Model of Transnational Online Serial Sociocultural Lectures for Overseas Chinese Children and Its Evaluation

Zhiling Yang | ORCID: 0000-0002-0521-2681
Lecturer, School of Foreign Studies, Wenzhou University, Wenzhou, Zhejiang, China
zlyang@wzu.edu.cn

Abstract

Previous lectures targeted at overseas Chinese children have mostly been offline in the form of youth camps sponsored by the Chinese governments before the COVID-19 pandemic and are now usually administered online in a single-topic format transnationally post-pandemic. This form of “one-to-many” singular online lectures comes along with discontinuity, mass audiences, chaos, and being less tailored to the individual needs and context, failing to meet the evaluation metrics in different evaluation levels. This paper proposes a model of transnational online livestreaming serial socio-cultural lectures for overseas Chinese children, which puts forward the synergy of lecturing staff from higher educational institutions (HEIs) in China and students at Chinese language schools (CLSS) worldwide as participants. Lecturing staff from needs and context HEIs can guarantee sufficient keynote speakers for “one-on-one” mode and cope with the above-mentioned problems. After the implementation of five sessions of these serial lectures, evaluation of this model shows that the pre-lecture, during-lecture, and post-lecture stages have are applicable. Furthermore, for sociocultural lectures, the audience may be more interested in literature classics than folk arts from a specific region. Correlation analysis reveals that younger children have a better evaluation of this model and an improved inclination to attend lectures, which sheds light on the improvement of sociocultural lectures as online lectures are preferred among overseas Chinese children.
Keywords

transnational online lectures – sociocultural – overseas Chinese children – implementation – evaluation

1 Introduction

Lectures, as a supplement to classroom teaching and an increasingly popular tool, are usually given to a group of people to teach a particular subject or topic. Lecture provides a unique educational channel for human contact, communication, and cognitive engagement which involves disciplinary discourse framework. For overseas Chinese children worldwide, the Chinese heritage language (HL) education usually takes place in the Chinese language schools (sometimes referred to as Chinese schools, Chinese centers, or Chinese learning centers. Here referred to as CLSSs), known as overseas Chinese language education (OCLE). Outside of classroom teaching in CLSSs, sociocultural lectures are usually given for sociocultural knowledge expansion and are often considered useful to enhance their bonds with their motherland China.

Overseas youth culture camps have become an option for children and the destination itself needs to uphold certain appealing qualities such as historic attractions and cultural benefits. Before the Covid-19 pandemic, there is a unique form of youth summer/winter/fall/spring camp in China which is government-sponsored and targeted at the Chinese language learners worldwide started in the 1980s with a total number of 600,000 overseas

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Chinese participated during the past 40 years, most of whom were overseas Chinese children.\(^8\)

Qu (2017) investigated the origin and development of this provincial-government-sponsored youth camps for overseas Chinese children in his study, which was referred to as a “root-seeking camp”, known as “Bond with China”.\(^9\)

As a flexible and interesting short-term Chinese culture camp, it is different from general overseas Chinese heritage language classroom teaching. These camps are not only a practice for Chinese heritage language learners and an opportunity for Chinese heritage language enhancement through a variety of activities with cultural experience and cross-cultural communication. During the short camp time, campers from all over the world traveled to China and were fully immersed in a Chinese-language environment, which was usually filled with plenty of sociocultural lectures.

This program focused on the combination of classroom lecturing and first-hand experience, the integration of cultural perception in forms of both in and out-of-classroom interaction and trips, the combination of cultural knowledge and experiencing (including Mandarin learning, field works, and hands-on art classes such as calligraphy, martial arts, woodcraft carving, etc.).\(^10\)

With a deep tapping of the local and regional advantages of natural and cultural resources and characteristics in the camp-hosting cities in China, these lectures could not only enhance the student’s interest in learning Chinese but also be acquainted the campers with the Chinese culture.\(^11\) In 2011 alone, Fujian Province organized 60 camps for 8161 overseas Chinese youth who were living abroad.

