

Chinese Language Teaching and the New Educational Technology

華語文教學與新的教學科技

Cornelius C. (Neil) Kubler 顧百里
Williams College 威廉大學

Promises and Perils of Technology

- Instructional technology brings with it *both promises and perils*
- On the one hand, things can now be done that were impossible before
- Video and satellite reception allow us to provide learners with almost *unlimited access to Chinese culture*
- Technology can enable both learners and teachers to *make more efficient use of time* by moving out of the classroom rote activities such as drill that learners can do on their own using technology, freeing up valuable in-class time for more creative practice and correction

- Learners can learn *where* and (in case of asynchronous online instruction) *when* they wish and have the freedom to *learn at their own pace*
- Learners around the world who for economic or geographic reasons were not able to take classes before are now able to
- With the present generation of students, use of technology can also *increase motivation and stimulate interest* in learning (the “coolness factor”)

- On the other hand, the new educational technology also brings with it potential problems
- In online environment, students easily become distracted
- Therefore, it's very important to *engage* them fully, so they focus their attention on the learning at hand
- To this end, frequent *breaks* can be beneficial
- *Other adjustments* from in-person instruction may be necessary (e.g., choral repetition doesn't work so well as individual repetition, address questions to individual students rather than to the whole class – first ask question *then* call out student's name, have students stand *away* from screen when performing basic dialogs so it's more natural and so they don't cheat, etc.)

- Some high school students when they didn't know the answer to a question pretended their computer had problems! 美國高中生不會回答老師的問題時，假裝電腦有故障！

- Online classes can increase the pressure on students and cause screen fatigue 網課可能增加學生的壓力還會引起屏幕疲勞的問題

- To reduce screen fatigue, in addition to frequent breaks, consider changing some classes from synchronous to asynchronous mode, so students can work on at their convenience 為了減少屏幕疲勞可以（一）多休息，（二）把一部分課從同步上課轉成異步上課，讓老師錄製教學視頻，這樣學生可以更靈活的安排他們的學習

- Unless human nature changes, learning and using language is basically a *social activity* 除非人性改變，否則學語言、用語言是一種社會性活動

- Language involves human emotions and complex interpersonal relationships, which are difficult to create or simulate online 語言牽涉到感情、人與人之間的關係，而這很難在線上培養出來或者模仿

- The past 2 years, many students all over the world have taken only online classes, with the result that many have become depressed and lonely 最近兩年在全世界許多學生只上網課，結果得了憂鬱症，心情低落，覺得很寂寞

- Students very much need to learn collaboratively with their classmates on campus and encourage each other 學生非常需要在校園內和他們的同學一起學習，相互支持，互相鼓勵

- No technology can reproduce the relationship between student and teacher or the relationships among classmates 任何科技都無法重現教師與學生之間的關係或學生與學生之間的關係

- Computers, software, and the Internet can all play important roles in our instruction, but they are only tools and do not by themselves constitute a curriculum
電腦、軟件、網路都能在我們的教學中扮演重要的角色，但它們只不過是工具，並不構成一個課程
- According to an old Chinese saying, ‘If craftsmen want to do a good job, they must first sharpen their tools.’ 古言云：“工欲善其事，必先利其器”
- We need to know *when* and *how* to use *what kind* of educational technology 我們要知道什麼時候，怎麼樣，用甚麼教學工具
- Computers are only *one of many* tools for foreign language instruction 電腦是我們從事語言教學的許多工具之一

- To sum up, online instruction can greatly enrich traditional in-person instruction 總的來講, 線上的教學能使傳統的面對面的教學更加豐富
- If used appropriately, it can increase the efficiency of instruction (and *possibly* save some money) 如果用得正確也能提高教學效率 (也許能減少一部分的花費)
- Computers can *assist and augment* instructors but cannot replace them 電腦有時可以幫助教師但無法代替教師
- Ideally, online instruction should not and cannot completely replace in-person instruction 線上的教學也不可能完全代替面對面的教學
- Ideally, it would only *supplement* in-person instruction 它只能補充面對面的教學而已

Two Key Points About Technology

- 多媒体教学科技固然有价值，但科技随时要为教学服务，绝对不能让教学为科技服务。

Instructional technology can be very valuable but we must always keep our *pedagogical goals* foremost in mind and realize that technology is only the medium. It should be the *pedagogical goals that drive the technology*, not the other way around.

