

Journal of the National Council of Less Commonly Taught Languages

Volume 27



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The Journal of the National Council of Less Commonly Taught Languages, published annually by the Council, is dedicated to the issues and concerns related to the teaching and learning of Less Commonly Taught Languages. The Journal primarily seeks to address the interests of language teachers, administrators, and researchers. Articles that describe innovative and successful teaching methods that are relevant to the concerns or problems of the profession, or that report educational research or experimentation in Less Commonly Taught Languages are welcome. Papers presented at the Council's annual conference will be considered for publication, but additional manuscripts from members of the profession are also welcome.

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National Council of Less Commonly Taught Languages (NCOLCTL)

NCOLCTL is an organization dedicated to the teaching and learning of Less Commonly Taught Languages. Membership is open to individuals and organizations that share this interest.

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NCOLCTL's mission is to increase the number of Americans who choose to learn one or more of the less commonly taught languages (LCTLs) as a means of enhancing cross-cultural communication among citizens of the United States. NCOLCTL's work focuses on the less commonly taught languages which are becoming increasingly vital to the economic, social and political welfare of the United States. Furthermore, NCOLCTL seeks to improve the teaching and learning of these languages and to make them more generally available. We are the national voice for organizations and individuals who represent the teaching of these less commonly taught languages.

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NCOLCTL constitutes a national mechanism devoted to strengthening the less commonly taught language professions through enabling NCOLCTL members to work toward “shared solutions to common problems.” NCOLCTL principally directs its efforts toward building a national architecture for the LCTL field and in making the field’s resources easily accessible to language programs and individual learners around the United States.

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Editor's Introduction

Danko Šipka
Arizona State University

The spring 2020 issue features eight papers and one review article, representing various topics of interest to the entire NCOLCTL community and various languages in the field, and it comes in two volumes. In this volume, the first two papers *Life after Language Immersion: Two Very Different Stories*, and *Connecting Language Learning in the Classroom with the Local Community: Using Field Performance Tasks in Chinese Study Abroad Contexts* discuss immersion and study abroad, programs that augment our regular classroom activities. The next paper, titled *Temporal Sequencing and Narration in Learner Language: The Case of an Intensive Mandarin Chinese Program*, discusses the issue of narration, one of the key problems in presentative speaking and writing. Testing practices are front and center in *An Analysis of Testing Practices in College Korean Language Classrooms*. This volume concludes with a particularly interesting review article, entitled *Cultural Representations in Foreign Language Textbooks: A Call for Change*.

Connecting Language Learning in the Classroom with the Local Community: Using Field Performance Tasks in Chinese Study Abroad Contexts

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Abstract

This paper examines the literature of second language learning in study abroad (SA) contexts that connect classroom learning and local community contact, and reviews the development process of having students learn in the local community by a Chinese language program in a large U.S. research university, and introduces a collection of 94 Field Performance Tasks (FPTs). The paper shows that consistently doing FPTs can increase learners' participation in the Chinese cultural environment and boost their confidence in talking to native speakers, and thus is a meaningful contribution towards linking classroom learning with language contact in the community in a second language learning environment. Data from the 94 field-tested FPTs is presented and analyzed, and continuing development for future use is also addressed.

Keywords: Field Performance Tasks (FPTs), community, Chinese study abroad

Introduction

Learning from the Community

ACTFL has established Communities as one of the five Cs of World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages along with Communication, Cultures, Connections and Comparisons, calling for students to “use the language both within and beyond the classroom” (National Standards Collaborative Board, 2015). McAlpine (2000) believes that the standards of Communities may be easier to be met, compared to the other standards, by students who have a real-life experience in either a domestic or a foreign setting that requires them to use their language and cultural knowledge, such as study abroad (SA) programs that will allow students to use the language in a target culture. However, Communities has still been considered the “Lost C,” owing to the expressed difficulties in teaching toward it (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages [ACTFL], 2011).

Although SA is widely shared within the foreign language profession as an ideal means of improving students’ integration into target language communities, the learning outcomes can reveal a complexity due to individual differences in learning styles (Allen & Dupuy, 2012). Variables affecting the learning outcomes include the following: whether individuals maximize informal interactions in the host community (Wilkinson, 2005); the amount and the quality of interactional encounters with native speakers (Wang, 2010); the extent of social networks involving the local people (Isabelli-García, 2010); the number of social groups (Dewey, Brown, & Eggett, 2012); and students’ personal investment in and commitment to accessing such interaction opportunities (Taguchi, 2008).

In particular, Baker-Smemoe, Dewey, Bown, & Martinsen's (2014) study involving over 100 native English speakers participating in SA in six countries (i.e., China, Egypt, France, Mexico, Russia, Spain) identifies social network variables to be the greatest predictor of language gains. Baker-Smemoe et al. argue that those who made significant language gains during SA are those who engaged in greater number of native-speaking social groups (which afforded greater opportunities for varied types of interaction) and developed stronger and deeper relationships with fewer speakers (thus more opportunities for more in-depth and sustained interpersonal exchanges).