However, as is affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and most overseas Chinese children worldwide are not able to travel back to China, the online youth camp as a new form came into being in 2020, which is mostly held in form of lectures. Overseas Chinese students in CLSS participate in the camps and lectures through network interaction. At present, the online camp is at its budding stage and hasn’t been held frequently.\(^12\)

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online camps, some typical ones include the “Chinese Bridge – A Musical Joy for Five Weeks” online summer camp for Chinese music lectures in 2020 and the “Chinese Bridge” online summer camp for “the Belt and Road Initiatives” knowledge lectures started in 2021,\(^\text{13}\) the “Chinese Peiyou (Elite Fostering)” online summer camp for language training lectures,\(^\text{14}\) “Chinese Culture Paradise” hosted by different provincial and municipal Overseas Chinese Affairs Office (cohosted by some higher educational institutions guided by National Overseas Chinese Affairs Office of China) started online in 2021 for scattered cultural lectures,\(^\text{15}\) and “Virtual Reality Classroom” hosted by Chinese Language and Culture Foundation of China and started in 2020 for technological cultural lectures.\(^\text{16}\)

2 Literature Review

2.1 Evaluation Methods

There are some conventional techniques to measure the effectiveness of classroom instruction, such as analytic hierarchy process (AHP),\(^\text{17}\) developmental student evaluation,\(^\text{18}\) and the Delphi method,\(^\text{19}\) which were effectively used during offline classroom settings. However, with the coming of online teaching or the hybrid or blended offline/online mode, conventional methods are not rational or scientific enough because of unclear evaluation standards, incomplete and inaccurate assessment of online learning effect. There are many evaluation systems now with constant revision and improvement. Pandhiani used factor analysis to discuss how students evaluate teachers in terms of course


attributes. The offset Korotkoff evaluation model was studies in current blending teaching mode to construct the evaluate system of teaching effectiveness with the combination of Kirkpatrick model (Liang, et al., 2022). In this improved Kirkpatrick model, four evaluation levels are involved including reactive layer, learning layer, behavioral layer, and result layer. These evaluation levels can also be used in online lecture instructions. Research of Villanueva et al. (2017) showed that students’ evaluation at the end of class is the most used method when evaluating classroom teaching.

2.2 Evaluation Metrics in Current Online Transnational Lectures
From the perspective of the four evaluation levels, each level is measured by different metrics. There are some unneglectable weaknesses in those conventional online camps in form of lectures for overseas Chinese children in CLSS when looking into the credibility of delivery due to reported cases of “choke points” arising from the overwhelming number of scattered lectures. Meanwhile, by observing the evaluation metrics, studies of sociocultural lectures are quite homogenous with neglect of investigation of its implementation of various camps before and after the pandemic.

In the reactive layer, teachers, courses, and environment are considered as evaluation metrics and the satisfaction questionnaire can be used as the evaluation method. However, as of the environment, there are some problems in live-streaming lectures, among which the biggest problem lies in online platforms. Insufficient network capacity due to too many people online at the same time causes network jams and delays. This usually leads to a lack of online lecture room management and its systematism. Besides, the topics of the

live lectures should be appropriate to the audience's needs and give priority to more practical topics instead of too abstract ones.\textsuperscript{26} It is advisable to combine the enculturation of the audience with characteristics of lecture themes or subjects.\textsuperscript{27} Topic selection is important for lectures even in the case of lectures of some overseas Chinese associations.\textsuperscript{28} Existing lectures for overseas Chinese children are usually given without selected themes between one and another lecture. In learning layer, self-learning concept, professional knowledge and skill are evaluation metrics. In the conventional sociocultural online lectures, there is always a scarcity of professional keynote speakers with enough knowledge and skills due to geographical limitations and insufficient funds. It’s hard to provide quality keynote speakers and lectures, which in the end hinders the continuous and sustainable development of serial lectures instead of just one single-topic lecture.\textsuperscript{29} Deng (2022) advocates the introduction of those keynote speakers with high research ability and high cultural knowledge background and emphasizes the content of traditional folk arts and classics in socio-culture lectures.\textsuperscript{30} In previous lectures, the topics are more scattered without the scientific design of a framework for a themed session of lectures so that it cannot hold the audience. It’s difficult to find keynote speakers of a similar research scope. Even though several lectures of different topics can be given but usually without a consistent theme.\textsuperscript{31}

Behavioral layer is evaluated by metrics of behavioral, attitude, and concept changes. Most importantly, CLSS are weary of signing up the participation in

\begin{itemize}
\end{itemize}
the lectures because there are usually many CLSSs in the same online lecture room and there is a possibility of a loss of students when their rival schools try to steal their students by advertising in the chatting box or private messages while the live-streaming lectures, especially when some CLSSs are having the online teaching mode and students can transfer from one school from another much easier without geographic constraints. Namely, a student from Germany can take online courses of a Canadian CLS. Though there is usually a posting and notices a few days before the lectures, and dates are usually arranged by organizers of lectures instead of CLSSs. Lectures are usually given without the consideration of the Chinese language and cultural proficiency of participants, which means first graders and middle school students usually participate in the same lecture of the same content. Keynote speakers usually dominate the whole lecturing process and don’t have much interaction with listeners. Even though on some occasions listeners can use text messages in the chatting box in the online live-streaming lecture platform, the large number of audiences would hinder the keynote speakers from giving feedback on time, not to mention the Internet glitch because of the mass audience. After several experiences of frustration in the lecture, child participants usually lose enough interest.