- 要先决定教学目标和教学内容，再考虑科技能否协助我们达到教学目标，绝对不可以让科技过分地影响教学内容。

We must first decide our pedagogical goals and the instructional content; *after* those goals have been set, we can consider how technology may facilitate attaining them.

Should We Require Students to Handwrite Characters from Memory?

- In recent years more and more US programs allow students to do all character writing digitally 最近許多美國大學從初級華語的第一天開始就准許學生用電腦輸入漢字
- But based on my experience, if students can handwrite characters, they're much more likely to keep the constituent parts of characters straight 但根據本人的經驗，學生會手寫漢字有助於把部首、偏旁、聲符等組成部件弄清楚
- Knowing how to handwrite characters is useful in distinguishing look-alike characters 會手寫漢字有助於辨別比劃類似的漢字：「大太犬天天末未夫」
- Requiring learners to handwrite characters at the beginning stage is not only for the sake of writing but also for the sake of *reading* 讓學生手寫漢字不只是為了培養寫字能力也是為了加強閱讀

- The younger generation of Chinese native speakers' ability to handwrite characters is gradually diminishing 年輕一代的中文母語者手寫漢字的能力似乎也逐漸退步了
- This was demonstrated in a small-scale survey I undertook while living in Nanjing in 2014-16 我在南京的小規模研究：“尷尬”、“螃蟹”、“勿論吞棗”
- The fact is the majority of native speakers nowadays *writes* Pinyin or Zhuyin and *reads* characters 實際上現在大多數中文母語者寫的是漢語拼音或注音符號而讀的才是漢字

- Has the death knell sounded for Chinese characters? 漢字的“喪鐘”是否已經敲響了？
- Vietnam and Korea formerly used characters but now basically no longer do 越南、韓國從前用漢字但現在基本上已不用了
- It's impossible to predict the future, but it's possible that in 150 years, the average Chinese will write in Pinyin or a similar alphabet and only graduate students of Chinese literature learn characters 當然無法未卜先知，但有可能150年後，一般人寫的是漢語拼音(或類似的拼音文字)，只有讀中文研究所的學生才學漢字

Coordinating In-Class Learning With Out-of-Class Learning

- Language learning includes different learning activities, some in class with an instructor and others learners can do on own.
- It turns out many activities don't require an instructor but can effectively be undertaken by learners working independently with printed materials, audio, video, computer software, and online lessons.
- Learning activities for speaking/listening training include studying grammar and culture notes; drilling with audio, video, and software; engaging in various communicative activities
- Learning activities for reading/writing include studying the structure of characters, writing characters, prereading texts (orally and silently), questions and discussion about reading
- For most efficient learning, curriculum designers and instructors should carefully consider **for which learning activities learners need an in-class or online instructor and which ones learners can do on their own outside of class.**

THE “ACT”/“FACT” APPROACH

- For the majority of adult language learners, the most effective way to learn a language includes: (1) large amounts of language practice and use (=ACT); and (2) smaller amounts of analysis and explanation about pronunciation, grammar, society and culture (=FACT)
- ACT = communicative practice, language performance, & language use 語言的練習和使用
- ACT is all in the target language (Chinese), never in the learners’ native language (English), so English is never used in ACT class

(the ACT/FACT approach, cont.)

- FACT = explaining how to use a language 解釋
如何使用一種語言
- FACT includes explanation about grammar, pronunciation, society, culture, language learning strategies, etc.
- At the beginning level, FACT must of necessity be conducted in the learners' native (or common) language, though many examples should be provided in the target language (Chinese)
- At the intermediate and advanced levels, FACT can increasingly be done in Chinese

The “Flipped Classroom” 翻转课堂

- Students PREPARE everything BEFORE CLASS, so class can be used for ACT activities (practice USING Chinese).
- Instructor never (or only rarely) presents new information or explanation in class.
- Curriculum designer or instructor should put FACT content (information about pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, society, culture) in textbook, a hand-out, or online.
- Give students a daily schedule with *detailed instructions* on what and how to prepare for each class and what will be done in class each day.
- Most students can read, study, and understand FACT-type content by themselves, but they cannot do ACT-type activities by themselves.
- In class, instructor must be careful *not to go beyond what students have prepared* (老師不可以超越學生準備的範圍) .

