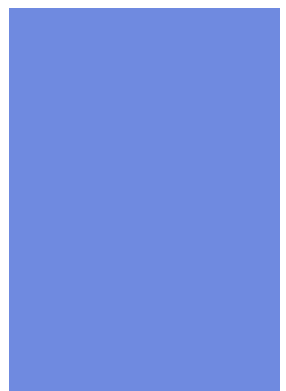


# Implementing a Technology-Enhanced Blended Learning Approach



## A Guidebook for STARTALK Summer and Post-Summer Programs

February, 2018



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

First and foremost, we would like to thank STARTALK Central for supporting the Hunter College STARTALK student and teacher Chinese language programs since 2007. STARTALK's support and guidance have been invaluable in helping us develop the blended learning infrastructure project. Over the past decade, the use of blended learning technology has been integrated into our STARTALK summer program as well as our Chinese Flagship program design. In particular, we thank the students and teachers who participated in the online courses that we offered over the years. Their feedback and suggestions helped us to refine our online course design, curricula, and teaching methods.

Our deep thanks go to Dr. Katharine Nielson, now Chief Education Officer at Voxy. During 2009-2010 her team at the Center for Advanced Study of Languages (CASL) at the University of Maryland collaborated with the Hunter team in designing and developing online courses for Mandarin Chinese. This project set the foundation for the blended learning model presented in the Guidebook.

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The writing of the Guidebook was a team effort. Dr. Der-lin Chao was the main author; Ms. Bing Ying Hu and Dr. Ming-Ying Li, both lecturers at Hunter College, contributed to chapters 4 and 6. Greg Walsh, Chinese teacher at Chaminade High School and a MA student in the Chinese program, contributed to chapters 3 and 8. Bo Hao, also a lecturer at Hunter College, and Ms. Hu helped design sample curricula for grades K-12 to show how to integrate blended learning into language programs.

The STARTALK Infrastructure Project Team  
Chinese Program  
Hunter College  
January 17, 2018

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# Chapter One Introduction



- \* Purpose of the Guidebook
- \* Sustainment in Language Learning is Critical for Developing Proficiency
- \* The Need for Post-Summer Programs
- \* Challenges of Organizing Post-Summer Programs
- \* Post-Summer Design: Offering Weekly Online Personalized Learning
- \* Other Considerations When Designing Post-Summer Programs



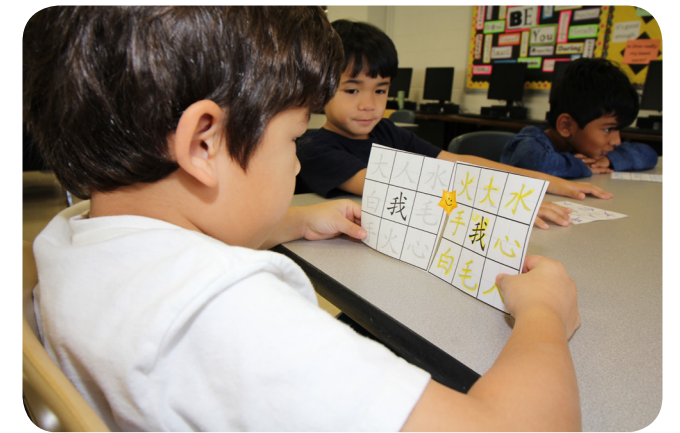
## Purpose of the Guidebook

This Guidebook, compiled by the Hunter College STARTALK team, will show how to expand a STARTALK summer face-to-face program into a summer-plus post-summer program by incorporating an online instructional component. The instructional model that combines face-to-face instruction in a classroom setting with online instruction in a virtual environment is widely known as blended learning. This Guidebook will provide comprehensive step-by-step instructions on how to prepare and run a post-summer online program. The Guidebook also summarizes the lessons we have learned during our decade of experience implementing summer and post-summer online programs at K-16 levels. We believe that this will be useful for all STARTALK programs, no matter what language is taught.

## Sustainment in Language Learning is Critical for Developing Proficiency

Cultivating the foreign language skills of Americans is critical in today's interconnected world. Since STARTALK inaugurated its first summer program in 2007, it has grown to be one of the most significant federally-funded projects in critical foreign language education for American youths. Numerous world language experts have worked as program team leaders and evaluators to promote STARTALK instructional principles and methods in teaching, curriculum design, and assessment. As a result, STARTALK programs have set a national standard for quality language instruction for thousands of students.

If we look at the 2017 programs, it is evident that the majority of the programs are summer-only programs. Even though thousands of students have benefited from the summer programs, after the summer programs end, many students are not able to continue to study their STARTALK languages in their home schools. These students will likely have difficulty maintaining their language skills, and may even forget what they learned during the summer. Even if a student's



school does have foreign language classes, instruction very often does not follow STARTALK principles, and class curricula are rarely articulated with the STARTALK curriculum.

One solution to address this issue is to offer a post-summer program that consists of both synchronous and asynchronous online learning, using a personalized and proficiency-based approach. Synchronous learning refers to real time instruction via a virtual classroom with a trained language teacher or a conversation partner who possesses the requisite Chinese language proficiency. Asynchronous learning refers to students working online with self-paced, authentic, multimedia instructional materials that are task-based and meaningful in real life situations. Personalized learning means that students are provided with a personalized study plan that addresses the interests and needs of each individual learner. Proficiency-based learning means that the curriculum specifically indicates proficiency targets and that the goal for instruction is to push students to the next higher proficiency level in all four modalities. After the post-summer session ends, students will be assessed to see if they have achieved the proficiency targets. The proficiency assessment results will be shared with teachers and students to plan for future instruction and learning needs.

Post-summer learning should be regarded as an integral part of the STARTALK summer programs. Therefore, the personnel, curriculum, and standards of post-summer programs should follow the same principles and standards as the summer programs. Learning outcomes of

post-summer study should be tracked and documented, with post-summer program performance being evaluated in the same manner as summer program performance. Teacher programs should consider including online teaching standards and practicum opportunities when training on-line instructors for their post-summer programs.

### **The Need for Post-Summer Programs**

Finding ways to keep STARTALK students learning and increasing their proficiency levels after the summer is especially important for STARTALK languages, because these languages are known to be challenging and time-consuming for English speakers to acquire. For example, languages such as Mandarin Chinese, Korean, and Arabic require approximately 2000 hours of instruction for a student to reach advanced level proficiency, and Russian, Hindi and Urdu require 1500 hours. In contrast, more commonly taught languages such as Spanish or French may require as few as 500 hours. Therefore, finding an approach to make quality STARTALK language instruction available for students after the summer is critical. Establishing post-summer programs is necessary so students can continue to receive the best quality of instruction through the fall, winter, and spring.

Having a post-summer component can ease the instructional burden of teaching both conversational skills and literacy skills in the summer program. For example, research has shown that it takes longer for students to develop literacy skills in Chinese than it takes them to develop speaking skills. Because of the limited instructional time, many summer programs focus almost exclusively on teaching conversational skills. Post-summer programs could provide students with more language input and exposure to reading and writing. As a result, teachers in summer programs can use their face-to-face time to focus on activities that require interactivity and personal contact. During the post-summer session, students can review to maintain their conversation skills and work on improving literacy skills. This design will ensure that students develop skills

in all four modalities in a balanced way.

Post-summer STARTALK programs can facilitate the transitions from one grade level to the next. This is especially helpful for high school students who would like to continue learning critical languages in college. Students are often asked to take placement exams to test their proficiency before being placed in a higher-level course. College placement exams are based on the course materials used at the institution, and they focus on conversation, reading, and writing skills. It is common for high school students whose language instruction focuses only on conversation skills to be unprepared for college placement exams. Moreover, many college Chinese language teachers find students entering college programs to have “Swiss Cheese Syndrome,” or “holes” in their linguistic competencies, particularly regarding tones, characters, and grammar. As a result, many students with decent speaking skills fail placement exams because they cannot read or write at a high enough proficiency level. It is discouraging to ask these students to start learning Chinese from scratch, beginning with Chinese 101, which can demotivate students to the point where they drop out of Chinese language learning altogether. Post-summer one-on-one instruction, therefore, is an ideal opportunity for STARTALK high school students to complete college-level beginning Chinese course requirements so that they do not have to waste time repeating course material in college.

### **Challenges of Organizing Post-Summer Programs**

Running a post-summer program that offers face-to-face instruction has several issues and challenges that need to be considered. The biggest challenge is scheduling. Unlike summer time, students are busy with school work as well as extracurricular activities. Therefore, a post-summer program will most likely not be able to maintain the same level of intensity as a STARTALK summer program. Furthermore, students in a summer program may attend different schools during the year, making it

# Post-Summer Program



# Summer Program Only

difficult to get students together at a post-program site. Given these constraints, flexibility in scheduling and space is essential to ensure that participants will be able to enroll in a post-summer program.

Another challenge is to find experienced teachers familiar with STARTALK instructional principles to teach during the academic year. The teachers who teach in the summer programs may have day jobs, or they may be hired from out of state or even abroad. During the academic year, it is unlikely that the same teaching team will be available to teach post-summer instruction. To confront these challenges, it is recommended that STARTALK post-summer programs adopt online tutoring.

### **Post-Summer Design: Offering Weekly Online Personalized Learning**

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The proposed post-summer program featured in this guidebook adopts a weekly online one-on-one synchronous instruction design. This means that a teacher and student will meet online to engage in real-time of language teaching.

Offering one-on-one instruction online minimizes the challenges of scheduling and space effectively because online sessions are scheduled based on students' and instructors' availability. There is no space issue because classes are conducted in cyberspace. Furthermore, our experience demonstrates consistently that language learners prefer one-on-one sessions to all other instructional formats. The reasons are very simple – students get 100% of the teacher's attention, can work at their own pace, and can focus on their own needs. With internet technology and the advancement of tele-conference tools, it has become technically much easier to offer online instruction. As long as students have an internet connection and equipment such as a computer and a headset, students can access quality language instruction anytime, anywhere. The blended learning design allows students to continue learning a

*I like that it is just student-to-teacher so I can learn what I need help with quickly and my teacher can help me with it.*

*- Student Participant*

language even when they are not on campus, such as during long breaks or periods of travel.

Personalized instruction is a powerful way to learn a new language. With technology, one-on-one instruction can be easily integrated into the curriculum. Learners learn at different speeds and vary in their strengths and weaknesses. Personalized instruction adapts to the learning style and cognitive development differences of individual learners, and thus is crucial for language learning success.

Students' language backgrounds are another important factor to consider when adopting online one-on-one instruction. For example, some students of Chinese heritage know how to speak conversational Mandarin Chinese but cannot read or write. Some speak a Chinese dialect at home. Some have studied Chinese for one or two years in school. Even though heritage speakers are an untapped national resource, in a "one-size-fits-all" curriculum, heritage learners' needs have too often not been appropriately addressed. The blended learning and personalized instruction model allows heritage students who have learned how to speak, but not read or write, a critical language to follow a personalized curriculum to work on literacy development.

### **Other Considerations When Designing Post-Summer Programs**

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There are other considerations for program directors to keep in mind when designing a post-summer program. For example, it is recommended that programs run face-to-face sessions before the online sessions for the following reasons: 1) it is more effective to

teach pronunciation in a face-to-face setting because students need to watch their teachers' mouths to learn how to pronounce a word; 2) face-to-face group instruction helps STARTALK students to bond with each other in a community.

One word of caution: Even though online instruction has many advantages, it cannot completely replace face-to-face instruction. Furthermore, online instruction is not for everyone. For younger students such as grades K-5, online instruction should only be used when it is the only way for students to continue learning. Teachers must determine if their students are ready for online learning and must enlist their parents' support. It is also advised that if online instruction is chosen for younger learners, monthly face-to-face meetings should also be offered during the academic year so that students can get together for collaborative learning. Like face-to-face instruction, the online

*I definitely like how we can move at my pace. If I need more time on one subject, we can focus on that. If I can move quickly through something, we can move quickly. I think it is also really great. Also, my family doesn't need to be troubled with driving me to school since I have a computer at home. Plus, computers are everywhere! I really enjoy the online sessions!*

*- Student Participant*

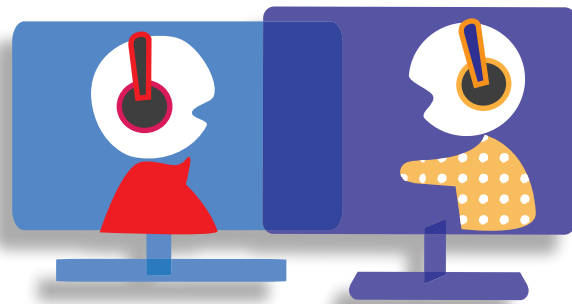
instruction design should ensure that learners receive sufficient input, have opportunities for output and interaction, receive both implicit and explicit feedback, and work within a task-based framework. In this model, students work with their online instructors to practice language tasks that are meaningful in everyday life situations

using authentic materials. Assessment focuses on how well students perform in completing language tasks, linguistic accuracy, and social and cultural appropriateness.