Result layer is determined by personal achievement as the metric. The traditional “one-to-many” lecture mode is frequently adopted, which means one lecture is live streaming to many participating CLSSs simultaneously. Some lecture participants are complaining about the disordered management, especially tens of thousands of children crowded in the same virtual classroom and sharing the same lecture with some younger-aged participants doodling on the screens, and don’t understand the necessity of classroom discipline such as turning off microphones which will disrupt other audience and affect the outcome and achievement in the lectures.

Most research on lectures, no matter offline lectures, recorded lectures or live-streaming lectures of different metrics focus on students of older age, such as university students. In the case of sociocultural lectures in China,
most research are case studies of one specific camp. Studies are less content-based and are aimed to investigate the relationship with learning/teaching efficacy/methods or heritage identity\textsuperscript{36,37,38} and fail to discuss their process of organization, implementation, management, and evaluation. Fan (2013) and Wang (2018) took Chongqing and Guangxi as examples and put forward feasible suggestions for the integration of regional cultural resources and offline youth camps and discussed its evaluation merely from three factors, such as accommodation and methods of organization,\textsuperscript{39,40} failing to meet some changes of the online lectures which needs more transnational holistic and collaborative efforts of factors outside of lectures.

Previous research has revealed the practicality and feasibility of sociocultural lectures in “root-seeking camp” for overseas Chinese, which was prevalently offline before the Covid-19 pandemic and tentatively online in the recent more than two years. This current study is conducted to fill up this research gap by using overseas Chinese children in form of transnational online serial sociocultural lectures as an important form and a supplement to the post-Covid-19 pandemic era study. By constructing a new model of transnational online serial socio-cultural lecture for CLSS, its evaluation of the new lecture model will be examined using a questionnaire. Three questions will be researched in this study.

1. How to construct an effective model of transnational online serial socio-cultural lectures for CLSS and test it with several sessions?
2. How do lecture participants evaluate the content and overall management of this model by different factors?
3. How does age affect the evaluation of the model and inclination of participating?


3 Materials and Methods

3.1 Participants
Quantitative research data were collected by a real-time online questionnaire survey in Chinese during transnational live streaming online serial sociocultural lectures given to overseas Chinese children in ten CLSS in four different European nations. The consent of the respondents was obtained at the beginning of the questionnaire and lower graders were helped by reading and explanation of the questions. A total of 248 valid samples from the ten CLSS were collected with 110 males and 138 females.

Based on previous practices of offline lectures of “root-seeking summer camps” for decades, five different sessions of transnational online serial sociocultural lectures with different topics have been organized since the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic in early 2020. Each session was composed of eight different lectures with different topics related to local regional Chinese cultural characteristics respectively. Each lecture lasted for one hour. Lectures were given on a once or twice-a-week basis. This means each session lasted for one or two months and was given during summer and winter vacations for overseas Chinese children in Europe. The online lectures were given by lecturing staff from HEIs in China while the participation of lectures for overseas Chinese children was made on a live-streaming software platform. To cater to the different levels of students’ Chinese language proficiency, the lectures were designed at the elementary level (for 1st to 3rd graders) and advanced level (for 4th graders and above) for children. Among the participants, 141 attended the elementary level and 107 advanced level. A total of 13 CLSS and 10 CLSS in Europe participated in different levels of the serial online lectures in Session 4 and Session 5 respectively (five CLSS participated in the 4th Session but didn’t participate in the 5th Session). Only participants of the 10 CLSS who participated in the 5th Session were included in the questionnaire survey, including two CLSS who participated only in the 5th Session. The information of the 10 CLSS participating is listed in Table 1.

