

**CONTENT DEVELOPMENT FOR THE ELECTRONIC LANGUAGE
LEARNING SYSTEM: ENGLISH LEARNERS OF
MANDARIN CHINESE**

**Thomas Nowalk, Ph.D.
Fei Reed
Northrop Grumman**

ABSTRACT

The goal of the content development paper is to establish a process for generating content for the Electronic Language Learning System (ELLS). Since the first phase of the ELLS aims to teach American learners beginning level language in Chinese, a second goal of this paper is to present possible content for this level. The process outlined here sorts themes from proficiency standards, then determines tasks centered on those themes. The final step requires the identification of actual content through the task specifications. The content includes grammatical patterns, vocabulary items, pronunciation features, and language skill applications. The content suggested in this paper represent the pilot phase of the ELLS, but the process is applicable to all phases of the project. The process presented here applies to American middle school students who have no proficiency in Mandarin Chinese. More importantly, the entire effort begins with the needs of the American students as foreign language learners.

Questions Raised

1. What are different formats or schemes possible for writing the tasks?
2. How can assessment tools, criteria, and procedures be integrated with the tasks?
3. What kinds of cultural elements should be included with each task?
4. What modifications may be necessary for adopting the task system to an e-learning system?
5. How can we integrate the unique features of the Chinese language into the task design? Into the conceptual models discussed?

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Section 1. Introduction to the Content Development.....	4
Section 2. Conceptual Models.....	5
Section 3. Definition of the Chinese Learner	9
Section 4. Analysis	12
Section 4.1. Analysis of the Proficiency Standards	12
Section 4.1.1. Rationale.....	12
Section 4.1.2. Selection and Scope.....	12
Section 4.1.3. Analysis Process	18
Section 4.2. Content Analysis.....	26
Section 4.2.1. Rationale.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Section 4.2.2. Selection and Scope.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Section 4.2.3. Analysis Process	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Section 5. Recommendations for the ELLS.....	26
Section 6. Appendix 1: An example of a Level 1 Speaking Task	31
Section 7. Appendix 2: An Example of a Level 2 Reading Task	32
Section 8. Glossary of Terms Used	33

Section 1. Introduction to the Content Development

The paper presents the proficiency standards and content for development of the Electronic Language Learning System (ELLS). The paper shows how combined Chinese-ACTFL standards could be used toward establishing content for the ELLS. Common themes are sorted from the proficiency standards, then the themes are organized into tasks. Each task integrates language components and instructional topics for presentation in the ELLS. The tasks also allow for intersection of instructional goals with game goals in the ELLS.

Before discussion of the content development, the paper reviews the analysis process and components. The paper attempts to follow a rigorous process for the development of ELLS content, though information about the target population has yet to be verified. The process proceeds through a series of analyses, the results of which eventually weave back into the content development for the ELLS. The goal of the entire paper is to propose a possible set of content for American beginning level learners of Mandarin Chinese, the terminal objective being Level 2 on the Chinese standards, and Novice High on the ACTFL standards.

Section 2. Conceptual Models

The literature in language education, whether in foreign language teaching or second language teaching, distinguishes between an approach, a method, and classroom technique or activity. By an approach is meant a philosophy toward language and learning a language. Approaches are theories or conceptual models. The concepts and principles of a model may be applied to prescribe a set of actions teachers should take to teach language. That is called a method. Methods prescribe the scope and sequence of instructional activities. Those classroom activities are systematic efforts on the part of teachers to reach instructional goals. As this section reviews conceptual models in language education, the discussion will remain at the wider level of an approach. Implementing that approach through the choice of specific activities for the ELLS fits the topic of a separate analysis.

Two approaches guide the development of the ELLS content. The first stems from the field of foreign-language education. The approach, known as the proficiency approach, rests on an understanding of proficiency as the ability to use language in context. More specifically, Omaggio (1986) describes proficiency as

specifications about the levels of competence attained in terms of the functions performed, the contexts in which the language user can function, and the accuracy with which the language is used. (p. 8)

The idea behind the proficiency model is that of a learner gaining greater competence in a language by moving up an imaginary vertical scale.

Omaggio (1986) describes such progress more as an inverted pyramid. At each level, the learner masters the ability to perform language in contexts common to speakers of a language. Thus the ability to use language at the bottom relies on few functions:

exchanging greetings, giving simple biographic information, using learned expressions to accomplish simple tasks such as finding a bathroom. As the learner progresses, the learner is more able to combine language forms and functions learned in novel ways, toward expressing personal views about the world and exchanging a variety of information from printed sources. Consequently, the top of the inverted pyramid opens with a wide range of abilities, all accumulated from level to level.