A More Flexible Approach to Learning

- Which kind of learning environment is most effective and efficient for which kind of learning activity?
- Traditionally, a class meets with the same group of students for a set number of days per week.
- A smarter approach might be to *match the size of the class to the particular learning activity*, so for a given student, there might be 1 class per week in a large group of 50 students, 2 classes in medium-sized groups of 8 or 10 students, plus 1 or 2 weekly online 30-minute tutorials.
- Listening, some reading, FACT, and testing could be done in the large group; but conversation and discussion of the reading would be done in the medium-sized group, with intensive conversation in the online tutorial.
- In addition, there would be a large number of hours each week of *out-of-class learning activities* done by learners on their own using print media, audio, interactive

Online Individual Sessions

- Assuming a 30-minute session, the first 25 minutes are all in Chinese, using “Flipped Classroom” approach (learner has prepared based on detailed schedule, tutor doesn’t go beyond what’s been prepared)
- Learner and tutor role-play Basic Conversation, which learner performs from memory; then switch roles and do again (but student *stands up*, away from device!)
- Tutor asks learner questions on the Basic Conversation
- Tutor and learner ask each other questions using the new vocabulary, grammar, and functions of the lesson
- Learner and tutor (or additional learners) engage in various interactive communicative exercises with guidance and correction from tutor

(online individual sessions, cont.)

- For reading, tutor asks learner to read aloud selected passages and asks questions based on passages learner has prepared, making corrections as needed
- If time remains, material introduced in earlier lessons can be reviewed through question and answer practice as well as discussion
- Unlike first 25 min., the last 5 minutes is FACT
- Either Chinese or English may be used; learner can ask questions and tutor can offer comments or explanations
- Tutor should spend time talking with learner about learning strategies and try to strengthen learner's motivation
- It's best not to introduce supplemental material; stick with what is formally introduced in the course materials

Curriculum Development

- Curriculum developer and instructor both important but learner must always be at center of enterprise
- Curriculum typically includes various media: online content but also textbooks, workbooks, instructor handbooks, flashcards, audio recordings, video recordings, computer software, websites
- Since the most effective type of learning involves a multisensory, multimodal process, a carefully designed mix of learning modes and media is best (multimodal content delivery, hybrid, blended, portfolio approach)
- Different modalities are desirable so as to meet the needs of *different learning styles* among the learners

(more on curriculum development...)

- Before developing a new curriculum, familiarize yourself with materials already available
- Avoid unnecessary duplication of efforts and ‘reinventing the wheel’
- Adapting or supplementing existing materials to make them more communicative is often preferable to starting from scratch
- It’s usually not a good idea to try to develop a curriculum alone (curriculum should reflect *multiple backgrounds and perspectives*)
- ideal curriculum development team size is 2-4 people

(more on curriculum development...)

- Curriculum development team should be as diverse as possible (native/non-native, different Chinese-speaking societies, male/female, college/high school)
- At inception of project, team members should draw up explicit principles and learning objectives
- First step in developing new curriculum is to form a clear picture of intended users and their needs (age, native language, level in Chinese, purpose, how many hours per week, in China or overseas)
- Language is so complex and the personalities and learning styles of learners and instructors so different that no single approach or method can possibly meet the needs of all learners at all times
- Audio-lingual, communicative, functional-notional, proficiency-oriented, and grammar-translation orientations all have valuable insights

(more on curriculum development...)

- What are the learning objectives? Is the training to cover all 4 skills (speaking, listening, reading, writing) or only 3 or only 2? Are proficiency goals for the various skills the same or different?
- Since training time limited, be efficient: teach only what's needed; highest-frequency, most useful material first
- Both *selection* (deciding what to teach and what not to teach) and *ordering* (deciding when to teach what one has decided to teach) are crucially important
- If materials are for beginners, include a carefully designed orientation to study of Chinese: overview of Chin. lang., learning strategies, goals and objectives, how curriculum and materials are to be used, etc.

(more on curriculum development...)

