Teaching Chinese Heritage and Foreign Language Students in Mixed Classes[1]

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Abstract

Through a three-year implementation in the 100- and 200-level Chinese language courses of a university in the U.S., this article provides a timely response to many CHL (Chinese as Heritage Language) scholars' repeated call for optimizing placement and learning for CHL learners in mixed classes and sets up a useful model for many CHL-and-CFL (Chinese as a Foreign Language) mixed Chinese language programs. Through the innovative in-course two-path design and technology-driven tools, the CHL learners had their diverse backgrounds systematically profiled and their needed skills clearly identified and efficiently trained. The article also discusses the results of this implementation—enrollment, pre- and post-course proficiency, and student feedback. The

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article finally discusses the drawbacks of such an

implementation and possible solutions.

Keywords: Chinese as Heritage Language; mixed classes; pedagogical design; placement

1. Literature Review
Chinese as a Heritage Language Learner

Originating in Canada in the early 1970s, the term Heritage Language (HL) began to be used in the U.S. in the 1990s (Duff, 2008, p. 71; Hornberger & Wang, 2008, p. 3; Montrul, 2016, p. 13), during which time the National Heritage Languages Initiative was launched (1998), followed by its National Conference on Heritage Languages (1999) and the corresponding edited volume (2001) (Peyton et al., 2001, p. 14). The then HL definition by Valdés (2001), "[one] who is raised in a home where a non-English language is spoken, who speaks or at least understands the language and who is to some degree bilingual in that language and in English" (p. 38), was quickly adopted in the field of Chinese as a Heritage Language (CHL) (He, 2006, p. 1). This is now considered a "narrow" or "relatively narrow" definition (Ji, 2021; Luo et al., 2019). A "wide" or "broad" definition (Ji, 2021; Luo et al., 2019), on the other hand, initially embraced only learners who have "one or more parents who speak Chinese as their first language," regardless of learners' own linguistic

proficiency (Weger-Guntharp, 2006). The scope of the term broadened further, and soon covered all learners with a heritage motivation, including those in families with multiracial marriages or multinational adoptive families (Hornberger & Wang, 2008). Standing between these two categories, an eclectic category comprehensively attends to heritage motivation, linguistic proficiency, and social language contact (Ji, 2021). It considers "non-Chinese learners who have had considerable exposure of the target language by living, studying, or working in Chinese-speaking communities" (e.g., a Caucasian native-English-speaking learner who received elementary schooling in Taiwan) eligible for HL learning, and hence the modified term "students with [some Chinese-language] background" (Li & Duff, 2008, p. 17). On the other hand, a self-identified HL learner with non-existing linguistic proficiency would be "more on par with L2 learners" (Ji, 2021, p. 8). To date, the CHL field has grown from where the pioneers argued for its legitimacy (Li & Duff, 2008) to where comprehensive overviews and

large-scale even national surveys are burgeoning (Duff et al.,

2017; Ji, 2021; Li & Duff, 2018; Luo et al., 2019; Pu, 2019;

Xiang, 2016; Xiao-Desai, 2021).

Tracks

The CHL learners, identified largely by Valdés' (2001)

definition, are offered a separate track (Luo et al., 2017) in

roughly 20% of Chinese language programs,[2] including

"most prestigious universities" (Tian, 2017, p. 437). Such a

track is commonly referred to as the "heritage track" (Li et

al., 2014; Luo et al., 2019), but the term "heritage track" may

not be suitable if Cantonese-speaking HL   learners   are

not   included   (Kelleher, 2008). Alternative names

are reportedly being used, such as "Mandarin Chinese reading

and writing for native speakers class" (Wiley,   2008),

"bilingual track" (Duff et al., 2017; Kelleher, 2008), as well

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[2] By 2012, 20.99% of the 100-level courses and 18.52% of the 200-level courses in North American college-level Chinese language programs (N=162) offered separate tracks for CHL learners (Li et al., 2014, p. 19). By 2016, 20.7% of the U.S. college-level Chinese language programs (N=246) "have separate courses for heritage learners" (Luo et al., 2019, p. 105).

as "accelerated Chinese," "intensive Chinese," and "Chinese of advanced beginners" (Luo et al., 2019). Meanwhile, the commonly named "non-heritage track" is also called "mainstream track" (Luo et al., 2017), "regular track" (Kelleher, 2008; Weger-Guntharp, 2008), or "Chinese true beginners track" (Wu, 2008).

Despite the two-track design and various terms, most (other) Chinese language programs still mix CHL and Chinese as a Foreign Language (CFL) learners in the same courses with little institutional practices reported. Luo et al's (2019) nationwide survey shows that 75.6% of the U.S. institutions do not have separate courses for CHL learners, even though 18.7% of them "have a significant portion of heritage learners" (p. 105). From the administrative view, the reasons for mixing classes include lack of budgetary support, limited resources, low number of HL learners, and lack of training for faculty (Carreira, 2015; Carreira, 2017; Luo et al., 2019; Son, 2017). Over the years, CHL scholars have repeatedly called for optimizing placement and learning for

CHL and CFL learners in programs that have limited resources to support separate curricula (Carreira, 2015; Carreira, 2017; Li & Duff, 2008; Luo, 2015; Son, 2017; Weger-Guntharp, 2008; Wiley, 2008; Xiang, 2016; Zhang & Koda, 2018).

Instruction

As "accelerated Chinese" (one of the above terms) reveals, many separate CHL curricula progress at a much faster (even doubled) pace. Luo et al. (2019) identified three major CHL curricular types. Two of those types are designed so that "one year's CHL instruction was regarded as equivalent to two years of nonheritage instruction" (one type adopts the same textbooks for CFL learners, e.g., *Integrated Chinese*, and the other uses CHL-specific textbooks) (p. 107-108). Yet since research has shown that lower-level CHL learners do not develop literacy skills more quickly than non-heritage learners (Ke, 1998; Xiao, 2006; Xiao, 2008), the practice of accelerating the learning process by increasing the amount of characters for CHL learners to produce is cautioned (Ke,

1998). Moreover, most CHL instructors were neither satisfied with traditional CFL textbooks nor CHL-specific textbooks—the traditional textbooks had "too many grammar exercises" but "not enough reading materials"; CHL-specific textbooks lack character coaching materials such as common radicals and phonetic components (Luo et al., 2019, p. 109-110).