Shrum and Glisan (1994) agree with Omaggio's notion of proficiency. The authors also propose a proficiency model of foreign language teaching, which they see as a more contextually grounded approach to language teaching. This includes functions, which the authors define as linguistic tasks. It also features context/content, or the settings in which language takes place. The third component of the model is accuracy, which Shrum and Glisan (1994) note as the "precision of the message" (p. 24).

The second approach guiding the ELLS development is called the communicative approach, which is a close conceptual cousin to the proficiency approach. Both models trace back to the concept of communicative competence. What communicative competence tells us is that two parallel conditions are necessary for the use of language: words must be strung together grammatically in the production of speech, and the speech produced must be performed in the right place at the right time. Whether ordering food at a restaurant, or receiving directions from a teacher, or perhaps composing the words on this page, language requires accurate linguistic production with appropriate performance of social customs.

Yet the communicative approach adds elements from other linguistic theory: Halliday's (1975) functional linguistics. Halliday (1975) originally proposed a

conceptual model for understanding children's first language development, but the theory has since been applied to the communicative approach (Richards and Rodgers, 2001). The model is useful for demonstrating the different uses of language, which Halliday posited as the seven basic functions for children learning language (Richards and Rogers, 2001):

- Instrumental function: using language as a tool for accomplishing goals
- Regulatory function: using language to control others people
- Interactional function: using language to interact with other people
- Personal function: using language to express personal interpretations, feelings, and understandings
- Informative function: using language to exchange information
- Heuristic function: using language as a tool for discovery and learning
- Imaginative function: using language for pretend, to create possibilities and worlds

Halliday and others contributed linguistic theory parallel to work done in the 1970's by The Council of Europe, an educational organization that faced the growing needs for developing language programs for Europe's "increasing interdependence" (Richards and Rogers, 2001). There was a strong need for teaching adults at that time the major languages of the European Common Market. The solution proposed was a Communicative Approach to language education.

Like the proficiency approach that has more closely been tied to foreign language education in America, the communicative approach looks at language as the use of grammar, vocabulary, and sounds in communication. Language is applied to two broad uses: social interaction- chiefly the first four Halliday functions listed above, and for communicating information- which includes the last three Halliday functions above. Both emphasize the functional nature of language, and the need for a degree of accuracy in the use of language. Without accuracy meaning fails to be understood.

Communicative language teaching, though, emphasizes more the idea of language as a system of meaning, while the proficiency approach emphasizes more the ability to use language. Despite the many similarities, one stresses meaning in context while the other focuses more on the competence to make meaning possible.

A task-based approach closely follows the same principles explained in the two approaches. Still, task-based language teaching is less a conceptual model and more a planning model. The notion of a task focuses more on a unit for planning and assessing language. Nunan (1999) defines task-based approach as “an approach to the design of language courses in which the point of departure is not an ordered list of linguistic items, but a collection of tasks” (p. 24). A task is taken as a “piece of activity or goal that is carried out using language” (Richards and Rogers, 2001, p. 224). Tasks in this sense do not have linguistic outcomes; the outcome of a task is the activity goal.

Rogers (2001) warns us, though, of issues surrounding a task-based approach. Few programs take a strictly task-based approach, as there exists no standard form for defining tasks, nor for designing and selecting tasks for instruction. While Nunan (1999) does distinguish real-world tasks from classroom tasks, the terms identify a wide-range of possible tasks.

The paper recognizes difficulties with the implementation of tasks as planning tools. Yet the proficiency standards outlined in the analysis section should provide clarity toward the kinds of tasks to be defined. A combination of the proficiency standards with a task-oriented design to the ELLS content should offer clarity in terms of the task structures and their language components.

Before addressing this issue, though, it will be necessary to define the learner first. Since the conceptual models outlined are learner-centered and directed toward authentic language use, their implementation depends on careful analysis of the learners. Defining the learner, then defining the proficiency required of the learner, will assist with determining the kinds of tasks required for the ELLS content.

Section 3. Definition of the American Learner

For any content analysis to proceed, the learner must be defined first. As previously stated, some information about the mainstream American learner has not yet been verified. So the definition must progress on assumptions rather than empirical data gathering. Yet even assumptions must be defined toward establishing the learner needs driving the content.

We assume that the American learner is an adolescent residing in rural, urban, and suburban areas. We include here a range of socioeconomic classes within the mainstream American cultural landscape. As with the Chinese learners, the American ages range from 12 to 18 years of age, and we presume that all of these learners will have strong previous skills with using technology: computers and the Internet. We further presume that all of these learners have access to technology comparable to the ELLS system; certainly, a number of states such as Virginia require a mandatory number of computers in every classroom.