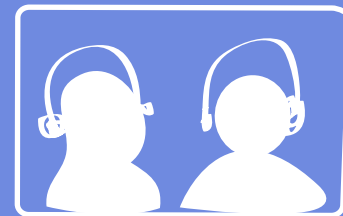
# Chapter Two

## The Hunter College STARTALK Program: A Case Study

### Online Learning



- \* Design of the STARTALK Program
- \* Design of the Flagship K-12 Program
- \* Language Proficiency Outcomes
- \* The Retention Outcomes for Online Instruction



The proposed blended learning approach is a tested and proven model that has been implemented at the Hunter College STARTALK program for high school students as well as the two-year Flagship K12 Blended Learning Pilot project. It is our hope that more STARTALK programs would consider using this model.

Hunter started offering STARTALK programs in 2007. During the first year, we offered a 100% face-to-face intensive eight-week program to 24 high school students who had little or no previous experience in learning Chinese. Because there were many inquiries from parents and students who wanted to continue learning Chinese after the summer program, we began to think about ways to extend our program into the fall and beyond.

After extensive research on various program models, the program staff concluded that adopting the blended learning model by adding a post-summer online one-on-one instruction component would be the best solution. Hunter's first summer plus post-summer online blended learning program launched in 2009. For the past ten years, Hunter's program has been using a blended learning curriculum for grades 9-12, and students have consistently achieved or exceeded the targeted proficiency goals.

During the 2009-2010 academic year, the Hunter program collaborated with the CASL (Center for Advanced Study of Languages) program at the University of Maryland on a project to offer a nationwide, year-long online course in Chinese for STARTALK high school students who completed a face-to-face summer program. Students from New York, New Jersey, Hawaii, Massachusetts, Connecticut, California, Mississippi, Michigan, Maryland, and Pennsylvania STARTALK programs took this post-summer course. The design of the post-summer program presented in the Guidebook is to a large extent based on the online course design of the Hunter-CASL project.

This model was then used for the Hunter College Chinese Flagship program for college-level

students in 2011, and for grades K-12 in a two-year pilot project (beginning in 2015) in which we partnered with a nearby school district in Jericho, Long Island, and with Hunter Campus Schools in Manhattan, New York.

### Design of the STARTALK Program

Students who participated in the summer program were recruited to participate in the post-summer program, consisting of an hour-long one-on-one tutoring session once a week for 10 weeks. The post-session usually started around mid-September and ended before the winter break. Students were required to return to Hunter campus to take an end-of-program proficiency test (e.g. Standards-based Measurement of Proficiency or STAMP) and give a final project presentation. If students could not come back, arrangements were made to take the test with an on-site monitor or to send in a video of their presentations. The class performance, test results, and project were used for grading.

In addition to the student program, Hunter College also ran a side-by-side teacher development program during the summer face-to-face session. The teacher trainees were recruited to work as online instructors during the post-summer program, teaching for 4-5 hours per week. Teacher and student online course preparation began during the face-to-face session so as to provide teacher trainees ample time to become familiar with the online platform and the virtual classroom. Students and instructors got together to choose a convenient online class time, either after school or on a weekend.

The Hunter online instructional program design drew upon state-of-the-science best practices from Second Language Acquisition (SLA) theory and online learning to help students maintain and continue to develop their proficiency. It ensures that learners receive sufficient input, have opportunities for output and interaction, receive both implicit and explicit feedback, and work within a task-

based framework. (See Chapter Seven for the Hunter STARTALK Program Curriculum.)

To offer online instruction, the first challenges that we faced were to find an online Learning Management System (LMS) and virtual classroom that provided adequate resources for online language courses. After researching what was available, Hunter decided to design its own LMS, called Chinese For All, with a team of developers and teachers who volunteered their time and effort. This allowed us to customize functionalities for language teaching and learning, and to have a one-stop online learning platform that eliminated the need for multiple programs, platforms, and logins.

In terms of learning materials, Hunter developed a wealth of web-based multimedia and interactive materials that engaged students in multiple modalities. Students could use them independently or under the guidance of a teacher. The web learning materials were authentic and appropriate to students of different ages and target proficiency levels. They were used for asynchronous learning before and after the online weekly classes. The asynchronous learning materials also contain rich Chinese literacy foundation materials to help students learn to read and write characters and to read character-based texts. Hunter’s tech team is in the process of developing learning apps and a version of the Live Classroom for mobile devices.

### Design of the Flagship K-12 Program

This K-12 blended learning project was funded by The Language Flagship. This project allowed us to implement online instruction with students in grades K-2, 3-5, and 6-8, in addition to grades 9-12 and college level. We partnered with the Jericho School District in Long Island, New York for two years and Hunter Campus Elementary School for one semester. The enrollment was 87 students in year 1, and 160 students in year 2.

Similar to the STARTALK programs, students

attend a summer program before they attend the online one-on-one instruction during the academic year (30 weeks). We made adjustments in online instructional time for each age group. The project lasted for two years. During the first year, we provided some face-to-face instruction to complement the online instruction for students in grades 3 to 12. Grades K-2 students did not receive online instruction. During year 2 of the project we had to drop face-to-face instruction and instead provided online instruction to all grades from K to 12. Below are the weekly online instruction times for each group:

- Grades 9-12: 1.5 hours per week
- Grades 6-8: 1 hour per week
- Grades 3-5: 1 hour per week
- Grades K-2: 30 minutes per week

Students in grades K-5 were invited to attend optional monthly face-to-face meetings.

### Language Proficiency Outcomes

Over a period of five years, the Hunter STARTALK program collected proficiency scores in speaking and reading from a total of 34 high school students without prior learning background. After studying Chinese in a summer plus online post-summer program for a total of 110 instructional hours, high school students with no background were able to obtain robust linguistic gains.

The proficiency outcomes demonstrate that 100% of the students reached Novice-mid (NM) or higher in speaking; more than 85% of the students reached Novice-high (NH) or higher. The proficiency results also show that compared to speaking proficiency, reading proficiency takes longer to develop. 59% of the students still remained at Novice-low (NL) when they completed the post summer program. Below is a chart showing various proficiency outcomes:

**Proficiency Outcomes for Hunter STARTALK High School Students Without Background**

N=34	NL	NM	NH	IL	IM
STAMP Speaking	-	12%	55%	27%	6%
STAMP Reading	59%	24%	8%	8%	-



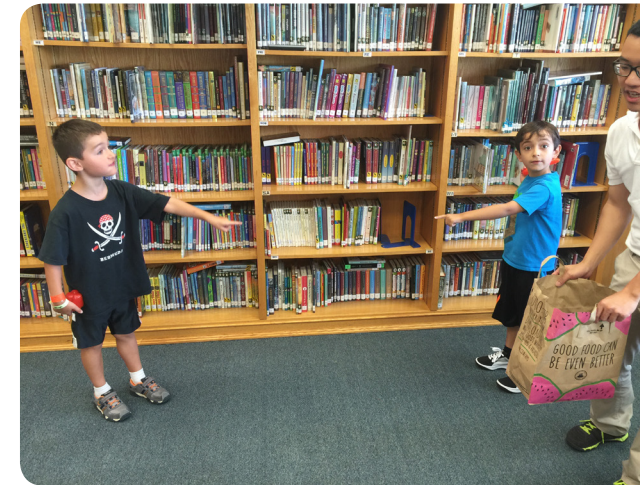
It is clear that students learning Chinese via a blended and personalized instruction model can continuously increase their proficiency, and that the model can articulate well with college-level Chinese courses at various universities nationwide.

Our analysis of student proficiency scores in the **Flagship K12 Blended Learning Pilot project** further confirms that this innovative, one-on-one online instructional design can be applied to all age levels, not only for elementary grades 3-5, but also as early as grades K-2. Because there were no proficiency assessment tools available, we were not able to obtain proficiency outcome data for grades K-2 students, but the

progress demonstrated by students in grades 3 to 12 with no previous background was strikingly promising. Below is a chart indicating their proficiency outcomes in speaking, writing, reading, and listening. Before the students took the assessments, grades 9-12 students received about 150 instructional hours (100 hours of face-to-face group sessions plus 50 hours of one-on-one online sessions); grades 6-8 received about 90 instructional hours (55 hours of face-to-face group sessions plus 35 hours of one-on-one online sessions), and grades 3-5 students received about 53 instructional hours (30 hours of face-to-face group sessions plus 23 hours of one-on-one online sessions).

**Proficiency Gains for Jericho Grades 3 -12 Students Without Background**

	NL	NM	NH	IL
STAMP Speaking	Gr 3-5: 7.6% (n=39)	Gr 3-5: 48.72% (n=39)	Gr 3-5: 25.6% (n=39)	Gr 3-5: 17.9% (n=39)
	Gr 6-8: 5% (n=21)	Gr 6-8: 38% (n=21)	Gr 6-8: 33% (n=21)	Gr 6-8: 24% (n=21)
	Gr 9-12: n/a (n=20)	Gr 9-12: 20% (n=20)	Gr 9-12: 35% (n=20)	Gr 9-12: 45% (n=20)
STAMP Writing	Gr 3-5: 17% (n=41)	Gr 3-5: 56% (n=41)	Gr 3-5: 22% (n=41)	Gr 3-5: 4.8% (n=41)
	Gr 6-8: 18% (n=22)	Gr 6-8: 18% (n=22)	Gr 6-8: 36% (n=22)	Gr 6-8: 27% (n=22)
	Gr 9-12: 0% (n=20)	Gr 9-12: 15% (n=20)	Gr 9-12: 60% (n=20)	Gr 9-12: 25% (n=20)
STAMP Reading	Gr 3-5: 83% (n=47)	Gr 3-5: 8.5% (n=47)	Gr 3-5: 2% (n=47)	Gr 3-5: 6.4% (n=47)
	Gr 6-8: 50% (n=24)	Gr 6-8: 42% (n=24)	Gr 6-8: 8% (n=24)	Gr 6-8: 0% (n=24)
	Gr 9-12: 24% (n=21)	Gr 9-12: 57% (n=21)	Gr 9-12: 5% (n=21)	Gr 9-12: 14% (n=21)
STAMP Listening	Gr 3-5: 64.4% (n=45)	Gr 3-5: 27% (n=45)	Gr 3-5: 4% (n=45)	Gr 3-5: 4.6% (n=45)
	Gr 6-8: 38% (n=24)	Gr 6-8: 29% (n=24)	Gr 6-8: 25% (n=24)	Gr 6-8: 8% (n=24)
	Gr 9-12: 20% (n=20)	Gr 9-12: 25% (n=20)	Gr 9-12: 15% (n=20)	Gr 9-12: 40% (n=20)



for language learning activities. STARTALK elementary school students can take advantage of quality post-summer online language instruction to learn languages quickly. The virtual class meetings, supplemented with the carefully designed weekly assignments, will produce amazing language acquisition results to maximize learning outcomes for both elementary and secondary students.

The proficiency results indicate that the majority of the students were able to reach NM or higher in speaking and writing after completing a summer-plus-post-summer program. High school students seemed to adapt to online instruction especially well, because they were able to reach NH or higher in speaking. The results also show that for students at all grade levels, reading and listening skills take longer to develop.

**The Retention Outcomes for Online Instruction**

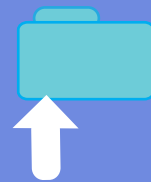
Another important success indicator is the student retention rate for the program. One recurring criticism about online instruction is the high attrition rate. However, the data shows that the retention rate for STARTALK programs for high school students has been consistently at or near 100%. For our K-12 two-year program, the retention rate was 90%. The high retention outcomes for online instruction strongly indicate that if the instructional design is adequate and if students find it useful, they will continue to study Chinese from one level to the next.