In Chinese SA contexts, Du (2013) discovers that that learners increase fluency when they are frequently engaged in the local community using the target language, such as conversing with native speakers when shopping or using public transportation. Kinginger, Wu, Lee, & Tan's (2016) study of American high school students in host families in China demonstrates that active engagement with the host families can enable students to learn "how people actually interact" as opposed to the "sanitized discourse of the classroom" (p. 45).

In summary, much of the literature has stressed the contribution of having social interactions with local people in the community towards second language learning in SA contexts.

Linking Classroom Learning and Community Contact

In an effort to strengthen students' connection to the local community, SA programs have been employing new ways to expand students' use of the target language beyond the school

setting. Allen and Dupuy (2012) identify four types of initiatives: 1) linking classroom learning and language contact in the community through required conversational exchange (Engle & Engle, 1999); 2) service learning and internship opportunities that include “written and oral reflections on that experience” (Vahlbusch, 2003); 3) making purposeful use of online communication to create a “virtual SA” experience (Pertusa-Seva & Stewart, 2000); and 4) training SA participants in ethnographic techniques for research projects (Jackson, 2006). In East Asian SA contexts, Kubler (1997) points out that in a Chinese SA program there must be activities that bring learners into close contact with the society around them, because the whole point of SA is getting students out into Chinese society to interact with the Chinese people, not to “lock them up” in a classroom most of the day. Therefore, Kubler proposes doing “field tasks” as part of the SA curriculum. Field tasks are projects requiring use of the language in Chinese society to accomplish specific tasks. Here is Kubler’s example:

An advanced student interested in business might choose a project on Chinese toy exports to the U.S. To gather material, the student could set up interviews with people in the toy business and interview them, as well as reading related newspaper articles and trade journals. The goal might be presentation of an oral report to teachers and fellow students as well as preparation of a written report (p. 24).

According to Kubler (1997), a successful “field task” has four essential elements: 1) assigning a task to students; 2) drilling new vocabulary and sample dialogs in class; 3) performing the task in the society with the instructor accompanying the students to observe them; and 4) returning

to the classroom for detailed debriefing and corrective feedback. This is the earliest literature that can be found on community-based language learning in Chinese SA contexts.

Larson (1999), from the perspective of learning Japanese in Japan, also discusses two issues of integrating SA into students' on-campus academic programs, one of those being "self-managed Japanese." According to Larson, self-managed Japanese is a set of workbook exercises for self-managed learning of Japanese. There are twelve exercises meant to suggest what students can do to begin a program of self-initiated language learning. One example that Larson gives is as follows:

In this exercise you will visit one of the immense food halls that are common in the basements of Japanese department stores. Your task will include locating a department store that has a good food hall, locating the areas within the food hall where you can buy certain kinds of Japanese foodstuffs, finding out the names and prices of different foodstuffs, observing how Japanese customers talk to salespeople about the foodstuff in one area of the hall, and talking to a salesperson yourself about a particular foodstuff (p. 29).

Larson lists a three-step sequence that students should follow: 1) Anticipation, which includes talking to a mentor (e.g., Japanese friend) about the upcoming situation and practicing vocabulary and social expressions; 2) Enactment, which involves eavesdropping and observing what Japanese people do, rehearsing, and conducting an activity; 3) Reflection, which involves analyzing the experience, talking to

the mentor again, and writing all the new information in a notebook.

Besides, there are quite a few other studies that propose and report on the efforts being made to take full advantage of the SA environment in order to both engage learners in the local community and rapidly improve students' language skills. These efforts include: internships at local placement companies (Han, 2008), living off-campus (Yin, 2008), language partners (Han, 2008; Yin, 2008), study tours (Yin, 2008), and living with host families (Kubler, 1997; Dewey, Bown, Baker, Martinsen, Gold, & Eggett, 2013; Di Silvio, Donovan, & Malone, 2014; Kinginger et al., 2016).

However, it is worthwhile to mention that although living with host families can be advantageous for learning language and customs in the community during SA (Kubler, 1997; Dewey et al., 2013; Di Silvio et al., 2014), there are negative operational factors that can prevent SA programs from choosing homestay as a housing option. First, finding homestay families can be time-consuming and may be more expensive than other housing options. Second, since reliable homestay partners are often established through long-term cooperation, if the program changes location, it may be hard to establish new homestay contacts in a very short time. Third, host families tend to use over-simplified rather than genuine, naturalistic language (Siegal, 1996; Iino, 2006) and may treat the learner in a condescending manner (Wilkinson, 2005). Fourth, the study program can incur a personal risk, and therefore legal liability, if a student is harmed in a host family environment (Cunningham & Nolan, 2006). Even though the likelihood is very low, one occurrence can have serious

consequences for the program, its participants, and its personnel.

Meanwhile, for SA programs that provide language partners, administrators should not assume that students will naturally have productive time with language partners as long as they are given “free time.” Tobaru (2019) finds out that, in a four-week SA program in Japan, American students showed a passive attitude in interacting with Japanese language partners about what to do and where to go during their “free time,” because American students mistakenly assumed the Japanese value of “being polite” to be “not expressing true feeling,” and thus feared being rude by suggesting ideas. Therefore, Tobaru (2019) proposes that “free time” should rather be called “community exploration time,” and SA programs should provide pedagogical support for students to learn to actively find activities and effectively communicate with language partners.