As is shown above, seven CLSS are schools located in Italy, one in France, Spain, and Austria. Among the ten schools, eight CLSS participated in the 4th session of transnational online serial socio-cultural lectures and all of them participated the 5th session. All ten schools chose the elementary level and seven CLSS chose the advanced level and seven of them chose the advanced level. As each session was composed of eight different lectures, each CLS arranged lectures once or twice every week, which made the session last for four or eight weeks. Among the 10 CLSS, five of them had two lectures per week
### Table 1  CLSs participated in the 5th Session of transnational online sociocultural lectures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CLS</th>
<th>Country of CLS</th>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Lecture(s) Per Week</th>
<th>Total Weeks</th>
<th>Lecture Platform</th>
<th>Time Slot (European Time)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>JCK</td>
<td>France</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
<td>Zoom</td>
<td>Sat. 10–11AM / Wed. 2–3PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BS</td>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
<td>Zoom</td>
<td>Sat. 11–12AM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BLM</td>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>Zoom</td>
<td>Wed. 5–6PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YC</td>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>DingTalk</td>
<td>Sat. 10–11AM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MEK</td>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>ClassIn</td>
<td>Thu. 2–3PM / Tue. 4–5PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WYN</td>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
<td>Zoom</td>
<td>Sat. 3–4PM / Tue. 4–5PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HY</td>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>Zoom</td>
<td>Sat. 5–6PM / Thu. 5–6PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XD</td>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
<td>Zoom</td>
<td>Mon. 2–3PM / Thu. 3–4PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XY</td>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
<td>Zoom</td>
<td>Sat. 5–6PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ZY</td>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
<td>DingTalk</td>
<td>Sat. 10–11AM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Based on author’s fieldworks from July to August 2022
and the other five had one lecture. The time slot was arranged upon request. Most of the lectures were put on Saturdays. Some of CLSSs put the lectures on weekdays with intervals of several days. Lectures usually finished before 6 PM as there are some time differences between the time zone of China and Europe (six hours in summer hours and seven hours in winter hours).

As is shown in Table 2, the cross-tabulation of 248 respondents shows the age distribution of different grades in CLSSs. For 1st graders, public schools usually enroll children of 6 years old, but CLSSs have a range of students of 6 to 13 years old for Grade 1. For 2nd graders, most of the students were of 9 to 11 years old and some of them were even 15 or 16 years old. That’s the same case for all lower grades from Grade 1 to Grade 5. At some higher grades, students of younger ages can attend. For example, there was one participant at the age of 9 years old, but he/she was attending Grade 6. Students of CLSS attend their grades depending on their Chinese language proficiency, instead of their age. This helps to understand the correlation analysis in the discussion.

### 3.2 Measure
To assess the strength of reliability and validity of the questionnaire, Cronbach’s alpha and, KMO measurement of sampling adequacy, and Bartlett’s test of sphericity is used by SPSS 26.0. Three dimensions in the survey include content evaluation, overall management evaluation, and inclination of participating lectures, to reveal the evaluation metrics in different evaluation layers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6+</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Based on author’s fieldworks from July to August 2022
The first part of the questionnaire survey focused on the content evaluation of eight topics in 5th Session of transnational online sociocultural lectures (8 items) in a 5-point Likert scale format (5 means strongly like and 1 means dislike). Overall management evaluation factors (8 items) were based on the offline lectures of the “root-seeking camp” before the Covid-19 pandemic in a 5-point Likert scale format (5 means strongly satisfied and 1 means strongly dissatisfied) were fielded regarding different stages for a discussion of whether and how the problems in the current online sociocultural lectures can be solved. By 5-point Likert scale format (5 means strongly agree and 1 means strongly disagree), three items about the inclination of participation were made along with a multiple choice (see Table 9). The subscales from the transnational online serial sociocultural lectures are listed as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subscale</th>
<th>NO. items</th>
<th>Cronbach's Alpha</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>S.D.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Content evaluation</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>.880</td>
<td>3.70</td>
<td>1.276</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall management evaluation</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>.888</td>
<td>4.56</td>
<td>.664</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inclination</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.742</td>
<td>4.15</td>
<td>.865</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Based on author’s fieldworks from July to August 2022

As is shown above, the content evaluation of eight topics in 5th Session of transnational online sociocultural lectures was tested with a reliability index of $\alpha = 0.880$ (Mean = 3.70; SD = 1.276). Overall management evaluation factors generated a reliability index of $\alpha = 0.888$ (Mean = 4.56; SD = .664). Three items about the inclination of participation had a Cronbach’s alpha of .742 (Mean = 4.15; SD = .865). An index above .850 is extremely good, above .800 shows a good reliability, and above .700 is acceptable. This means the first two dimensions have a good reliability, and the third dimension is acceptable.

