Reference Guidelines for TBCL Application- FAQ

1	**What are the "Reference Guidelines for TBCL Application" (hereinafter, the Guidelines)?**

Taiwan Benchmarks for the Chinese Language (TBCL) include works such as "Chinese Language Proficiency Level Descriptors", "Grading Scales for Chinese Characters, Words and Grammar points" and "Basic Vocabulary" which were completed in 2020. We hope to exhibit and share Taiwan's work in Chinese language education with other countries. The National Academy for Educational Research (NAER) has adapted the TBCL with fundamental beliefs of Chinese language teaching, curriculum goals, learning focuses and implementation directions. Thus, expanded the scope of Chinese language education and established the "Application and Reference Guidelines" for TBCL that holds five elementary aspects, which are, materials, teaching methods, resources and evaluation.

The Guidelines provide supplemental subjects such as teaching materials for Chinese language teaching (including Chinese characters, words, grammar, other linguistic knowledge, and topics of communication) and teaching resources. With the combinations of learners' listening, speaking, reading, writing, translating, and cultural performance descriptors, instructors can make appropriate changes to their course based on students' learning objectives and goals to develop suitable teaching methods and materials. The Guidelines also offer instructors' advices on teaching implementations based on course planning, teaching design, teaching material preparation, resource utilization, and test formulation.

2	**Why was it necessary to develop the "Reference Guidelines for TBCL Application"?**

The TBCL includes matters such as Chinese language proficiency level descriptors, which defines three grades/seven levels, grading scales for Chinese characters, words and grammar points, and basic vocabulary. All of which were completed in 2020 to serve as a common framework of reference for Chinese language teaching, teaching material design, and tests/evaluation. The development of the work mentioned previously and proficiency level descriptor were based evidence such as corpuses including texts in common daily scenarios. Considering the necessity to develop a set of course guidelines that encompass concepts, objectives, learning focuses and implementation methods for Taiwan. We wish to share and exchange experiences on Chinese

language teaching with other countries. In 2021, NAER implemented parts of international benchmarks into TBCL. International benchmarks such as the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Language (ACTFL) Proficiency Guidelines and the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment (CEFR) (Council of Europe 2001). We intend to design "Reference Guidelines for TBCL Application" from the base of TBCL. The expectations of "Reference Guidelines for TBCL Application "is to align with learner-oriented mainstream perspective that is consistent with common daily scenarios. We hope to provide a further clarification on the process and objectives of Chinese language learning, therefore we expect TBCL to serve as a reference for future Chinese language course development, teaching material compilation, teaching implementation, resource selection and tests/evaluation.

3	**What are the features of the Guidelines?**

The Guidelines has two features, the first of which is the comprehensive research and development procedure. TBCL was discussed and revised based on numerous expert consultations (including seasoned Chinese language instructors). Furthermore, we received comments as well as suggestions from Chinese language teaching academic teaching departments/institutes as well as teaching centers (35 institutional members participated in these meetings). The "Reference Guidelines for TBCL Application" were examined on multiple dimensions by Chinese language scholars, experts and instructors through multiple consultations and discussions. Along with two international video-conferencing seminars and multiple reports to the Ministry of Education. As such, both constitutional research and system development have undergone comprehensive R&D procedures and represent mutual consensus. Secondly, the Guidelines are appended with complete supplementary materials including an FAQ, a unified portal website with 14 application systems, a technical manual, Youtube videos, workshop competitions, and a user manual.

4	**How are the "Chinese language proficiency level descriptors," "Taiwan Benchmarks for the Chinese Language" (TBCL) and the Guidelines related?**

The Chinese language proficiency level descriptors refer to descriptors for the three grades/seven levels of Chinese language learner knowledge and abilities. The three grades are basic, advanced, and proficient. The seven levels are "Level 1," through "Level 7". Levels 1 to 3 are basic levels, Levels 4 to 5 are advanced levels, and Levels 6 and 7 are proficient levels. In 2020, apart

from the Chinese language proficiency level descriptors, "Reference Guidelines for TBCL Application", including grading scales for Chinese characters, words and grammar points and basic vocabulary. In 2021, to share and exchange our Chinese language education knowledge with other countries, our work was reinforced with basic concepts of Chinese language teaching, course objectives, learning focuses and implementation methods. Thus, we expanded the scope, which we captivate, by designing the Reference Guidelines for TBCL Application that encompass five aspects, namely courses, materials, teaching methods, resources and evaluation.

5	**Who are the users of the Guidelines?**

Users who may be interested in the guidelines include editors of Chinese language teaching materials, individuals who are required to design learning content for Chinese language courses, and Chinese language instructors. The guidelines primarily provide information on the fundamental beliefs, curriculum goals, learning content and learners' proficiency level descriptors for teaching Chinese as a second or foreign language. This information can serve as references for individuals whom are required to plan courses, compile teaching materials, select teaching resources, and design tests.

6	**Who are the "learners" referred to in the Guidelines?**

The term "learners" in the guidelines refers Chinese language learners in all regions of the world (including Taiwan) whose native language is not Chinese.

