year will begin with a wide range of material of interest to the general listener/viewer/reader, which will be differentiated from the third level material by increasing abstract or specialized/professional content. Documentaries, selected excerpts from news broadcasts, videos of specialized lecture-series and segments of current films will be included. The reading/viewing material will constitute entry points for speaking and writing activities based on community language learning, pair/group work or debate formats, with students taking turns writing minutes or summaries in Chinese. Drafts of all student writing will be critiqued by peers and by instructors, and rewritten at least once before dissemination to classmates. Later in the year, the instructor will collaborate with Chinese specialists in other disciplines (art, history, geography, political science, literature, etc.) to select segments from texts in their fields (whether a reading, video segment, Chinese language lecture, etc.) to incorporate into the language instruction. These China specialists will also come to the language class at least once to lead a discussion (in Chinese) on the content of the segment the students have worked with.

Beyond level four

We propose to institute a series of “rider courses”---1 or 2 credit add-ons to Chinese Studies courses currently being offered across the curriculum by the University, in anthropology, law, theater, geography, management, etc., in which the medium of instruction is English. The add-on courses will provide reading and discussion sessions in Chinese, with a requirement to write a brief term paper in Chinese. They will meet 1-2 hours per week (in addition to the regular meeting hours of the actual course itself).

INSTITUTIONAL MEASURES TO IMPLEMENT THE CURRICULUM

Faculty charged with coordinating the language program will have the following responsibilities and prerogatives:

- Design and implement – level assessment of student communicative competence in four skills;
- Provision for classroom observation of and feedback to teachers of all language-skill courses;
- Selection of course materials, in consultation with relevant level.

Each of these responsibilities and prerogatives is discussed in more detail below

Assessing student performance

A well-designed program will measure differences in student performance at entry to and exit from each component course against program goals defined for that level. Some program designers advocate the use of an identical, or very similar, set of items drawn from a “bank”, measuring the same communicative competencies, for testing at the beginning and end of the semester, as an objective measure of student learning. The language coordinator(s) will work with the faculty to design such a bank of task-based test items reflecting level goals in all four skill areas, to be administered in all core language courses, perhaps as part or all of a final exam. They will also create a records system, integrated with the current student background records kept by the department, tracking the performance of each student on these tests. Tests and scores will also be made available as feedback to the program.

Test results from this testing program will be used in several ways. Firstly, test scores can serve as indicators of how well the program is meeting its goals. If the goals are not being met, they may be reassessed. Secondly, they offer an overall picture of student performance semester to semester, suggesting areas in the curriculum that might be redesigned to receive more or less focus. Finally, the test items serve as a concrete representation of the abstract goals defined for each level, and thus provide a point of focus for teachers attempting to concretize the goals in their own classrooms.

Classroom observation and feedback

A proficiency-based curriculum is best pursued through a clear demarcation in the classroom between skill-getting and skill-using., through the use of task-based classroom activities, and through communicative activities that are meaningful for and relevant to the learner. Classroom teachers in the department have varying amounts of experience in designing and implementing such activities; currently, there is no way to assess the extent to which they are employed in the classroom and no mechanism for feedback to individual instructors regarding the match between the educational activities in their classrooms and the above criteria. Every teacher, from beginning TAs to the most experienced classroom teacher, can benefit from feedback about classroom activities.

The language coordinator(s) will be responsible for developing a set of criteria for classroom observation, which will be distilled into a standardized classroom observation form. They will coordinate schedules and personnel to undertake the observations. Data from the observations will be tabulated in a useful format and used as a basis of discussion with individual teachers, primarily in order to increase their self-awareness of teaching techniques.

Convocation of meetings for course coordination and teacher training

A good language program offers teachers a balance between centralized coordination and support on the one hand, and the freedom to individualize classroom instruction, utilizing personal strengths, on the other. The language coordinator(s) are empowered to mandate goal-based meetings of various groups of teachers, and will mediate those meetings, so as to direct the focus of all faculty teaching core language courses to the performance-based goals that have been set in place, and to how whatever texts have been chosen can be effectively utilized to help students reach the goals. It is not necessarily recommended that each teacher follow the same procedure every day in every section of a given course, but it is essential

that instructional objectives (in performance terms) are matched on a week-to-week or unit-to-unit basis. This can be achieved when teachers meet to share ideas about classroom activities. The language coordinators will monitor and track the progress of these weekly meetings, where possible by attending in person.

Another area that requires Section-level coordination is the training of TAs. It is anticipated that requiring attendance at the teacher's meetings described above will go a long way towards providing systematic training for TAs, as they are exposed to ideas from the senior instructors and new hires about classroom activities. It is recommended that further rigor and systematicity be introduced into the process by requiring new TAs to enroll in a methodology of teaching foreign language course in their first semester. The language coordinator(s) will work with the instructor of the methodology course to create hands-on course assignments, such as the design of information-gap activities or form-focused grammar activities to be integrated into the course the TAs are currently teaching.