To mitigate CFL textbook weaknesses and avoid undue acceleration, Luo et al.'s (2017) CHL-track curriculum sets up a useful model of classroom instruction. It uses the same volumes of *Integrated Chinese* in a 200-level year-long course as many non-CHL courses do, but only assigns literacy-focused workbook exercises and incorporates literature supplementary readings in the third quarter.

Meanwhile, the long-established Individualized Instruction (I.I.) program at The Ohio State University (i.e., a 15-minute one-on-one session mirroring a 50-minute group class)[3] is also an exemplar for CHL-tailored instruction. In this program, established in the early 1990s, Mandarin speakers may bypass some spoken sessions and focus more on reading and writing (Christensen & Wu, 1993, p. 96; Noda, 2013, p. 143). Regardless of the skills these sessions emphasize, they are all evaluated by the same assessment standard as students do in group class. Such practice not only responds flexibly to diverse CHL learners' needs, but also exerts less budgetary concern than classroom instruction.

Another concern regarding some CHL-track instruction is that it lacks recognition of dialect speakers' backgrounds and needs. In Wiley's (2008) case study, a Taiwanese-background student at UC Berkeley quit the

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[3] Yu (2021) comments that it "was a pioneering institution during the 1980s Individualized Instruction Movement and still offers a vibrant Individualized Instruction program in various languages" (p. 3).

second semester of their CHL course because the professor from Beijing frequently corrected his Taiwanese accent and marked down writing traditional characters that he retained from Chinese school. Wong and Xiao-Desai (2019) discovered through interviews with 64 CHL learners (mostly dialect speakers) in Hawaii and California that they felt Beijing speech sounds (e.g., *er*) alien to their ears and were reluctant to commit to learning the required simplified characters instead of traditional characters which they have "a strong attachment to" (p. 97). Therefore, many CHL scholars advocate recognizing the legitimacy of Chinese language variations, understanding CHL learners' dialect backgrounds, and respecting their preferences of writing systems to maintain dialect speakers' own identities and ideologies (Kelleher, 2008; Li & Duff, 2008; Wiley, 2008; Wong & Xiao-Desai, 2019; Xiao-Desai, 2021).

Assessment
Prior to course instruction, HL placement (or "diagnostic assessment") procedures typically use locally developed

placement tests (i.e., discrete items and open-ended tasks such as oral and written tests), self-assessments, and biographical (or "autobiographic," "background") questionnaires (Ji, 2021, p. 9-14; Kondo-Brown, 2021, p. 900). CHL placement procedures similarly include background questionnaires, oral interviews, written tests, and self-assessments (Li & Duff, 2008, p. 21; Pu, 2019, p. 71). To "provide a more comprehensive student assessment" (McGinnis, 1996, p. 109) and "avoid the misplacement of incoming students" (Kondo-Brown, 2021, p. 900), many reported local placement procedures use some combination of the above methods; among them, oral interviews are conducted unanimously, followed by biographical questionnaires and discrete-item tests than composition tasks (Christensen & Wu, 1993; Liu, 2011; McGinnis, 1996; Weger-Guntharp, 2008; Wu, 2008). These scholars' reported cases are summarized below, followed by two additional unusual and contrasting instances.

Christensen and Wu (1993) reports conducting a language background survey and then an interview that

evaluates listening, speaking, and reading proficiency and decides where in the text materials to begin and what pace to follow (in the above-mentioned individualized instruction program). McGinnis (1996) uses a locally created discrete-item test first and then switched to the SAT II Chinese test, both of which contain listening comprehension, grammatical structure, and reading comprehension sections in a multiple-choice format, and suggests supplementing an oral interview with predetermined format and/or writing task if institutions have the resources (p. 109). Similarly, Wu (2008) conducts a course-based oral interview followed by reading and writing test questions. Placement not only starts from pre-registration in the previous semester, but also involves identifying "heritage learners in the regular Elementary Chinese sections who may be better suited to the heritage course" (p. 286). Liu (2011) uses an educational background questionnaire (instead of a discrete-item test), an oral interview, and a composition task, and advises comparing interview responses with questionnaire responses to ensure

consistency and accuracy. Weger-Guntharp (2008) reports a much less complex placement procedure, which is "an obligatory, informal, one-on-one" pre-course diagnostic interview "asking about language exposure, dialect knowledge, and motivations for taking the course" in open-ended questions.

Nevertheless, Tian's (2017) reported placement procedure is unusual—the head of the CHL track announces after the first ten minutes of a three-hour written placement exam designed for CFL learners that if CHL learners can understand the head's speech but do not recognize the Chinese characters in the exam they are moved to a separate orientation directly. What's more, CHL learners with no or low proficiency in Mandarin Chinese are shuffled between the CHL and non-CHL tracks for so long that they eventually drop Chinese class altogether. In contrast, Kelleher's (2008) reported Cantonese-speaking students who are placed into the CHL track resist the placement decisions made by the

department and re-place themselves in the non-CHL track that they think best meets their needs. Hence, Kelleher (2008) advocates placing Cantonese-speaking CHL learners into the non-CHL track and renaming "heritage track" since Cantonese-speaking CHL learners aren't included.

In addition to the diagnostic assessment, (C)HL scholars also value both formative and summative assessments (Kondo-Brown, 2021, p. 897; Xiang, 2016, p. 187). Xiang (2016) especially advocates measuring learner's entry- and exit-level proficiency with ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines and performance-based (e.g., interpersonal, presentational) assessment throughout a course (p. 187).

2. Current Study
Adopting the "broad" category of CHL definition, the current study provides a timely response to the above-mentioned CHL scholars' proposal to optimize placement and learning for CHL learners in mixed classes by incorporating the knowledge gained in previous literature and

the researcher's teaching experience. For three years (six semesters in total) the researcher taught at a university in the east coast of the U.S. for its 100- and 200-level Chinese language courses (i.e., Chinese 101, 102, 201, 202) where CHL and CFL students were roughly balanced. The percentage of CHL students per course ranged from 29% to 58%. Among the total enrollment of 304 (188 individual students), the enrollment of CHL learners was 134 (82 individual students, 44%).