7	**Are the Guidelines Taiwan's only set of teaching standards?**

The Guidelines is not the only set of teaching standards in terms of Chinese language education. The purpose of the Guidelines is merely to serve as a reference for users seeking information on the fundamental beliefs of Chinese language teaching, curriculum goals, learning content and implementation directions.

8	**What are the advantages of the Guidelines in comparison with the "Chinese Proficiency Grading Standards for International Chinese Language Education" of Mainland China?**

The Reference Guidelines for TBCL Application have the following advantages:
1.　It contains a set of comprehensive Chinese language proficiency level

descriptors and grading scales for Chinese characters, words, affixes and grammar rules;

2. Detailed teaching materials for Level 1 to Level 3 basic vocabulary for composing in difficulty-leveled vocabulary books , Level 1 to Level 5 wordlists and 18 scenario categories, and a frequency list for common words;

3. The guidelines includes *Chinese 8,000 Vocabulary* for easy application in the TOCFL tests administered by the by the Steering Committee for the Test Of Proficiency-Huayu (SC-TOP);

4. The guideline is consistent with ACTFL and CEFR international descriptors;

5. We utilize corpuses with the most comprehensive, up-to-date Chinese language, and with the largest amount of texts;

6. It provides a complete education training and technical reports;

7. Online query function for Chinese language proficiency level descriptors and grading scales of Chinese characters, words and grammar points;

8. Integrated corpuses, TBCL and natural language technology with a single portal.

9	**Do the "learner performance" descriptors referred to in the Guidelines correspond to international descriptors?**

Studies to comparing the learner performance descriptors in the Guidelines to CEFR (Council of Europe 2001) and ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines (ACTFL 2012) were completed between 2018 and 2019. Please refer to Attachment 7 of the Guidelines for the alignment results.

10	**TBCL Chinese characters, wordlists and tables of grammar points are now part of the "learning content" in the Guidelines, but since the corpuses are true linguistic representation of the Chinese people, could the "learning content" derived from native language corpuses prove to be too difficult for people learning Chinese as a second/foreign language?**

Chinese characters, wordlists and rules of grammar of the TBCL also include spoken language word frequency lists and high frequency educational vocabulary were founded through statistical analysis.. Furthermore, the guideline has been reviewed and adapted in meetings attended by five experienced Chinese language instructors. Additionally, submitted for further suggestions and comments multiple times to Chinese language departments, institutes, and other teaching units across Taiwan, SC-TOP, and Chinese language teaching associations (Association of Teaching Chinese as a Second

Language and World Chinese Language Association). As such, learners' proficiency levels has been thoroughly and cautiously taken into account. Moreover, a comparison of the wordlist in the Guidelines with the *Chinese 8,000 Vocabulary* (https://tocfl.edu.tw/index.php/exam/download) published by the SC-TOP revealed that apart from a handful of words not included due to incompatibility, the TBCL contains the *Chinese 8,000 Vocabulary* almost in its entirety, signifying that the learning content included in the Guidelines is an optimized rooted from the foundations of TBCL.

| 11 | **How will the Guidelines be promoted in the future?** |

Apart from two major associations, namely the World Chinese Language Association and Association of Teaching Chinese as a Second Language, NAER has introduced the Guidelines to Chinese language teaching departments, institutes and teaching centers in universities and at various seminars. It will also be promoted via workshops and filming instructional videos. Regarding teaching plan design, teaching material compilation and evaluation production included in the Guidelines will be featured in "Annual Taiwan Benchmarks for the Chinese Language and Corpus of Contemporary Taiwanese Mandarin Competition" to increase the Guidelines' awareness in application of Chinese language teaching. Furthermore, NAER plans to publish the "User Manual of Reference Guidelines for TBCL Application" in 2023 to offer illustrations and concrete examples on how to use the Guidelines in actual teaching practices. This information can serve as a reference for Chinese language teaching institutions and people enrolled in educational training programs instructors, teaching material compilation, instruction design, and test formulation.

| 12 | **What online query systems provided by the Guidelines are available for use by external parties?** |

To facilitate application of the Guidelines in actual Chinese language teaching by users, the Guidelines list 14 query systems available online under the "Teaching Resources" section (pp. 31-33), including: (1)"Chinese Character Grading Scales Query" (2) "Word Grading Scales Query"(3) "Basic Word Query" (4) "Grammar Grading Scales Query" (5) "Affixes Scales Query"(6) "NAER Thesaurus"(7) "Teaching Materials Editing Assistance System"(8) "Chinese Semantic Field Conjunctive Word Query"(9) "Automatic Correction for Typos in Chinese Compositions"(10) "NAER Word Tokenization System"(11) "Calculation System of Word Coverage Rate in

Corpus"(12) "Comparative Tools for Word List"(13) "Chinese Interlanguage Thesaurus"(14) "Chinese-English Bilingual Thesaurus". For links to the above 14 systems, please visit our website portal at https://coct.naer.edu.tw. For manual to these 14 systems please see pp. 32-33 of the guidelines where information such as Chinese language teaching, teaching material design, testing/evaluation, and research applications are provided.