With many states and the Federal government emphasizing high-stakes, standardized testing in the majority of American schools, the American classroom is teacher-centric. The authority role of the teacher does not perform as directly as in a Chinese classroom. Yet many American teachers face pressure to prepare students for the kinds of mandated

tests given at their particular schools. Teachers in America face many of the same challenges that teachers face in China, in terms of managing student learning with test-driven curriculums.

Besides the learner and learning environment defined above, we further consider the learning strategies of American learners. American mainstream students or European-American students (as defined by Dunn & Griggs, 1995, p. 65) bring to the foreign language classroom certain preferences for learning. These preferences include:

- Strong preference for field-independent learning: a preference for analysis
- Moderate analytic skills: a preference for distinguishing and analyzing traits or features
- Strong sequential processing: a preference for serial order of items or activities
- A preference for less formality: informal social interactions
- Low preference for structured experiences
- A strong preference for working alone

Dunn and Griggs (1995) do note that the first preference, that of field-independence, does become more of a preference for field-dependence among groups with lower “socioeconomic status” (1995, p. 70).

In considering the learning environment, the field of Chinese pedagogy itself is an emerging field that has long been dominated by traditional, text-based instruction. Grammar-translation continues to be a prevalent teaching method. There has been such a strong emphasis on text-based Chinese lessons that one writer concludes: “the textbooks are the curriculum” (Chi, 1996, p. 4). Chu (1996) writes: our classrooms do not provide enough opportunities to practice the language and hone their communicative skills” (p. 137). The communicative and proficiency models discussed in the previous section, with their emphasis on communicative competence, have only begun to be explored as viable approaches for teaching less commonly taught languages such as Chinese.

Finally, the definition of the mainstream or European-American learner must assume low motivation on the part of the learner to learn Chinese. Monolingualism has long been the standard in American society, partly “because of the remoteness of most Americans from any place where other languages are actually used” (Snow & Hakuta, 1992, p. 394). Many American high schools have no instruction in Chinese, but the number is increasing. The Modern Language Association has recently shown that Chinese has moved up to the “sixth most commonly taught language in postsecondary institutions” (Standards for Foreign Language Learning, 1999, p. 118). Learning to read and write Chinese, especially, presents a long task for the American learner; at least, longer than it takes to reach comparable levels of understanding in European languages with similar writing systems. Considering, then, the value on monolingualism in American society in general, and the particular features inherent the Chinese language, we expect low motivation.

This section has defined the American foreign language learner for the ELLS. High-stakes testing drives many curriculums in America, placing pressures on teachers to follow carefully prescribed instruction. In classrooms where Chinese is taught in America, the instruction has remained strongly text-based and teacher-centric, with traditional instructional strategies applied to teach the unique features of the Chinese language.

Section 4. Analysis

The Analysis Section covers the Crosswalk of Standards for American learners. While the analysis is not a rigorous analysis in a true sense, of judging and weighing topics with a set of criteria, it does represent a systematic effort toward establishing content. Those efforts are represented in this section, with the process outlined for each analysis.

Section 4.1. Analysis of the Proficiency Standards

The analysis conducted is that of the Crosswalk of Standards. As stated, the Crosswalk is not a true analysis. The Crosswalk shows how similar theoretical principles, organizational schemes and wording in the standards allow for combination of at least two standards. The combined standard uses the Chinese system of numeric levels, though each level is intended as a combined Chinese-ACTFL standard.

Section 4.1.1. Rationale

The chief purpose of the analysis is to determine standards that are most suitable for the American learner as defined in Section 2. A second reason for the analysis is to establish an alignment of the ELLS content with a set of established standards in the field of foreign language teaching.

Section 4.1.2. Selection and Scope

As the ELLS project overlaps both foreign language teaching contexts and second language teaching contexts, three language learning proficiency standards were first selected for the content analysis: the Chinese National English Curriculum standards, the ACTFL (American Association of Teachers of Foreign Languages)

standards, and the TESOL ESL standards. The document recognizes that other standards do exist, particularly the Standards for Foreign Language Learning (1999), which have adopted standards particularly for teaching Mandarin Chinese in American public schools. And some states such as California and Virginia have written their own proficiency standards for ESL students. Still, the standards are accepted as conventions within their specific fields.

All three documents selected share similar conceptual models, though the TESOL standards do differ on some points. The Chinese standards reflect a more communicative approach. The ACTFL standards more clearly reflect a proficiency-approach, with the proficiency in language use moving from lower novice levels to advanced and superior at the top. The TESOL ESL standards outline a functional model of language. But the TESOL ESL standards differ from the other two in that it holds that “language processes develop interdependently” (p. 6, 1997). TESOL disagrees with the others in its view on language learning; whereas the others suggest a linear or sequential development of skills, the learner accumulating abilities step-wise, the TESOL standards hold that the language learning process “occurs more simultaneously and interdependently” (p. 7, 1997).

