

# Designing and Implementing a Hybrid First Year Chinese Course: Theoretical Frameworks and Instructional Practices

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## ABSTRACT

This paper presents an effective model for the design and implementation of a first-year hybrid Chinese course at college level, based on the insight gained from developing and teaching such a course over a period of three consecutive years. It describes the components of our course design, the theoretical underpinnings of the design, and the implementation. Some general recommendations are also offered for designing hybrid language courses.

**Keywords:** Hybrid Chinese Courses, Flipped Classroom, Mobile Assisted Language Learning, Course Design and Implementation, Assessment

混合一年级汉语课的设置与实施：理论构架和教学实践  
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## 摘要

本文论述大学一年级混合中文课如何设置才行之有效。这些论述源于作者在连续三年执教一年级混合中文课之后的心得体会。讨论范围包括课程设置的方方面面、课程设置的理论以及课程设置的实施。另外，本文还对如何设置混合语言课提供一些具体的建议。

**关键词：**混合汉语课，翻转课堂，移动通信辅助教学，课程设置及实施，教学评估

## Introduction

Information and communication technologies have dramatically reshaped the pedagogical landscape over the past two decades. Hybrid instruction that integrates physical and virtual components has become a critical strategy for institutions of higher education (Cobcroft, Towers, Smith, & Bruns, 2006). In an earlier study, Ester (1994–95) found that students with access to both traditional and online instruction did better academically than those instructed entirely in one of the two modes. The momentum has intensified since the publication of a meta-analysis of 50 studies that found that while online students performed a little better than face-to-face (F2F) students, students in courses that blended online and F2F components did much better than a straight online course, with an effect size of +0.35,  $p < .001$  (Means et al. 2010). Indeed, hybrid learning has been hailed as the “new normal” (Norberg, Dziuban, & Moskal, 2011).

Hybrid learning, also called blended learning, refers to the instructional method that combines traditional learning with online learning activities. More specifically, a hybrid course has three general features. First, web-based learning activities are introduced to complement F2F work; second, “seat time” is reduced, though not eliminated altogether; third, the web-based and F2F components of the course are designed to interact pedagogically to take advantage of the best features of each other. The combination of in-person instruction with technology-enriched online experiences helps to create an educational atmosphere that promotes active participatory

learning. The success of blended learning is such that hybrid courses are considered capable of achieving “the best of both worlds” (Seaman & Allen, 2010).

In foreign language instruction, hybrid courses have gained rapid momentum so that they are “quickly becoming an essential alternative in many FL programs” (Rubio & Thomas, 2014, p. 1). In the field of teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language (CFL) at the collegiate level, however, hybrid courses are a relatively late comer. Studies of the effectiveness of the hybrid Chinese language class and reports on best practices have been quite limited so far. This paper presents not only the feasibility but also the desirability of hybrid Chinese language instruction by introducing an effective model for the design and implementation of a first-year hybrid Chinese course at college level, based on the insight gained from developing and teaching such a course over a period of three consecutive years. It describes the components of our course design, the theoretical underpinnings of the design, and the implementation. Some general recommendations are also offered for designing hybrid Chinese language courses. Whereas this is not primarily an empirical study, it does include some data for purpose of illustration.

### Overview of the Course Design of Our Hybrid Course

Since a portion of hybrid learning takes place outside of the classroom, a crucial consideration in the course design is the seamless integration of online and F2F learning activities. There is, however, no one-size-fits-all pedagogy. Instructors must draw on their own expertise and experience in adjusting to their local instructional conditions. Methodologically, our Hybrid First Year Chinese has two components: flipped classroom and mobile assisted language learning (MALL), as illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1. *Format of Our Hybrid First Year Chinese*

Online Learning	Classroom Learning
Watching Videos Completing Online Quizzes Completing WeChat Assignments Q/A Discussion Board	Language Practice and Problem Solving

What follows is a detailed description of the two components of our Hybrid First Year Chinese and their theoretical underpinnings.

### The Flipped Classroom: Theoretical Framework and Practical Design

The design of our flipped classroom has two theoretical foundations. The first is the taxonomy of cognitive process originally formulated by Bloom, Englehart, Furst, Hill, and Krathwohl (1956) and revised by Anderson and Krathwohl (2001); the second is Vygotsky’s (1978) socio-cultural theory. The former is a framework for classifying statements of what students are expected to learn after receiving the instruction; it has been often used for designing educational training and learning processes. It suggests that any learning objectives of a unit or courses can be analyzed in two dimensions. The first is the cognitive process, which reflects thinking skills with different levels of cognitive complexity (e.g., remembering, understanding, applying, analyzing, evaluating, and creating). The second dimension is the knowledge process, which includes four types of knowledge that learners may be expected to acquire or develop: 1) factual knowledge, 2) conceptual knowledge, 3) procedural knowledge, and 4) metacognitive knowledge.

In Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory, the process of learning is as much social as it is cognitive. A social environment for learning provides the expert access and cultural tools to help students arrive at the highest level of proficiency at the right time. Therefore, social learning activities will be more effective in instructing higher-level cognitive processes, such as analyzing, creating and evaluating, while lower-level cognitive processes can be taught through self-paced learning. Previous empirical studies have also shown that some types of knowledge, such as basic facts and foundational information, can be learned best through exposure and repetition (Geary, 2007, 2008). Most factual knowledge and conceptual knowledge can be learned via self-paced e-learning, which provides the opportunities of multi-mode exposure and self-paced repetition.

The flipped classroom is a form of hybrid learning. Typically, grammar and vocabulary drills are moved online, with class time devoted to oral communicative and interactive activities (Goertler et al., 2012; Young & Pettigrew, 2014). The theories of Bloom and Vygotsky provide the philosophical foundation for structuring learning activities in flipped classroom: Whereas higher-level tasks (including analysis, evaluation, and creation) are accomplished in classroom, repetitive tasks such as remembering, understanding, and applying knowledge can be effectively completed online. Online activities are input-based, computer-graded; students receive instantaneous feedback. Typically, the pre-class online activities include learning grammar and completing exercises related to the grammar.

The most prominent benefit of a flipped classroom is that it promotes active learning and increases teacher-student interactions by maximizing the F2F class time. The popularity of this methodology is indicated by the appearance of narrative and critical reports in some of the most influential media outlets, including *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (Berrett, 2012), *The New York Times* (Fitzpatrick, 2012), and *Science* (Mazur, 2009). At the same time as it garnered much attention in major academic content areas (e.g., science and math), the flipped classroom made increasing forays into foreign language instruction.

### **The Structure of Our Flipped First Year Chinese Class**

Our regular first year Chinese class employs the traditional lecture-drill format, with students attending larger grammar sessions on Tuesdays and Thursdays and smaller drill sessions on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. In the flipped first year Chinese class (inaugurated in the fall semester of 2015), students meet four times a week (Monday through Thursday). Grammar lectures are replaced by online self-learning sessions (an equivalent of 1 credit). Students learn grammar and vocabulary through vivid and feasible online tutorials and quizzes before class. Class time is optimized for enhancing oral proficiency through intense drill work and authentic communicative tasks.

### **Our Three Goals in Flipping First Year Chinese**

There are three goals in the design and implementation of our flipped first year Chinese. The first is to maximize and optimize class time for students to produce target language to improve their proficiency level. Chinese is grouped into Category IV Language. To achieve "absolute speaking proficiency" in Chinese at the ACTFL Advanced Level, an American learner needs 1320 hours whereas only 480 hours are needed to achieve same proficiency level in European languages. However, in many universities, instructional hours for Chinese are the same as those for European languages: student taking four years of college Chinese has a maximum of 480

instructional hours (5 hours per week for beginning to intermediate levels; three hours per week for advanced levels,) which is a long way from the 1320 instructional hours required for achieving the ACTFL advanced level. Our flipped Chinese class can function as an effective supplement to compensate for the inadequacy of classroom instructional hours in regular Chinese language curricula as a portion of what is now taught in the classroom is moved to the online environment. Without the need to explain grammar or vocabulary, the use of English is minimized, if not always eliminated, in class.

Our second goal is to promote student-centered learning. In a flipped classroom, the teacher is no longer primarily a lecturer, but a facilitator. The sense of responsibility is instilled in students when they take ownership of much of the learning process, especially with regard to the conceptual comprehension and assimilation of grammar and vocabulary.

The third goal in our design and implementation is to provide a learning environment that is flexible and adjustable to the individual needs of students. By removing the one-size-fits-all lecture from the curriculum, the flipped class provides students with a self-paced lecture that best serves their needs. For example, short tutorial video lectures allow students to move at their own pace, rewind to review portions they do not understand, and skip through sections they already understand. The on-line learning session can be completed at a time and place that best fit different schedules of individual students.

### The Format of Our Flipped Classroom

The flipped classroom is defined in either restricted or broader sense, as shown in the Tables 2 and 3 (Bishop & Verleger, 2013).

