

# Chinese Language Video Clips Project

## Proposal for ACS Teaching with Technology Fellowship

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### **Background:**

During the 1990's a handful of texts were produced to provide Chinese language teachers with transcripts and language-learning aids for feature-length Chinese films. These texts strengthened Chinese language pedagogy at a time when textbooks were very limited in availability, diversity and pedagogical sophistication. The films tended to be adaptations of China's earlier social-realism. They were still grounded in the idea of portraying everyday life (and everyday speech) but also carried the mandate that they contain socially relevant plots and issues. The films featured in these guides are still very much relevant to Chinese language programs today, but in a considerably altered situation. Today there are many available textbooks and a wide variety of pedagogically advanced materials. Twenty years ago teachers were challenged to find supplemental materials for the paltry texts. Now Chinese language teachers must exercise judicious selection. The Chinese program at Southwestern University, along with other ACS colleges, such as Trinity, faces the challenge of teaching the full range of language skills in a week with only three days of classroom contact. Films are now beneficial to such programs not as a way to supplement scanty material, but rather to reinforce and reiterate the abundant supply student already have. It is frankly necessary for students in such a program to receive pedagogically-sound materials for out-of-classroom exercises. Southwestern's Chinese program already requires lab assignments that ask students to produce characters in association with spoken or heard sounds. We will continue to develop technology-based materials beyond this project to encourage student participation with resources and communities accessible on the internet. Films are currently used in our classrooms of all levels to foster listening comprehension, introduce cultural issues, provide examples of sentence patterns, and to provide contexts in which role-playing activities can be employed without much explanation. These are all helpful for the overall program curriculum, but making use of online resources where students can prepare for the film beforehand and reflect and analyze once again afterwards will help maximize the classroom use of these films.

### **Description:**

I propose to use ACS funding to capture film segments, arrange them into manageable clips and provide meaningful exercises for pre-learning and post-learning activities. The project will include at least 20 clips from five different films. These films are commercially available with developed transcripts and language-teaching materials, hence all of the materials of this project could be shared with ACS schools. The films are (English titles): *Strange Friends*, *A Great Wall*, *Under the Bridge*, *At Middle Age*, and *Hibiscus Town*. Each clip will consist of a very short segment from a film, roughly 10 to 20 seconds. Each clip will have two components: a preparatory component in which students gain initial exposure and respond to global-oriented questions, such as "How do the neighbors respond to the woman in this clip? What kinds of things do you think they

could be saying about her?” There will also be a concluding exercise, asking for precise information about sentence- or vocabulary-level observations, such as “Which character below represents Liu Mama’s exclamation in this segment? Which expression below is the most accurate written form of Yang Jun’s reply? How does the verb-complement form appear in this conversation?”

**Timeline:**

I plan to work on this project throughout the months of July and August, 2004. By July 16 I will complete the identification of relevant clips with lesson objectives and provide draft exercise applications in which they can be used (hard copy outlines). By July 23 the clips and segmenting will be completed. By August 8 I will have exercises for the clips using *Strange Friends* and *Under the Bridge* completed and functioning online as a pilot program. These two films are most appropriate for beginning students, and hence hold a higher priority. By August 15 exercises for the remainder of the films will be completed. On this date, the entire set of clips will be coordinated with the other resources available on SU’s Chinese language website, ready for students to access via password. This will also be accessible by colleagues at other ACS institutions who may want to make use of these materials.

**Technology:**

This project will require video capture hardware and software, and software for creating interactive exercises online. These are all available through SU’s Language Learning Center.

**Other Support:**

I will continue to work with Dr. Bill Christensen and Eric Hanke of Southwestern’s Language Learning Center. Southwestern University’s Information Technology Service (ITS) will also provide support, as they have done in the past. I am also reasonably assured of support from the ACS Technology Center, located on our campus. In addition, Dr. Glenda Carl will provide advice and support within our own department, and I may also make use of professional contacts through the Chinese Language Teachers Association and the Kenyon Chinese language teacher’s listserv ([chinese@kenyon.edu](mailto:chinese@kenyon.edu)). The latter frequently discusses Chinese language computing issues and some of the discussants are quite familiar with Chinese IT issues in regards to the classroom.

**Learning Outcomes:**

Through the application of this Video Clips project students will 1) develop listening proficiency skills, 2) increase character-to-sound connection, and 3) participate in culturally authentic discourse. By requiring participation in these film clip exercises the students will hear many repetitions of the given film clip. By completing the concluding exercise they will analyze the sounds they are hearing, associating these sounds directly with characters. Finally, students will engage in cultural participation simply through the act of reviewing and closely analyzing genuine Chinese films. Students will be able to converse about the films and identify social issues presented in the films with native speakers, even at a novice or intermediate level of speaking.

**Curriculum:**

The Video Clips project will fit into the overall curriculum of the Chinese program at each level of proficiency. At each level the video clips will complement or even illustrate 1) contexts and 2) examples of sentence patterns. The video clips will supplement the use of films in the classroom, but these comprise only one part of classroom acquisition activities. The curriculum provides for acquisition of reading, writing, listening and speaking; and also for the development of cultural, contextual and community-oriented abilities. Students already make use of audio files to increase listening abilities and associate characters with recorded dialogues, for example. The film clips will assist in the curriculum by providing further character-to-sound connections, reinforce grammatical contexts—showing how particular sentences are used in context of particular discourses—and strengthening listening skills. In addition the films will provide cultural contexts and issues for discussion in class, but primarily for prompting direct student interaction through role-playing activities. The reiterations will facilitate full acquisition of these skills, especially given the great value of classroom time.

**Assessment:**

The Video Clips project will be evaluated by assessing student performance, by student evaluation, and peer review. Listening comprehension portions of exams taken before the project will be compared to comparable exam portions after the project has begun to function, in December of 2003 and 2004. Students will also evaluate their personal response to the project in an in-class mid-term assessment (roughly October 2004). I will also ask for comments from colleagues in the field for input and advice on the project (March 2005). I will also maintain a journal or log of my experiences and observations throughout the academic year.

**Dissemination:**

Because the Video Clips project will make use of materials already widely available for classroom use, these materials will be readily accessible to any ACS college with a Chinese language program. Other campuses without regular programs may also take an interest. Rollins College, for example, conducts occasional Beginning Chinese courses, for which this project can provide supplementary material. As this project will have clearly defined objectives for each clip, instructors will be able to adapt the clips to that particular objective within their own curriculum. I intend to notify all ACS campuses with Chinese programs and the project can be made available to them through passwords or download—whichever is most appropriate.