The Chinese standards and the ACTFL standards are compatible in their linear organization of linguistic competencies. Both describe language proficiency according to nine levels, with each level divided according to competencies for the four traditional language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Moreover, each of these two standards is grounded in a competency-oriented

approach to language, with each competency starting with the phrase “be able to” or “can.” In short, both the Chinese national standards and the ACTFL proficiency guidelines are rooted in a common organizational scheme. More importantly, both address the needs of a foreign language learner. As defined in the previous section, the Chinese learner has instructional needs relevant to a foreign-language context, not a second language context.

The following tables juxtapose the Chinese standards and the ACTFL standards. The tables demonstrate the compatibility of the two standards.

TABLE 1. PRESENTATION OF THE CHINESE AND ACTFL STANDARDS FOR LEVEL 1

	Chinese Middle School Curriculum Level 1	ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines Novice Low
Listening Skill	<p>Recognize or point to pictures or objects when hearing words</p> <p>Understand simple classroom instructions and react accordingly</p> <p>Understand simple short stories and react accordingly</p>	<p>Understand words</p> <p>Understand high-frequency social conventions</p>
Speaking Skill	<p>Imitate taped recordings</p> <p>Exchange simple greetings</p> <p>Exchange simple personal information</p> <p>Express simple feelings and emotions</p> <p>Sing songs, recite poems</p>	<p>Use high-frequency phrases and social conventions</p>
Reading Skill	<p>Recognize words with pictures</p>	<p>Recognize written symbols (alphabet)</p>

	Read words and understand with help of pictures Comprehend simple stories	Identify words Identify phrases
Writing Skill	Write letters and words	Copy and produce symbols of the writing system (i.e. letters or characters) For learners of Mandarin Chinese, produce the romanization of characters

TABLE 2. PRESENTATION OF THE CHINESE AND ACTFL STANDARDS FOR LEVEL 2

	Chinese Middle School Curriculum Level 2	ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines Novice-Mid
Listening Skill	Understand simple sentences with help of pictures, videos, actions Understand simple short stories with pictures Understand simple questions during classroom activities Understand common instructions and commands	Understand short, learned utterances Comprehend words/ phrases for simple commands, statements, and high-frequency social formulae Words and phrases referring to basic personal information Words and phrases referring to immediate physical setting
Speaking Skill	Articulate with clear pronunciation & intonation Hold simple conversations about family information Hold simple conversations about personal information Use common daily expressions Tell simple short stories	Produce isolated words and phrases Handle elementary personal needs Express basic courtesies
Reading Skill	Read learned words	Recognize symbols of the writing system (and their

	<p>Read short, simple commands or directions in a textbook</p> <p>Understand simple information in greeting cards</p> <p>Understand short stories or passages with the help of pictures</p> <p>Read aloud learned stories or passages</p>	<p>romanizations)</p> <p>Identify learned words</p> <p>Identify learned phrases</p>
Writing Skill	<p>Write sentences, using samples as example</p> <p>Write simple greeting sentences</p> <p>Write simple titles</p> <p>Write simple descriptions about pictures or objects</p>	<p>Copy or transcribe known words</p> <p>Copy or transcribe known phrases</p> <p>For learners of Mandarin Chinese, can copy and produce stroke order</p> <p>For learners of Mandarin Chinese, can spell out romanizations</p>

As for the TESOL ESL standards, the organization of the standards is clustered around different grade-levels, with the standards written according to three uses of the English language: social-interactive, school-classroom, and culturally appropriate usage. The TESOL standards do address competencies, but the standards are not laid out in a linear format, as are the first two. Indeed, the TESOL document warns against the format applied to the first two standards, arguing that such a division of language into the four skills is artificial. The broad scheme outlined by TESOL's standards included three broad goals organized

according to the three uses mentioned above. Table 3 outlines the TESOL standards.