Table 2. *Restricted Definition of the Flipped Classroom*

Style	Inside Class	Outside Class
Traditional	Lectures	Practice Exercises & Problem Solving
Flipped	Practice Exercises & Problem Solving	Video Lectures

Table 3. *Broader Definition of the De-Facto Flipped Classroom*

Inside Class	Outside Class
Questions & Answers	Video Lectures
Group-Based/Open-Ended Problem Solving	Closed-Ended Quizzes & Practice Exercises

With the exception of WeChat assignments, all other online activities are asynchronous. The online portion of the flipped classroom is illustrated in Table 4.

Table 4. *Design of the Online Learning Portion*

Online Learning			
Synchronous	Asynchronous		
WeChat assignment	Grammar/Vocabulary Videos	Online Quizzes	Q/A Discussion Board

As shown in Figure 1, we do not try to follow any strict model, though what we do fits better the broader definition of de-factor flipped classroom. We ask students not only to watch videos but also to complete online quiz and post their questions on Q/A discussion board after watching the videos to make sure that everyone is prepared before classes. Students answer each other's questions and the instructor gets involved when no student can answer the posted questions. The interaction is not just between teacher and student, also among students. Students can post their questions both before and after class meeting.

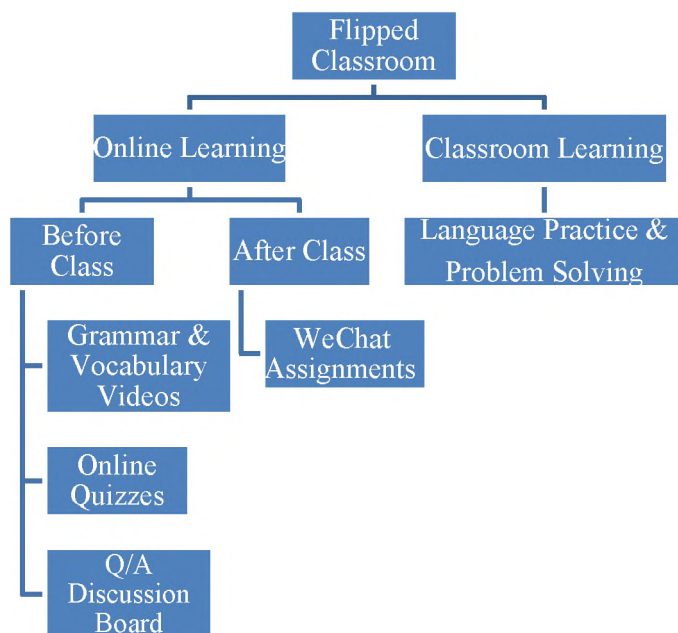


Figure 1. Format of our Flipped Classroom

Vocabulary and grammar videos are made for each lesson with clear pronunciation and grammar explanation. The grammar videos have pictures with short dialogues to demonstrate and reinforce the use of grammar. Students are required to complete an online quiz after watching each video. The online quiz scores are 5% of final grade. Students are required to post their questions on the Discussion board. This discussion board is a safe place for students to post their questions and problems and get quick help. When peers cannot answer those questions, the instructor will get involved. This practice is time efficient by eliminating the need for the instructor to email each individual student to answer his or her questions. It also increases the interaction between students. As the semester moves along, the discussion board becomes an increasingly collaborative space for students to ask for help and receive it from peers or instructors. Figures 2, 3, and 4, are sample screenshots of an online vocabulary video, an online quiz, and a page from the discussion board.

### MALL and the Utilization of WeChat

MALL is the second component of our Hybrid First Year Chinese. MALL may be described as a subfield of mobile learning (m-learning). There have been various definitions of m-learning, but the consensus is that it is learning through the mediation of a mobile and portable device and wireless technology (Pollara, 2011). “Mobile” has two dimensions: the first refers to learning supported by mobile devices; the second to the mobility of people and knowledge in our times

(Sharples et al., 2007). According to Traxler (2007), m-learning exhibits a cluster of traits: personal, spontaneous, disruptive, opportunistic, informal, ubiquitous, context-aware, portable. Thanks to the ubiquity of high-efficiency mobile devices, the potential of mobile learning environments has been greatly expanded. M-learning has now been recognized as one of the directions in which Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) is evolving (Chinnery, 2006; Stockwell, 2007). The trend has been building over the last two decades toward shifting from classroom centered learning to one that is free from the constraints of time and space, which Wang and Jason (2012) called mobile cloud education.