Despite the efforts that have been made in improving the SA experience, Du (2013) still calls for administrators of SA programs to focus on creating more opportunities for students to interact with local people and finding more effective ways to encourage and motivate everyone—especially those who are less likely to do so on their own—to take advantage of the SA environment to improve their proficiency in the target language. In the following section, we will review the development process of having students learn in the local community in a Chinese SA program and introduce a collection of real-life tasks that enable learners to make use of the rich local resources to maximize their SA experience and enhance their language skills.

The Field Performance Tasks (FPTs)

Ohio State University (OSU) has been exploring learners' engagement with local communities during SA for over two decades. Since around 1996, the OSU summer SA program has started to require its students to engage in daily conversations with local people in the host city. Gradually, the assignments were developed into having students conduct interviews regularly on certain topics. In 2004, the program proposed to have students practice with, exchange experiences with, and invite feedback from their language partners without having their language partners directly involved in the interviews in the community. In 2009, a textbook titled *Perform Qingdao* was created around a virtual American college student's SA life in the Chinese city of Qingdao. Over years of revisions and development, *Perform Qingdao* now has various versions for different Chinese cities¹, which share the same framework but differ in content, depending on varied local information.

In 2013, a new activity, "Field Performance," was proposed. "Field Performance" is added at the end of each lesson, consisting of one or two Field Performances for student participants to accomplish in the community (e.g., take a taxi to some place after having learned the "taking a taxi" conversation), and give oral reports in class after they complete the tasks. In the same year, each student also received a palm-size notebook as a co-curricular pedagogical resource. Students were encouraged to carry the notebook around on excursions

¹ This series of textbooks include *Perform Qingdao*, *Perform Suzhou*, *Perform Xiamen*, *Perform Chengdu*, *Perform Guangzhou*, and *Perform Hangzhou*, among which *Perform Suzhou: A Course in Intermediate to Advanced Spoken Mandarin* was published in China in 2016 and in UK in 2018.

into the community. Each page of the notebook included one function (e.g., “How to compliment people”) and leaves the rest of the space blank. The students were required to write down their assumed expressions to each given function and revise accordingly if they heard more accurate ones uttered by Chinese native speakers in the community (or if language partners made suggestions during their one-on-one meetings). The implementation of the Field Performance and the notebook in 2013 yielded extensive feedback, and consequent revisions were made for the following year. The idea of Field Performance was further developed with the mindset of improving the authenticity and the practicality of the tasks, which were incorporated into a portable notebook that students can carry around and take notes wherever they go doing real-life tasks in the community. The tasks that the students have to accomplish in the community are called “Field Performance Tasks (FPTs).”

FPTs comprise a repertoire of pedagogically designed tasks that learners accomplish using the target language in the local community. It aims to facilitate learning to do things in Chinese, based on the premise that one cannot learn a foreign language, but instead, one can only learn to do things in the foreign language (Walker, 2010). The FPTs have three distinctive features. First, it provides a wide range of topics that cover extensive daily life events during SA. The content of FPTs is organized thematically into nine topics with a total of 94 tasks which are likely to be encountered by Chinese learners who are new to the local SA contexts: settling in, campus life, social gatherings, travel, solving problems, community events, conducting research, talking about the host city, expressing appreciation, and saying farewell.

Second, it provides varied levels of complexity to meet learners' needs at various stages of oral proficiency. This feature is realized through a star-rating system, in which different tasks are marked with different star levels: one-star tasks are recommended for learners at the equivalent of Novice-High to Intermediate-Mid learners on the ACTFL proficiency guidelines (ACTFL, 2012); two-star tasks are recommended for Intermediate-Mid to Intermediate High learners; and three-star tasks are recommended for Intermediate-High to Advance-Mid learners.

Third, the tasks have a mixed modality to encourage various modes of learning styles. Of the total 94 FPTs, 68 (72.3%) are individual tasks (i.e., to be accomplished by the learners themselves, although the language partner is allowed to accompany), 22 (23.4%) are pair work (i.e., to converse with the language partner or a Chinese native-speaking friend), and four (4.3%) are group projects (i.e., to be done in cooperation with classmates). These features aim to offer learners sufficient flexibility in choosing tasks that are tailored to their oral proficiency levels as well as their personal interests, so as to cultivate autonomous learners.

Each task description is presented on the left page, and the right page is left blank for ethnographic notes. The book series presents task descriptions in both English and Chinese versions in separate volumes: the English version is distributed to non-advanced learners, and the Chinese version to instructors and advanced learners. There is a short video available that demonstrates the reporting and feedback processes in class. Here is a typical example of a set of FPTs with three complexity levels: Taking a Taxi (see Appendix I for more examples).

☆☆☆ Take a taxi to a location of your choice (e.g., shopping center, park, restaurant), or when you are out in the community, take a taxi back to campus. Successful completion of this task involves hailing the taxi, communicating where you want to go, and paying the fare. Also figure out how taxi fees are charged (base price, fuel surcharge) and if taxis are allowed to enter campus.