However, since the Chinese language program only supported a single-tier system due to limited resources, no CHL-specific course or track was offered or was planned to be offered. Over the years, the program-level placement into a 100- or 200-level course was given largely based on the coordinator-student email communication (in English) about the students' self-described four skills (reading, writing, speaking, and listening) and previous learning experience. This procedure often resulted in misplacement, but it was

sometimes too late to re-place these enrolled students (especially late enrollees) into a different level since registration had already closed. Meanwhile, since the mixed-class practices were not methodically executed, the initial student course evaluations showed that some CFL students were discouraged by the CHL students who did not prepare for and joked about "winging" class while some CHL students felt bored staying in class. The need to create a practicable mixed-class course design was pressing.

Beginning in the first semester of this three-year period, the instructor started exploring options to expand the program's pedagogical design in a way that would better serve a mixed classroom that included both CFL and CHL students. This paper reports the exploration and implementation processes to address the following issues: What pedagogical design can be created to better suit the needs of mixed classes? What are the learning outcomes and student feedback of this pedagogical design? It is hoped that

this study will offer valuable insight to many 100- and 200-level Chinese language courses without CHL tracks, regardless of whether the CHL learners are the minority, roughly balanced, or the majority in mixed classes as categorized by Carreira (2015, p. 29).

3. Pedagogical Design

The instructor's 100-level and 200-level courses were all four-credit, 15-week courses using the *Integrated Chinese* textbook series (Liu et al., 2018, "*IC*" thereafter), and each course covered five *IC* lessons and met three 50-minute classes a week (i.e., Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays). Originally designed for CFL learners framed in the Performed Culture Approach, the instructor separated the spoken and written class hours to help CFL learners first build a foundation of phonological representations of target expressions and then only need to learn the written representations of the spoken

language.[4] Now by inheriting this pedagogical framework

with separated spoken and written class hours while

referencing The Ohio State University's I.I. program

mentioned above, the courses also met the special needs of

Mandarin and dialect-speaking CHL learners of building

literacy skills without much labor-intensive adaptation in a

Chinese language program in which discussing having a

separate CHL track is moot. Based on this framework, the

instructor created two additions tailored to the CHL students'

needs, which are introduced below.

Literacy Path and Regular Path
The instructor's creation of the Literacy Path and the Regular

Path was motivated by an enrolled Beijing-Mandarin-speaking

CHL student in the first semester inquiring about the

possibility of only working on reading and writing skills.

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[4] See Chai (2022) for the detailed discussion of the framework, schedules, activities, assessments, and effectiveness. Simply speaking, every Monday and Wednesday class built oral/aural communicative skills based on the pinyin script, and every Friday class built reading and compositional skills while consolidating spoken skills based on the character script. Each class meeting required students to prepare approximately two hours.

Unlike other programs' CHL and non-CHL tracks that have separate courses, the Literacy Path and the Regular Path were two paths tailored to CFL and CHL students' different needs in the same course. Although tailored mainly to Mandarin-speaking CHL learners, the Literacy Path is not named as "the Heritage Path" since this path welcomes qualified non-heritage learners who received extensive Chinese schooling experience in Chinese-speaking worlds and recognizes Cantonese-speaking learners' heritage although they may be placed in the Regular Path.

The Literacy Path allowed students to opt out of most spoken skills requirements for Mandarin-speaking CHL students and other qualified students so that they could focus on developing literacy skills. The Regular Path was intended for CHL learners with no or low oral proficiency and CFL students to develop all four skills through all class hours. Table 1 below shows the two slightly different assessment structures for the two paths, both of which include the

diagnostic, formative, and summative assessments (the
diagnostic assessment will be introduced in the next section).

Categories			Regular Path (Total 350 points)	Literacy Path (Total 230 points)
Diagnostic Assessment	Background spreadsheet		5 points (1%)	5 points (2%)
	Pre- & post-course CCALT		5 points (1%)	5 points (2%)
Formative Assessment	Class performances	Spoken classes	5 points per class x 2 classes per week x 12 weeks = 120 points (34%)	
		Written classes	5 points per class x 1 class per week x 12 weeks = 60 points (16%)	5 points per class x 12 classes = 60 points (28%)
	Assignments	Character worksheets	5 points per worksheet x 5 lessons x 2 dialogues per lesson = 50 points (15%)	5 points per worksheet x 5 lessons x 2 dialogues per lesson = 50 points (24%)

		Compositions	5 points per composition x 5 lessons x 2 drafts per lesson = 50 points (15%)	5 points per composition x 5 lessons x 2 drafts per lesson = 50 points (24%)
Summative Assessment	Final exam	Oral report	20 points (6%)	20 points (10%)
		Written report	20 points (6%)	20 points (10%)
		Oral interview	20 points (6%)	

Table 1. Course assessment structures

Students on the Literacy Path bypassed the interpersonal spoken classes and the final oral interview, as they had already demonstrated proficiency in their spoken language skills during their placement. Instead, these students attended the written classes and completed character worksheets and composition assignments[5] that train literacy skills. The Literacy Path also especially maintained certain spoken elements of the Regular Path including the semesterly

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[5] Each composition topic delineated a relatively consistent number of the required target expressions in the current and previous lessons to "off-set the tendency of avoidance" (Xiang, 2016, p. 184).

final oral report (i.e., "self-introduction" for Chinese 101; "a famous Chinese person" for Chinese 102; "a Chinese city" for Chinese 201; "a travel plan to China" for Chinese 202). The final oral report was maintained in the Literacy Path because it develops presentational discourse, contemporary informational culture, and public speaking skills that Mandarin-speaking CHL learners may still be short of. Although bypassing some assessment items, the Literacy Path keeps a similar percentage distribution across the three big assessment categories in common with the Regular Path. Efforts were also made to maintain dialect speakers' own identities and ideologies while keeping the course fair for and engaging with CFL students. All the students could choose simplified or traditional characters to read, type, and handwrite. The dialect speakers' accents, if any, were given friendly corrections with limited attempts if the students were willing to speak the more standard Chinese. The instructor also tried their best to compare the dialect pronunciation to standard Chinese and convince CFL students to get some

exposure to varieties of local *Putonghua*–spoken Mandarin–so that they could gradually cultivate the ability to understand them—a needed skill for higher-level learners (Kubler, 2019).