The American Academy of Arts and Sciences 2017 report *America's Languages: Investing in Language Education for the 21st Century* advocates world language instruction to elementary school students because younger students are more likely to acquire native-like pronunciation. In addition, students at



# Chapter Three

## How to Choose a Platform



- \* The Correct Platform for Post-Summer Program
- \* Synchronous Learning Features
- \* Asynchronous Learning Features
- \* The Right Fit for Your Program
- \* Free Platforms
- \* Paid Platforms



The adoption of a post-summer STARTALK program relies on selecting an appropriate online platform that satisfies several basic needs to successfully complete the set curriculum. The post-summer program is an extension of the established summer course, and it should integrate the learning goals to maintain and expand upon the skills acquired during the face-to-face sessions. During online classes, students will be able to focus on personal interests and needs to maximize their learning outcomes by receiving level-appropriate challenges and individualized error corrections.

An important additional benefit is that online platforms allow students to access materials and complete assignments as their schedules permit. Overall, students perform best when they are encouraged to be independent learners. Manageable assignments and clear instructions with accessible materials allow students to take responsibility for their learning outside of class and to prepare to participate in online instruction.

Technology, when properly aligned with instructional strategies, can be an effective tool that opens opportunities. However, student motivation decreases when the technology is superfluous and does not contribute to the learning goals. It is therefore imperative that the technology chosen be easy to use, without distracting, unnecessary bells and whistles.

### **The Correct Platform for Post-Summer Programs**

There are hundreds of online learning management systems available to choose from, and it can be a daunting task to select the system that best fits your program. When selecting a LMS platform, it is important to consider multiple factors such as cost, class size, methods of use (such as live classrooms versus asynchronous individual work and assessments), and forums to provide students with timely feedback. It is also important to keep in mind that the online component is simply a tool that will allow further

collaboration toward an already established learning goal. Under the blended learning model, students should be able to access online learning in both synchronous and asynchronous modes. At a minimum, the following features should be included for whichever platform is selected.

### **Synchronous Learning Features**

- Students should be able to use all modes of communication (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) to allow for performance-based tasks to be accomplished in accordance with ACTFL standards.
- The software platform should not require specific devices or a high level of technical ability to operate. This allows greater accessibility and convenience of use. Depending on the age and level of the students, parents may also need to be present to monitor online classes.
- Technical support should be available in some form for both student and instructor.
- Audio and video capabilities facilitate authentic communication tasks in real time.
- Chat functions should allow either typed and/or handwritten messages.
- Ideally both instructor and student should be able to upload images and video for live analysis, and should be able to highlight parts of text and images for greater communicative comprehension in dealing with presentational, interpersonal, and interpretive tasks.

### **Asynchronous Learning Features**

- An online library of multimedia content that allows a student to work at his/her own pace and review material previously covered should be available. Full-time access to this library allows students to prioritize and schedule their language learning during the busy academic

year. Additionally, there are evidence-based studies that show students perform better when they have the ability to pause, rewind, or re-watch online videos to review parts that are of particular interest, or that are harder to absorb on a first viewing.

- A location to upload and share assignments and materials is needed. This can be beneficial for peer assignments designed to develop critical collaborative skills.

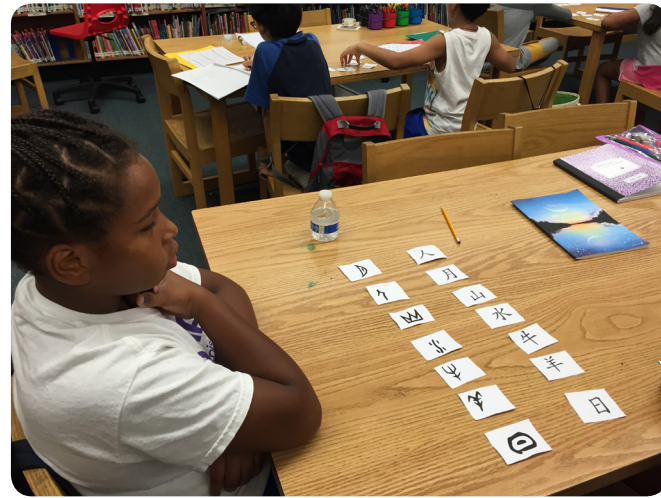
- The ability of instructors to collect assignments and provide timely, appropriate feedback with markups and/or audio commentary is necessary. A benefit of online feedback is the inclusion of specific links to learning resources that cater to a student's personal learning style.

- Tools that allow students to monitor their progress by accessing past work are especially useful.

### The Right Fit for Your Program

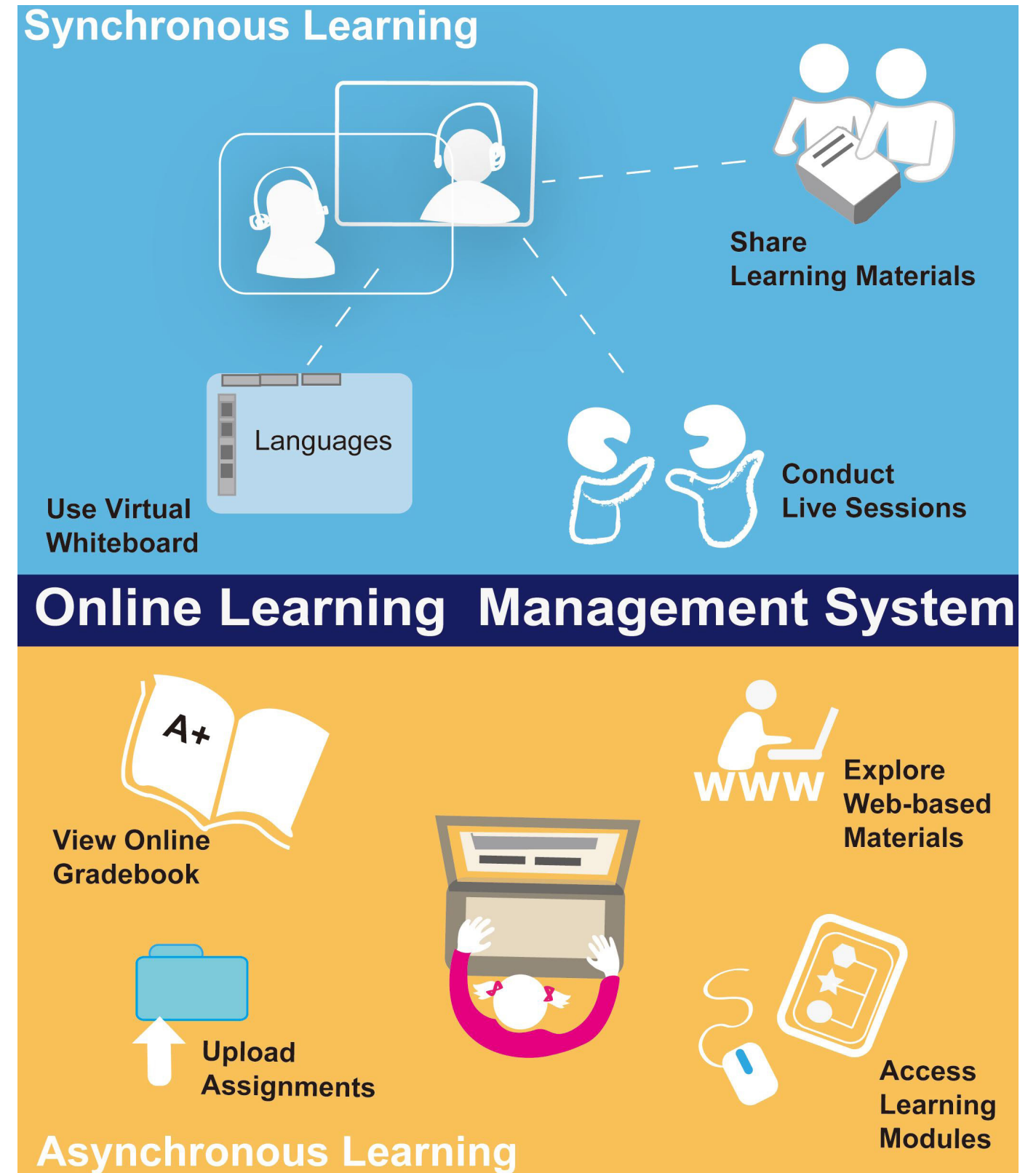
If the STARTALK program is affiliated with a school that already uses a LMS, it would be advantageous to adopt that system for a few reasons. The upfront cost will be minimal, students will be familiar with the platform and will not require training, and teachers can integrate the coursework into the regular academic modules. Your school administration should be consulted to check if there are any restrictions before using their LMS.

If no LMS is available, your STARTALK program will have to look elsewhere. The charts below feature a few exemplary major tele-conference and LMS tools. As previously mentioned, there are hundreds more to choose from and conducting your own up-to-date research is strongly encouraged. The top chart refers to systems that can be adopted at no cost to the user and satisfy some needs for online teaching, whereas the bottom chart provides more robust solutions.



*I think that my online teacher was awesome! She definitely gave me enough time to practice new topics and get the sentences right. And she corrected my speech if I said something incorrect. I really enjoyed when we went over how to write different Chinese radicals and characters.*  
- Student Participant

*What I like about the online learning is that it gives a one to one opportunity to work on private matters/struggles like tone. The online learning sessions also keep you attentive because of how fast and how much material for the lesson there is to obtain.*  
- Student Participant



**Free Platforms**

Name	Description	Synchronous Features	Asynchronous Features
<i>Skype</i>	Skype is an instant messaging app that provides online text message, video chat, and VOIP services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Up to 25 users meet online</li> <li>• Take part in live video discussions</li> <li>• Mobile access across devices</li> <li>• Upload text, pictures, and videos to share</li> <li>• Instant messaging with text</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None</li> </ul>
<i>Google Hangouts</i>	Google Hangouts is a communication platform developed by Google which includes instant messaging, video chat, SMS and VOIP features.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Up to 25 users meet online</li> <li>• Take part in live video discussions</li> <li>• Mobile access across devices</li> <li>• Upload text, pictures, and videos to share</li> <li>• Instant messaging with text</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chat text histories are saved</li> </ul>
<i>ooVoo</i>	A video chat and a messaging app developed by Microsoft.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Up to 12 users meet online</li> <li>• Take part in live video discussions</li> <li>• Mobile access across devices</li> <li>• Upload text, pictures, and videos to share</li> <li>• Instant messaging with text</li> <li>• Desktop sharing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None</li> </ul>
<i>ChineseForAll.org</i>	Website developed by the Hunter College Chinese program tech team.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There's no limit in terms of number of users at a time, but to ensure stable connection, we suggest no more than 10 - 15 sessions at a time.</li> <li>• Take part in live discussions</li> <li>• Write on a virtual whiteboard</li> <li>• Upload text, pictures, and videos to share</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Upload assignments, tests, and materials</li> <li>• Collect homework</li> <li>• Keep track of student grades and attendance</li> <li>• Web-based instructional materials for literacy development</li> <li>• Task-based learning modules</li> </ul>

**Paid Platforms**

Name	Cost	Synchronous Features	Asynchronous Features
<i>Adobe Connect</i>	\$370/month	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Up to 200 students and teachers meet online</li> <li>• Mobile learning across devices</li> <li>• Take part in live discussions</li> <li>• Upload text, pictures, and videos</li> <li>• Screen / document sharing</li> <li>• Breakout rooms to divide students into groups</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• On-demand classes</li> <li>• Efficient training management and tracking</li> <li>• Record classroom sessions</li> <li>• Create custom reporting based on live sessions</li> <li>• Central content library</li> </ul>
<i>Canvas LMS</i>	One-time implementation fee plus an annual fee that varies based on size, training, and support.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take part in live discussions</li> <li>• Write on a virtual whiteboard</li> <li>• Upload text, pictures, and videos to share</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rich LMS suite</li> <li>• Upload assignments, tests, materials, syllabus, calendar, and more</li> <li>• Audio and video message feedback on assignments</li> <li>• Real-time grade book that can be shared with students and parents</li> <li>• Collaborative workspaces</li> <li>• ePortfolios</li> </ul>
<i>Schoology LMS</i>	Free for individuals, premier content requires additional fees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take part in live discussions</li> <li>• Write on a virtual whiteboard</li> <li>• Upload text, pictures, and videos to share</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take part in live discussions</li> <li>• Write on a virtual whiteboard</li> <li>• Upload text, pictures, and videos to share</li> </ul>



It is not always easy to predict what tools will be necessary if an online component has never been taught before. Before a program determines which platform suits their needs best, it is important to take careful account of the instructional requirements of the post-summer curriculum. It may be beneficial to complete some trial lessons with the lead instructors to draw up a wish list of features, and then compare with usable platforms. Administrators should not feel that they have to commit a large percentage of their resources in order to have a successful blended learning model, but they should expect some growing pains in the first year. If possible, collaborate and share with STARTALK programs that already have an online component to find the best solution for you. We strongly encourage administrators to search the

**STARTALK programs list** for programs that have adopted online and blended learning to learn more about their models and experiences.