★★☆ Take a taxi to a location of your choice. Engage the driver in small talk aiming at enhancing your understanding of his/her experience of life as a taxi driver. For example, inquire how long he/she has been driving a taxi, what he/she likes about the job, whether or not he/she owns the vehicle, or whether he/she considers this a good way to make a living.

★★★ Contact an Uber or a taxi dispatch service to take you to a location of your choice. After engaging the driver in some initial small talk, ask their opinion about a current event or social issue. Be prepared to politely share your own views on the subject as well as asking follow-up questions in response to the driver's comments. Examples of questions you might want to explore include: Should the government limit the number of privately-owned vehicles on the road? How has the presence of Uber affected the local transportation situation?

As the number of stars increases, the complexity levels elevate in terms of vocabulary, length, discourse, topic, and linguistic competency. A one-star task only involves the basic steps of taking a taxi, e.g., hailing the taxi, communicating where someone wants to go, and paying the fare. On ACTFL proficiency guidelines (2012), all of these are “predictable and concrete exchanges.” To accomplish this task, learners only need to initiate and/or respond to “direct questions or

requests.” A two-star task requires learners to participate on a higher level by engaging in small talk with the driver to better understand their life experience. For this task, a student will have to ask and/or answer a variety of questions to maintain an exchange of basic information related to the driver’s work, interests, and life experience. A three-star task challenges students on an even higher level by asking them to make a phone call to have the taxi dispatched and exchange opinions with the driver on a current situation or social event. This task will challenge learners to participate in informal and formal exchanges on a variety of topics with relevant and supporting facts.

To accomplish an FPT, we suggest four steps: prepare, conduct, reflect, and report. First, learners will read all the tasks with varied complexity levels under one topic and choose one task which will give them the appropriate level of challenge. Following each set of tasks, there is also a Getting Ready section for learners to jot down key phrases and expressions that they think they may use when doing the tasks. The purpose of this step is to activate learners’ prior knowledge (National Research Council, 2000). Then, learners will go to the community (e.g., supermarket, bus stop) to conduct the task. They can use the blank page provided to take field notes while they are conducting the task or after they have finished the task. Afterwards, learners will discuss their experiences in the local community with their language partners on what did or did not work while doing the task, what they didn’t understand while talking to the local people and discuss what they would do differently next time if they encounter a similar situation. Then they will report their experiences in class and answer questions raised by the instructor and their classmates.

Instructors and some language partners who sit in on the class will provide feedback regarding their language use and cultural understanding. One thing worth noting is that in the final step where learners report their experiences to the class, learners can adopt different means of presentation based on their varied proficiency levels. At a lower level, students can reenact their experiences in the local community, while at a higher level learners are encouraged to share their ethnographic notes so that a more in-depth discussion can be carried out.

Comparison among Self-managed Japanese, Field Tasks, and FPTs

The field tasks proposed by Kubler (1997) and Self-managed Japanese by Larson (1999) are significant propositions in Chinese/Japanese language pedagogy that bring SA program students closer to the local community. Compared with these two designs, the FPTs share one similarity—they have learners do things in the Chinese local community—and some differences, which will be reviewed below.

One of the most salient differences we've found is that the required interventions from instructors are different. The Self-managed Japanese does not specifically require intervention from instructors, but from mentors, who might be classroom teachers, but more typically are Japanese friends, to help converse with students before and after doing tasks. Field tasks, on the other hand, have instructors' intensive participation throughout the whole process. They assign levels and tasks, accompany students in the community to observe and take notes of the students' performances, and give critiques to students' report performances when they return to the classroom. However, having instructors present in the

community may cause operational difficulty for many SA programs that do not have a low instructor/student ratio. Furthermore, even though the instructor does not intend to intervene in the interaction between the student and people in the community, the appearance of the instructor may have an impact on how a natural conversation goes. Having this in mind, FPTs do not have instructors accompany students to do tasks. Instead, language partners or classmates can either accompany the students or participate in the conversation to reduce anxiety level and increase bonds between the students and their language partners and classmates. Also, unlike Kubler's field tasks where instructors assign a specific task to students, FPTs allow instructors to give students autonomy in selecting the tasks based on their proficiency levels, operability, and preferences—but require instructors to provide timely advice when necessary.

The second biggest difference is the oral proficiency levels for which the tasks are suitable and the flexibility allowed in doing the tasks. Larson's Self-managed Japanese does not specifically address which oral proficiency level it is designed for. Kubler's field tasks do not either, but according to Kubler's example, it seems to be designed for more advanced learners. FPTs are suitable for learners ranging from Novice High to Advanced-Mid. Learners who fall in this range can all select a task that is appropriate to their oral proficiency level. Furthermore, unlike Larson's Self-managed Japanese and Kubler's field tasks being both individual tasks, FPTs allow individual work, paired work with language partners, and group work with classmates, depending on the nature of the various tasks. For a complete analysis of the differences, please refer to Table 1 below:

Table 1. The comparisons among Self-managed Japanese, Field Task, and FPTs (Noda, 2014)