Diagnostic Assessment
The Beijing-Mandarin-speaking student mentioned earlier was allowed to bypass spoken classes through an instructor-student meeting which checked the student's educational background (i.e., all previous schooling took place in the U.S.) and literacy skills (i.e., almost zero). The two-path system was not fully developed then, and thus several other potentially qualified Mandarin-speaking CHL students stayed in all class hours. It was from the second semester that the instructor offered the two-path system to all the students. Those who indicated interest in the Literacy Path, which was announced in the syllabus and at the orientation class, contacted the instructor for a one-on-one meeting in the first few days of the course. The instructor also approached students who outperformed their peers during the first few class hours for interest.[6]Taking up to 15 minutes, each

meeting consisted of conversing in Chinese about the student's background, including language used by and with family members, the amount of schooling the student had experienced in the target language (Li & Duff, 2008, p. 21), and previous Mandarin Chinese learning experience. Additional questions were based on the prompt of the course final oral interview, as well as reading various Chinese character texts in the textbook. For someone who read the textbook texts fluently, the instructor requested a sample composition (either typed or handwritten).

In the third year (fifth semester), the instructor incorporated the use of two technology-driven tools (i.e., Google Sheets and CCALT) into the diagnostic assessment. This addition was prompted by the fully online class format in that semester, but these tools could be used for hybrid or in-person class formats. The Google Sheets tool was used by

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[6] It is recommended that email correspondence to potential CHL students (even if they have a Chinese name on the course roster) be conducted in English, since reading and writing are not their assumed skills.

the instructor to create a Background Spreadsheet for all the students (including CFL students) to cooperatively fill out by the day of the orientation class. The Background Spreadsheet elicited information including their name, year in college, major and minor, hobby or specialty, reasons for taking Chinese, Chinese learning experience, living experience in Chinese-speaking regions, home language environment, and self-estimation of Chinese skills. Exploratory in nature, the Background Spreadsheet elicits initial qualitative information for the instructor to have potential qualified Mandarin-speaking students in mind and tailor their one-on-one meetings if any. It also helps create a sense of community online among all students. The Background Spreadsheet was worth a five-point completion grade, and all students earned a grade for this assignment.

During the first week, all students took a free web-based language assessment outside of class. The CCALT (Chinese Computerized Adaptive Listening Comprehension Test) measures a learner's listening comprehension of

Mandarin Chinese and assigns students a proficiency level, based on ACTFL guidelines, upon the completion of the test. The test uses algorithms to adapt the difficulty level of the test items as the student takes the assessment. The instructor created a management account and then activated the students' registered accounts and assigned one test per student. Upon completing the test, the student submitted a screenshot of the received electronic Certificate of Completion (Figure 1). During the final week of the semester, all students were required to take CCALT again as a post-course proficiency assessment. Completion of both CCALT assessments was worth a five-point completion grade. Most students completed them.

NEALRC

In recognition of completing CCALT at the Level:
Intermediate Low

███████

is hereby awarded this

Certificate of Completion

Given this day, Tuesday, December 8, 2020, 4:30 pm

Figure 1 CCALT electronic certificate of completion

Having comprehensively evaluated students' language skills using the Background Spreadsheet, pre-course CCALT, notes from the instructor-student meeting, and composition sample (if any), the instructor then decided if a student was approved to be in the Literacy Path. Later in the semester, the instructor conducted new or follow-up meetings as needed to ensure that every student learned in the most suitable path. In the following (i.e., sixth) semester, the students (i.e., in Chinese 102 and 202) were not able to take CCALT due to

website upgrades, but fortunately all the CHL students in the

Literacy Path proceeded from the previous semester and

CCALT was not needed for the diagnostic assessment.

4. Results and Discussion
Through the instructor's sustained close attention to all

students' literacy-related needs and provision of personalized

pedagogical treatment, every student was efficiently directed

to and stayed in their most suitable path. This section

discusses the results of this pedagogical design.

Student Numbers and Profiles
Table 2 below shows the numbers of CHL students (Literacy

Path, hereafter "Literacy"), CHL students (Regular Path,

hereafter "Regular"), and CFL students per course. Most

courses had one to four placements of CHL students

(Literacy), which added up to 18 in total (12 individual

students). Only two offerings of Chinese 202 had no CHL

students (Literacy). Most CHL students were dialect speakers

(e.g., Cantonese, Shanghainese) and stayed in the Regular

Path. From this data it can be seen that, first, given the

number of CHL students (Literacy) per course, it was

preferable to implement the in-course paths, rather than to

mix all students in all class hours. It was also more

economical to not create a separate course for

Mandarin-speaking CHL learners. Second, the number of

CHL students (Literacy) rose in general. This may be because

the instructor's continued pedagogical development arranged

more qualified CHL students into the Literacy Path and/or

made the two-path courses more attractive to potential

Mandarin-speaking CHL students seeking to enroll.

	Chinese 101 (Fall)	Chinese 102 (Spring)	Chinese 201 (Fall)	Chinese 202 (Spring)
2018-2019	Data unavailable	1 CHL (Literacy) 9 CHL (Regular) 25 CFL (Regular) 35 Total	1 CHL (Literacy) 18 CHL (Regular) 22 CFL (Regular) 41 Total	0 CHL (Literacy) 3 CHL (Regular) 7 CFL (Regular) 10 Total
2019-2020	Data unavailable	2 CHL (Literacy) 12 CHL (Regular) 20 CFL (Regular) 34 Total	3 CHL (Literacy) 9 CHL (Regular) 22 CFL (Regular) 34 Total	1 CHL (Literacy) 5 CHL (Regular) 8 CFL (Regular) 14 Total
2020-2021	4 CHL (Literacy) 20 CHL (Regular) 26 CFL (Regular) 50 Total	3 CHL (Literacy) 18 CHL (Regular) 15 CFL (Regular) 36 Total	3 CHL (Literacy) 17 CHL (Regular) 16 CFL (Regular) 36 Total	0 CHL (Literacy) 5 CHL (Regular) 9 CFL (Regular) 14 Total

Table 2 Enrollment of CHL students (Literacy), CHL students (Regular), and CFL students (Regular) per course

A further analysis of the 12 individual CHL students'

(Literacy) profiles shows that four students (33%) started

from Chinese 101, three students (25%) started from Chinese

102, and four students (42%) registered for Chinese 201 (i.e.,

foreign language requirement) directly. It is unknown if the

twelfth student who registered for Chinese 201 had previously

taken any lower-level course. Among the eight students who

already completed Chinese 201, two students (25%)

continued taking Chinese courses (one took Chinese 202 and

the other jumped to a 300-level course); the remaining six

students (75%) discontinued. Based on the data and the

instructor's observation, it is noticed that, first, if

Mandarin-speaking CHL students need no permission to

enroll, they may enroll in any level of Chinese course based

on course availability and their self-perception of reading and

writing skills, although the self-selected course might not be a

good match. If needed, the instructor should advise and re-place the students according to their levels. Those who prefer to stay in the enrolled course, either because they desire to build a more solid foundation or because they have no time to wait before graduation, could be reasonably accommodated only if the students recognize their responsibility to complete each required assessment with diligence or make up the missed reading and writing skills in the lower-level courses independently.