- Topical and situational content of the lessons should be useful and practical, and as rich, varied, and interesting as possible
- Material should be introduced that has the highest and most immediate pay-off value possible
- Majority of the content should be about language, society, and culture of Chinese-speaking societies, but there should also be some content involving learners' home countries, since learners will at times need to be able to discuss this with Chinese-speaking interlocutors
- All the Chinese language presented should be as natural and authentic as possible
- Authentic materials can motivate learners and demonstrate how the language is really used, but

(more on curriculum development...)

- At the beginning level, an excessive amount of authentic materials can be counterproductive and result in inefficient learning (given difficulty of Chinese, systematic approach is called for most of the time)
- Materials must be free of gender, racial, etc. biases
- Materials should be age appropriate, so lessons for high school students should not include dinner banquets with heavy drinking
- Material should not be overly humorous or overly sad or tragic (learners typically wish to feel positive about subject of their study)
- Controversial political material need not necessarily be avoided, since learners need practice in dealing with this and it can encourage classroom discussion, but curriculum developers must remain objective and neutral (sometimes wise to include opposing viewpoints)

(more on curriculum development...)

- Material for long-term use should not be too closely connected with current events, as will otherwise quickly become out-of-date (for newspaper readers, one way to avoid this is to include only articles of permanent historical interest)
- Assuming learners' native language English, then at beginning level all written explanation must be in that language (if explanations well done, no or only little need to use English in class or online tutorial sessions)
- As learners' levels rise, more explanation can be in Chinese, but specialized terms still need to be translated
- Linguistic features should be presented in step-by-step progression from simple to more complex, with each new step building on the one before it

(more on curriculum development...)

- Spiraling presentation of material so that basics of a grammar pattern are presented in one lesson and more complex variations later
- By dividing large tasks into a series of smaller ones, learning becomes more manageable
- New material in each lesson should be presented in digestible amounts of approximately same length
- At basic level, number of new grammar patterns, vocabulary, and characters in each lesson should be carefully controlled
- Take into account the 3 modes of communication: interpersonal (conversations, letters, email), interpretative (listening to news report or reading newspaper), presentational (oral reports, written essays)
- To promote long-term retention, there needs to be extensive review of new material presented (new grammar, words, characters recycled periodically)

Need for Flexibility

- Since user needs vary widely, curriculum developer should strive for maximum flexibility of use and leave options open
- Provide more than the minimum amount of material required and designate some drills and exercises as *optional*, thereby empowering users to decide what to take up and what to skip
- However, avoid excessive flexibility, which can lead to negative results in the case of self-learners or inexperienced instructors
- It's wise to provide *recommendations* for how to use materials with average, strong, and weaker students, and to explain relative advantages and disadvantages of various options provided

Heritage Learners

- Since substantial percentage of learners in some programs may be of Chinese heritage, their special needs and interests should be taken into account
- Information should be included on learning strategies applicable to them (since many learned “naturally,” they may not be aware of effective study strategies)
- Material on special pronunciation and grammar challenges heritage learners face should be included (retroflex sounds, in/ing, en/eng, 我有去, etc.)
- For some lessons, content might be chosen that is of special interest to heritage learners (Chinese-American history, etc.)

Language and Culture Content

- Chin. and Eng. explanations must be accurate and clear
- Many Chinese learners already feel under pressure; to have to deal with errors and misprints can be frustrating and cause them to lose faith in the program
- For optimal learning, pedagogical materials should be attractive and inviting but don't overdo "bells & whistles"
- Regarding teaching of culture, rather than adding a separate English 'culture capsule' in each lesson as in some textbooks, teach culture in Chinese as part of representative dialogs and reading selections
- At beginning level, *behavioral culture* should be main type of culture taught (dialog: introductions, exchange of name cards)
- At intermediate level, *informational culture* can be introduced (dialog or reading selection on geography)
- At advanced level, *achievement culture* can be studied and discussed (short story by Lu Xun)

Training in Speaking

- At basic level, spoken and written skills most efficiently learned from separate but related materials
- If learners need written skills, then by beginning of intermediate level, reading and writing can catch up with speaking and listening, so from that point on the four skills may be integrated
- At beginning and intermediate levels, spoken Chinese best taught through speech samples consisting of dialogs that learners listen to, drill, memorize, and perform
- Grammar, vocabulary, functions, and culture all embedded in these dialogs
- Most of the other oral learning activities – questions, discussion, and other communicative exercises – are based on the basic dialogs

(more on speaking...)