Task name	Self-Managed Japanese	Field task	FPTs
Proposed by	Phyllis Larson (1999)	Cornelius Kubler (1997)	Chai, Cornelius, & Mu (2014)
Steps suggested	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Anticipate 2. Act 3. Reflect 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Assign task 2. Prep in class & self-study 3. Practical Application 4. Debrief in class 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Prepare 2. Conduct 3. Analyze and Reflect 4. Present in class
Instructor's role	Pre: (Mentor) helps discuss; Mid: N/A Post: (Mentor) helps discuss	Pre: Assign task; in-class rehearse; Mid: Accompany students to do tasks; Post: Critique students' report performance	Pre: Offer advice (if any); Mid: N/A Post: Critique students' report performance
Levels	No indication of levels	Advanced	Novice-Low to Advanced-Mid

Modality	Individual	Individual	Individual, Pair work, and Group work
Relationship with curriculum	Supplement to classroom activities	Must-have	One course in the curriculum
Number	12	Undefined (left up to teachers)	94 across 9 topics
Example	Food hall (in a department store); Watching TV	Interviewing business people in preparation for research presentation	Taking a taxi

Field-testing Background and Methodology

The FPTs were field-tested in the summer of 2014 as part of the curriculum for OSU's Intensive Chinese Language Program (Group A) and another OSU's larger intensive Chinese language program (Group B) with funding provided by a grant from the US Department of State. The main goal of this field-testing is to learn about users' feedback that can shed light on how to revise the tasks for future use. The background information of the two groups can be seen from Table 2 below.

Table 2. The background information of the two field-tested groups.

		Group A	Group B
1.	Sites	1 site in Suzhou	2 sites in Suzhou, 1 site in Hangzhou, and 1 site in Guangzhou (total 4 sites)
2.	Duration	7 weeks in summer	8 weeks in summer
3.	Instructors	2 from OSU	4 from OSU and 14 in Chinese host universities (i.e., 1 OSU faculty and 3-4 Chinese host university faculty in each site)
4.	Number of users	9	102

5.	Prior Chinese learning experience	2+ years (OSU)	2+ (various US universities)
6.	Pre-program oral proficiency level	Intermediate-Mid to Advanced-Low	Novice-High to Advanced-High
7.	Language partners	A Chinese or education related undergraduate or graduate native Chinese in the host university was paired with each student participant as a language partner, meeting the student participant for 1-2 hours on Monday–Friday afternoons.	
8.	Curricular schedule	Morning: one hour on Spoken Development, one hour on Spoken Application, and two hours on Reading and Composition. Afternoon & evening: meeting language partners, community exploration, and individual class preparation.	

As shown in Table 2, Group A is a Chinese SA program located in a university in Suzhou. Group B has four sites, including two sites in Suzhou, one site in Hangzhou, and one site in Guangzhou (all in universities). Group A and Group B occurred during the similar time period in summer, although Group A had seven weeks in total while Group B had eight weeks in total. In terms of instructors, Group A had two instructors, both of whom were dispatched from OSU (one of them is the co-designers of FPT's); each site in Group B had one instructor dispatched from OSU and three to four local instructors from the host university.

Group A had nine student participants, and eight of them received Chinese language training at OSU. Their pre-program oral proficiency levels were from Intermediate-Mid to Advanced-Low.

The users from Group A were small in number and unified in their Chinese language learning backgrounds. On the other hand, since the student participants from Group B were recruited nationwide, their Chinese language learning backgrounds and their pre-program oral proficiency levels were more diversified. Group B is closer to the mixed population of nationwide users we can anticipate in the future, therefore the results from Group B should help us better predict reactions to the FPTs from users of diverse backgrounds.

Since both SA programs were facilitated by OSU, the curricula were similar. For each student, an undergraduate or graduate native Chinese in the host university was paired with each student as a language partner meeting the student participant for one to two hours on Monday to Friday afternoons. On weekday mornings students met in class for four hours, including one hour of Spoken Development, one hour of Spoken Application², and two hours of Reading and Composition. Spoken Application is the course where FPTs are reported and discussed.

In order to achieve the main goals of field-testing, we aim to find answers to the following three questions: 1) How do learners respond to the presumed benefits of the FPTs? 2) What are the learners' preferences on different modalities? 3) What do learners like most and least about the FPTs?

² In Spoken Development classes students learn new dialogs, while in Spoken Application classes students report and discuss their completed FPTs.

To answer these questions, we designed a questionnaire (see Appendix II) that contains numerous statements and asked the survey participants to choose a level of agreement (i.e., strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagree) and degree of frequency (i.e., always, frequently, occasionally, and never). We also asked survey participants to provide comments. Toward the end of each SA program, the researchers sent out the paper questionnaires to the nine participants of Group A and the online questionnaires to the 102 participants of Group B. In the end, the survey received seven responses from Group A and 44 responses from Group B. The data was calculated and analyzed, and the results are presented in the following section.

Field-test Results

Question One: How did learners respond to the presumed benefits of the FPTs?