TABLE 3. TESOL ESL STANDARDS

	To use English for social interaction	To use English in the classroom	To use English for social customs
Standards for Social Use of English	Be able to use English to participate in social interaction	Be able to use English to interact in the classroom	Be able to use language appropriate for context
Standards for Communicating Information	Be able to interact in, through, and with spoken and written English for personal expression	Be able to use English to obtain, process, construct, and provide subject matter information in spoken and written form	Use appropriate nonverbal communication
Standards for Learning Strategies	Be able to use learning strategies to strengthen communicative competence	Be able to use appropriate learning strategies to construct and apply academic knowledge	Be able to use learning strategies to extend sociocultural competence

Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, Inc. (1997). ESL Standards for Pre-K-12 Students

To summarize the selection of proficiency documents, only the Chinese and ACTFL standards passed final selection. The Chinese standards here may not be as strong as the ACTFL standards, for they address a specific foreign language teaching situation: teaching English to Chinese students. Yet unlike the TESOL ESL standards, which also address a specific audience, the Chinese standards do apply to a foreign language context. As shown, the wording on the Chinese

standards features broad statements of what learners can do with a language. More importantly, the Chinese standards are strongly compatible with the ACTFL standards, with compatible approaches and organizational schemes. This will allow for greater facilitation in the development of ELLS content for American learners.

Section 4.1.3. Analysis Process

Beginning with the two standards selected, the process for determining content moves from identification of common themes between the two standards to determination of tasks that may make up those themes. The process progresses, then, from standards to themes to tasks.

Beginning with identification of the themes, the first step, the paper begins with the table below. In the far left column are the common themes drawn from the standards presented in Tables 1 and 2. To the right of that are the two standards, with the different skills coded. In the Chinese standard, for example, of “Do Simple Greetings,” the (S) marks that as a speaking skill in the Chinese system; but the ACTFL standard “Perform routine courtesy exchanges” is coded as a listening skill, or (L). So the original skills are marked here as L for listening, S for speaking, R for reading, and a W for the writing skill.

TABLE 4. DERIVING THEMES FROM THE STANDARDS SELECTED

Common Theme	Chinese Middle School	ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines
Perform routine courtesies	Do simple greetings (S)	Perform routine courtesy exchanges (L) Express basic courtesies (S)
Respond to directions/ commands	Understand and react to classroom instructions (L) Perform and action (L) Guess meaning from an action. (S)	Respond to common commands (L)
Comprehend vocabulary for concrete words.	Recognize pictures of real objects when the object is named. (L) Recognize words as connected to pictures. (R)	Use learned words and phrases. (S) Describe known, concrete vocabulary. (S)
Share personal information.	Exchange simple personal information. (S)	Use learned words and phrases. (S)
Handle basic needs & feelings	Exchange simple personal information. (S) Exchange simple feelings and emotions. (S)	Handling personal needs. (S)
Comprehend words and letters.	Recognize vocabulary and read it. (R/W)	Recognize isolate, learned words and phrases. (R/W)
Comprehend simple texts.	Comprehend simple stories. (R)	Comprehend some common written texts such as menus, timetables, street signs, and maps. (R)

The following lists presents the themes taken from the above. The table below that presents a description of the different themes for Level 1.

- Theme 1: Perform routine courtesy acts
- Theme 2: Reply to directions
- Theme 3: Comprehend vocabulary for concrete words
- Theme 4: Exchange personal information
- Theme 5: Handle basic needs
- Theme 6: Share basic feelings
- Theme 7: Comprehend words and letters
- Theme 8: Comprehend simple texts

TABLE 5. DESCRIPTION OF THE THEMES

Theme	Description
Perform routine courtesy acts	Use polite phrases for greetings, farewells, thank you's, inquiries about health, and interrupting with <i>excuse me</i> .
Reply to directions	Perform a gesture, or action such as pointing or moving something in response to directions.
Comprehend vocabulary for concrete words	Show understanding of concrete topics such as furniture, classroom objects, electrical equipment, or other realia.
Exchange personal information	Ask for and provide information about name, job, address, phone number, and family.
Handle basic needs	Make requests for simple needs such as a restroom, an object, or something on furniture.
Share basic feelings	Report a few simple emotions such as happiness or sadness, or tiredness- to name a few.
Comprehend words and letters	Match sounds to English alphabet letters, pronounce sounds according to spelling.
Comprehend simple texts	Understand short narratives, routine forms, menus, or simple maps.

From the set of themes listed, we may now begin with the identification of the tasks. A task is defined here as a goal-directed piece of language-in-use activity

with a beginning, middle, and end. There is a story-like or episodic feature to tasks, which facilitates their integration into gaming formats.

The tasks will be written here as a language function, typically written as a gerund phrase, combined with people and a setting. Nunan (1999) lists two kinds of tasks, in agreement with the conceptual model presented in Section 2. The tasks include real-world tasks, or those used for communication outside school, and pedagogical or classroom tasks. See Table 5 for a list of tasks. The tasks follow the descriptors listed in Table 4 above. The list is intended to be suggestive: more tasks may be added or subtracted according to the design needs of the ELLS. The themes have been rearranged somewhat to reflect a more natural order for the presentation of the tasks.