*We are the parents of Brendan and Madeline, who have taken part in the Chinese Flagship Program this year. We must say that we are absolutely thrilled with what the program has had to offer and amazed at how receptive our kids have been to learning Chinese through the interactive online classes.*

*To provide some additional context here, we had tried to put Brendan and Madeline in a traditional Chinese school on the weekends in the past - the results were abysmal and we pulled them out of school before they grew to resent the language on a broader basis.*

*More specifically, our kids appreciate the individualized teaching approach based on their respective interest and proficiency level. The use of monthly in-person classes to supplement the online sessions was also very well-received. And, they were so fortunate to have Ms. Lu ('Lu Laoshi') as their teacher, who they consider to be their 'favorite teacher ever' despite the fact that they have never met in person! Lu Laoshi was simply wonderful in keeping our kids fully engaged yet challenged with the many different exercises she worked with them on over the past months. They literally looked forward to spending time and learning Chinese with Lu Laoshi online every Sunday morning! We'd like to sincerely thank you from the bottom of our hearts, Lu Laoshi! :)*

*- Shirley & Fred*

# Chapter Four

## Preparing Students and Parents for Online Learning



- \* Personnel Required for Post-Summer Component
- \* Post-Summer Online Session Coordinator
- \* Part-Time Tech Support Staff
- \* In-Person Orientation
- \* Preparing K-5 Students for Online Sessions During the Face-to-Face Session
- \* Online Session Preparation at Home
- \* Scheduling
- \* Challenges



### Personnel Required for Post-Summer Component

Preparing students and parents for the online session is crucial to ensuring your program's success. Regardless of students' or parents' experiences with technology, clear step-by-step instructions and guidance must be provided. To start the preparation work with the students and their parents, a program must first fill the following two positions:

#### Post-summer Online Session Coordinator

To ensure effective, clear communication of program expectations to students and their parents, it is essential to designate a person to be the online session coordinator. This person will serve as the point of contact for the program and as a liaison between students, parents, and instructors. The responsibilities of this position are frontloaded and are less rigorous during the instructional period of the course. This person will be busiest during the preparation stage, before the post-summer online session officially starts. Preparation work includes the following steps:

1. Preparing orientation materials, and then coordinating and conducting the orientation sessions for students and parents.
2. Collecting student and instructor schedules and then finalizing online tutoring times for all students.
3. Setting up the master program schedule. The program has to decide the length of the post-summer online session, and then decide on the start and end dates. When setting up the master schedule, the program should check the K-12 school calendar, and avoid scheduling classes during holidays and school breaks. We suggest that programs not schedule classes on weeks with a holiday, to ensure that all students receive an equal number of online sessions.

4. Preparing record keeping sheets, such as student attendance sheets. Click [here](#) for a sample student attendance sheet.

5. Helping to troubleshoot when technical issues arise.

After the online session starts, the amount of work required for this position will be greatly reduced. Possible responsibilities include:

1. Responding to inquiry emails from students, parents, and instructors.
2. Monitoring student attendance.
3. Sending out program updates and news.

When the online session reaches its conclusion, the coordinator will collaborate with the program director to conduct program evaluations, and collaborate with the instructors to compile and send out student progress reports. If the program decides to have students complete post-program proficiency assessments, the program coordinator will also help to determine the assessment dates and proctor the assessment session, if needed.

It is recommended that this position be filled with someone who has had previous experience with the face-to-face program. A summer program instructor could be an ideal candidate for this position as that person will have both administrative and instructional experience. The coordinator can work off-site during the post-summer term.

Creation of a program email account is also recommended. The coordinator should use the program email account instead of his/her personal account for all correspondence with the students, parents, and instructors.

#### Part-time Tech Support Staff

The second position that is essential to a post-summer online program is a tech support staff

member. Similar to the coordinator position, this person will also perform the majority of his/her work during the preparation stage. Preparation responsibilities include:

1. [Assisting the coordinator to put together the orientation materials, and attending the orientation session online.](#) Tech support can explain to students and parents what kind of technical issues they might encounter and how to troubleshoot. [Click here to reference the FAQ page compiled by the Hunter Program.](#)

2. [Testing the platform with all students and instructors before the online session officially starts.](#)

3. [Being available to offer immediate assistance when the online instructors and students try out the platform individually.](#) Instructors should inform tech support of the technical testing time once it is determined.

After the first or second week, students and instructors might still occasionally need tech support so it is important that this person respond to emails in a timely manner.

Once the program coordinator and tech support positions are filled, work can begin to prepare for the orientation sessions for students and parents. Information on how to prepare for the instructors can be found in the next chapter.

## In-person Orientation

**When:** Because the online term follows the face-to-face term, the in-person orientation session should be held during the face-to-face term. If the face-to-face term is 4 weeks long, it is recommended that you hold the in-person orientation during the 2nd or 3rd week, leaving the last week for students to complete technical online testing from their home.

**Where:** A school computer lab would be ideal. Instructors can assign tutorial tasks for students

to complete while using a lab computer, and can show students how to deal with any technical problems.

**Attendees:** While students in grades 6 -12 should attend the orientation session themselves, parental supervision is necessary when working online with preteens. It is important for parents of students in grades K-5 to attend the orientation session. Programs can also consider having K-5 students attend the orientation with their parent(s) if space allows. The coordinator should send out the orientation date and time as early as possible so parents can plan accordingly. The program may want to arrange for parents to attend orientation at the end of the day so that parents can take their children home afterwards. The tech support staff can join virtually if needed.

**What:** The orientation session should cover the following aspects:

1. [Students and parents should understand that the objective of the post-summer online sessions is to sustain or improve student proficiency in the target language.](#)

2. [The advantages of online learning include flexibility and greater individualized instruction. Students and parents should be welcome to contribute their thoughts on the advantages of online learning during orientation; this will encourage a positive attitude towards online learning.](#)

3. [Provide logistical information such as technical requirements, platform URL, account login information, etc. During the orientation session, the coordinator can ask attendees to complete pre-designed tutorial tasks to ensure that they have acquired the necessary information.](#)

4. [Finally, it is crucial to point out that technical problems may occur, especially during the early stages. Encourage students and parents to be patient when issues arise. This is also why helping them to understand the purpose of the](#)

[post-summer online session and establishing a positive attitude towards online learning is very important.](#)

Click [here](#) to download a copy of the orientation PPT template.

We have observed that some parents do not check their email regularly. Therefore, it is extremely important to remind parents during the in-person orientation that they must check emails daily because all communications will be delivered via email. It is also important that students and parents respond promptly when asked. Although other methods such as texting or other forms of instant messaging might be easier to use than email, for tracking purposes it is recommended that all parties use email. In addition, communication tends to be more formal via email. Instructors can send emails from their own email account but it is important that they copy the program or program coordinator's email at all times.

## Preparing K-5 Students for Online Sessions during the Face-To-Face Session

In addition to going over the logistical information with their parents, it is also important to have K-5 students experience a trial online session before the official online program starts. The testing session can be done in small groups, with 3-5 students taking about 10 – 15 minutes per session. Online instructors need to be available to conduct test sessions with students, and a face-to-face instructor needs to be on-site to assist students. If there are about 20 students in the program, the testing sessions can be completed in two days, allocating 1 hour per day. The Hunter STARTALK program observed that K-5 students respond positively to online instruction. As we mentioned before, young children have much shorter attention spans, so we recommend 30- to 45-minute online sessions for students in grades 3-5, and 20 to 30 minutes for students in grades K-2.

## Online Session Preparation at Home

After the in-person orientation, tech support should conduct the first synchronous run-through with students and parents at home, to ensure that their computers are correctly configured for the online platform. Audio problems are the most commonly encountered technical issues, so the tech support member needs to make sure that students can hear others well and can also be heard. Tech support can provide time slots for students to sign up for run-through, and the sessions can be done in small groups. Lastly, tech support needs to arrange run-through sessions with the instructors.

A second run-through session should be done between instructors and students to eliminate technical issues. This should take place after scheduling is complete, but before the first official online session.

## Scheduling

Depending on the number of students, and the format of your online classes (small group vs. one-on-one), scheduling can be one of the most challenging tasks. Scheduling for one-on-one sessions usually is easier because only one student and one instructor are involved. Scheduling for small group sessions can be more difficult because students, especially high school students, often have very different and busy schedules. Three to four weeks may be needed to finalize a workable schedule.

The task of scheduling can be divided into three steps, with at least a week allocated for each step. First, collect information on both student and instructor availability ([sample email to high school students; sample email to parents; sample email to instructors](#)). The Program Coordinator should send out the initial email that includes a tentative online session schedule so that students and teachers are informed of the start and end dates as early as possible.

Second, after receiving everyone's availability, the coordinator should match students and instructors with similar schedules. Keep in mind that some students might not be able to provide their availability until they finalize their regular school and extracurricular schedules. Therefore, it is recommended to start the online session 2-3 weeks after the academic year has begun. To maximize everyone's schedule, the program can also encourage instructors and students to hold online sessions on the weekends if they cannot find time during weekdays.

Third, after the initial matchings are complete, the program coordinator should send out an **introductory email to students** and **instructors** respectively. The instructor should send follow-up emails to their students to confirm session times.

### Challenges

As opposed to the summer face-to-face session when classes are held every day and for several hours each day, students and teachers will only meet once or twice per week during the post-summer online session. In addition, the post-summer session will be scheduled after students' regular school schedule, so the amount of time and energy that students will devote towards Chinese learning will likely be limited. Therefore, one of the biggest challenges that a post-summer program will face is rescheduling.

The convenience and flexibility of online classes will also contribute to students' tendency to reschedule or not show up without prior notification, especially if the online class is one-on-one, and offered for free. Therefore, it is extremely important to have an attendance policy:

### Sample Attendance Policy

1. Once the class meeting time is determined between the student and teacher, the time should be kept the same throughout the semester.

2. Students can make a set number (2-3 times is reasonable) rescheduling requests per semester. The request must be made 12 hours prior to the scheduled class time. All requests must be emailed to the instructor and copied to the program or the program coordinator's email. The request should not be made via text message or any other forms of instant messaging.

3. Students will be removed from the program after the third unexcused absence.

Because both students and teachers will have other commitments during the post-summer term, rescheduling should be allowed, but the program needs to decide on a maximum number to avoid inconveniencing the teacher and to ensure that students complete the required instructional hours by the end of the post-summer session. Students and teachers may exchange phone numbers, but the program should discourage communications via phone or text message unless it is absolutely necessary, as it would not be possible for the program to track and review the correspondence if miscommunication occurs between the instructor and student. Asking students and parents to reschedule via email also maintains the formality of the request.

The program can consider issuing a warning email before removing a student from the program due to attendance issues. For instance, if a program decides to allow three unexcused absences, a warning message can be sent after the 2nd unexcused absence. Click [here](#) for a sample warning email.

To avoid having students miss sessions, it is also helpful for instructors to send a reminder email to students or parents on the day of the class. Instructors can also encourage students or parents to set up reminders on their calendars. When students are asked to comply with the attendance policy, of course, it is also important to ask the instructors to do the same.



# Chapter Five

## Teacher Preparation for Online Instruction



- \* Understanding the Online Environment Limitations and Advantages for Language Teaching and Learning
- \* Creating Personalized Instructional Plans
- \* Classroom Interaction in a Virtual Environment
- \* Providing Delayed Feedback in a Virtual Environment
- \* Giving Instructions in a Virtual Environment
- \* Teaching Demos, Observations, and Critique Sessions
- \* Understanding How to Use Asynchronous Materials
- \* Assessment in a Virtual Environment and Understanding Assessment Tools
- \* Encourage Collaboration and Sharing
- \* Building an Effective and Lasting Online Instruction Team



One of the main objectives of STARTALK is to increase the number of highly effective teachers for critical languages. In the 21st century, technology-enhanced education will become the norm. Language teachers need to prepare themselves to teach in both traditional classroom-based settings as well as online blended settings.