Second, only a small number of Mandarin-speaking CHL students continued taking Chinese courses beyond Chinese 201. It is understandable that students may have many other obligations to accomplish amid hectic college life, but it is also crucial for instructors to help sustain these CHL students' motivation as much as possible. Many HL students are strongly motivated by a desire to communicate with family at home and abroad, as well as discovering their

linguistic and cultural roots (Kagan & Dillon, 2018, p. 486). To this end, instructors could, for example, offer interested students an alternative topic for the final oral report: research one's family roots by interviewing family members. This topic should be an alternative option for the final oral report and should not be assigned as an extra burden for CHL learners.

CCALT Gains

Chart 1 below shows the means of pre- and post-course CCALT results among the CHL students (Literacy), CHL students (Regular), and CFL students in Chinese 101 and Chinese 201 during the fifth semester when CCALT was newly implemented. The numbers 1 through 9 on the vertical axes represent the ACTFL-guidelines-based proficiency levels: 1–Novice Low, 2–Novice Mid, 3–Novice High, 4–Intermediate Low, 5–Intermediate Mid, 6–Intermediate High, 7–Advanced[7], 8–Advanced High, 9–Superior. In Chinese 101, the average proficiency level of the CHL

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[7] CCALT currently does not differentiate between "Advanced Low" and "Advanced Mid." Both are assigned "Advanced."

students (Literacy) rose from 7 (Advanced) to 7.7 (close to Advanced High); that of the CHL students (Regular) rose from 3.4 (between Novice High and Intermediate Low) to 4.4 (between Intermediate Low and Intermediate Mid); that of the CFL students rose from 1.2 (close to Novice Low, almost true beginners) to 2.7 (close to Novice High). In Chinese 201, the average proficiency level of the CHL students (Literacy) rose from 6 (Intermediate High) to 6.5 (between Intermediate High to Advanced); that of the CHL students (Regular) rose from 4.9 (almost Intermediate Mid) to 5.7 (close to Intermediate High); that of the CFL students rose from 3.1 (a bit over Novice High) to 4.1 (a bit over Intermediate Low).
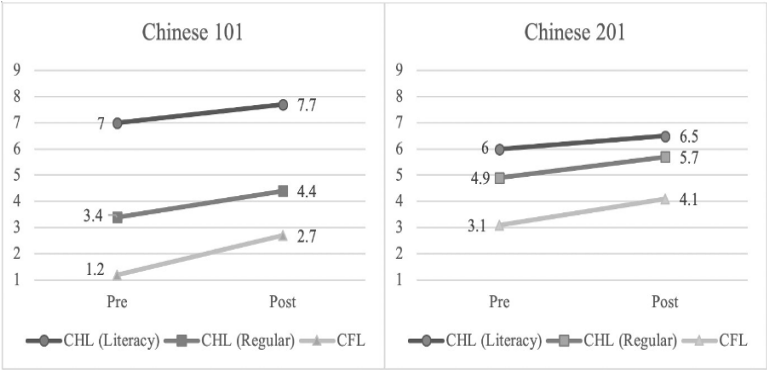

Chart 1 Mean scores of pre- and post-course CCALT

These data can generate four findings. First, the fact that the CHL students (Literacy) scored much higher than other students in the same course confirms that the CHL students (Literacy) did need to be treated differently in aural skills. Second, even though CHL students (Literacy) in both courses initially scored as high as 7–advanced and 6–intermediate high,[8] they still had an increase of 0.7 (from 7 to 7.7) and 0.5 (from 6 to 6.5) respectively. This shows that bypassing the spoken classes did not leave aural skills unattended; rather, the literacy-focused speaking activities during the weekly written class hours contributed to their improved proficiency, and/or the personalized design may have motivated them to devote the unoccupied class time to more autonomous learning, such as conversing with

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[8] Although the CHL students (Literacy) in Chinese 201 scored lower in the pre-course CCALT, they had more reading and composition ability and were more suited to be placed into Chinese 201. For example, one student attended elementary school in China (all other CHL students received K-12 education in the U.S.), and another student proceeded from Chinese 102 from the previous semester.

(extended) family members in Chinese and watching Chinese dramas. Third, although the pre-course CCALT of CHL students (Regular) was decently higher than that of the CFL students and even the textbook-expected entry levels in both courses,[9] their post-course CCALT still increased by 1 (from 3.4 to 4.4) and 0.8 (from 4.9 to 5.7) respectively and surpassed the textbook expected exit levels. This may be because the CHL students' (Regular) exposure to CFL students who are of other ethnic backgrounds "validates their perception and value of their heritage language and culture, and therefore further motivates them to learn the language and culture" (Lu & Li, 2008, p. 101). Fourth, compared with all the CHL students (Literacy and Regular), the CFL students improved their proficiency level the most by 1.5 in Chinese 101 (from 1.2 to 2.7) and 1 in Chinese 201 (from 3.1 to 4.1). Although

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[9] Since IC aims for 3–Novice High for its first volume and 4–Intermediate Low for its second volume, the Chinese 101 (first half of first volume) may aim for rising from 1–Novice Low to 2–Novice Mid and the Chinese 201 (first half of second volume) may aim for rising from 3–Novice High to somewhere between 3–Novice High and 4–Intermediate Low.

this could be because lower-level proficiency simply grows faster, chances are that since the CFL students "are exposed to Chinese heritage students who are from the target language culture" they "become more motivated to learn the target language" (Lu & Li, 2008, p. 101).