Chart 1 below lists the three statements in the questionnaire that concern the presumed benefits of the FPTs. For the first statement: “I was able to do more challenging FPTs at the end of the program than at the beginning,” Three learners from Group A chose “strongly agree,” two “agree,” two “disagree,” and none “strongly disagree.” In Group B, six learners chose “strongly agree,” 17 “agree,” 15 “disagree,” and six “strongly disagree.” Overall speaking, this statement received a percentage of agreement of 71% from Group A (five out of seven chose “strongly agree” and “agree”) and 52% from Group B (23 out of 44 chose “strongly agree” and “agree”).

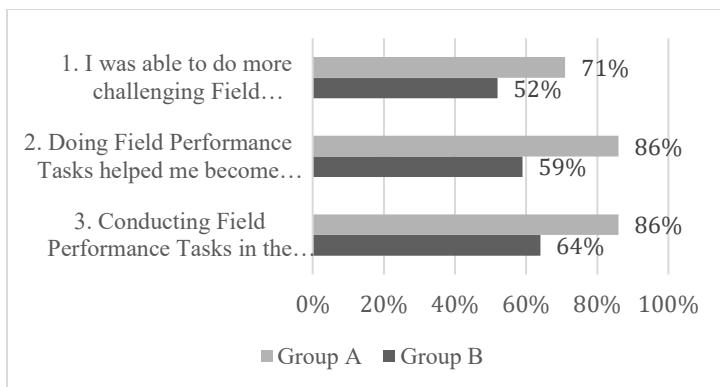


Chart 1. The comparative degree of agreement of the two groups on presumed benefits of FPTs

For the second statement: “Doing FPTs helped me become more confident in talking to strangers in Chinese,” two learners from Group A chose “strongly agree,” four “agree,” one “disagree,” and none “strongly disagree.” In Group B, four learners chose “strongly agree,” 22 “agree,” 10 “disagree,” and eight “strongly disagree.” In other words, this statement received an agreement of 86% from Group A (six out of seven chose “strongly agree” and “agree”), and 59% from Group B (26 out of 44 chose “strongly agree” and “agree”).

For the last statement: “Conducting FPTs in the community is a good use of time in a SA program,” three learners from Group A chose “strongly agree,” three “agree,” one “disagree,” and none “strongly disagree.” In Group B, six learners chose “strongly agree,” 22 “agree,” eight “disagree,” seven “strongly disagree,” and one did not respond. In this sense, the agreement ratio was 86% from Group A (six out of seven chose “strongly agree” and “agree”) and 64% from Group B (28 out of 44 chose “strongly disagree” and “agree”).

The students of Group A responded to the presumed benefits of FPTs more positively than those from Group B. The underlying reason for such a divergence may lie in the fact that the concepts of community and performance traditionally have been a part of the Chinese language program at OSU. Students from Group A have already been used to the concept of performance before they started the SA program. On the other hand, since Group B students came from various Chinese learning backgrounds, their exposure to these learning experiences may vary, and therefore their acceptance and recognition of FPTs was lower than the first group. Despite the varied degree of acceptance, FPTs were still widely welcomed by Group B students: over half of these students recognized that FPTs facilitated their ability to undertake communication challenges and build their confidence. An even larger percentage recognized it to be a meaningful time investment.

These results are significant for new pedagogical materials in their first field-test. However, the discrepancy in the agreement rates indicates that varied exposure to the concepts of community and performance in learning Chinese as a foreign language, as well as the different experiences and habits of learning Chinese can influence learners' perceptions on FPTs. This, in turn, may affect their learning outcomes and self-evaluations.

Question Two: What were the learners' preferences of different modalities?

To understand learners' responses to the pedagogical design of the three modalities (i.e., individual tasks, pair work, and group projects), we provided a statement for survey participants to choose their frequency of agreement, which is "I preferred

doing FPTs that involved talking with people in the community more than talking with my language partner.” Participants’ responses to this statement are presented in Chart 2.

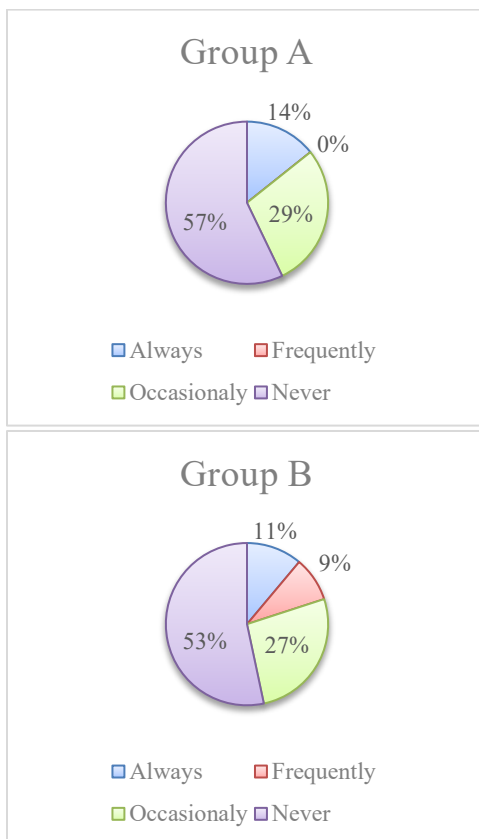


Chart 2. The learners’ responses to “I preferred doing FPTs that involved talking with people in the community more than talking with my language partner.”