The one-on-one instructional design of the post-summer program will presumably require recruiting and training many experienced instructors, but there will likely be a shortage of qualified online instructors. As of the summer of 2017, only a handful of STARTALK teacher programs address online instruction. In order to implement blended, personalized instruction and accommodate the demand for quality online teachers, it is critical for STARTALK teacher programs to add online instruction training to the teacher preparation agenda.

For the past decade, Hunter College has included online instruction content and an online instruction practicum in our STARTALK teacher training program. After teacher trainees complete the STARTALK teacher program, they are hired to teach STARTALK students during the post-summer program. This chapter is a description of the online teacher training program that was developed at Hunter College. It is by no means a perfect design, but it can serve as an example. STARTALK program directors and lead instructors can adjust the training content to suit their local situations. A more refined design will be generated through the collaboration of the STARTALK community.

When designing an online teacher training program, it is very important to base teaching standards on the STARTALK instructional principles. These principles will facilitate language acquisition and should be applied to all teaching environments regardless of face-to-face or online instruction. Thus, it is essential for online instructors to attend a STARTALK teacher program to first become familiar with the STARTALK principles. These principles include:

- Standards-based and thematically organized curriculum
- Learner-centered instruction
- Use of the target language for at least 90% of class time
- Comprehensible input
- Integrating language, culture, and content
- Age-appropriate authentic materials
- Performance-based assessment (PBA)

Below is a description of the key training items for online instructors.

### Understanding the Online Environment Limitations and Advantages for Language Teaching and Learning

The purpose of this training is to introduce the basics of the selected online teaching platform to teacher trainees. As previously mentioned, it would be ideal to select teacher trainee candidates from the STARTALK summer program to serve as post-summer online instructors. Even if new instructors must be selected, they must also be involved in the training tutorial. The computer tutorial would be best conducted in person at a computer lab as a half-day, face-to-face workshop during the summer session. If no lab is available, teachers should be asked to bring in their own laptop computers. If face-to-face training cannot be arranged at all, the program can still provide a detailed handbook that shows how to use the LMS, with a video link illustrating regularly used functions. It would also be beneficial to provide a FAQ on how to solve simple and common technical issues. The handbook and the video should be available throughout the program for teachers to access as a quick reference guide.

Before the training tutorial, the program should create accounts for teachers to access the online platform. During the tutorial, teachers should test their account logins to ensure that they work properly. After teachers are successfully logged in, they should review the asynchronous features of the LMS by exploring hands-on activities to create announcements, assignments, assessments,



and so forth. Teachers also need to understand how to operate the synchronous functionalities of the virtual classroom. This part of the training session can focus on how to upload images and videos, highlight sections of the shared screen space, type text on both the whiteboard and in the designated text area, toggle the camera and audio devices, etc. The tutorial can also show the limitations and advantages of the online environment from a pedagogical point of view, such as the pros and cons of using live video (teachers and students seeing each other versus the teacher and/or student using audio only).

During the training tutorial, it would be beneficial to review program standards and policies. Teachers should be aware of proper protocols when it comes to issues such as reporting technical problems, students missing class, wait time for tardy students, communication with parents, weekly learning reports for program supervisors and students, weekly meetings with staff, teacher responsibilities, observations, and teacher evaluation criteria.

At the end of the tutorial, teachers can complete a run-through with other teacher trainees from home using the equipment they intend to use for online teaching and learning. This will enable teacher trainees to test if they can hear and see each other in the virtual classroom, and to practice using the tools discussed. Finally, teachers should set up a trial session with students to ensure functionality on all aspects of the platform.

### **Creating Personalized Instructional Plans**

Because the post-summer program is designed to provide personalized instruction, it requires teachers to have a deep understanding of each learner. This could be facilitated through a student survey of interests and learning needs, and through interviews with students to discuss the goals and purposes of learning the language. Teachers should also review assessment outcomes such as Linguafolio material and proficiency test results.

The training to prepare personalized learning plans should begin with definitions of the ACTFL proficiency ratings and corresponding text types and language tasks, as well as what it means to teach using proficiency-based instruction. Teachers should go over the proficiency targets in each modality. Watching student language output samples provided by ACTFL is helpful in giving archetypes for each level, so that teacher trainees learn to determine what the proficiency rating is for a language sample. Teachers then can go over the current proficiency levels for each learner they will be teaching and fine-tune reasonable proficiency targets in each of the modalities. This is a critical step for personalized instruction because effective teaching should help students build on their language skills, and not simply teach at or below their current proficiency levels.

Keeping a detailed student learning profile is an essential component of personalized instruction. (See Appendix A for an example.) The teacher will update the student profile throughout the learning process of the program. The profile will document a student's weekly online class attendance, performance, assignment completion and quality, yearly proficiency scores, instructional materials used in class, and assignment materials used after class. Student profiles should be accessible online for all teachers to review. The weekly study plans will be designed based on each individual student's needs, and adjusted based on language goal performance from previous lessons.

Student profile information can be collected using an online Google or other LMS form where both teachers and students post their reflections each week. At the beginning, middle, and the end of the post-summer session, a mini-conference must be conducted online to inform all stakeholders what the learning proficiency goals are for each of the modalities, and to suggest how to improve weak areas.

### **Classroom Interaction in a Virtual Environment**

In the virtual environment, the video camera is optional. Sometimes, high school students do not wish to be seen and this option may be granted. (Sometimes, teachers do not wish to be seen either.) The program can decide whether video should be used by both students and teachers. Teachers may want students on video so they can monitor if a student is attentive in class (i.e. not multi-tasking) or to make sure that students are not obtaining quiz answers elsewhere. If teachers are communicating through video, they may find that due to lag or delay students may not receive the intended nonverbal feedback cues such as smiling, nodding, or eye contact that teachers use in classroom-based instruction. Audio delay can affect timely verbal feedback from teachers as well. A wait time of a few seconds in a virtual environment may feel much longer than the actual time.

Because audio and video delays can lead to frustration and a breakdown in effective communication, teachers should find alternate ways to let students know they are paying attention. Text transmits faster than audio and video, so it is important for teachers to become comfortable using different ways to provide "visible" feedback, such as emojis or text on the whiteboard or in the textbox to supplement verbal feedback.

Teachers should ask students to turn off any other audio or multimedia programs on their computer during instructional sessions. If the internet connection is slow, students should ask family members to stay off-line while they are in class. The online session should be conducted in a quiet place by both teacher and student, with no interference from background or household noises. Both teachers and students must wear headsets to further avoid background noise.

### **Providing Delayed Feedback in a Virtual Environment**

One of the major advantages of one-on-one instruction is that students can receive abundant and immediate feedback, which is conducive to language acquisition. Concurrent feedback, or feedback that is provided at the same time the skill is displayed, is important to the success of the virtual classroom. However, due to the technical issues mentioned above, teachers can also take advantage of giving detailed delayed feedback. This is defined as a period of time between the skill performance and feedback. Performing an error analysis would be ideal for instances of delayed feedback.

Some online platforms allow teachers to record students' performances across different language tasks and subsequently compile an error analysis to post to each student. The error analysis should not be too trivial - only patterned errors should be pointed out and addressed. Students should be able to notice where the errors are and be asked to correct the errors themselves. Afterwards, students should be asked to perform the same language tasks until they can do them accurately and fluently without help. To reinforce a lesson, teachers can modify tasks to suit slightly different situations to allow students additional practice. It is important to note that it is not easy to provide feedback for pronunciation or tones online. It might be necessary to use alternative methods (such telephone calls or offline recordings) where the audio quality may be higher.

To provide feedback for students' writing output, teachers can post students' writing on the whiteboard with highlighted areas that need to be corrected. Teacher trainers should discuss other ways to provide feedback in the virtual environment with teacher trainees. Video clips should be collected to demonstrate these feedback strategies.

## Giving Instructions in a Virtual Environment

Due to the technical limitations in audio and video transmission, it is important for teachers to put down instructions in a visual text format (e.g., on a PPT slide) to clearly show students what to do and to supplement verbal instructions. Teachers need to find a way to break down a task into smaller segments so that there is only one simple instruction for students to focus on at a time. Instructions for activities can be written on the PPT in English and the target language at the beginning of the semester, gradually removing the amount of English used over time. If verbal instructions are provided, it should be consistent with the wording used on the PPT. If there is more than one item (e.g. pictures, vocabulary words, or questions) on a PPT slide, it is best to number the items to help students identify what is being discussed.

## Teaching Demos, Observations, and Critique Sessions

It is recommended that sample videos of real online sessions be used to show teacher trainees how to conduct an online session. After teacher trainees watch the video, ask them to comment on the effectiveness of the instructional strategies, what could be used in their own teaching, and what pitfalls to avoid. Here are some links to sample videos:

### Online session sample focused on speaking instruction

Three online sessions focused on literacy instruction: [Session 1](#); [Session 2](#); [Session 3](#)

After the discussion of the sample video, teacher trainees should be given an opportunity to teach volunteer students for 20 minutes or so. This teaching should be recorded and observed by their peers online, if possible, with a discussion being conducted after each teaching session. Observation criteria will include effectiveness

of using online teaching tools, effectiveness of giving feedback, effectiveness of giving instructions, and effectiveness in conducting teaching activities.

## Understanding How to Use Asynchronous Materials

Online instructors must know what materials are available for students to do self-paced, out-of-class learning. During the training sessions, teachers should be introduced to the difficulty levels of these materials and the types of skills needed to use them. This will help them assign materials appropriate to the proficiency level of their learners.

Both online instructors and students should understand the purpose of asynchronous learning. If possible, it would be helpful to organize different types of materials into learning modules and present a sample schedule to keep students on track. Online instructors also need to be trained on how to assess students after they finish a learning module, and how to conduct a follow-up PBA online. Assessment results must be made available to both instructors and students, and should be used to adjust future instruction.

## Assessment in a Virtual Environment and Understanding Assessment Tools

Online instructors must learn how to conduct assessments in the virtual space. Interpersonal PBA can be conducted online that indicate whether each transaction has been conducted successfully, most likely taking the form of a student doing role plays with an instructor. Instructors can rate the performance of students using a detailed [rubric](#).

With the advancement of technology, teachers can use numerous online tools to conduct quizzes, tests, and proficiency assessments online. It is a good idea to conduct an end-of-learning module assessment to see if students have acquired the

requisite skills for that unit. Other types of item types, such as multiple choice, dictations, or vocabulary matching are also useful to find out if students have completed their homework or prepared for the online session. To avoid cheating, programs can ask students to sign an honor code to abide by good classroom and testing conduct.

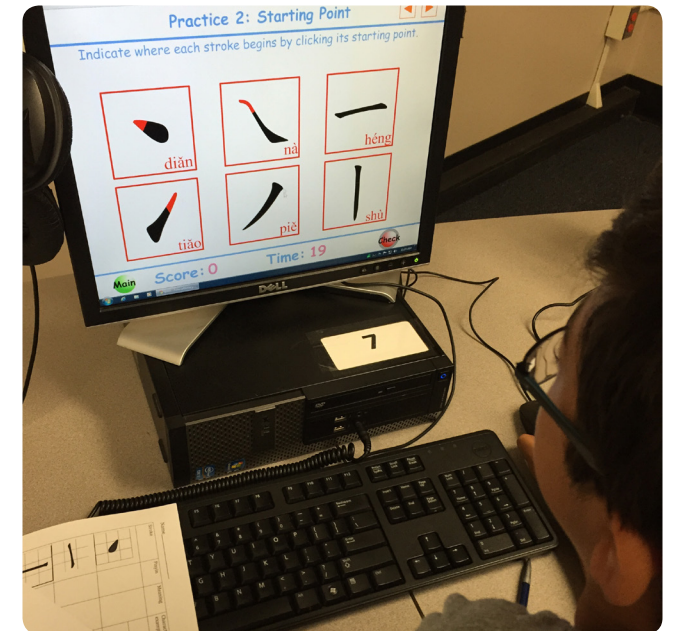
Teachers should be introduced to different assessment tools (more details in Chapter Eight) and what types of questions are asked during the test. Students also need to know how responses are rated and how to demonstrate their full potential by providing a language sample that is ratable. Most proficiency tests usually take about two hours to complete; for younger students, it is better to split the tests into two one-hour sessions over two days so that students do not become overtired.