TABLE 6. LIST OF LEVEL 1 TASKS FOR THE CHINESE LEARNER

Themes	Tasks	
	Real-World	Classroom
Perform Courtesy Acts	Greeting strangers Greeting friends Asking about health Saying farewell to strangers Saying farewell to friends Saying excuse me to a stranger.	Greeting the teacher Asking about the teacher's health.
Reply to directions	Following a friend's directions in performing an action. Following a stranger's directions to find a place. Following a series of simple commands with everyday objects.	Following routine directions from the teacher. Performing routine administrative acts.
Exchange personal information	Exchanging information with an official person	Giving a teacher personal information.

	(such as a policeman) Exchanging information with a person that you've just met.	Telling a teacher family information.
Handle basic needs	Making polite requests for directions. Making polite requests to get something. Declining polite requests. Accepting polite requests.	Making polite requests for attention. Making polite requests for information. Making polite requests for materials. Making polite requests for changing a routine or activity.
Share basic feelings	Reporting to a friend how you feel. Reporting to a friend how you react to sights or events. Reporting to a doctor how you feel.	Reporting to a teacher your health status. Reporting to a teacher sickness. Reporting to a teacher how you feel about a piece of information. Reporting to a friend how you feel about an activity in the classroom. Reporting to a teacher negative feelings about classroom activities.
Comprehend words and letters	Reading aloud a word or phrases. Asking for the spelling of a word or phrase. Asking a friend to pronounce a word or phrase. Asking a friend the meaning of a word or phrase. Asking an official the meaning of a word on a form.	Matching letters and letter combinations to sounds. Copying and tracing letters and letter combinations. Matching letters and sounds to visual representations.
Comprehend simple texts	Exchanging information about a passage with a friend. Exchanging information	Exchanging information about a passage contents. Responding to teacher questions about a short

	about a story to a friend. Retelling a story to a friend. Reporting how you understood a short passage, to a friend.	passage. Completing a visual that represents the meaning of a short passage.
--	--	---

Applying the same process outlined to the Level 2 combined standards resulted in the following list of themes. Please note that many of the themes overlap with the themes noted for Level 1. With the image of the inverted pyramid described in Section 2, this is expected, for learners are able to do little beyond rehearsed material at these levels.

- Theme 1: Exchange family information.
- Theme 2: Identify classroom routines and activities.
- Theme 3: Give directions in the classroom.
- Theme 4: Understand and tell simple stories.
- Theme 5: Handle basic personal needs.
- Theme 6: Make requests for everyday objects.
- Theme 7: Talk about the immediate physical setting.
- Theme 8: Report on past events.

TABLE 7. DESCRIPTION OF LEVEL 2 THEMES

Theme	Description
Exchange family information	Describe family relationships using kinship terms; identify the names, ages, and occupations of different family members. Describe different members' personalities.
Identify Classroom routines and procedures	Name scheduled events and administrative routines in the classroom; describe the schedule and time periods. Describe habits and events in the classroom.
Give Directions in the Classroom	Receive directions pertaining to classroom written forms, routines, materials, or objects; give similar sets of instructions to classmates.
Understand and Tell simple	Tell a sequence of events in chronological order; report

stories	on a single experience or event in the past.
Handle Basic Personal Needs	Make requests for simple needs such as a restroom, an object, or something on furniture.
Make Requests for Everyday Objects	Ask for objects at the table, desk, or at a restaurant. Ask for and be declined.
Talk about the Immediate Physical Setting	Describe weather events, building events, or classroom activities in progress.
Report on Past Events	Tell about an event that happened in the past. Tell when and where it happened.

As demonstrated with the Level 1 themes, the Level 2 themes are listed below with suggested tasks.

TABLE 8. LIST OF LEVEL 2 TASKS FOR THE CHINESE LEARNER

Themes	Tasks	
	Real-World	Classroom
Exchange family information	Exchanging information with a friend about family relations. Describing to a friend the personalities of people in your family. Writing a short letter outlining the people in your family.	Reporting to the teacher information ones immediate family. Telling a teacher the kind of people in your family. Completing a family tree as part of a classroom project.
Identify classroom routines and activities	Describing to a family member classroom routines. Describing to a friend typical classroom activities. Describing to a friend ones school schedule. Naming periods for different school subjects.	Asking a teacher when an activity will begin. Asking a teacher about the schedule for a class. Finding the period and materials needed on written schedule.
Give directions in the classroom	Reporting to a friend how you perform certain activities in the classroom. Reporting to a family	Responding to a teacher's directions in the classroom. Responding to a teacher's directions on performing a