- Basic dialogs should be contextualized linguistically and culturally, with information provided on the speakers, their location, ages, positions, and relationship
- Basic dialogs should be short enough (6 to 14 lines) to be easily memorizable and performable
- Basic dialogs should involve 1 non-native and 1 (or occasionally more than 1) native speaker
- Both informal (chatting with roommates in dorm) and formal situations (business meeting or dinner banquet) should be included

Training in Listening Comprehension

- Distinguish between two types of listening comprehension: *interactive listening* (when you're participant in a conversation) and *non-interactive listening* (when you're overhearing others or a lecture, news broadcast, film, TV show)
- Interactive listening easier for non-natives (you can ask for repetitions, confirm meanings, request speaker speak more slowly, change topic to something you're better at, etc.)
- In non-interactive listening listeners ordinarily have no control over speech they hear
- A special listening component should be provided consisting of listening passages based on which specific tasks are to be performed by learner as homework

(more on listening comprehension...)

- Listening passages should be realistic and authentic (dialogs, monologs, weather reports, announcements, commercials, etc.)
- Tasks could include identifying the general topic of passage or listening for specific information and answering multiple-choice questions
- At beginning level, most tasks should be accomplished in English, so as to avoid problem of assessing *mixed skills*
- Learners should be provided with feedback on their performance.
- Most listening comprehension passages should be based on what learners have learned but there can be some that exceed learners' current level, since it's important to give students practice in dealing with unfamiliar material
- Include different voices in listening passages – male, female, older, younger (some with moderate regional accents)

Reading

- For basic level, include brief orientation to Chinese writing system
- Also information on effective learning strategies for reading/writing
- Reading should be carefully coordinated with speaking but, at basic level, is most efficiently learned from *separate materials*, since non-native learners can learn spoken words much faster than they can learn the characters used to write those words
- By designing separate tracks for oral and written skills, we can offer users maximum flexibility so they can begin written skills at whichever point is appropriate or not at all
- At basic level, it's best not to teach characters for reading and writing until after the words they represent have been learned for speaking and listening

(more on reading...)

- Under this approach, when learners take up a new character, they already know pronunciation, meaning, and usage of word it represents, which considerably lightens learning load
- Distinguish between 口头语 *koutouyu* ‘spoken-style Chinese’ (which can also be written down in characters) and 书面语 *shumianyu* ‘standard written Chinese’, which is strongly influenced by Classical Chinese
- To reduce learners’ learning loads and reinforce their knowledge of spoken Chinese, reading and writing at basic level should initially be taught through written *koutouyu*, which can serve as a transitional writing system leading toward eventual goal of reading authentic Chinese texts in *shumianyu*
- Even at basic level, we can introduce learners to common examples of *shumianyu* such as dates or signs

(more on reading...)

- This teaches learners some useful written language but also sensitizes them to differences between spoken and written register
- To help learners develop reading fluency, a variety of reading exercises should be provided including sentences, dialogs, narratives, letters, emails, notices, advertisements, etc.
- Learners should be asked to read for meaning and answer questions or perform other tasks based on comprehension of material
- Exercises in skimming and scanning for specific information or discerning general meaning of passages also important
- Include detailed notes on aspects of written Chinese that differ from spoken Chinese
- Provide full information on structure of individual characters including radical, phonetic, and etymology

(more on reading...)

- Create exercises for sensitizing learners to structure of characters and for differentiating similar-looking characters
- All reading texts should be in characters (not Pinyin), since only characters can be considered authentic Chinese writing system
- Variety of type fonts and formats should be represented in reading curriculum including printing, handwriting, horizontal and vertical format
- Ideal is to offer user option of both simplified and traditional characters
- Supplementary materials such as paper or digital flashcards are desirable for practice in recognizing individual characters and the polysyllabic words they write

Writing

- Provisions should be made to teach and allow learners to practice the correct stroke direction and stroke order of characters
- Full proficiency in Chinese includes the ability to write by hand
- At same time, we need to keep in mind that writing depends on the more basic skills of speaking, listening, and reading
- Moreover, writing is the hardest of the 4 skills to master but the least useful for most non-native learners
- Instead of traditional essays, more practical topics should be chosen (fill out common forms, write thank-you notes, telephone messages, emails)
- Writing exercises can be created based on reading selections in reading curriculum (answer questions on specific passages, etc.)