KMO measurement of above .800 is good enough and .500 is acceptable for factor analysis. From our result in table 4, the KMO value of content evaluation is .872 (Sig.(P) = .000) and the KMO value of overall organization evaluation is .926 (Sig.(P) = .000), which is highly acceptable for validity. The KMO value of inclination is .654 (Sig.(P) = .000), which is acceptable but relatively low. Therefore, according to Table 3 and Table 4, the three items in inclination will be discussed its correlation with independent variables separately. Bartlett’s
test of sphericity is used to test the null hypothesis. All three significant statistical test is .000, which is under the significance level .050.

3.3 Data Analysis
Data analysis of three dimensions will be followed. First, there will be a discussion of the model of transnational online serial socio-cultural lectures to examine how lecturing staff of HEIs of China collaboratively work with CLSS by pre-lecture, while-lecture, and post-lecture stage. Then, by observing the existing research tradition, each of the three dimensions was measured by different items with their means and stand derivation. Last, we resorted to correlation analysis to explore how age potentially influences the perception of transnational online serial socio-cultural lectures.

4 Results

4.1 Model of Implementation
The whole process of transnational online serial socio-cultural lectures is the collaboration of both HEIs in China and CLSS overseas, which needs a transnational synergy of efforts of all stakeholders. The model is demonstrated as follows:
As is shown in Figure 1, lecturing staff from HEIs in China give live-streaming lectures online and students of CLSS worldwide, as receivers of lectures can take the lectures both online and offline. The whole process is composed of three stages: pre-lecture, while-lecture, and post-lecture stage.

In the pre-lecture stage, CLSS sign up for participation in serial lectures from a designated website of HEIs in China and then select desirable sessions respectively according to the characteristics of schools and students who participate.
The eight different topics will be assigned to different keynote speakers in a crew of lecturing staff in HEIs of China. Lecturing staff team building adopts the “N + X” method. “N” means the number of lectures in one session. In the case of this study, there are eight lectures, and this means that there are eight keynote speakers in one session and each keynote speaker gives lectures on one topic so that there can be better prepared. “N” is not a set number because
it doesn’t have to be exactly eight lectures in each session and one keynote speaker isn’t necessarily assigned to one topic. That way, each keynote speaker will be more skillful in the assigned topic, and he/she lectures the same topic in different CLSS by turns in different time slots to make sure of lecture quality.

Sometimes, keynote speakers can be assigned more topics. Keynote speakers are mainly HEI undergraduate seniors and postgraduates majoring in Chinese education or international Chinese education with Chinese language teaching certificate, who have a good knowledge background and HEIS have sufficient keynote speakers to build the team. “X” means teaching affairs staff working on the collaboration between the lecturing staff of HEIS and CLSS, such as posters and notices, who don’t necessarily deliver the lectures. Time difference between European and Chinese needs to be considered and suitable for both lecturing staff and participating students. There will be lecturing staff training to be adapted to the features of overseas Chinese students, no matter their language competency or cultural knowledge. Most importantly, the lecturing skills, such as techniques of having good lectures and online lecturing software operation will be trained by some experienced veteran keynote speakers. This can guarantee the good quality of keynote speakers and eventually the quality of transmission of sociocultural knowledge.

Moreover, sufficient keynote speakers can help to solve the conflict time slot in the “one-on-one” mode which means one lecture is given to one specific CLS according to different time slots to avoid the crowdedness of the audience and relieve the worry of loss of its students. If families of overseas Chinese students mostly emigrated from one regional area in China, chosen topics will be related to their regional culture so that it can have cultural resonation among participants. If students in CLSS come from different parts of China, the topic will cover a wider range of national cultures. If the students have a relatively longer immigration history, their lower Chinese language proficiency might have to be taken into consideration.

After the lecture is fully prepared, the teaching affairs staff of the team will work out posters and notices about the online lectures so that CLSS can finalize more details, such as time slot selection, participant enrollment, online lecture room ID, and so on. The sequence of each topic is not fixed, and they can be switched upon request. If there several CLSS choose the same time slot, different lecture topics will be given by different keynote speakers. For instance, both schools JCK and YC choose the same time slot Saturday 10–11 AM. Then, School JCK can have one lecture topic and School YC can have any of the rest seven lecture topics to avoid conflict among lecturing staff.