Today's learners exhibit a clear preference for mobile platform to PCs (Thornton & Houser, 2005). According to The EDUCAUSE Center for Analysis and Research (ECAR) Study of Undergraduate Students and Information Technology, "Students hold high expectations for anytime, anywhere access to course materials and for leveraging the use of their personal digital devices inside and outside class" (Dahlstrom et al., 2013, p. 5). Yet the same study also found that students continue to value F2F access to their instructors and show little interest in Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs). In the face of the dual preferences of the students, hybrid courses appear as a perfect fit in that they create a learning environment in which students benefit from the "anytime, anywhere" paradigm and have F2F access to their instructors at the same time.

WeChat is adopted as a platform for MALL in our Hybrid First Year Chinese. As a social media app, WeChat is known for its capability in multi-communication in text messaging, hold-to-talk voice messaging, broadcast (one-to-many) messaging, photo/video sharing, location sharing, and contact information exchange as well as its featured function of group discussion. These functions combine to form a ubiquitous learning environment, where seamless language learning is fostered, especially with regard to seamless adaptivity and seamless connectivity. (Seamless adaptivity refers to the situation where technology adapts to the needs of the learners without their awareness. Seamless connectivity derives from the deliberate course design that enables learners to move across different learning settings with no significant gap or interruption in their language acquisition [Milrad et al., 2013].)

In the fall semester, our WeChat assignments focus on student's pronunciation. Students are required to read a text and send their recording through WeChat to the instructor at their designated time slots, and the instructor gives instant feedback to correct student's pronunciation. The communication between the instructor and each individual student lasts for 5–10 minutes for each session. In the spring semester, the WeChat communication of each session is between the instructor and a pair of students instead of one individual student. Students are required to follow the WeChat instructions on the weekly schedules and complete the assignment in pairs. The instruction of the assignment provides students with a scenario or topic for conversation that is closely related to the current materials; students are required to construct meanings in pairs related to the course content and skills.

Other WeChat activities include delivering Chinese colloquialisms to students for intentional learning. In addition, WeChat is used for communication between instructor and students and students to students. All communications are in Chinese. They cover cultural aspects of China as well as the Chinese language. Table 5 is an example of the WeChat assignment.

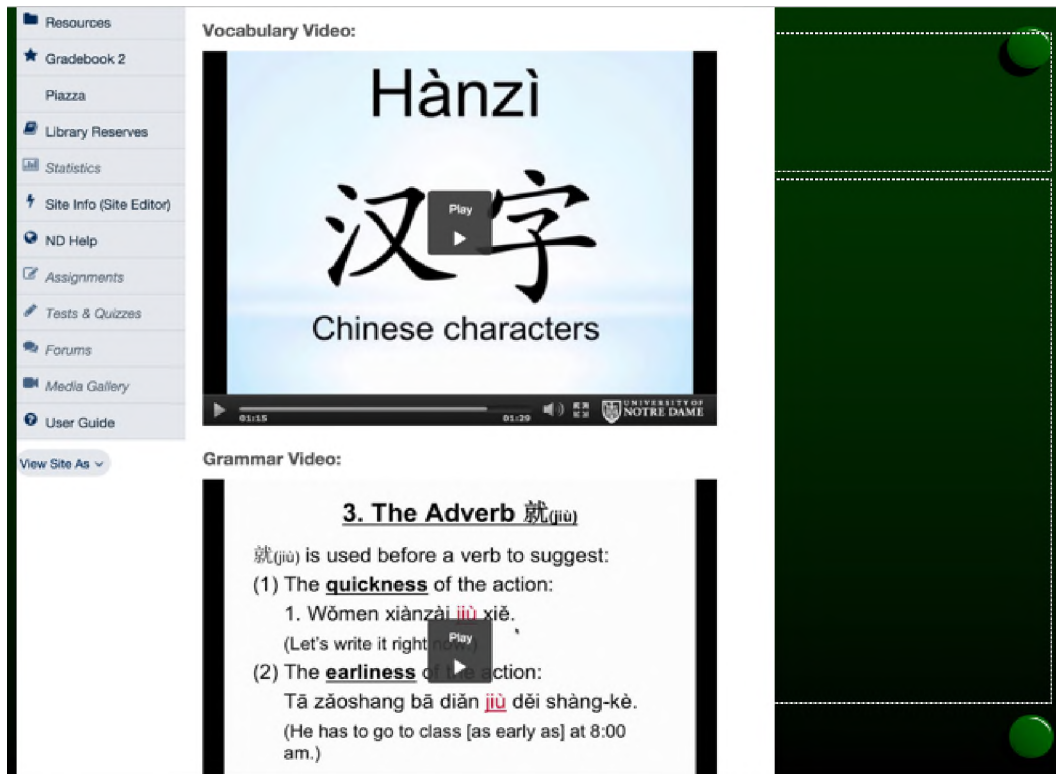


Figure 2. Screenshot of an Online Vocabulary Video

Please complete the following sentences, using the English sentences as clues. **(Tone marks are not necessary.)**

