




# Meeting the Challenge:

Preparing Chinese Language  
Teachers for American Schools





Asia Society is the leading global and pan-Asian organization working to strengthen relationships and promote understanding among the peoples, leaders and institutions of Asia and the United States. We seek to increase knowledge and enhance dialogue, encourage creative expression and generate new ideas across the fields of policy, business, education, arts and culture. The Asia Society Partnership for Global Learning develops youth to be globally competent citizens, workers, and leaders by equipping them with the knowledge and skills needed for success in an increasingly interconnected world. A critical part of this effort to build a world-class education system for all is to promote the learning of Chinese and world languages and cultures.

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## **Preface and Acknowledgements**

**T**he rise of Asia and growing global interconnectedness are reshaping the world as never before. China is central to this shift. An ancient civilization, rapidly growing economic and political power and home to one fifth of the world's population, China today presents both opportunities and challenges. In fact, the United States - China relationship is probably the single most important international relationship of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

American students, parents, schools and districts are recognizing the importance of being able to understand and communicate with China and this recognition has led to significant growth in Chinese language programs over the past five years. Indeed, demand seems likely to continue to increase. The most significant barrier to the expansion of opportunities for students to learn Chinese is the lack of trained and certified teachers. For programs to be vital and sustainable, teachers must be able to engage and to motivate students over the long term, incorporate best practices in the teaching and learning of world languages, and to connect the Chinese language program to other academic subject areas and aspects of school life and community. This report analyzes the current status of and demand for Chinese language programs and proposes ways to expand and enhance the supply of Chinese language teachers, increase their effectiveness and produce teachers for new innovations in elementary and online language programs. Accomplishing these tasks will require vision and partnerships between all the critical stakeholders – schools, colleges and universities, and state and federal government.

On behalf of Asia Society, we would like to express our sincere appreciation to the members of the working group for sharing their understanding of the complexities of trying to create high-quality Chinese language programs in American schools and to support teachers in doing so. This report draws from their deep experiences over the last few years. We hope that many of our ideas and recommendations will apply to the teaching of other world languages in American schools as well. At Asia Society, we would particularly like to thank Yi Zheng, who had lead responsibility for the working group and the production of the report, and the other members of our Chinese language team, especially Eleise Jones and Jeff Wang, as well as Lorianne Salazar, who provided research assistance, for all their hard work in bringing this project to fruition. We also express our heartfelt thanks to Ted Fiske, author and former Education Editor of the New York Times, for his role in shaping and writing much of the report.

We hope this report will be of value to K-12 and higher education leaders, as well as state and local officials, as we seek to provide all of our students with the tools for success in this increasingly interconnected world.

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## Introduction

The United States is one of the few countries in the world where you can travel three thousand miles and expect to be able to talk to just about anyone you meet in a single language. This experience—coupled with the fact that English has become the preferred second language in countries around the world—helps explain why Americans have traditionally felt little urgency in learning foreign languages.

As the pace of globalization accelerates in virtually every area of life in the twenty-first century, from international trade to the arts and culture, this situation is changing. Americans—both collectively and individually—are becoming increasingly aware of the need to acquire new knowledge and skills suited to the emerging global society. In addition to their professional qualifications, they will need to develop global competencies. These include knowledge of other cultures and the ability to work alongside people from diverse backgrounds.

High on this list of global competencies is facility in world languages. As U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan recently declared, “Communicating with our international neighbors not only promotes peaceful relations but also equips students for employment and to compete in the global marketplace.”<sup>1</sup>

American schools, which in the past have typically limited their foreign language offerings to Spanish, French, and German, are beginning to show greater interest in less commonly taught languages that are of growing significance. One of the most important is Mandarin Chinese. Jon Huntsman Jr., the U.S. Ambassador to China, spoke to the special importance of Chinese language study for Americans when he observed that