In the while-lecturing stage, the audience from CLS students will be grouped into the elementary level and advanced level according to their
language proficiency. The elementary level is suitable for participants with a vocabulary of 1,600 Chinese words whereas the advanced level is suitable for participants with a range of vocabulary of 1,600 to 3,500 Chinese words, which is divided according to the level classification of Chinese Proficiency Grading Standards for International Chinese Language Education. Therefore, 1st to 3rd graders is advised to take the elementary level, and 4th and above graders are advised to take the advanced level. The online lecture platform can be chosen from Skype, Classen, Zoom, DingTalk, or other similar ones. If CLSS have some offline students, students can participate in the classroom and interact with the aid of multimedia as in Figure 1. It’s advisable to use the software with which the students are familiar to encourage more participants. The one-hour lecture time is allotted for warming-up, main lecturing, and the last period including review, consolidation, and assignments. In the warming-up, the keynote speaker will bring up some activities to activate the theme-related brainstorming. The main lecturing part is sociocultural content based. In the last section, the lecture will design some exercises or activities to consolidate the knowledge in the class, considering the relatively younger age compared to adult audience.

In the post-lecture stage, there might be some related assignments to reinforce cultural knowledge after the lecture upon request or if necessary, participants can submit their assignments on an online platform. After the lecturing staff reviews their assignments, they will give feedback to students in CLSS either about the assignments or participants’ performance during the lectures. After one lecture is finished, the next lecture will come up according to schedule until eight lectures of one session are completed.

4.2 Evaluation

As is demonstrated in Table 5, previous interviews with Principles of all ten CLSS showed that around 85% of students in these CLSS were families emigrated from Wenzhou, a coastal city in Zhejiang Province of southeast China. It’s advisable to choose the topics of folk arts (No. 1 to 4) and classics from that specific region (No. 5 to 8) so that the participants of lectures can have better cultural resonance and identity. South opera, drum ballad, hair embroidery, and southern fist are some well-known folk arts that originated in Wenzhou. Leading roles in classics, such as Su Dongpo, Butterfly Lovers (Mr. Liang Shanbo and Ms. Zhu Yingtai), Mad Monk (Ji Gong), and White Serpent (Bai

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Suzhen) are popular in Zhejiang Province, especially in Wenzhou. With some previous cultural input from students’ families or communities, it can better arouse participants’ interest. It can also be seen that the evaluation of the topics of literature classics is higher than that of folk arts.

In Table 6, among the eight factors to evaluate the overall management of three stages of the transnational online socio-cultural lectures for CLSS, it shows that all factors were rated above 4.1, which means participants are satisfied with the model and three stages. Among all, the skills and proficiency of keynote speakers (Mean = 4.56; SD = 0.664) were rated the highest. Overall organization, topics selection and content, quality of courseware, and offline or online lecture platform are all above 4.3 to indicate a good review. News, notices, and posters updates on the official website or WeChat group are relatively lower, but still high enough.

Three factors were used to examine respondents’ inclination for lectures in Table 7. Results show that 104 (41.9%) and 66 (22.6%) percent of respondents consider the lectures fit into their Chinese heritage language and cultural proficiency. Only about 4% of respondents don’t want to participate in the lectures next session. 53.6% and 21.8% of respondents like the lectures to different extents and less than 8% dislike them. Less than 10% of respondents disagree with the compatibility of the content. A large percentage of participants (60.9% strongly agree and 16.1% agree) want to participate in lectures next session. The reason the why KMO value of inclination is relatively low in Table 3 is that Factor #1 can go either way, namely either too easy or too difficult.

**TABLE 5**  
Content evaluation of the 5th Session

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>South Opera of Wenzhou</td>
<td>3.45</td>
<td>1.995</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Tales of Su Dongpo</td>
<td>3.87</td>
<td>1.497</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Drum Ballad of Wenzhou</td>
<td>3.34</td>
<td>2.024</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Legend of Butterfly Lovers</td>
<td>4.17</td>
<td>1.306</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Hair Embroidery of Wenzhou</td>
<td>3.35</td>
<td>2.063</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Legend of Mad Monk</td>
<td>3.92</td>
<td>1.419</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Southern Fist of Wenzhou</td>
<td>3.37</td>
<td>2.016</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Legend of White Serpent</td>
<td>4.11</td>
<td>1.276</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**SOURCE:** BASED ON AUTHOR’S FIELDWORKS FROM JULY TO AUGUST 2022
**Table 6** Overall management evaluation of the 5th Session