	member how routines are performed in the classroom.	task. Responding to the teacher's directions for using a reference tool in the classroom. Listing directions for how perform a routine in the classroom.
Report on past events	Telling a friend about something that happened Telling a friend where and when it happened	Telling a teacher about a homework assignment completed Telling a teacher when and where the assignment was completed
Handle basic personal needs	Making polite requests for directions. Making polite requests to get something. Declining polite requests. Accepting polite requests.	Making polite requests for attention. Making polite requests for information. Making polite requests for materials. Making polite requests for changing a routine or activity.
Make requests for everyday objects	Making polite requests to a stranger. Making requests to a friend. Declining polite requests. Accepting polite requests.	Making polite request for classroom materials. Making polite requests for a classroom tool.
Talk about the immediate physical setting	Describing things around you Describing activities in progress around you Reporting on what people are doing at the present moment	Reporting to a teacher what you are doing Telling a teacher about activities around you Composing a letter describing a scene
Understand and tell simple stories	Telling a short story about a life event. Telling a friend a personal story.	Telling a teacher a personal story. Finding the people and places presented in a short

	Writing a brief personal story in a letter.	story. Writing about a personal story that happened in a classroom.
--	---	--

The process section outlined a sequence of activities moving from the standards to themes to the tasks. While the resulting list of tasks is not exhaustive, it should provide enough for alignment of activities with the standards examined.

Section 5. Recommendations for the ELLS

Unlike the Content Analysis paper written for Chinese learners, this paper stops short of listing commercial content to guide the development process. Certainly, the next step will be to examine textbooks and other commercial materials to provide similar lists of content for the Chinese language instruction. The same process as with the English language content analysis is presented and advocated here. Materials for teaching Chinese to foreign residents in China, primarily at Chinese universities, and for teaching Chinese to middle and high school students in the United States, will have to be obtained and examined in the same manner as was the English language materials. A list of potential content from commercial materials will need to be matched with the tasks determined.

The tasks will need to be written in greater detail, combining their objectives, conditions, and performance steps with their linguistic components: grammar patterns and vocabulary words to complete the task. Certainly, the commercial content will provide a sufficient guide for matching content with tasks. Appendices 1 and 2 provide early examples of tasks to be incorporated within the design of the ELLS. The task system may need to be revised for teaching Chinese.

A final recommendation points to the unique features of the Chinese language. As a tonal language, Chinese requires extra attention to the use of the four standard tones. Pronunciation and vocabulary activities will require a focus on the use of these tones. Moreover, the writing system features large numbers of characters, each with standard stroke orders. Traditionally, these unique features of Chinese lead to an early emphasis on reading, with rote learning strategies applied to mastering the Chinese characters. The ELLS aims to teach these unique linguistic characteristics through a combined

communicative-proficiency approach. The recommendation here refers to how communicative teaching may be applied to promoting the use of these linguistic components. Should the linguistic elements themselves determine the instruction, we fall back into traditional instructional styles.

REFERENCES

1. Chi, T.R. (1996). Toward a communicative model for teaching and learning Chinese as a foreign language: Exploring some new possibilities. In S. McGinnis (ed.), pp. 1-28. Chinese Pedagogy: An Emerging Field, Chinese Language Teachers' Association Monograph #2. Columbus, Ohio: National Foreign Language Resource Center.
2. Chu, M. (1996). Class plan for teaching Chinese as a functional language. In S. McGinnis (ed.), pp. 135-158. Chinese Pedagogy: An Emerging Field, Chinese Language Teachers' Association Monograph #2. Columbus, Ohio: National Foreign Language Resource Center.
3. Chinese Ministry of Education. English Curriculum Standards (Yingwen Kecheng Biaojun). Beijing, China: Beijing Normal University Press.
4. Dubin, F. and Olshtain, E. (1991, 5th ed). Course design: Developing programs and materials for language learning. New York: Cambridge University Press.
5. Dunn, R. and Griggs, S. (1995). Multiculturalism and learning style: Teaching and counseling adolescents. Wesport, Connecticut: Praeger.
6. Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages. (1997). ESL Standards for Pre-K-12 Students. Alexandria, Virginia: Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, Inc.
7. Halliday, M.A.K. (1975). Learning How to Mean: Explorations in the Development of Language. London: Edward Arnold.
8. Li, Xiaojun. (1984). In defence of the communicative approach. ELT Journal, 38(1), 2-13.
9. Lightbown, P. and Spada, N. (1993). How Languages are Learned. New York: Oxford University Press.
10. Nunan, D. (1999). Second Language Teaching & Learning. Boston, Massachusetts: Heinle & Heinle.
11. Omaggio, A. (1986). Teaching Language in Context. Boston, Massachusetts: Heinle & Heinle.
12. Richards, J. and Rogers, T. (2002, 2nd ed). Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching. New York: Cambridge University Press.