## Encourage Collaboration and Sharing

Online instruction is still new to STARTALK and the field in general. Therefore, it would be helpful to collaborate and share experiences. Programs can invite experts to give workshops, ask experienced teachers to share tips, and observe other master teacher online sessions. Students can be asked to share what worked best and what aspects of online instruction could be improved upon (or left out altogether). Teachers should be encouraged to collaborate throughout the post-summer program to share their successes. Finally, the program can consider inviting a tech person to talk about what to do to prevent tech issues that may have cropped up over the course of the program.

## Building an Effective and Lasting Online Instruction Team

Programs that want to build a successful post-summer component are going to have to make adjustments to streamline procedures and evaluate online instructors. If there are many students within a specific group, or if there is some student attrition throughout the term, the



coordinator can reorganize or reassign students to make the distribution of instructors more equitable. New instructors should learn about evaluation criteria during their training. It is also important to let online instructors know that there are opportunities for career advancement and promotion. Coordinators should identify capable teachers and assign them more responsibilities. For example, if your program has multiple levels, it might be a good idea to promote more experienced teachers to act as lead instructors for each level. Knowing what opportunities are available ahead will encourage online instructors to stay and return to teach in subsequent years. Program leadership might also want to consider giving online teachers extra pay for session preparation, administrative work, and attendance at staff meetings.

Finally, there should be a program support system so that online instructors never feel they are on their own. For example, the program can host weekly meetings so that online instructors can communicate with lead instructors or group leaders to ask questions or bring up concerns. Continuing to cultivate teacher knowledge is important to improve the quality of instruction. For sustained success, programs need to have capable teachers with professional knowledge as well as good communication skills.

# Chapter Six

## Preparing Materials for Online Teaching and Learning



- \* Synchronous Learning Materials
- \* Asynchronous Learning Materials
- \* Additional Chinese Resources for Students and Teachers
- \* Additional Chinese Resources for Teachers
- \* Other Resources



Online learning preparation materials can be sorted into two categories: 1) useful for synchronous learning, and 2) useful for asynchronous learning. Depending on learners' ages and learning needs, teachers can choose appropriate types of materials for each learner. Synchronous learning materials refer to the instructional materials that teachers will upload to the virtual classroom canvas to be viewed by both instructors and students. Depending on the functionalities of the virtual classroom, these materials might be PPT slides, PDF files, images, and videos. Asynchronous learning materials are materials that teachers can assign students to use before or after the synchronous online sessions. Asynchronous learning materials allow students to do self-paced learning, especially with materials focused on developing listening and reading skills.

### Synchronous Learning Materials

Synchronous learning materials are what instructors need to prepare for the synchronous online sessions. The most commonly used synchronous teaching material is the online session PPT created by teachers in advance to serve a particular lesson. If a program has more than one instructor, and the students they teach share similar backgrounds and are set to reach similar proficiency levels, instructors can save time by taking turns to prepare synchronous materials each week and sharing them with their colleagues. Each instructor can then make adjustments to the PPT to meet the personalized learning needs of each student. For instance, some students might need more speaking practice while other students might need more reading practice, so the focus of the PPT can be adapted accordingly. If students need more speaking practice, the speaking exercises should be completed first, and perhaps 60% or more of the class time can be allocated towards speaking practice. If students need more reading practice, reading exercises should be done first, and more time overall should be allocated towards reading practice.

If instructors take turns preparing materials, the materials must be ready in time for other instructors to review before their scheduled sessions. If a new week starts on Monday, then new materials for the upcoming week must be ready by Sunday evening at the latest. We also suggest that instructors hold an online meeting once a week to discuss student progress, questions or suggestions for the instructional materials, etc. The meeting can be held on Sunday evening, and one hour should be sufficient.

When designing PPTs, we suggest instructors consider:

1. *Set up a routine*: Similar to face-to-face sessions, it is extremely important to establish a routine when conducting online sessions. For instance, the first slide could be an audio check asking "can you hear me or not" (to be done in the target language) and greetings; the second slide could review the learning objectives; the third slide could be a quiz to check if students have done the pre-reading assignments; the following slides could be the main learning activities; and the concluding slide could instruct the student to thank and say goodbye to the instructor. **Click here to view a sample online session.**

2. *Ensure comprehensible input*: In order to follow the **STARTALK principle** of using the target language at least 90% of the time, strategies used to ensure comprehensible input in face-to-face sessions can also be used during synchronous online sessions. One way is to incorporate images. At lower proficiency levels, images can help to provide scaffolded and context-rich comprehensible input; at higher proficiency levels, images can help to elicit meaningful output from students. Well-chosen images with language-rich contexts can inspire students to speak more and also to learn about the target culture. To understand more about the power of images, view STARTALK consultant Laura Terrill's presentation entitled "The Power of the Image," **available here on the STARTALK website.** When using images created by others,

be sure to include appropriate citation. The citation should give the name of the image, the creator of the image, and a link to the image source. **Creative Commons** is a good place to find images and videos that teachers can legally use as long as they follow the media's copyright requirements. Other resources of free images for personal and educational use include: **Clip Art**, **FlashCardFox**, **Pixabay**, **silhouetteAC**, and **StickPNG**.

3. *Limit the number of PPT slides:* Depending on the length of the online session, instructors should carefully consider how many PPT slides to include for one session. Changing slides too frequently might distract students, so we suggest 10 or fewer slides for a one-hour session.

4. *Simplify the design:* Avoid using complex PPT designs so students can focus on the content that you want to deliver. A simple, white background works best.

5. *Choose the appropriate font size and font design:* Avoid using fancy fonts that are difficult to read. The font size should be kept large and clear for students. For languages that use special characters such as Chinese and Arabic, choose the font that is the easiest to read for students. It is also important to test the PPT beforehand to ensure that the font you choose shows up correctly on the online platform.

## Elementary Level PPT Sample

### Asynchronous Learning Materials

Asynchronous learning materials are materials that teachers can assign students to use before or after the synchronous online sessions. There are many resources for these materials. When teachers assign YouTube videos to their students, they can use **Edpuzzle** to insert questions to check students' comprehension. One of Edpuzzle's great features is its gradebook: after students watch each video, teachers can view their answers to questions and track their progress.

**Quizizz** is a completely free and fun tool for teachers to assign students quiz games as homework. Teachers can generate multiple-choice quizzes to share with students and can receive detailed feedback on each student's quiz performance. Teacher resources and video tutorials can be found [here](#).

**Quizlet** is a commonly used tool for students to study vocabulary words before class. Instructors can create vocabulary cards for students, or students can create cards themselves for preview purposes. Quizlet also provides several formats for self-assessment which help students to acquire new words. Teacher resources and video tutorials can be found [here](#).

To help students review what they have learned and complete assignments online, check out **Lingt**. This is a simple tool that lets you use images and video to create and assign online speaking exercises and to keep track of every student's progress in speaking. After completion of each speaking assignment by students, teachers can easily give both text and audio feedback when necessary. One caveat: Lingt is not available for free as an assessment tool for teachers and school districts. Video tutorials can be found [here](#).

### Additional Chinese Resources for Students and Teachers

**Animated Chinese Reading books** is a collection of animated picture books provided by the Taiwanese Ministry of Culture. These reading materials are suitable for young heritage learners. In addition to the animations, there are interactive companion games for the readers.

**ASU Chinese Flagship Linkages Cultural Project** offers modules that focus on aspects of Chinese culture important to students, including Chinese calligraphy, traditional holidays, how Chinese students apply to college, and campus life in China. These materials are suitable for high school students and may be used by individual learners or by teachers who plan to

incorporate them into an existing curriculum. These were designed for Advanced Placement (AP) courses, but much of the material is still appropriate for lower levels.

**Games Learn Chinese** provides different types of games to help students review vocabulary words as well as improve recognition of Chinese characters. The design of the games is suitable for young beginners. If the instructor plans to employ this website as a review tool, we suggest that you play the game and view the words first so you can make sure to incorporate the words into your lessons. The free version allows students to review words related to numbers, colors, foods, animals, verbs, and transportation.

**Global Language Online Support System (GLOSS)** provides lessons that are developed for independent learners with at least novice-high or above proficiency level to improve their reading and listening skills. Best used for assignments or supplementary reading materials, each lesson is based on authentic materials (e.g., articles, TV reports, radio broadcasts) and consists of four to six activities followed by in-depth feedback. Learners can choose from 40 different languages that include Chinese, Arabic, Russian, Hindi and more. GLOSS is more suitable for high school juniors or seniors and college students. Click [here](#) to view the GLOSS introduction video.

**Pitch Perfect Pinyin** offers hundreds of interactive exercises for Mandarin Chinese pronunciation. In addition to learning basic information about *pinyin* (Chinese syllables, tones and *pinyin* rules), there are five types of practice exercises (identify tones, match *pinyin* to sound, *pinyin* spelling, tone differences, and match sound to *pinyin*). This learning resource is especially beneficial to beginning learners to learn *pinyin* quickly and accurately.

**Read Chinese** aims to provide online reading lessons in both traditional and simplified characters for secondary school student learners who are at beginning and intermediate levels.

Materials may be used by individual learners studying on their own or by teachers assigning them for individual or group study. After-reading activities help readers to improve their reading comprehension.

The reading materials in the **Rutgers Multimedia Chinese Teaching System** cover various topics related to life in China. All reading materials are categorized into four different proficiency levels (basic, beginning, intermediate, and advanced). Each lesson is shown in both traditional and simplified characters and includes audio recordings, lesson texts or dialogues, vocabulary, grammar, and speech or sentence patterns. These supplementary reading materials are suitable for college students.

**The Chinese Reading World** provides an extensive array of Chinese readings for adult learners from beginning to advanced levels. Each level has three hundred articles divided into thirty different units. Each lesson includes a vocabulary pretest, reading, post-reading test, and an audio file. This reading material is suitable for college-level or adult learners looking for self-study materials.

### Additional Chinese Resources for Teachers

**Chinese Characters Storytelling** is a collection of animated stories of traditional Chinese characters. Each two-minute episode introduces one basic character and one to four related words. The stories teach students the basic structure of the character and how it evolved over time and through different Chinese scripts. Aimed at beginners, teachers can use the stories to introduce Chinese characters and words in a fun way.

The **Chinese Flagship Secondary Curriculum Project** created four curriculum maps for four different proficiency levels (novice-mid, novice-high, intermediate-low, and intermediate-mid) that instructors can download and adapt to meet

the needs of students. The detailed curriculum units target all four modalities: speaking, reading, listening, and writing. Unit assessments are also included.

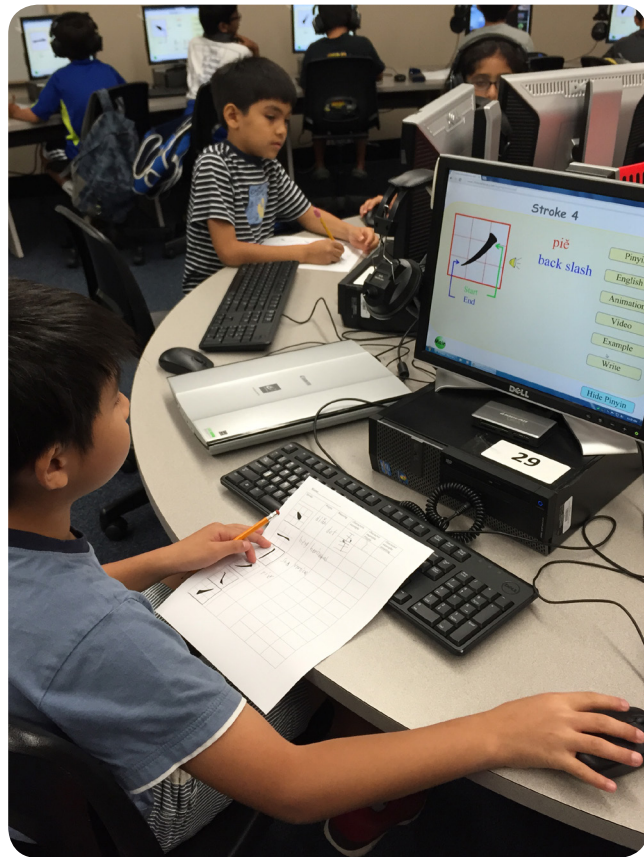
**Chinese Literacy: Developing Text Literacy in CFL Learners** is a series of modules that incorporate character and literacy instruction and practice. The teaching modules are differentiated by grade level (K-5, 6-8, 9-12, and 13-16). Instructors can download and adapt these materials to meet the needs of students.