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Corresponding Lecture Stage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Overall organization</td>
<td>4.35</td>
<td>.790</td>
<td>Stage 1, 2, 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. News, notices, and posters updates on the official website or WeChat group</td>
<td>4.17</td>
<td>.887</td>
<td>Stage 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Topics selection and content</td>
<td>4.36</td>
<td>.827</td>
<td>Stage 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Skills and proficiency of keynote speaker</td>
<td>4.56</td>
<td>.664</td>
<td>Stage 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Quality of courseware</td>
<td>4.35</td>
<td>.759</td>
<td>Stage 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F. Interaction with keynote speaker in and after lectures</td>
<td>4.29</td>
<td>.888</td>
<td>Stage 1, 2, 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. Online lecture platform</td>
<td>4.32</td>
<td>.825</td>
<td>Stage 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H. Feedback and wrapping up</td>
<td>4.21</td>
<td>.331</td>
<td>Stage 3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Based on author’s fieldworks from July to August 2022

**Table 7** An inclination of the 5th Session and future lectures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Lectures fit into my Chinese language and cultural proficiency. (Factor #1)</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>(41.9%)</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>(26.6%)</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>(22.6%)</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I like this session of lectures. (Factor #2)</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>(53.6%)</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>(21.8%)</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>(16.9%)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I want to participate in lectures of next session. (Factor #3)</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>(60.9%)</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>(16.1%)</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>(19.0%)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Based on author’s fieldworks from July to August 2022
for some participants, and factors in this dimension would need more elaboration in future research. There are still some students who are about to graduate from CLSSs and won’t be able to attend lectures next year.

From Table 8, under the condition of significance $0 \leq \alpha \leq 0.05$, age and overall management evaluation of transnational online socio-cultural lectures for CLSSs are correlated with the correlation coefficient $\gamma = -0.140$ and $\text{Sig (P)} = 0.028$. Age and inclination factor #1 (lectures fit into my Chinese language and cultural proficiency) are correlated with the correlation coefficient $\gamma = -0.129$ and $\text{Sig (P)} = 0.043$. Under the condition of significance $0 \leq \alpha \leq 0.01$, Age and inclination factor #2 (I like this session of lectures) are correlated with the correlation coefficient $\gamma = -0.304$ and $\text{Sig (P)} = 0.000$. Age and inclination factor #3 (I want to participate in lectures of the next session) are correlated with the correlation coefficient $\gamma = -0.266$ and $\text{Sig (P)} = 0.000$. Among the four correlation coefficients, $-0.140$, $-0.129$, and $-0.266$ are all above $-0.300$, which means they are correlated, but not so significant in linear correlation but in other forms of correlation. The correlation coefficient $\gamma$ of Inclination (factor #2) is $-0.304$, which is within the range of $0.300$ to $0.700$, which means that they have a slight linear correlation. It shows that the younger the participants are, the higher they evaluate the lectures and have a better inclination toward present and future lectures.

Table 9 shows the different forms of sociocultural lectures respondents prefer. Among 248 respondents, only 30 of them (12.1%) have a clear preference for offline lectures. Most participants prefer online lectures or a combination of other forms.
Discussion and Recommendations

It's clearly shown that in the synergy and implementation of transnational online socio-cultural lectures for CLSS, three stages before, during, and after the lectures are all important, which can well address the problems of conventional online lectures and constitutes a rational and systematic evaluation metrics for different evaluation levels. Among them, the pre-lecture is the most heavy-loaded one and it shows that a good transnational collaboration of both efforts of lecturing staff in HEIs from China and CLSS worldwide can make the lectures work efficiently. The five sessions over the three years have proved the model proposed is effective. There is a high evaluation of the model in content as regards topics selection of regional folk arts and literature classics. The highly rated overall management shows that the model of transnational online socio-cultural lectures for CLSS is worthwhile trying.

The skills and proficiency of keynote speakers were also highly rated, which shows the lecturing staff including HEI undergraduates and graduates with related education backgrounds are well qualified for lecturing, and this partly gives solutions to the learning layers with professional knowledge and skills. Before the Covid-19 pandemic, many teachers in CLSS were usually international students from China in local universities who took part-time jobs in CLSS overseas. Without enough education background in pedagogy, those teachers cannot compete with the lecturing staff from HEI. In a medium-sized HEI, there are around 50 to 100 undergraduate students and 15 to 30 postgraduate students for each grade majoring in Chinese education or international Chinese education, which can guarantee the staff team building and enough staff members in the “N + X” mode, or even the “(N + X) *Y” mode to lecture as many CLSS in need as possible (“Y” means to duplicate the same structured

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Options</th>
<th>n (N = 248)</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Online</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>38.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Offline</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>12.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Online and offline combined</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>19.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Whichever</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>29.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>248</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: based on author’s fieldworks from July to August 2022
“N + X” lecturing team). Therefore, it’s advisable to make better use of more than 2,000 HEIs in China and build more quality lecturing teams so that there will be more and more “one-on-one” lectures, with an improved behavioral layer which can cause the changes in behavioral, attitude and concept.