However, it was unusual to notice that the CHL students (Literacy) in Chinese 201 scored lower (from 6 to 6.5) than CHL students (Literacy) in Chinese 101 (from 7 to 7.7). The reason was that the two participating CHL students (Literacy) in Chinese 201 were initially rated 6–Intermediate High and then one of them increased to 9–Superior but the other dropped to 4–Intermediate Low. The drop could be because the student didn't make their best effort in taking the CCALT. If testees consecutively make wrong choices, the adaptive algorithm would end the test sooner and assign a lower proficiency level. A similar case was found in Chinese 101 in which a CHL student (Regular) who self-estimated pre-course listening skill as "Advanced" was only rated 1–Novice Low in both pre- and post-course CCALT

assessment (and still gained the five-point completion grade). To avoid students taking advantage of the "completion grade," it is recommended to give this grade only if the pre-course CCALT is largely coherent with one's actual class and/or interview performance and the post-course CCALT does not drop.

Student Feedback
To elicit student feedback of the pedagogical design, the instructor invited all the 12 CHL students (Literacy) at the end of sixth semester to complete a Literacy Path Survey via email. Only four CHL students (Literacy) who enrolled in the fifth and sixth semesters completed the survey; the other eight students unfortunately did not respond, six of whom (75%) may have already graduated. Therefore, it is recommended to conduct future surveys of this kind at the end of each semester.

The results of the Literacy Path Survey, although limited, still demonstrate some meaningful findings. As shown in Chart 2 below, all respondents unanimously agreed

that the Literacy Path was a beneficial accommodation for them, and the majority of students (three out of four, 75%) concurred that the Literacy Path helped them focus on written skills. When asked if the Literacy Path alienated them from classmates and reduced their spoken practice, the students' views were varied: one agreed (25%), another disagreed (25%), and the remaining two were undecided (50%). In general, most CHL students (Literacy) were satisfied that the Literacy Path met their needs.
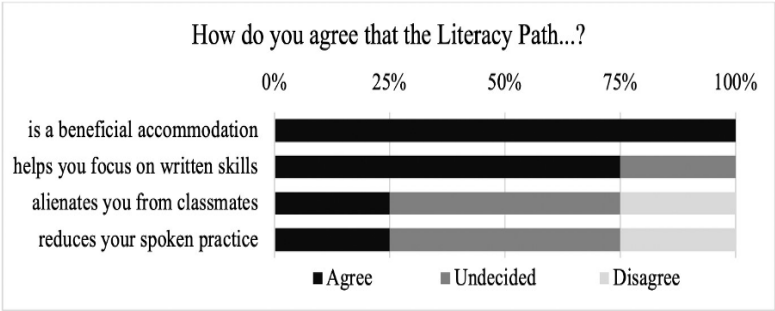

Chart 2 Results of the Literacy Path Survey

Besides the CHL students' (Literacy) feedback, the CHL and CFL students in general appreciated the pedagogical design. Two anonymous student course evaluations wrote "the instructor is aware that some students

have a greater background in Chinese while some don't and takes that into consideration when teaching" and "one other thing that I really like was how the instructor did something like a background survey to get a gist of where all the students stood in terms of knowing Chinese. I know for certain none of the other language classes that I've taken have ever done that." Although no more comments specifically addressed this pedagogical design due to the fact that the unified university-collected course evaluation form did not specifically ask about it, negative comments about the course not fitting the needs of CHL learners no longer appeared as they had in evaluations of previous iterations of the course. Anecdotal evidence also shows that some CHL students (Literacy) approached the instructor to confirm that the Literacy Path was still offered in the next level of the course before enrolling. This suggests student preference for the option of the Literacy Path in their course registration decisions.

Some evaluations provided reasonable critiques of the reading/writing class requirements. Some CHL students (Literacy) indicated that textbook lessons required students to learn excessive and uneven numbers of new characters from lesson to lesson. Some CHL students' (Literacy) typical comments were that "the number of characters being learned in the character classes can be a bit much, and that amount is variable and also rather inconsistent," and "the amount of character work we do sometimes feels a bit excessive… I would try to lower the character work." A CHL student (Literacy) told the instructor that merely copying new characters from one lesson text in the character workbook took three hours. The instructor therefore calculated the number of *IC*'s new characters across lesson texts (Chart 3 below), which totals 174 new characters in Lessons 1-5 (Chinese 101), 179 in Lessons 6-10 (Chinese 102), 145 in Lessons 11-15 (Chinese 201), and 120 in Lessons 16-20 (Chinese 202), plus 40 radicals and 10 numerals before learning actual lessons. Since CHL students do not learn

literacy skills more quickly than non-CHL students (Ke 1998;

Xiao 2006; Xiao 2008) and CHL and CFL students follow the

same pace in the instructor's courses, it is necessary to set up

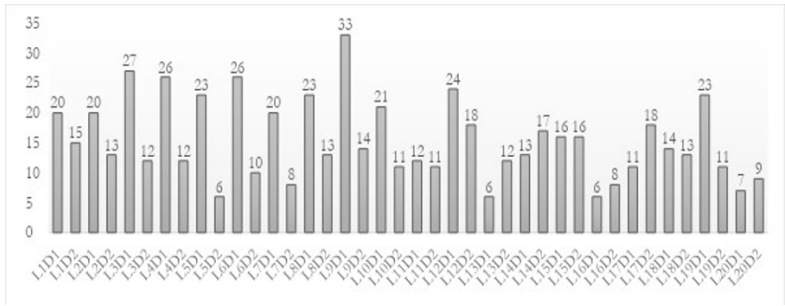a reasonable and balanced pace of learning new characters.

Chart 3 Numbers of *IC*'s new characters per lesson text
(L1D1: Lesson 1 Dialogue 1)

5. Possible Solutions
To meet the challenge of CHL students (and CFL students)

having to learn excessive and uneven numbers of new

characters across lessons, there are two possible solutions.

The first possible solution was originally designed for CFL

students but can be applied to CFL-and-CHL mixed courses

as well. This solution is to "expect students to read and type

character texts that contain all the new characters but choose

a consistent number of new characters per lesson text for

handwriting from memory" (Chai, 2022, p. 135). The consistent number of new characters for handwriting from memory could be, for example, ten per lesson text. Also, one new character could be copied for reasonably fewer times (rather than filling out all the 30 boxes) by students' own choice and based on character complexity. In-class assessments asking students to handwrite from memory should be justified and reinforced by constantly performing real-life tasks (e.g., handwrite notes, postcards, shopping lists) rather than just arranging dictations.