13. Zhenhui Rao. (July, 2001). Matching teaching styles with learning styles in East Asian contexts. The Internet TESL Journal, 7(7).
(<http://iteslj.org/Techniques/Zhenhui-TeachingStyles.html>)
14. Richards, J. (2001). Curriculum Development in Language Teaching. New York: Cambridge University Press.
15. Shrum, J. and Glisan, E. (1994). Teacher's Handbook: Contextualized Language Instruction. Boston, Massachusetts: Heinle & Heinle.
16. Standards for Chinese Language Learning. (1999). In Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21st Century, pp. 111-152. Lawrence, Kansas: Allan Press.
17. Wu, Yi'an. (2001). English language teaching in China: Trends and challenges. TESOL Quarterly, 35(1), 191-198.
18. Yu, Liming. (2001). Communicative language teaching in China: Progress and resistance. TESOL Quarterly, 35(1), 195-198.

Section 6. An example of a Level 1 speaking Task

Level 1 Tasks- Real-World

Task: Asking about ones health	Theme: Performing Routine Courtesy Acts
Language Skill: Speaking	
Goal: Be able to inquire about someone's health status.	Condition: Given a stranger and a formal speech situation
Performance: Greet a person you have never met, then ask them about their health.	Speech Functions within the task: Greeting, Asking, Saying Farewell
Structure	Pronunciation
Questions with ma particle	Rising stress patterns on social expressions.
Vocabulary Expressions: Ni3 hao3? Ni3 shen1 ti3 hao3 ma? Wo3 hao3. Wo3 hen2 hao3. Xie4xie4.	Vocabulary Words: Pronouns: Wo3 Ni3 Ta1 Health descriptors: Hao3 ke2yi3 bu4cuo

Section 7. An Example of a Level 2 Reading Task

Level 2 Tasks- Classroom

Task: Finding times and activities in a classroom schedule	Theme: Identify classroom routines and activities
Language Skill: Reading	
Goal: Be able to determine times for scheduled activities	Condition: Given a simple classroom schedule with days of the week at the top and times on the left side; with activities filled in different period spaces
Performance: Identify what day of the week the activity takes place, then match the activity with the time period.	Speech Functions within the task: Identifying, reporting
Structure	Pronunciation
Schedule formats and calendar systems	
Expressions: What do we do at ...? When do we ...? What do we do after/ before ...?	Vocabulary Words: Days of the Week: Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday Times Classroom Activities: read, write, listen to the teacher, exercise, watch videos, go to lunch, group work, silent reading, study time

Section 8. Glossary of Terms Used

1. Approach: A theory about language and learning a language
2. Authentic Language: Language as it is used for natural communication, not contrived or the use of instructional objectives.
3. Communicative Approach: A language teaching theory which emphasizes teaching learners how to use language for authentic communication.
4. Communicative Competence: The combined ability to both produce accurate sentences in a language and produce those sentences in an appropriate manner.
5. Context: The situation or environment surrounding the use of language. Language is always embedded in experience.
6. EFL: English as a Foreign Language- the teaching of English in places where English is not the common language. In this condition, there is often limited access to fluent speakers of English.
7. ESL: English as a Second Language- the teaching of English in places where English is the common language. This usually means that learners learn English formally at the same time they reside in a community where it is widely spoken.
8. First language: The native language or language first acquired as a child.
9. Function: The purpose for which language is used; functions usually refer to behaviors such as requesting or denying; reporting or describing. A single theme here in this paper may include any number of functions or behaviors that input into the theme.
10. Grammar-Translation: A language teaching method that involves grammar and textual analysis and translation of material into the student's first language.
11. Language Content: The components of language instruction, including the grammatical forms or patterns, the vocabulary topics and their words, and the pronunciation features to be taught. This also includes specific skills to be taught such as reading for main ideas or writing with periods to indicate sentence closure.

12. Method: A set of principles about language and learning a language that prescribe a particular practice for language teaching. This typically involves prescriptions of the sequence and scope of instruction, as well as the kinds of objectives and assessment tools.
13. Proficiency: The general ability to use a language.
14. Second Language: The language learned after the native language.
15. Task: A goal-directed piece of activity that has a beginning, middle, and end.
16. Teacher-centric: A classroom environment that is teacher-directed. The teacher's decisions govern the choice of objectives, materials, and classroom activities.
17. Test-driven: A mode of education in which objectives, materials, and activities are designed to meet testing goals.