An example: Special features of the *Basic Mandarin Chinese series*

●教材分为《基础中文》和《进阶中文》两个阶段，适合大学两年中文常态教学使用，也能满足中学四到五年的中文课程需要。

This two-level series (titled *Basic Spoken Chinese, Basic Written Chinese, Intermediate Spoken Chinese, and Intermediate Written Chinese*) covers up to 2 years of college instruction or 4 to 5 years of high school.

●预计学习者学完本教材后，口语和阅读能力可以达到ACTFL外语水平测试的“中级高”标准，相当于美国政府ILR标准的S-1+/R-1+水平。

The proficiency goals in speaking and reading by completion of the series are Intermediate-High according to the American ACTFL Chinese Proficiency Guidelines, which correlates with S-1+/R-1+ on the U.S. government ILR Language Skill Level Descriptions.

●教材分听说本和读写本，学习者可根据自己的背景 and 需要，选择先学听说再学读写，或听说读写四种技能同时学，或只学听说亦可。

Each level has one textbook for speaking/listening and another textbook for reading/writing, so learners can take up the same lesson in spoken and written; or one lesson in spoken and an earlier lesson in written, with a gap of any desired duration; or they can study spoken Chinese only.

●主课本有配套的练习册，里面提供了大量辅助练习。

Each textbook has an accompanying workbook with copious supporting drills and exercises.

●教材配有两张DVD和八张CD，内容包括96个视频和长达60个小时的听力练习，一百多名中文字母者参与了录制工作。学习者可利用DVD上的软件来跟母语者互动。

Included are 2 DVDs with interactive language learning software featuring 96 videos that were filmed on location, plus 8 CDs with over 60 hours of recordings featuring over 100 native speakers. Learners can interact with the speakers in the videos.

●课本对中文发音和拼音系统进行了详细的介绍，并提供了丰富的发音练习。

Comprehensive introduction to pronunciation and the Pinyin romanization system with many pronunciation drills in the textbook and on the accompanying CDs.

●所有初中级常用语法点都是通过自然对话来介绍的。

All the common beginning-to-intermediate level grammar patterns, introduced in natural dialogs.

●主课文对话简短精炼（只有6到12句），便于学习者背诵和表演。

Dialogs are short (6 to 12 lines), so they can easily be memorized and performed by learners.

●与其他初中级教材相比，这套教材包含更多口语常用词，全书生词总量为2,318个。

A substantially larger spoken vocabulary (total of 2,318 words) than most other beginning-to-intermediate level textbooks.

●全书配有详细清晰的英文注释，介绍有效的学习策略，帮助学习者学习语音、生词、语法，了解中国社会与文化。

Detailed explanations in English of Chinese sounds, grammar, usage, culture, society, and effective learning strategies.

●本教材的一个基本观念即中文是一种有多种标准的，属于几个不同社会的语言，而且学习者都应该能听懂。

Chinese is presented as a language used in diverse societies with multiple standards and usages, which learners are expected to gradually learn.

●本教材的基本对话虽然以北京为主（共56课），但也包含台北（共31课）、香港（共3课）、澳门（共1课）、新加坡（共2课）和马来西亚（共2课）。

Emphasis is on Beijing Mandarin (56 lessons), but lessons are also included reflecting the diverse Chinese-speaking societies of Taiwan (31 lessons), Hong Kong (3 lessons), Macau (1 lesson), Singapore (2 lessons), and Malaysia (2 lessons).

●听说本教材配套练习册，每课包括听力理解练习、角色扮演和其他多种练习形式。

The speaking/listening workbooks include listening comprehension exercises and role play exercises for each lesson, as well as numerous other drills and exercises.

●读写本教材中出现的汉字选自听说本中的高频词汇，所以学习者学习某个新字之前，已经掌握了该词语的发音、意义和用法，这样极大地减轻了学习者的学习负担。

Characters in the written textbooks were chosen from high-frequency vocabulary in the spoken textbooks, so when learners learn a new character, they already know the pronunciation, meaning, and usage of the new word, considerably lightening the learning load.