1. Míngtiān wǒmen yào xué \_\_\_\_\_ yīkè . (We will study Lesson One tomorrow.)

Answer:  [Submit Answer](#)

2. Tā xiězì xiě \_\_\_\_\_ hěnhǎo. (He writes characters well.)

Answer:  [Submit Answer](#)

3. Zhè gè diànyǐng tài yǒuyìsī \_\_\_\_\_ ! (This movie is really interesting!)

Answer:  [Submit Answer](#)

4. Wǒ jiāo nǐ \_\_\_\_\_ tiàowǔ . (I will teach you how to dance.)

Answer:  [Submit Answer](#)

5. Wǒ xiàwú wúdiǎn \_\_\_\_\_ chí wǎnfàn le . (I had dinner as early as 5:00 p.m..)

Answer:  [Submit Answer](#)

6. Wǒ jīntiān \_\_\_\_\_ máng. (I am a little bit busy today.)

Answer:  [Submit Answer](#)

Figure 3. Screenshot of an Online Quiz to Test Students' Understanding of New Grammar Items



Figure 4. Screenshot of the Discussion Board

Table 5. A Sample WeChat Assignment

Create a conversation between a customer and a waitress/waiter in a Chinese restaurant. You need to follow the required steps and use the grammar patterns provided. Step 1: After brief greetings between the customer and the waiter, the customer starts to order drinks and food and ask for the waiter's recommendation. The waiter makes some recommendations. The following patterns should be used: 吃（喝）点儿什么；reduplication of adjectives; 给我; 除了...以外，还... Step 2: The customer gives detailed instructions on the way to prepare the dishes by using the following expressions: 别放; 多/少+V; V+快一点儿. Step 3. The customer makes payment. The waiter gives a wrong change. The following patterns to be used are: 一共; resultative complement; 多/少找了.

We adopt Piazza as the discussion and Q&A board for the class. This is a versatile and completely free platform that integrates with every major LMS, including Sakai. Its Wiki style format enables collaboration in a single space. Among its featured functions is LaTeX editor that allows highlighted syntax and code blocking. Questions and posts needing immediate action can be highlighted. Instructors can endorse answers to keep the class on track. Piazza also allows



students to comment on answers or post follow-up inquiries. (Students are allowed to pose their questions and answers either in Chinese or in English.)

### Learning Management System and Learning Analytics through Sakai

An effective learning management system (LMS) provides a centralized venue for keeping the calendar, learning activities, assessment, and student records. A good LMS can (1) work with teachers and learners to identify appropriate learning goals, (2) create individualized instruction, (3) assess learner performance products, (4) gather and store evidence of student progress, (5) support collaboration, and (6) generate informational reports for maximizing the effectiveness of the entire learning organization (Watson & Watson, 2007).