We can see from Chart 2 that for both groups, only a small portion of participants preferred to talk with the local people: 14% of the participants from Group A and 11% of the participants from Group B indicated that they always preferred

doing FPTs that involved talking with people in the community. The majority of the participants preferred doing tasks paired with their language partners. 57% of the Group A participants and 53% of Group B participants indicated that they never preferred doing FPTs that involved talking with people in the community over talking with their language partners. This is an unexpected finding, and yet understandable. Compared with the strangers in the community of unknown social status and with varied accents and willingness to cooperate, the language partners could appear more available and approachable to the learners: the SA students and language partners were of similar ages and similar college education backgrounds, and they could have developed friendships by meeting with each other on a daily basis for weeks. While we support SA students to engage in in-depth and sustained interpersonal exchanges and develop stronger and deeper relationships with language partners, we also want SA students to step out of their comfort zone, increase their social network, and engage in diverse types of interaction. However, the most typical learner explanation was that it was due to the overwhelming workload that forced them to choose the less time-demanding tasks:

I enjoyed getting to spend more time conversing and interacting with my language partner. Doing the tasks together was a bonding experience for our friendship as well as beneficial to developing my oral language skills. I also enjoyed going out into the community, but I found myself often choosing tasks that would require less time or could be done together with my language partner rather than a stranger. This was not because I did not want to go out, but because my time was so limited due to large amounts of other homework and program responsibilities.

Question Three: What do the learners like most and least about the FPTs?

One section of the questionnaire is that we asked the survey participants to freely write down what they like most and least about the FPTs. Because there were more respondents in Group B, we received more varied responses from this group. The number one aspect that the students liked most for both groups is “interacting with local people.” Another response from Group A was they “learned firsthand culture.” Group B gave more various perspectives, which included “interesting topics,” “improving listening and speaking skills,” “learning things that I wouldn’t have considered” and so on. One participant wrote: “I loved being forced out of my comfort zone and getting creative ideas to go out and practice my Chinese with native speakers.” Another participant wrote: “a lot of the topics were genuinely interesting. I enjoyed hearing Chinese perspectives on subjects like health care, travel, government, and so on.” These favored aspects mostly fall into our presumed benefits of doing FPTs, such as engagement with the locals in the community, improving oral language proficiency level, and learning Chinese culture.

As for what learners liked least about the FPTs, some participants pointed out issues of time. Some pointed out that some tasks were not relevant to their particular interest. A number of participants also reported they felt nervous when they were talking with strangers. This is particularly understandable as when people are moved out of their comfort zone, they tend to be nervous. However, better time management and finding topics based on students’ interest can be addressed and improved through continuing development of FPTs in SA programs.

Continuing Development

After nearly twenty years of exploration and effort in learning in the local community, FPTs have been developed with the mindset of combining classroom learning with language contact in the community to take advantage of the SA language environment. The field-test results suggest an overall positive attitude from the students towards FPTs in helping them engage with the local people, improve their oral proficiency, and learn Chinese culture.

To make the best use of the FPTs, we have made suggestions and improvements. First, to make effective use of FPTs, we suggest instructors set a realistic pace for the curriculum and allow students sufficient time to be out in the community. Students mentioned that time pressures are the major reason why they choose to converse with their language partners instead of going to the community; we should therefore consider the overall workload before deciding on the number of the tasks to be assigned. If students are not given enough time to prepare and do the tasks, the likely result will be that they will avoid the tasks that require them to be in the community. Second, we deleted those tasks that were reported to be unrealistic and uninteresting, and replaced them with new tasks. In addition, we rearranged the order of the tasks accordingly to better suit the needs of the learners in SA programs. The published version of 99 FPTs can be found in *Action! China: A Field Guide to Using Chinese in the Community* (Chai, Cornelius, & Mu, 2018).

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Appendix I Sample of FPTs

Individual task: Taking a Taxi.

★☆☆ Take a taxi to a location of your choice (shopping center, park, restaurant), or when you are out in the community, take a taxi back to campus. Successful completion of this task involves hailing the taxi, communicating where you want to go, and paying the fare. Also figure out how taxi fees are charged (base price, fuel surcharge) and if taxis are allowed to enter campus.

★★☆ Take a taxi to a location of your choice. Engage the driver in small talk aiming at enhancing your understanding of his/her experience of life as a taxi driver. For example, inquire how long he/she has been driving a taxi, what he/she likes about the job, whether or not he/she owns the vehicle, or whether he/she considers this a good way to make a living.

★★★ Contact a Uber or a taxi dispatch service to take you to a location of your choice. After engaging the driver in some initial small talk, ask their opinion about a current event or social issue. Be prepared to politely share your own views on the subject as well as asking follow-up questions in response to the driver's comments. Examples of questions you might want to explore include: Should the government limit the number of privately-owned vehicles on the road? How has the presence of Uber affected the local transportation situation?

Pair work: Understanding Teacher-Student Relations

★☆☆ Talk with a Chinese university student to find out what behaviors are considered appropriate and inappropriate in a Chinese classroom. Discuss similarities and differences between classroom etiquette in China and your home country.