The second possible solution is to consider another pedagogical material, *Basic Written Chinese* (Kubler, 2012, "*BWC*" hereafter), which introduces six new characters per "part" (i.e., lesson text). Thus, working on two parts per class would total 12 new characters consistently. Besides the controlled number of new characters, *BWC* also explains the etymology of each new character, which many lower-level learners value (Shen, 2003). The series offers various reading exercises (presented through both simplified and traditional

characters in the same volume) that are timesaving for instructors' class preparation and convenient for managing a combined class where some students use simplified characters and others use traditional characters.

While *BWC* is used at The Ohio State University in conjunction with a different spoken-skill-focused pedagogical material series to help students learn the written representations of most of the learned spoken language, those who are interested in using *BWC* for reading and writing classes while maintaining *IC* for spoken classes should be cautioned that although both *BWC* and *IC* (volume one and two) are targeted for the beginner level and *BWC* well covers 90% of the new characters in *IC*'s first five lessons, *BWC* only covers 35% of the new characters in *IC*'s Lessons 6-10 (Chinese 102), 25% in Lessons 11-15 (Chinese 201), and 10% in Lessons 16-20 (Chinese 202). Although incorporating *Intermediate Written Chinese* (Kubler, 2015, "*IWC*" thereafter) would raise the character coverage up to roughly 50% and

above for each course, it would not be appropriate to train intermediate-level reading and writing skills while only building beginner-level spoken skills. All considered, instructors using *IC* are recommended to refer to the first solution. Instructors using the first solution can still make use of the resources present in *BWC* and *IWC* by using the index of the *IC* new characters (created by the author of this paper and provided in the Appendix) and encouraging students to use their institute library access to *BWC*'s and *IWC*'s eBook version to quickly look up structural explanations. Instructors deciding to use *BWC* should also consider adopting its companion course *Basic Spoken Chinese* (Kubler, 2011).

6. Conclusion

To conclude, this study responds to many CHL scholars' repeated calls for optimizing placement and learning for CHL learners in mixed classes and sets up a useful model that many CHL-and-CFL mixed course instructors can reference. Drawing on the existing pedagogical design of separating spoken and written class hours for CFL students, the

instructor offers the in-course two-path system to meet dialect- and Mandarin-speaking CHL students' different learning needs. The two new technology-driven tools (CCALT and the Background Spreadsheet collected via Google Sheets) improved the efficiency and relieved the financial burden of diagnostic assessment. The results of this pedagogical design are largely positive. Prompt response to the issues addressed in the CHL students (Literacy) survey and controlled management of the introduction to new characters will remedy concerns in future implementation for both the instructor in this study and other interested CHL practitioners. It would also be of interest to test out how *BWC* works when paired with *BSC* in CHL-and-CFL mixed courses.

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Appendix: Index of the *IC* new characters in *BWC* and *IWC*

Note: The structural explanation of the first character in the

list below 人, for example, can be found in *BWC* as character

number 30 on page 43. L1D1 represents "Lesson 1 Dialogue

1." All the *IC* new characters are included in this appendix

(although some are not found in *BWC* or *IWC*) so that

readers could have a complete list of new characters to work

with and add notes of their own, should they find structural

explanations elsewhere.

Basics–Radicals
1. 人 BWC 30 p. 43
2. 刀
3. 力 IWC 478 p. 244
4. 又 BWC 210 p. 278
5. 口 BWC 140 p. 183
6. 囗
7. 土 IWC 343 p. 78
8. 夕
9. 大 BWC 13 p. 34
10. 女 BWC 101 p. 123
11. 子 BWC 155 p. 201
12. 寸
13. 小 BWC 24 p. 38
14. 工 BWC 154 p. 201
15. 幺
16. 弓
17. 心 BWC 262 p. 339
18. 戈
19. 手 IWC 305 p. 31
20. 日 BWC 132 p. 165
21. 月 BWC 130 p. 164
22. 木
23. 水 IWC 333 p. 65
24. 火 IWC 566 p. 362
25. 田
26. 目 IWC 543 p. 330
27. 示
28. 糸
29. 耳
30. 衣 IWC 357 p. 93
31. 言
32. 贝
33. 走 BWC 70 p. 83
34. 足 IWC 546 p. 330
35. 金 BWC 46 p. 54
36. 门 BWC 123 p. 156
37. 佳
38. 雨 BWC 279 p. 361
39. 食 IWC 341 p. 73
40. 马 IWC 458 p. 223

Basics–Numerals
1. 一 BWC 1 p. 28
2. 二 BWC 2 p. 28
3. 三 BWC 3 p. 28
4. 四 BWC 4 p. 28
5. 五 BWC 5 p. 28
6. 六 BWC 7 p. 31

7. 七 BWC 8 p. 31
8. 八 BWC 9 p. 31
9. 九 BWC 10 p. 31
10. 十 BWC 11 p. 31

L1D1
1. 你 BWC 49 p. 60
2. 好 BWC 50 p. 60
3. 请 BWC 67 p. 82
4. 问 BWC 75 p. 91
5. 贵 BWC 85 p. 105
6. 姓 BWC 86 p. 105
7. 我 BWC 51 p. 60
8. 呢 BWC 54 p. 61
9. 姐 BWC 72 p. 83
10. 叫 BWC 78 p. 83
11. 什 BWC 127 p. 163
12. 么 BWC 128 p. 163
13. 名 BWC 83 p. 99
14. 字 BWC 84 p. 99
15. 先 BWC 69 p. 83
16. 生 BWC 22 p. 37
17. 李 BWC 20 p. 37
18. 友 BWC 172 p. 229
19. 王 BWC 6 p. 28
20. 朋 BWC 171 p. 228

L1D2
1. 是 BWC 76 p. 91
2. 老 BWC 61 p. 75
3. 师 BWC 102 p. 123
4. 吗 BWC 60 p. 68
5. 不 BWC 63 p. 76
6. 学 BWC 153 p. 200
7. 也 BWC 52 p. 61
8. 人 BWC 30 p. 43
9. 中 BWC 23 p. 37
10. 国 BWC 74 p. 90
11. 北 BWC 16 p. 34
12. 京 BWC 17 p. 34
13. 美 BWC 77 p. 91
14. 纽
15. 约 IWC 603 p. 37

L2D1
1. 那 BWC 109 p. 139
2. 的 BWC 79 p. 98
3. 照 IWC 510 p. 285
4. 片 BWC 91 p. 112
5. 这 BWC 96 p. 113