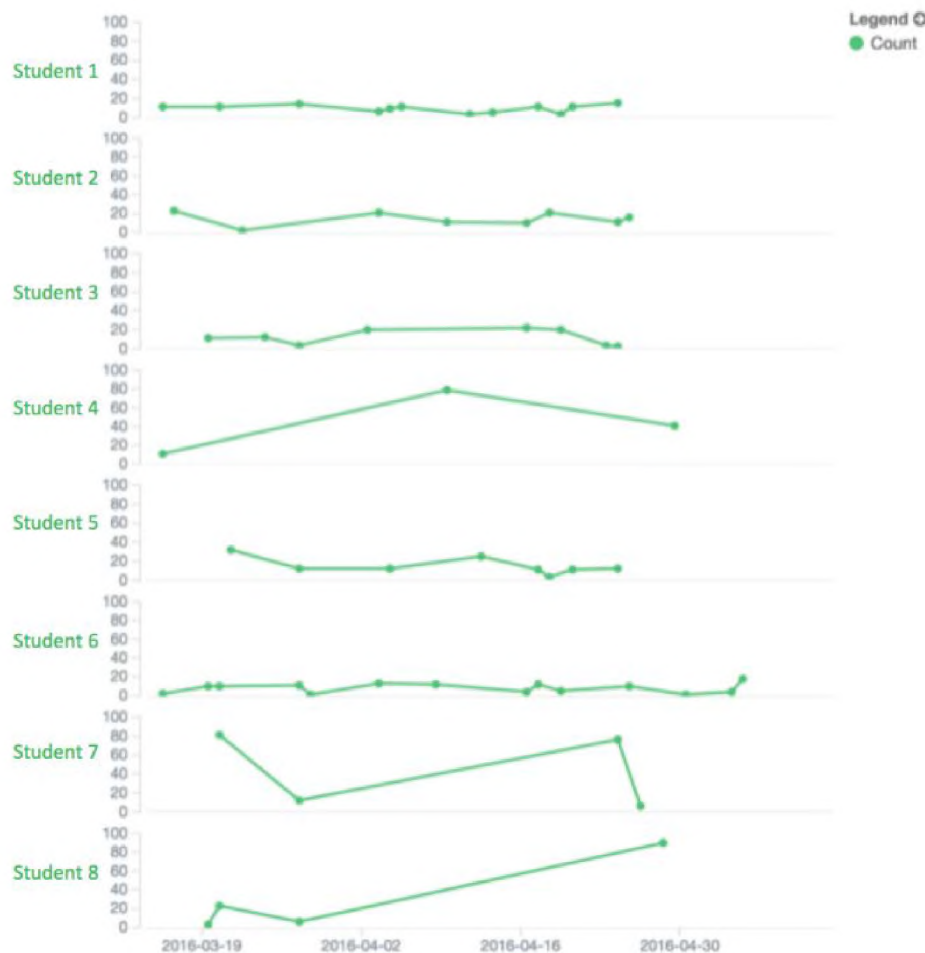


Figure 5. Data on Student Online Activity

We use Sakai as our LMS to deliver the online portion of our hybrid course. Some of the functions of Sakai are: publish syllabi, carry on discussions, provide web links to other resources, distribute files (PowerPoint, PDF, etc.), create online quizzes, conduct surveys, enable students to submit assignments electronically, and manage and post grades. Quizzes conducted on Sakai allow us to gather data easily on the completion rate and performance outcomes. This in

turn enables us to determine what needs to be reviewed and reiterated during F2F time in class. Piazza is adopted as the discussion forum on Sakai. It complements the interactions via WeChat.

Learning analytics is “the measurement, collection, analysis and reporting of data about learners and their contexts, for purposes of understanding and optimizing learning and the environments in which it occurs” (van Harmelen & Workman, 2012). Sakai allows us to collect and analyze students’ online activity data so that we may track their progress and provide individualized assistance for their success with the course. The information we collect includes data on the Sakai login, lesson page click, video watching, and quiz completion. We implemented the Open Learning Record Store (LRS) test environment in March 14, 2016. Since then we have been able to track all students’ activity closely in Sakai. Such data collection would have been extremely cumbersome, if not entirely impossible, in a traditional classroom. Figure 5 is a sample description of individual student’s online activity since our implementation of LRS.

The data indicated that Students 3, 5, 7, 8 had no activity from March 14 to 20. As it turned out, Students 3 and 5 did the online study before March 14, so the system was not able to capture their activity data. Students 7 and 8 simply did not do the online assignment. Their instructor was notified of this lapse, and she immediately met with those two students, who made up the missed assignment immediately after the meeting. Since then, they have been actively engaged in the online study of this course.

### **Assessment and Outcome**

Using data collected from LMS, we monitor students’ participation, performance, and progress. WeChat and Piazza enable us to provide immediate feedback, and students are able to use the feedback immediately to improve their skills. We use assessment primarily to improve performance and only secondarily to evaluate performance for grading purposes. We also conduct three surveys at the end of the fourth week, the eighth week, and the semester. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive. Students like the format of the class, its flexibility of learning time and learning pace, and the overall interactive environment. The following is a summary of the survey results of the fall semester of 2015. Table 6 is a short online survey conducted at the fourth week.

Eight out of nine students enrolled chose “Enjoyment” as their answer. One chose “Hope.” Table 7 contains explanations by students of their choices in Table 6.

Table 8 contains sample questions and feedback in the follow-up survey conducted at the end of the eighth week.

Figures 6 and 7 contain students’ overall evaluation of the course and their explanations in the course exit survey.