**Ohio's K-4 Content Related Mandarin Curriculum** is appropriate for grades K-4 students to begin Chinese language learning early. Before using these materials, it is highly recommended that instructors go through the professional development modules to get a better understanding of content-related curriculum.

Lastly, Guiding Principles for Early Literacy Experiences for Beginning Learners of Chinese is a document developed by STARTALK that provides guidance for creating effective literacy experiences through the application of well-founded educational principles. Designed primarily for the K-8 environment, the principles can be applied to the teaching of students at any age. This document can be found on the STARTALK website: <https://startalk.umd.edu/public/system/files/resources/chineseliteracydevelopment.pdf>

### Other Resources

**CELIN** is a website for educators, administrators, parents and learning communities that promotes Global Education.



*Our kids enjoyed learning through the Flagship program. The method had helped my daughter Hannah learn to write letters to her pen pal using the computer, write words by hand and speak more fluently. My son Zachary loved the online program as well as the in person classes and he had improved his verbal skills tremendously. Also, we had a great time going to the city and experienced the Chinese New Year celebration.*

*- Anna*

# Chapter Seven

## Curriculum that Integrates both Face-to-Face and Online Learning



- \* STAGE 1: What will learners be able to do with what they know by the end of the program?
- \* STAGE 2: How will learners demonstrate what they can do with what they know by the end of the program?
- \* STAGE 3: What will prepare learners to demonstrate what they can do with what they know?



Your curriculum should include both summer session and post-summer session learning plans. Programs do not need to come up with an entire new curriculum for the post-summer component; instead, modifications can be made to reflect the post-summer extension. This chapter will discuss what changes need to be made using the [STARTALK curriculum template](#).

### STAGE 1: What will learners be able to do with what they know by the end of the program?

#### Target Proficiency Level / Target Performance Level

For languages such as Chinese, proficiency development in the four modalities (speaking, listening, reading, and writing) progresses at different rates. Listening and reading proficiency takes the longest to develop, especially at the beginning level. Thus, it is necessary to determine target levels for each modality separately.

Based on the length of the post-summer session, programs that recruit absolute beginners can decide whether it is appropriate to keep the original target proficiency level set for the end of the summer session or to raise the target by one sub-level, as shown in the chart below:

Comparison of Proficiency Levels for Students with No Background		
	Target Proficiency Level for <b>Summer Only</b>	Target Proficiency Level for <b>Summer and Post-Summer</b>
Speaking	Novice-Mid	Novice-Mid/High
Listening	Novice-Low	Novice-Low/Mid
Reading	Novice-Low	Novice-Low/Mid
Writing (by typing)	Novice-Mid	Novice-Mid/High

Because intermediate-level students need much more instructional time to move up to the next sub-level, it is reasonable for programs that recruit students with intermediate proficiency and above to set a post-summer session goal of sustaining the level projected for the end of the summer session, especially for listening and reading:

Comparison of Proficiency Levels for Students with Intermediate Level Background		
	Target Proficiency Level for <b>Summer Only</b>	Target Proficiency Level for <b>Summer and Post-Summer</b>
Speaking	Intermediate-Mid	Intermediate-Mid/High
Listening	Intermediate-Mid	Intermediate-Mid
Reading	Intermediate-Mid	Intermediate-Mid
Writing (by typing)	Intermediate-Mid	Intermediate-Mid/High

According to the STARTALK guidelines, the Target Performance Level can be slightly higher than the Target Proficiency Level because “learners can be coached to perform at the higher level when performing in the classroom.”

Our data show that beginning Chinese learners without prior background can reach the following target proficiency levels after completing a summer and a post-summer online program (a total of 110 instructional hours or more). Proficiency targets should be adjusted based on the number of instructional hours.

Grades 9 – 12 (after about 110 instructional hours)		
	Target Proficiency Level	Target Performance Level
Speaking	Novice-High	Novice-High/Intermediate-Low
Listening	Novice-Mid	Novice-Mid/High
Reading	Novice-Mid	Novice-Mid/High
Writing (by typing)	Novice-Mid/High	Novice-Mid/High

Grades 6 – 8 (after about 90 instructional hours)		
	Target Proficiency Level	Target Performance Level
Speaking	Novice-Mid	Novice-Mid/High
Listening	Novice-Mid	Novice-Mid
Reading	Novice-Low	Novice-Low/Mid
Writing (by typing)	Novice-Mid	Novice-Mid

Grades 3–5 (after about 53 instructional hours)		
	Target Proficiency Level	Target Performance Level
Speaking	Novice-Mid	Novice-Mid/High
Listening	Novice-Low	Novice-Low/Mid
Reading	Novice-Low	Novice-Low/Mid
Writing (by typing)	Novice-Low	Novice-Low/Mid

## Program Overview and Theme

The Program Overview and Theme can highlight how the curriculum design integrates face-to-face instruction with individualized online instruction. The overview can be divided into two parts. Part one describes what students will accomplish during face-to-face instruction. Part two describes what students will accomplish during post-summer online instruction.

## Learning Goals

If the proposed target proficiency level has changed, then it is necessary to change the NCSSFL-ACTFL Global **Can-Do Benchmarks** and program **Can-Do statements**. No major changes to the Can-Do criteria will be needed, however, if the change is only one sub-level.

## STAGE 2: How will learners demonstrate what they can do with what they know by the end of the program?

If a program decides to add proficiency tests as one of the summative assessments, the name of the tests can be indicated. The examples of assessments shown below are taken from the STARTALK 2017 Summer Language Program at Hunter College.

Learners understand, interpret, and analyze what is heard, read, or viewed on a variety of topics	Learners interact and negotiate meaning in spoken, signed, or written conversations to share information, reactions, feelings, and opinions.	Learners present information, concepts, and ideas to inform, explain, persuade, and narrate on a variety of topics using appropriate media and adapting to various audiences of listeners, readers, or viewers.
Formative Assessment:  After reading letters from their pen pal, students complete an organizational grid with relevant information, such as the locations, dates, and durations of the trip, the need-to-dos, and the costs of the trip. Students will create a graphic presentation to share the information with their peers. Other students will interpret the information presented and draw conclusions on whose plan is the most exciting but at the same time practical.	Formative Assessment:  During the online instruction sessions, students will do role plays with their instructors. They will be given a rubric detailing the scenario and the tasks they will need to complete during the role play, such as “inquire about the price of the item”. Each day they will be assessed on a different role play scenario (ordering food, giving directions, etc.). The role play will be graded by their instructors.	Formative Assessment:  At the end of the face-to-face program, students will give a presentation. They will introduce the information they have learned regarding their pen pals’ hometowns, as well as their visiting plans (dates, food, directions, cost, etc.). This presentation will be given to their teachers and peers.
Summative Assessment: STAMP tests	Summative Assessment: STAMP tests	Summative Assessment: STAMP tests

## STAGE 3: What will prepare learners to demonstrate what they can do with what they know?

### Learning Experiences

The third column, Major Learning Experiences & Evidence, can be divided into two parts: one for the face-to-face setting, and one for the online setting. This will help instructors to be aware of the different learning environments that students and instructors will encounter. The examples of learning experiences shown below are taken from the STARTALK 2017 Summer Language Program at Hunter College.

Major Learning Experiences & Evidence	Examples
<b>Listening &amp; Speaking</b>	<p>Student and teacher practice talking about travel plans:</p> <p>Teacher asks student:  <a href="https://youtu.be/sVpybUTNOms?t=6m14s">https://youtu.be/sVpybUTNOms?t=6m14s</a> (up to about 8m08s)</p> <p>Student asks teacher:  <a href="https://youtu.be/sVpybUTNOms?t=8m10s">https://youtu.be/sVpybUTNOms?t=8m10s</a> (up to 9m)</p> <p>Student repeats the information he just learned:  <a href="https://youtu.be/sVpybUTNOms?t=9m1s">https://youtu.be/sVpybUTNOms?t=9m1s</a></p>
<b>Reading</b>	<p>Re-arrange sentences: this sentence is focused on character recognition and the word order of sentence that is different from English.  <a href="https://youtu.be/5DO0Hw00a0E?t=21m36s">https://youtu.be/5DO0Hw00a0E?t=21m36s</a> (up to 22.48)</p>
<b>Writing</b>	<p>Grades 9 - 12</p> <p>Practice writing the basic strokes and then learn the character “月yue4, month.” Speaking and writing are integrated here. Student writes out the character while saying the stroke name out loud and in the correct stroke order.  <a href="https://youtu.be/sVpybUTNOms?t=52m50s">https://youtu.be/sVpybUTNOms?t=52m50s</a> (up to 54:09)</p>

### Materials & Other Resources

This can be the same as the original materials, plus the PPTs or other resources that the program decides to use for the online component.

### Daily Schedule

The summer face-to-face daily schedule might stay the same, so only a sentence or two may be needed to explain how the post-summer online instruction will be arranged. The examples of daily schedules shown below are taken from the STARTALK 2017 Summer Language Program at Hunter College.

### Summer Face-to-Face Daily Schedule



Time Frame	Activity
9:00-9:50 AM	Group Class 1
10:00-10:50 AM	Group Class 2
11:00-12:00 PM	Lunch
12:00-12:50 PM	Group Class 3
1:00-1:50 PM	Group Class 4
2:00-3:00 PM	Web Exercises and Tutorial Session

### Sample Session Schedule

Time Frame	Activity
First 1-2 minutes	Greetings and Technology Check
10% of the class time	Quiz (depending on the teacher, for example, can test students on the pre-reading assignment)
40% of the class time	Main learning activities focused on speaking and listening
40% of the class time	Main learning activities focused on reading and writing
Last 5 minutes	Wrap-up and farewell

### Post-summer One-on-one Session

As noted earlier, secondary students are able to handle a 50-minute online session, and grades 3-5 students can maintain their energy and concentration level for 30 - 45 minutes before tiring. As for grades K-2, 30-minute sessions are possible for 2nd graders while 15 to 20 minutes may be more appropriate for K-1 students.

The order of the learning activities and the percentages allocated should be adjusted based on student's learning needs.

### Sample Curriculum

- Grades 9-12
- Grades 6-8
- Grades 3-5
- Grades K-2

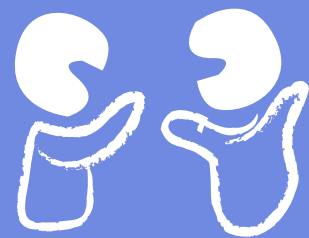


# Chapter Eight

## Assessments and Program Review



- \* Importance of Assessments
- \* Asynchronous Assessment
- \* Frequency of Assessments
- \* Program Performance Analysis
- \* Assessing K-2 Learners
- \* Tools for Summative Online Assessment



### Important of Assessments

Assessments in the post-summer program are used for the same purpose as in a face-to-face program: to improve student performance by providing opportunities to practice and demonstrate learning through a variety of assessment formats. Assessments are also used to determine weaknesses and strengths and to provide personalized lesson plans for individual students. Finally, data collected from PBAs can be used to determine the benefits of having a summer only versus summer-plus-post-summer STARTALK program.

Online assessments can take the place of either formative or summative evaluations, either in real-time or as asynchronous assignments. Online assessments, like their face-to-face counterparts, should remain focused on authentic, everyday situations to determine how well students perform language tasks in all modalities and modes of communication (interpretive, interpersonal, and presentational) while demonstrating linguistic accuracy and social and cultural appropriateness.

Data from proficiency assessments are invaluable in informing instruction and establishing student learning records to mark their proficiency progression. Assessments should be regularly added to the student learning profile (see Chapter Six for more information) for instructor and program analysis over time. Assessments should be able to measure each modality independently so proficiency targets can be adjusted accordingly. Instructional time can also be redistributed as needed, with more time and activities focused on weaknesses and less on strengths.

### Asynchronous Assessments

The nature of the STARTALK post-summer course design provides for synchronous online sessions as well as asynchronous assignments. These assignments give students opportunities to complete interpretive reading and listening tasks, as well as spoken and written presentational tasks,

on their own time. By incorporating the same teaching principles and providing students with authentic content and contexts, learners will have the ability to receive feedback that they can incorporate into their live sessions. Tasks can take the form of writing letters to a pen pal, leaving a voice message in response to a question, or answering simple questions based on a passage.