●教材读写本同时介绍简繁两种形式，系统地介绍了823个汉字和2,600多个词语。

The written textbooks systematically introduce 823 characters and over 2,600 words.

●读写本每课只介绍六个新汉字，还有学习者在听说课中学过的由这些汉字组成的词汇。

Each lesson in the written textbooks introduces 6 new characters and the words already learned in spoken form that can be written with them.

●每个新汉字的结构、笔画和词源都有详细的介绍，同时配有相似汉字的比较、对比与练习。

The structure and etymology of each new character are explained in detail, with similar characters being compared, contrasted, and practiced.

●与其他大部分中文教材相比，本教材对汉字的声旁做了更系统的介绍。

The system of phonetic components in Chinese characters is exploited more than in most other Chinese textbooks.

●读写本中的汉字既有不同字体的大小和印刷体（如楷体、宋体等），也有手写体，便于学习者识别。

Lessons include both printed and handwritten forms of characters, as well as several different printed font styles and font sizes.

●读写本里的每一课都包含大量的简体版和繁体版的阅读练习，形式有读句子、读对话和读段落，每一课也配有详尽的语法注释和文化注释。

Each lesson includes a large variety of reading exercises in both simplified and traditional characters including sentences, dialogs, reading passages, reading supplements, and grammatical and cultural notes.

●一些课文适时配有真实语料，例如路牌、名片、货币、电子邮件、日程表和手写便条等。

Some lessons include *realia* such as photographs of street signs, name cards, paper money, schedules, email messages, and handwritten notes.

●读写本练习册配有生词卡、汉字练习纸，以及多种形式的简繁体书写练习。

The reading/writing workbooks include character writing practice sheets, flashcards, and a large variety of writing exercises that learners can do in simplified or traditional characters, or in both.

●该教材虽然也适合传统的课堂教学，但在编纂时，在许多方面也把远程学习者和自学的人的学习需要列入考虑了。

Though the new materials are suitable for traditional classroom study, they were designed to take into account the special needs of distance learners and independent learners.

本套教材与远程教学

Features related to distance learning

●特别详细的英文注释

Detailed notes in English on effective study strategies, how to make best use of the audio and video, how to work with tutors or mentors, grammar, pronunciation, word usage, different registers, society, culture, etc.

●每一课都很短（一个对话或六个生字），这样学习者进度可以比较快，他们也会更有“成就感”。

Since especially for distance learners and self-learners motivation is crucially important, each spoken and written lesson is by design quite short, so that learners may gain a sense of achievement on completing a lesson, rather than getting bogged down in never-ending lessons.

●丰富的辅助教材：软件、视频、录音、练习簿等

A multitude of supporting materials including a software program, videos, audio, student workbooks with hundreds of listening comprehension exercises (and tasks for students to do), etc.

●几百张彩色照片、图片、地图等

Hundreds of full-color photographs, illustrations, maps, etc.

●有颇为详细的教师手册，里面也提供了各种练习的标准答案。

A detailed guide for teachers, tutors, and mentors is available, including answers to the exercises.

(example of listening comprehension exercise; learners work with audio only and don't have access to text)

女：小虎，你喜欢看中国电影吗？

男：我不太喜欢那些很老的黑白电影，但是我很喜欢八、九十年代的中国电影。

女：你最喜欢的中国演员是谁啊？

男：成龙和周星驰。

女：电影里的人说的话，你都能听懂吗？

男：我能听懂三分之一。有的地方说得太快，我就听不太明白了。可是，我觉得因为我常常看中国电影，所以我的听力比以前好多了。

女：你看过多少部中国电影呢？

男：差不多50多部。

女：天啊，这么多！

(example of listening comprehension exercise answer sheet, done at home and handed in as homework)

NAME _____ DATE _____ SCORE _____

Based on the recorded passage, circle the best response to each of the questions that follows. You may listen to the passage as many times as needed.