At the end of the 2015–2016 academic year, we compared students’ mean test scores of our traditional and Hybrid First Year Chinese classes for each of the four skills: listening, speaking, writing and reading, as well as the breakdowns of the writing scores and the speaking scores according to their respective grading rubrics. The statistical description of the test scores for the four skills shows that students in the hybrid class received higher mean scores in speaking, writing and reading than their counterparts in the traditional class. Due to the small sample size and non-normal distribution of most of the data from the two classes, Mann-Whitney U test, a non-parametric method, was adopted to make the further comparisons. The test result showed a significant difference ( $U = 18.5, p = .048 < .05$ ) in speaking test scores between the two classes, while no significant differences were found in reading and writing test scores between the two classes.

You are about to start the second lesson of this hybrid course. How do you feel about learning Chinese in this format? Please check one from the list in Table 6 and explain why.

Table 6. *Online Survey Conducted at the End of the Fourth Week of Fall 2015*

Response selections	Response selections	Response selections
Anxiety	Confusion	Relief
Hope	Boredom	Enjoyment
Frustration	Disappointment	Satisfaction

Table 7. *Explanations by Students*

Explanations by students
I like being able to replay the video if I need to hear pronunciation again. I like that I can repeat the pronunciation in my own room. I like that I can refer to the lesson whenever I need to.
It is nice to be able to watch a video and then prove you understand concepts. The concepts are presented very well. I understand material very well after watching the videos usually.
I really enjoy the learning environment and the small class size. I enjoy talking to my classmates and learning Chinese in such a collaborative way. I also really enjoy not having class 5 days a week and the flexibility of this class.
I like the pace of the class and the focus on speaking and pronunciation. I like that we learn the material outside of class and practice it in class.
This format has been good so far. It has been nice because if you don't understand you can rewatch as much as you want. But if you understand the first time you don't have to re-do it.

Table 8. *Sample Follow-up Survey Questions and Feedback*

Questions	Responses
How does this course design influence your learning experience in comparison with traditional classroom practices?	I take ownership of my learning, my responsibility. Allows class time to be more effective. Forces me to review materials before class that makes me more engaged in class. I feel I had to study and prepare more.
What do you think are the advantage of the online components of this hybrid Chinese course?	The grammar and vocabulary videos. WeChat assignment. I can review or preview lessons as often as I want. PPT are always posted so I can use them to refer back to.
What are the most effective aspects of this hybrid course?	The online videos are the most effective in teaching the grammar and new vocab. The Wechat time. Flexibility, preview/review grammar video. Drill time in class, emphasis on speaking. Speaking. The drill sessions where we speak only Chinese and practice using grammar and new vocabulary repeatedly. Classroom discussion.

How would you describe your overall experience with this course? (8 responses)

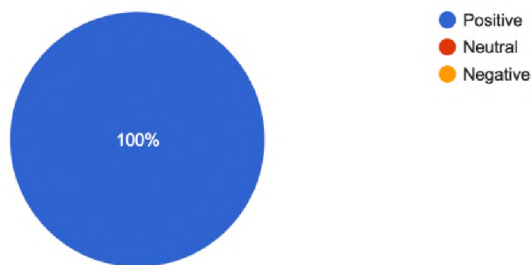


Figure 6. Students’ Overall Evaluation of the Course

Please explain why: (7 responses)

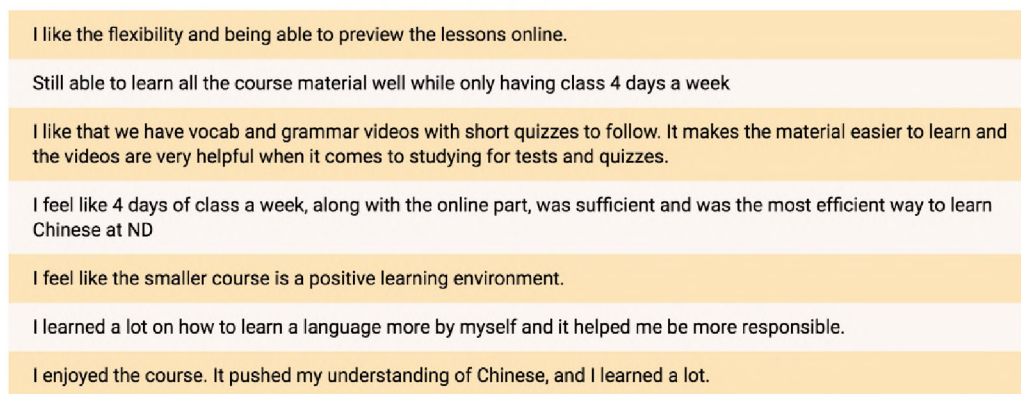


Figure 7. Students’ Explanations of Their Overall Evaluations of the Course

### Recommendations and Rationale

Based on research and experience, the following recommendations are offered in the hope of generating more interest in and discussion of promoting hybrid courses in CFL.