Other kinds of self-assessments, such as journaling and learner reflections, are useful in encouraging students to think about what they have achieved and what they still want to know. Journaling can give particular insight into a student's interests and help with designing individual lesson plans. Learner reflections are important check-ins that tell us what a student finds to be effective or ineffective – which can also aid in overall assignment design and teaching strategies.

A noted problem with online courses is the low level of participation and even attrition due to a feeling of isolation and a lack of accountability. Integrating outcomes of asynchronous assignments with live session learning goals can mitigate this feeling and provide motivation for students to dutifully complete all tasks. Although it is more work for the instructor, individualized feedback on asynchronous assignments also assigns importance to such tasks and encourages students to complete all parts of the program.

### Frequency of Assessments

A proficiency assessment should be conducted at the end of the summer session, to be shared with the program director, coordinator, and teachers to determine an appropriate post-summer course of study. Even if instructors change between the summer and post-summer sessions, students will still have a sense of continuity based on their performance and the consistent program design. Formative assessments should take place regularly throughout the term, as these have been shown to improve student learning by allowing

students to track their own level of proficiency and set their own learning goals.

At the end of each module of instruction, students should be asked to complete a PBA through a role-play of each module's target task. For example, students should be able to successfully order food at a restaurant or negotiate buying a cell phone. Most role-plays will take place using a synchronous online classroom and should be scored using a criterion-referenced rubric ([click here to view an example](#)) listing all the possible subtasks of each target task, determined by analyzing multiple examples of genuine target discourse. The results of the PBA should be shared with students shortly after the assessment so they know which areas were satisfactory and which areas need improvement.

In order to stay connected to students and create a sense of community, it is recommended that one face-to-face session be held midway through the semester to provide an opportunity for a role-playing assessment and to determine progress on learning goals. The last PBA of the term should be a summative assessment involving all of the skills practiced in the post-summer term. Finally, it is important to include a comprehensive proficiency test at the conclusion of the online sessions to determine if students improved, maintained, or decreased their language level as compared to the end of summer session.

### Program Performance Analysis

The first iteration of a post-summer program will likely have issues to work through and require feedback from program participants. It is recommended that surveys be given at regular intervals to gather the opinions of students and instructors. These inquiries serve as important mechanisms to identify and adjust problem areas, such as curriculum design, technical issues, and scheduling problems. Similarly, a survey should be conducted at the end of the program to determine overall impressions of students and their parents and to solicit suggestions for future improvements.

At the conclusion of the post-summer term, the program administration and faculty should sift through the assessment data collected throughout the semester to determine overall successes and areas in need of improvement. Notably, the summative proficiency assessment from the end of the summer term should be compared to the summative proficiency assessment at the end of the post-summer term to determine improvements in student language skills, if any. These statistics should be stored so as to compare results from year to year, as well as to inform other STARTALK programs.

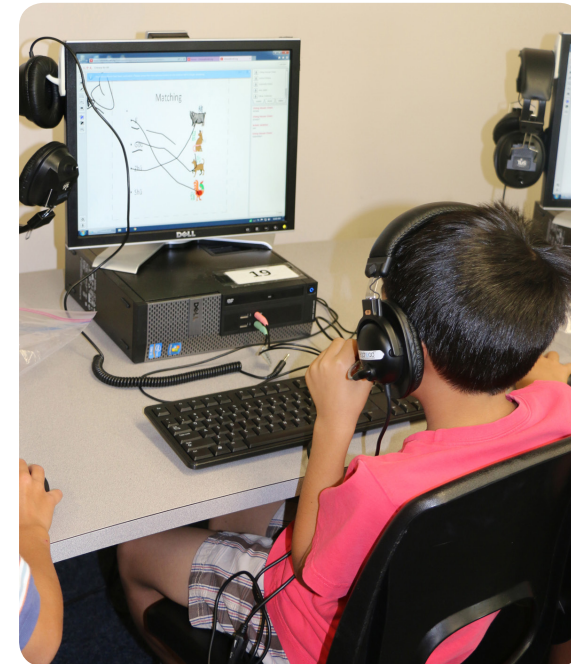
### Assessing K-2 Learners

K-2 students provide a unique challenge in acquiring measurable assessment results. Nothing is currently commercially available to assess K-2 learners, as children this young are only capable of achieving a low level of proficiency. Instructors cannot entice verbal, self-created responses, so the purpose of assessments is to see interpretive skills rather than productive skills. When these kinds of assessments are conducted, teachers cannot assess K-2 students as a group, but as individuals or two to three students at most. Encouragement and positive feedback should be given to these learners at all times. Teachers should also not give up on K-2 learners even if immediate progress is not shown because games, activities, and stories can still have a positive, lasting impact. Here's a [sample of K-2 progress report](#) that was shared with parents.

### Tools for Summative Online Assessment

At the end of each respective term an overall proficiency assessment must be conducted. These tests target all modalities and can be used as official ratings. It is recommended that teachers review the kinds of questions and scenarios students will likely encounter. Additionally, students should be encouraged to demonstrate their full potential, and not give up early or abandon a test, in order to provide a ratable language sample. The following three types of assessments are available for your consideration.

1. *LinguaFolio* is a free online language-learning portfolio that promotes autonomous learning through formative assessment. LinguaFolio Online is organized around the NCSSFL-ACTFL Can-Do Statements and supports articulation by providing a clear and commonly accepted description of language proficiency based on the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines. Learners have the ability to set goals based on the Can-Do Statements, track their progress toward accomplishing the statements, and upload work samples to showcase their abilities. Learners are enabled to truly understand the differing levels of language proficiency through examining and practicing the language functions embodied by the Can-Do Statements. They can create evidence to include in their portfolios on a regular basis to showcase their work, which helps them see how they are building the capacity to use the target language. Learners thus have a clear voice in tailoring their learning experiences to their own needs, wants, and interests.



2. *STAMP (Standards-based Measurement of Proficiency)* is an online test that determines what students can do with the language based on reading, listening, writing, and speaking. This multiple-choice computer test is adaptive, which means it changes the difficulty of the questions based on the number of correct answers. This gives it the ability to provide a more accurate proficiency rating. Students receive a rating from 1-6, which corresponds to the ACTFL proficiency levels of novice-low through pre-advanced. The STAMP exam is content-based and tests one's ability to understand main ideas from passages and recordings. There are no formal study guides, but the performance-style questions align with the [STARTALK Principles](#) and [ACTFL World Readiness Standards for Learning Languages](#).

STAMP tests are offered by Avant Assessment. It takes about two hours to complete a STAMP test. For younger students, it may be necessary to break the tests into two days so that they do not become overtired. For more information about scheduling and costs, visit the [STAMP Assessment website](#).

There are two kinds of STAMP assessments offered: the STAMP 4S assessment and the STAMP 4Se assessment. The STAMP 4S assessment is geared for students in Grades 7 and beyond, and assesses a student's language proficiency all the way to the top of the Advanced level. The STAMP 4Se is for students in Grades 2-6, and assesses a student's language proficiency to the top of the Intermediate level. In the Flagship K-12 Blended Learning Pilot Program, students in Grades 3-8 take the STAMP 4Se assessment whereas students in the Grades 9-12 take the STAMP 4S assessment.

[STAMP 4S Sample Test Link](#)

[STAMP 4Se Sample Test Link](#)

3. *AAPPL (ACTFL Assessment of Performance towards Proficiency in Languages)* is an exam that addresses the ACTFL World Readiness Standards for Learning Languages. Test takers perform tasks such as participating in a virtual video chat, creating wikis, e-mailing, and using apps to demonstrate language ability. The exam specifically addresses interpersonal speaking and listening, presentational writing, and interpretive reading and listening. Tests are online and require a working camera and microphone. For more information about scheduling and costs, visit the [AAPPL website](#).

## Appendix A

### Example of Student Learning Profile

Student Name: Anonymous

Grade: 3

Attendance in Fall 2015		Attendance in Spring 2016	
Attended	Absent	Attended	Absent
19	0	13	0
Assignment Records			
(√ means completed, empty value means not completed)			
Assignment: “Write 1,2,3,4...” in Chinese	Assignment: “Write a journal about hobbies”	Assignment: “Write a journal about favorite fruit and vegetable”	Assignment: “Write a letter to pen pal”
√	√		√
Comments from instructors about student’s performance			
<b>Face-to-face</b>			
Has great motivation to learn Chinese. Consistently showing willingness to take initiative. Actively participates in all class activities. Consistently completes all assignments.			
<b>Online</b>			
“I am so proud of you. Keep up your enthusiasm on learning Chinese. I believe one day you can speak Mandarin like your first language.”			
STAMP test result at the end of Fall 2015		STAMP test result at the end of Spring 2016	
Reading	Writing	Listening	Speaking
1	NA*	3	2
Reading	Writing	Listening	Speaking
1	3	3	4

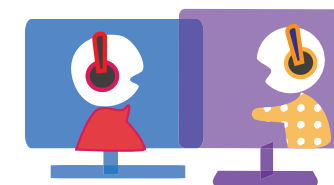
\*The value of “NA” in the above table means that the student does not satisfy the lowest grade requirement for a particular language skill.

Below you will find the actual reports given by STAMP.

## STAMP Report at the end of Fall 2015

Reading Score: 1 - Novice Low	Interpretive
	<p><b>Students who are reading at Novice proficiency are characterized by :</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>reliance of learned phrases and basic vocabulary</li> <li>ability to recognize the purpose of basic texts</li> </ul>
Writing Not Started	Presentational
	Not Started
Listening Score: 3 - Novice High	Interpretive
	<p><b>Students who are listening at Novice proficiency are characterized by :</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>understands a core of simple, formulaic utterances</li> </ul>
Speaking Score: 2 - Novice Mid	Presentational
<p><b>Speaking Sample Breakdown</b></p> <p>Sample 1 - 2 Sample 2 - 2</p>	<p><b>Students who are speaking at Novice proficiency are characterized by :</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>able to communicate basic information through lists of words and some memorized patterns</li> <li>understand common words and expressions</li> </ul>

## STAMP Report at the end of Spring 2016



Reading Score: 1 - Novice Low	Interpretive
<p><b>Reading Sample Breakdown</b></p> <p>Sample 1 - Not Ratable Sample 2 - 3</p>	<p>Students who are reading at Novice proficiency are characterized by :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>reliance of learned phrases and basic vocabulary</li> <li>ability to recognize the purpose of basic texts</li> </ul>
Writing Score: 3 - Novice High	Presentational
<p><b>Writing Sample Breakdown</b></p> <p>Sample 1 - Not Ratable Sample 2 - 3</p>	<p>Students who are writing at Novice proficiency are characterized by :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>able to communicate basic information through lists of words and some memorized patterns</li> <li>recombine learned vocabulary and structures to create simple non-formulaic sentences on very familiar topics</li> </ul>
Listening Score: 3 - Novice High	Interpretive
<p><b>Listening Sample Breakdown</b></p>	<p>Students who are listening at Novice proficiency are characterized by :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>understands a core of simple, formulaic utterances</li> </ul>
Speaking Score: 4 - Intermediate Low	Presentational
<p><b>Speaking Sample Breakdown</b></p> <p>Sample 1 - 4 Sample 2 - 3</p>	<p>Students who are speaking at Intermediate proficiency are characterized by :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>not limited to formulaic utterances, can express factual information by manipulating grammatical structures</li> <li>transitioning from memorized words and phrases to original production, though still limited</li> </ul>

*Our online teacher was very committed and patient. It was quite effective for my 2nd grader. She learned a lot and enjoyed the online format.*

*- Parents of Grades 3-5 Student*

*We were very happy with the program. Our daughter learned a lot. She had wonderful teachers. It was very age appropriate. A very nice balance of academics and fun activities.*

*- Parents of Grades K-2 Student*

*The k-2 summer program was more than I ever hoped for my son. I was amazed by all he was able to learn in such a short period of time. He really had a great time and looked forward to each class.*

*- Parents of Grades K-2 Student*

*This is a great program that kids not only learn about Chinese characters but the Chinese culture as well.*

*- Parents of Grades K-2 Student*



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A Guidebook for STARTALK Summer and Post-Summer

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