★★☆ Talk with a Chinese university teacher or student about how expectations regarding classroom behavior at the university level differ from the classroom etiquette in primary or secondary schools. For example, are university teachers stricter or more lenient regarding things like promptness, participation, posture, or cell phone use in class.

★★★ Talk with a Chinese university student about how they “read” their Chinese teachers. What cues let students know how teachers perceive them? How might Chinese teachers indicate approval or disapproval? What do Chinese students do to maintain good relationships with their teachers or to repair a problem in the relationship?

Group projects: What People Love about a City (Group Project)

The song from a TV commercial “What I Love about Shanghai” has inspired people in various cities to create lists of what they love about their own city. For this Field Performance task you will work in groups of 4-5 to find out what the people of your city love about it. Each group will take a poster or cloth banner and some markers to a public place in the city (e.g., park, business district, shopping district) and invite people who pass by to write down something they love about their city. Collect as many responses as possible and engage in conversation with the people who participate. Take turns inviting people to participate, holding the poster or banner, and talking to people about what they wrote. If you can’t read something someone writes, ask the person to explain it to you. Afterwards, work as a group to identify the top reasons Chinese people love your host city. Be prepared to show your

poster or banner and talk about the top reasons you have identified during your report in class. ★☆☆ or ★★☆☆

Appendix II Student Survey about FPT's

Thank you for providing your input on Field Performance Tasks. Your responses will contribute to a better understanding of Field Performance Tasks in an intensive Chinese study abroad program. Your responses will also provide a basis for revising and improving Field Performance Tasks for future program participants. This survey will take approximately 10-15 minutes to complete. Field Performance Tasks were developed specifically for the study abroad programs administered by The Ohio State University.

You have been selected to participate in this survey because you have been identified as a participant in one of the study abroad programs. We hope that we can count on your participation in this survey.

This survey is anonymous and no identifying information will be collected. Your individual responses will not be shared with anyone outside the research team which consists of the authors of Field Performance Tasks. All responses that relate to or describe identifiable characteristics of individuals may be used only for statistical purposes and may not be disclosed or used in identifiable form for any other purpose, unless otherwise compelled by law. The information you provide will be combined with the information provided by others in statistical reports. No individually-identifiable data, either at the student- or institute-level, will be included in the statistical reports. Participation in the survey is voluntary and you may choose to skip any question you prefer not to answer. We urge you to participate in the survey—your responses and experiences will

be invaluable in helping improve the educational experience of future program participants as well as improving the quality of Field Performance Tasks as a component of the program curriculum.

If you have questions about this study, you may contact X. For questions about your rights as a participant in this study or to discuss other study-related concerns or complaints with someone who is not part of the research team, you may contact Y.

To acknowledge your consent to participate in this survey, click “NEXT.”

1. Indicate the extent to which the following statements about the Field Performance Tasks reflect your own experience: Never, occasionally (less than half the time), frequently (more than half the time), always.
 - 1) I read all the Field Performance Tasks before selecting which ones to do.
 - 2) I used the Getting Ready section to activate my prior knowledge before conducting Field Performance Tasks.
 - 3) I used the blank pages for taking notes on Field Performance Tasks.
 - 4) The star-rating for each Field Performance Task helped me choose appropriate tasks for my level.
 - 5) I practiced my Field Performance Tasks with my language partner before doing them with strangers in the community.

- 6) After completing the Field Performance Tasks, I discussed what did or did not work with my language partner.
- 7) The people in the community seemed to enjoy helping me with my Field Performance Tasks.
- 8) I felt nervous when Field Performance Tasks involved talking to strangers in Chinese.
- 9) I felt comfortable doing Field Performance Tasks with my language partner.
- 10) I preferred doing Field Performance Tasks that involved talking with people in the community rather than talking with my language partner.
- 11) Reporting on my Field Performance Tasks was a challenging speaking activity for me.
- 12) Listening to classmates report on Field Performance Tasks was beneficial.
- 13) I learned more from doing the Field Performance Tasks than from reporting on them.
- 14) I was able to do more challenging Field Performance Tasks at the end of the program than at the beginning.
- 15) Doing Field Performance Tasks helped me become more confident in talking to strangers in Chinese.
- 16) I enjoyed the group Field Performance projects (e.g., planning a trip)

- 17) Conducting Field Performance Tasks in the community is a good use of time in a study abroad program.
2. I conducted most of my Field Performance Tasks
 - By myself
 - In collaboration with a classmate
 - Accompanied by my language partner or other Chinese friend
 3. The most important factor influencing my choice of Field Performance Tasks was
 - How much time I thought the task would require
 - Who I would have to talk to (e.g., language partner vs. stranger)
 - How difficult I thought the task might be (e.g., star rating)
 - How interesting the task was to me
 - Whether the task could be done individually or with others
 - Other (please specify)
 4. On average the amount of time it took for me to conduct a Field Performance Task was
 - 30 minutes or less

- 30–60 minutes
 - 60–90 minutes
 - More than 90 minutes
5. What did you like best about doing Field Performance Tasks? Why?
 6. What did you like least about doing Field Performance Tasks? Why?