I. Design different activities for different learning environments. Design input-based activities for online learning and output-based activities for classroom learning. Use class time for practice, small-group communications, real-life tasks, and collaborative oral assignments such as roleplaying, with the instructor serving as the facilitator (Baumgarten, 2015). For example, students watch the vocabulary video to learn the meaning and pronunciation of the words before coming to class. In class, they do not do such activities as going over the vocabulary PPT slides, matching words, as students in a traditional class would do. Instead, they engage in activities in which new vocabulary is incorporated by the instructor into more communication activities, such as roleplaying, conversation, and Q&A.

II. Keep online activities reasonably short. Research has shown that “the novelty of any stimulus tends to wear off after about 10 minutes, and as a result, learners tend to check out after 10 minutes of exposure to new content” (Goodwin & Miller, 2013, p. 79). Findings of other studies put the average attention span of an adult student in the range of 10-20 minutes (Burns, 1985; Middendorf & Kalish, 1996; Postman, 1985). We keep the length of our online activities in accordance with these findings.

Online videos: We created eighty videos via Camtasia (two vocabulary videos and two grammar videos for each lesson, with a total of twenty lessons) for the one year hybrid course to help students learn new vocabulary and grammar online before class. These videos provided clear pronunciation of vocabulary and lucid explanation of grammar. All video clips are under 7 minutes in length.

Online quizzes: Two quizzes were created for each lesson for students to practice and assess what they have learned from watching the videos. Each quiz has 6-8 questions. The questions adopt a variety of formats, including multiple choices, short answers, and audio prompts. Students are given multiple chances to arrive at the correct answers. They get instant feedback for each attempt they make.

III. Integrate online and classroom activities. Hybrid learning is not just a matter of moving certain course elements online or supplementing an online course with F2F meetings. The online and F2F modes need to be integrated. To do so, one must consider the learning objectives of the course and the affordances of each mode so that they can enhance and reinforce each other (Kelly, 2012). As Carrasco and Johnson (2015, p. 15) cautioned, “Instructors need to maintain a close degree of coordination between the online and in-person activities. The two parallel halves of the course may diverge if careful attention is not paid to planning.”

Our preclass learning introduces the topic to students who at that point may or may not have completely understood the material. Our F2F meetings start by reviewing the online work that was completed before the class. Based on their performance in the online quiz and their questions posted on the discussion board, explanation is provided on points that were confusing or difficult to them. In-class focus is on student interaction despite the relative reduction in F2F time. For efficient time management, an agenda is created with time estimate for each activity during F2F meetings. Following each F2F meeting, students discuss, practice, and apply the learned material through Piazza and WeChat. Such multiple exposures to the material, as Caufield (2011) points out, provide the opportunity for students to apply higher-level cognitive functions through self-reflection and interaction with their peers (p. 64).

IV. Choose the right technology. The use of technology is part and parcel of a hybrid course, but it should never be the end in and by itself. The most suitable technology does not always correspond to what is hottest out there in the marketplace. Technological decisions should be based on pedagogical goals (Aycock, 2011). There are two uses of classroom technology: instructional and collaborative. The former requires students to use digital tools to research and learn or present their learning to others. The latter requires them not only to consume content online but also react to it and form communities around it (Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013).

In our hybrid course, the instructional use of technology consists of the delivery of course content online and the completion of quizzes and drills online before class. The collaborative use of technology takes place primarily in the discussion board on Piazza and WeChat. The discussion board constitutes a virtual learning community where students and instructors ask and answer questions, comment on course content, and provide timely feedback.

V. Resist the temptation to give students an excessive workload. When designing a hybrid course, teachers have tend to simply add online work to the traditional design. As observed by Garrison and Vaughan (2008), “students will have little chance to approach learning in deep and meaningful ways if they are overwhelmed with content and do not have the opportunities to discuss, reflect, and digest the meaning of the material presented” (p. 88). In our course design, the average amount of time needed for the average student to complete the online

activities in any given week does not exceed one hour. Our hybrid course meets four times a week (with 50minutes for each meeting), though it is a 5-credit course. One hour is set aside for online learning. Our traditional First Year Chinese (also a 5-credit course), on the other hand, meets five times a week. The idea is that students learning the same material and earning the same number of credits should spend the same amount of time and do the same amount of work.

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