The theme-related sessions make sure the continuity of lectures and they can solve the problems of scattered topics without coherence in the reaction layer with better course and environment. Topics selection and content are important in lectures, and it was highly rated in the survey. There are many cultural merits to be tapped into so that participants can be more involved and immersed as China is a country with a long history. Take Wenzhou for example, apart from the eight topics mentioned, there are many cultural heritages worth discussing, such as stone tombs, ancient pagodas, ancient papermaking workshops, lounge bridges, and so on. It doesn’t have to be exactly eight lectures in one session. Know about the audience and select topics and make suitable content that is suitable for the younger audience to ensure a good reactive layer.

Different levels of lectures can cater to the needs of students of different age groups for a better fitting of Chinese language and cultural proficiency, which can ensure a better personal achievement in result layer. More levels can be provided if there’s enough lecturing staff, for example, elementary, medium, and advanced levels.

Age is a determining factor and is correlated to both the overall management evaluation and inclination of present and future lecture participation. CLSSs usually use specially designed textbooks which are targeted at overseas Chinese which it’s much simpler compared to those of China mainland. For those children who have good Chinese language proficiency either because they have some staying experience in China before immigrating overseas or because they have plenty of heritage language input from the familial or community environment, they can attend higher grades because students in CLSSs are divided by their proficiency of Chinese language instead of their age. It’s possible that a child starts to learn Chinese at age of 12, and then by the age of 15, he/she might be in Grade 3 instead of Grade 9 in CLSS. We usually have the stereotype that older students go to the higher grades. But, it’s not the case in overseas Chinese school because grades of students are usually divided by proficiency of Chinese language instead of age. It’s worth noting that students attend class at a later age compared to local public schools, which coincides with their attitude towards Chinese heritage language learning: an extra class. The most important reason is that lectures are fewer language skills based but more cultural knowledge related, which requires less language competency in writing and reading and involves more listening and speaking ability. As most
overseas children have the familial language environment of Chinese, they are usually more developed in verbal conversational settings. It’s advisable to divide the participants by language competency instead of by age so that younger children with poorer language proficiency will be more attracted by sociocultural lectures.

Online lectures are preferable to offline ones as it has become the new normal in sociocultural education for overseas Chinese children. With a flexible timeslot and the “one-on-one” teaching mode, CLSS have a better intention to sign-up for transnational online socio-cultural lectures without worrying about conflicts in their routine school management and the loss of students. CLSS are also entitled to choose their lecturing platform so that their students are familiar with the platform and better behave around classmates of the same school. These are suggestions for some top concerns of CLSS during the five sessions of lectures so that they can be handled carefully. In so doing, both CLSS and their students will be more willing to attend a future session of lectures.

6 Conclusion

This study has constructed a model of transnational online sociocultural lectures for CLSS, and it has been proved welcomed after the implementation of five sessions since the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic and received a good review. Transnational synergy and collaboration of lecturing staff from HEIS and CLSS worldwide in this model can provide overseas Chinese children with quality lecturing. This model helps to shed light on and solve some problems in existing traditional transnational lectures from the perspective of evaluation methods, by addressing evaluation metrics in reactive layer, learning layer, behavioral layer, and result layer. For sociocultural lectures, the audience might be more interested in the topics of literature classics rather than folk arts from that specific region. Eight factors, such as skills and proficiency of keynote speakers, overall organization, topics selection and content, quality of courseware, and lecture platform, can be used as important factors to evaluate pre-lecture, while-lecture, and post-lecture stages. It’s also found that participants of younger age have a better review of these lectures and a higher inclination of attending present and future lectures, which is an advantage to take to have a more age-proper audience.

Different factors of evaluation concerning all metrics in four evaluation layers in this study have been discussed under the consideration of language proficiency of younger-aged participants. Along those lines, it is advisable to expand the factors as regards in three stages of lectures for other older groups.
of lecture participants in future research. Findings and recommendations in this study must be interpreted with caution because it’s not likely to solve the shortage of lectures in CLSS worldwide as there are about 20,000 CLSS of different sizes worldwide. But with more HEIs engaged in the efforts, it’s promising to reach out to more CLSS in need.

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**Conflicts of Interest**

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

**References**