QUESTIONS

1. What kind of films does the male speaker like to watch?

- (A) Old black and white films
- (B) Chinese films from the 1980s and 1990s
- (C) Films with the actor Zhou Runfa

2. What proportion of the language in a Chinese film can the male speaker understand?

- (A) One-third
- (B) One-half
- (C) Two-thirds

3. How many Chinese films has the male speaker seen?

- (A) About 30
- (B) About 40
- (C) About 50

(example of *Notes* in accompanying textbook)

2B. ACCENTED MANDARIN. The taxi driver in this Basic Conversation doesn't speak standard Mandarin; his Mandarin is influenced by his native language, Taiwanese. For example, in line 2, instead of **shuō** he says **suō**; and in line 8, instead of **jiǔshiwǔkuài** he says **jiǔsiwǔkuài**. The type of pronunciation you're learning for your active use in this course is that of standard Mandarin, which is based on the dialect of Beijing and is considered the Chinese national language. While the majority of Chinese speakers throughout all of China can understand standard Mandarin without any problem, speakers from areas other than Beijing and environs frequently use non-standard, dialect-influenced pronunciations in their Mandarin. In the speech of non-standard Mandarin speakers there are fewer unstressed syllables and there is less use of the **(r)** suffix. Other common features of non-standard Mandarin include:

(a) Initials **zh-**, **ch-**, and **sh-** may lose the **h** to become **z-**, **c-**, and **s-** so that, for example, **zhū** "pig" sounds like **zū** "rent," **chǎo** "noisy" sounds like **cǎo** "grass," and **shān** "mountain" sounds like **sān** "three."

(b) Initial **f-** may change to **hu-** so that, for example, **fàn** "cooked rice" sounds like **huàn** "change."

(c) The distinction between initials **l-** and **n-** may be lost so that, for example, **lán** "blue" and **nán** "difficult" sound the same.

(d) The distinction between finals **-in** and **-ing** and between finals **-en** and **-eng** may be lost so that, for example, **xìn** “letter” and **xìng** “be surnamed” sound the same, or so that **děng** “wait” sounds like **děn**.

(e) Tones may differ from standard Mandarin. In the dialect of Tianjin, syllables which would be Tone 1 in standard Mandarin are pronounced like Tone 3 and syllables which would be Tone 2 in standard Mandarin are pronounced as Tone 1. Also, Mandarin spoken by speakers from Taiwan and southern China has fewer neutral tones than when spoken by northerners.

The above doesn't mean that you don't need to learn standard Mandarin tones; when native Chinese speakers use tones in a non-standard manner, there is still a *system* to their speech, so standard speakers will subconsciously make the proper adjustments and still understand them. If you, as a non-native Chinese speaker, pronounce tones “any old way,” there will be no system, and you're likely to be misunderstood.

You may be wondering how Chinese can communicate if all these distinctions are lost and how you'll ever get all this straight. The short answer is that context usually makes the meaning clear. Be aware that non-standard pronunciations exist, so that if in the local Chinese restaurant you hear someone say **Wǒ sì Céngdū rén** rather than **Wǒ shì Chéngdū rén** “I'm from Chengdu,” you won't be surprised and will get the gist. The important thing for you to focus on now is learning how to speak and understand Mandarin with standard pronunciation. As your Chinese language experience increases, you'll gradually get used to common accented Mandarin pronunciations.

Here are some more examples of the passive with **bèi**, some of them with and some without an agent: ...

Now note carefully the following:

(4) Traditionally, as in the examples above, the Chinese passive has been used mostly in adversative or infelicitous senses (i.e., unhappy situations, such as “be killed,” “be hurt,” “be hit,” “be stolen,” etc.) and such usage is still common. However, due to the influence of Western languages, Chinese grammar has changed, so that now the passive with **bèi** is sometimes used even for neutral or happy events. For example:

Shàng xīngqīde wǎnhuì, tāmen yě bèi yāoqǐngle.

“They were also invited to the evening party last week.”

This kind of usage is especially common in modern written style as in newspapers and novels.

(5) ...

(6) ...

(7) Having now learned how to express the passive with **bèi**, **ràng**, and **jiào**, you should be careful not to overuse it. As we pointed out earlier, Chinese tends to use active voice much more commonly than passive. Moreover, depending on the context, some verbs may be interpreted in a passive sense without the need for any overt passive marking. That is, the direction of a verb may be outward from the subject as actor, or inward toward the subject as receiver of the action or goal. Study the following examples: ...