6. 爸 IWC 365 p. 102
7. 妈 IWC 366 p. 102
8. 个 BWC 87 p. 106
9. 孩 IWC 457 p. 222
10. 谁 BWC 121 p. 156
11. 她 BWC 56 p. 67
12. 男 BWC 100 p. 123
13. 弟 BWC 188 p. 253
14. 他 BWC 55 p. 67
15. 哥 BWC 187 p. 253
16. 儿 BWC 156 p. 201
17. 有 BWC 139 p. 183
18. 没 BWC 92 p. 112
19. 高 BWC 62 p. 75
20. 文 BWC 21 p. 37

L2D2
1. 家 BWC 191 p. 254
2. 几 BWC 97 p. 122
3. 两 BWC 99 p. 123
4. 妹 BWC 189 p. 254
5. 和 BWC 209 p. 278
6. 做 IWC 378 p. 117
7. 作 BWC 184 p. 246
8. 律 IWC 617 p. 55
9. 都 BWC 32 p. 46
10. 医 IWC 553 p. 346
11. 白 IWC 328 p. 59
12. 英 IWC 558 p. 347
13. 爱 IWC 422 p. 174

L3D1
1. 号 BWC 131 p. 164
2. 星 BWC 125 p. 157
3. 期 BWC 126 p. 157
4. 天 BWC 33 p. 47
5. 今 BWC 106 p. 131
6. 年 BWC 104 p. 130
7. 多 BWC 103 p. 130
8. 岁 BWC 107 p. 131
9. 吃 BWC 151 p. 200
10. 饭 BWC 152 p. 200
11. 怎 BWC 217 p. 292
12. 样 BWC 277 p. 360
13. 太 BWC 64 p. 76
14. 了 BWC 71 p. 83
15. 谢 BWC 66 p. 76
16. 喜 BWC 169 p. 228
17. 欢 BWC 170 p. 228
18. 菜 IWC 327 p. 59

19. 还 BWC 180 p. 237
20. 可 BWC 145 p. 192
21. 们 BWC 57 p. 68
22. 点 BWC 115 p. 147
23. 半 BWC 117 p. 148
24. 晚 BWC 286 p. 370
25. 上 BWC 25 p. 42
26. 见 IWC 300 p. 24
27. 再 IWC 299 p. 24

L3D2
1. 现 BWC 198 p. 265
2. 在 BWC 149 p. 193
3. 刻 BWC 116 p. 147
4. 事 BWC 160 p. 210
5. 很 BWC 58 p. 68
6. 忙 BWC 59 p. 68
7. 明 BWC 15 p. 34
8. 为 BWC 182 p. 245
9. 因 BWC 181 p. 245
10. 同 BWC 80 p. 98
11. 认 IWC 395 p. 138
12. 识 IWC 396 p. 138

L4D1
1. 周 IWC 594 p. 19
2. 末
3. 打 BWC 229 p. 305
4. 球 IWC 529 p. 314
5. 看 BWC 176 p. 236
6. 电 BWC 230 p. 305
7. 视 IWC 544 p. 330
8. 唱 IWC 505 p. 284
9. 歌 IWC 506 p. 284
10. 跳
11. 舞
12. 听 BWC 215 p. 284
13. 音 IWC 436 p. 192
14. 乐 IWC 432 p. 183
15. 书 IWC 321 p. 52
16. 对 BWC 108 p. 131
17. 时 BWC 206 p. 277
18. 候 BWC 207 p. 277
19. 影 IWC 517 p. 298
20. 常 IWC 386 p. 13
21. 去 BWC 53 p. 61
22. 外 BWC 164 p. 218
23. 客 IWC 392 p. 137
24. 昨
25. 所 BWC 183 p. 246

26. 以 BWC 146 p. 192

L4D2
1. 久 IWC 295 p. 23
2. 错 BWC 284 p. 369
3. 想 IWC 319 p. 51
4. 觉 BWC 216 p. 285
5. 得 BWC 204 p. 271
6. 意 IWC 347 p. 79
7. 思 IWC 348 p. 79
8. 只 BWC 238 p. 313
9. 睡
10. 算 IWC 354 p. 86
11. 找 BWC 150 p. 193
12. 别 BWC 82 p. 99

L5D1
1. 呀
2. 进 BWC 278 p. 360
3. 快 IWC 289 p. 16
4. 来 BWC 135 p. 176
5. 介
6. 绍
7. 下 BWC 167 p. 219
8. 兴 BWC 90 p. 106
9. 漂
10. 亮
11. 坐 BWC 68 p. 82
12. 哪 BWC 73 p. 90
13. 校 BWC 185 p. 246
14. 喝 IWC 371 p. 109
15. 茶 IWC 431 p. 182
16. 咖
17. 啡
18. 吧 BWC 89 p. 106
19. 要 BWC 137 p. 176
20. 瓶
21. 起 BWC 177 p. 237
22. 给 BWC 192 p. 254
23. 杯

L5D2
1. 玩
2. 图 IWC 449 p. 207
3. 馆 IWC 429 p. 182
4. 聊
5. 才 IWC 325 p. 58
6. 回 BWC 161 p. 210

L6D1
1. 话 BWC 201 p. 271

2. 喂
3. 就 BWC 129 p. 164
4. 您 BWC 88 p. 106
5. 位 BWC 98 p. 122
6. 午
7. 间 BWC 232 p. 306
8. 题 IWC 291 p. 16
9. 开 BWC 122 p. 156
10. 会 BWC 199 p. 270
11. 节 IWC 344 p. 78
12. 课 IWC 428 p. 181
13. 级 BWC 174 p. 229
14. 考 IWC 481 p. 252
15. 试 IWC 482 p. 252
16. 后 BWC 213 p. 284
17. 空 IWC 437 p. 192
18. 方 BWC 158 p. 209
19. 便 IWC 362 p. 101
20. 到 BWC 205 p. 277
21. 办 IWC 317 p. 46
22. 公 BWC 94 p. 113
23. 室 IWC 533 p. 315
24. 行 BWC 236 p. 312
25. 等 BWC 228 p. 300
26. 气 BWC 271 p. 353

L6D2
1. 帮 IWC 474 p. 237
2. 准 BWC 263 p. 339
3. 备 BWC 264 p. 339
4. 练
5. 习 IWC 393 p. 138
6. 说 BWC 200 p. 270
7. 啊 IWC 426 p. 175
8. 但 BWC 280 p. 361
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