Selection of course materials

All materials currently in use will be reassessed in light of the performance-based goals that have been adopted, and ways to use these materials to meet specific performance-based learning goals will be thought out, particularly since most materials available on the market are not organized around performance-based goals.

Since there is no textbook currently in existence that matches the goals of any course exactly, teachers in every course will need at the very least to make use of some supplementary materials, and in some cases to move towards discarding the old text outright. The language coordinator(s) will analyze the currently-used text at each level in terms of the course goals (in all four skills) and to direct teachers at each level in the selection of additional materials, on an ongoing basis, or in the selection of new texts. The ultimate goal of this process of text selection is to improve articulation between levels in terms of communicative competence. For those students and teachers who have been used to a definition of articulation between levels based solely on a catalogue of vocabulary and grammar, this will be a new experience, and in this process the concerns of both students and faculty must be taken into consideration. For example, provision might be made in the curriculum for treatment of a limited number of listening and reading texts in an "intensive reading" or "literacy training" mode, in which the text is gone over in close detail, much as in the traditional grammar-translation method of teaching, although the main focus must remain on communicative competence.

			speaking	reading	writing	listening
level	goal	content	functions	functions	functions	functions
101	Nm-Nh	Basic topics such as : Classroom objects Colors Numbers Clothing Telling time Dates (month/day/current year) Weather/seasons Family members Self-identification (nationality & profession) Courtesy expressions (please, thank you, etc.) Money denominations	Use limited memorized material in simple statement or question form Name/identify objects, people, places Give name, place of origin, simple personal info Express membership in organization, family, institution Express minimal courtesy Express agreement/disagreement	Recognize pinyin for limited memorized material Recognize graphic elements such as high frequency radicals Recognize high frequency characters in type-set, hand-written, traditional or simplified forms Read for directional purposes standardized messages, such as menu items, prices, time/date Puzzle out pieces of selected authentic material relating to survival needs Puzzle out very simple hand-printed messages by native writers writing to foreigners Interpret set expressions in areas of immediate need	Copy and produce the basic strokes of characters Produce Romanization of high frequency phrases Reproduce from memory some familiar words or phrases and recombinations of these Supply information on simple forms and documents Use Romanization to express meaning when unnecessary to do so using characters	Interactive listening skills necessary for the speaking functions plus the following: Identify some high-frequency words and phrases in broadcast/recorded materials
102	Nh-II	Survival topics such as : personal/biographical information Restaurant/foods Directions around town Activities/hobbies Daily routine Transportation Lodging/living quarters Health matters Post office Shopping	Express own meaning using recombinations of known material in simple sentences Participate in short conversations Ask & answer questions Get info, through & out of simple survival situations Talk on phone Transfer current learned material to new situations/contexts	Identify key facts and some details in descriptive material on daily life and news events	Write short messages, postcards Take down simple notes, such as telephone messages	Identify the main idea of broadcast materials in areas of immediate need, including advertising, public announcements, warnings, instructions, weather and news reports, telephone messages
201	II-Im	Courtesy requests, eg Greetings/introductions Making appointments Accepting/refusing invitations/polite, formulaic expressions	Produce strings of longer sentences relating to one topic Participate fully in casual conversations Give instructions, simple reports Make simple comparisons	Identify key facts and some details in carefully written personal communication Discern linkages among sentences in simple connected texts This column only has 3 sets for the four levels up to end of 202 (typist's note)		Identify key facts and some details of broadcasts/recordings in descriptive material on daily life and news events

			speaking	reading	writing	listening
level	goal	content	functions	functions	functions	functions
202	Im-Ih	Past experiences Future plans Concrete topics such as: current events	Produce strings of longer sentences relating to one topic Participate fully in casual conversations Give instructions, simple reports Make simple comparisons		Take notes in some detail Write simple letters, brief synopses, summaries of biographical data, work and school experience.	Understand outline of plot in episodes from soap operas and popular movies
301	Ih-A	Concrete and factual topics of personal and general interest, such as work, community events, news items	Give simple narration and description and description in past, present, and future Make comparisons of a general nature Deal with social and transactional situations with complications Give detailed instructions and simple reports	Understand main ideas and most supporting details of factual narrations and descriptions in non-technical prose, such as in -announcements -instructions/directions -newspaper/magazine articles -detailed correspondence -factual reports	Write social and basic formal correspondence Write summaries, descriptions, narrations of several paragraphs Describe in detail with precision Narrate in detail with precision	Understand majority of face-to-face speech in standard dialect at normal rate Get main ideas and most supporting details of reports on factual material and in non-technical prose, such as -broadcast news -announcements -instructions/directions -popular movies and television shows
302	Ih-A	Factual and abstract issues in areas of general interest such as the following: politics and political systems Economics History				
401	A-Ah	Customs and mores Press and the media Education and educational systems philosophical and religious systems Literature and literary texts Arts	Describe in detail with precision Narrate in detail with precision	Understand most material on both concrete and abstract topics for a general readership	hypothesize and conjecture in writing	Understand main themes and most supporting details in television shows, movies for a general audience, news reports, lectures, etc.
402	A-Ah	science and technology Medicine and health Law and enforcement	Hypothesize Support opinions			

級別	目標	內容	會話能力	閱讀能力	書寫能力	聽力能力
101	Nm-Nh	基本內容如： 教室物品 顏色 數字 衣物 時間 日期（日月年） 天氣／季節 家人 自我介紹（哪國人／職業） 禮貌用語（你好、請、謝謝等） 錢幣	運用掌握的有限的詞語簡單表述與問話 說出與識別物品、人物、地點的名稱和特徵 說出個人姓名、籍貫及簡單情況 說出單位、機關及家庭情況 基本禮貌用語的表達	認出所掌握詞匯的拼音 辨認筆劃與組成，如常用偏旁 認出常用漢字的印寫刷體與書寫體、簡體與繁體 看懂日常生活常識材料中與自己有關的部分，如菜譜、價格、時間、日期等 通過琢磨辨出與自己有關的實際材料的部分 辨出一些中國人給外國人手寫的筆畫一整的信件的內容 在與個人有關的場景下理解習慣用語的用法	臨摹並寫出漢字的基本筆劃 寫出常用用語的拼音形式 根據記憶寫出常月詞匯並用這些詞匯進行新的組合 在簡單的表格和文件上填寫出個人的有關情況 在需使用漢字的情況下使用拼音表達 寫便條或明信片 記簡單筆記，如電話留言 記較詳細的筆記 寫簡單的信、摘要、簡歷、學校和工作情況	與會話能力要求相關的聽力反應參與技巧以及如下聽力能力要求： 從廣播錄音材料中聽出一些常用詞匯與短語 聽出廣播或錄音中廣告、公告、天氣預報、新聞以及電話留言等形式的基本內容 聽出廣播或錄音中有關生活及新聞消息的主要內容和一些細節 聽懂電視劇及電影中故事的基本情節
102	Nh-II	日常話題如：個人與家人情況 用餐與食品 市區交通 日常活動與愛好 作息時間 乘車 打電話 住房 身體狀況 郵局 購物	表示同意或反對 根據所掌握的內容用新組織的句子表達自己的意思 參與簡單對話 問話與對答 進入—處理—完成日常生活的有關場景，如問路	弄懂一些生活性、新聞性材料的大概內容及其細節 弄懂一些書寫清楚的個人手寫材料的大概內容及其細節		
201	II-Im	禮貌用語： 寒暄與介紹 約會 接受與拒絕 邀請	在不同的情況下靈活運用所掌握的詞語	辨認出有上下文內容的閱讀材料中句子之間的邏輯聯關		
202	Im-Ih	具體內容談話 時事 經驗 計劃未來	根據某一話題組造條列句子 指點、安排和簡單報告 簡單地比較			

級別	目標	內容	會話能力	閱讀能力	書寫能力	聽力能力
301	Ih-A	對話（包括對某事的描述、敘述、看法）： 時事 經驗 計劃	用過去、現在或將來時態進簡單敘述或描述	理解一些非專業性說理文章的基本論點和論據	寫出交往和較正式的書信	懂日常生活中正常速度的標準語言的大部分對話
302	Ih-A	關於具體事實的傳播材料（包括視聽和文字）如： 廣播新聞通知 指示、指導 報紙雜誌 流行電影與 電視節目 表述詳情的書信	進行簡單比較	理解在較熟悉情況之下的抽象議題的內容	寫出幾段綜述、描述、敘事性文字	聽出時事報導與非專論性文章中的主要觀點和大部分細節
401	A-Ah	對具體事實進行的討論或傳播，如： 政治與政治制度 經濟學 歷史 習俗、道德 出版、媒體 教育、教育體制 哲學、宗教 思想體系	假設	能看懂抽象和具體體材文章的大部分內容	寫出論說與推理的段落	聽懂大眾電視節目和電影，理解它的主題和基本內容
402	A-Ah	文學、文學作品 藝術 科技 醫藥 法律	論證 勸說他人接受自己的觀點 準確描述細節 準確敘述細節	能夠根據上下文猜測出生字的意思	寫簡單的研究報告 使用文字辯護與論證	聽懂具體與抽象各種傳播形式的大部分內容 能根據上下文判斷出生詞的詞義