<sup>1</sup> U.S. Department of Education. \$12.4 Million Awarded to School Systems in 24 States

young people today “need to be able to build bridges across the Pacific Ocean that speak to world peace, that speak to prosperity, that speak to economic development.” He added, “And I know of no other way of doing that ... building those bridges ... and making the cultures on both sides of the Pacific comprehensible, other than through language study.”<sup>2</sup> Similarly, during a 2009 visit to China, President Obama recognized the importance of Chinese language study and educational exchange for American students, and launched a new initiative to encourage a hundred thousand students to China over four years.<sup>3</sup>

Once programs in world languages such as Chinese are established, there is evidence that, as one report put it, “the single most important factor in whether language is learned or not is the competence and skill of the teacher.”<sup>4</sup> Whereas lack of teachers once seemed to be an insurmountable roadblock to the development of Chinese language programs, that is no longer the case. Over the past five years, schools in the United States have recruited Chinese language teachers through guest teacher programs and grow-your-own approaches.

In this report we will explore the growing importance of language learning for American students, the increasing demand for Chinese language instruction in the United States, and the urgent need for teachers who can satisfy this demand. We will discuss the challenges faced by current teachers, the new pools of prospective teachers, and the implications of these for training. We will show how innovative forms of instruction are growing—programs in elementary schools, immersion programs, and those that make extensive use of new technologies—and discuss ways to encourage and nurture these new approaches with well-trained teachers.

The bottom line is that if the United States is to turn out students ready and able to take up Ambassador Huntsman’s challenge, the country must develop a strong system to recruit, train, certify, and support a new generation of Chinese teachers in the United States.

Much is already happening—in terms of both quantity and quality. Lessons have been learned, new programs have been created, and new pools of potential teachers are being developed. But much more needs to be done.

The report concludes with a series of recommendations for educators, government officials, and others as we seek to build an improved infrastructure capable of meeting the challenge of expanding Chinese language study in U.S. classrooms.

<sup>2</sup> Asia Society, *Learning Chinese in American Schools*.

<sup>3</sup> Office of the Press Secretary, the White House. “U.S.-China Joint Statement.”

<sup>4</sup> Jackson and Malone, “Building the foreign language capacity we need.”



# A Changing World Requires Changing Skills



Partnership for  
Global Learning

In recent years, the pace of globalization has increased dramatically. Americans face the challenges and reap the benefits of an increasingly interconnected world.

What kinds of skills and human capital will American students need to be successful in this new global age? Young Americans growing up and seeking their place in this global society need knowledge and skills that differ from those of previous generations. In addition to their professional qualifications, they will need to develop global competencies. These competencies include knowledge of other world regions, cultures, and economies, along with skills in working across cultures and in communicating in languages other than English.

Calls for increased attention to foreign languages on the part of American citizens are nothing new. The need for high-level knowledge of foreign languages and cultures was recognized during World War II, when the U.S. government asked the American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS) to develop programs to teach several less commonly taught languages. Instruction in foreign languages at the high school and college levels increased sharply under the National Defense Education Act of 1958, which was inspired by the launching of Sputnik I by the Soviet Union in 1957. The legislation described growing facility in science, technology, and foreign languages as an urgent national priority.<sup>5</sup>

Despite such periodic bouts of attention to foreign language acquisition, the United States remains behind other developed countries in cultivating linguistic capacity. A recent study found that twenty of the top twenty-five industrialized countries begin mandatory study of world languages by grade five, with three others starting it at the middle school level.<sup>6</sup> The United States is the only country that waits until high school to begin teaching foreign languages in earnest. Only twelve states make foreign language a compulsory subject; only ten of these and the District of Columbia make it a requirement for high school graduation.<sup>7</sup> By contrast, while the United States struggles to promote any second language learning, a push is under way in the European Union for every student to learn at least two languages in addition to their mother tongue and 300 million students in China are studying English.<sup>8</sup>

Although it is widely accepted that languages are learned most effectively at an early age, in 2008 a mere 15 percent of American public elementary school students were enrolled in

5 Encyclopedia.com, "National Defense Education Act of 1958."

6 Wang, "Finding Solutions."

7 Wang, Evans, and Liau. "National world language education survey."

8 Salomone, "Does NCLB Promote Monolingualism?"

foreign language classes.<sup>9</sup> Only half of all American high school students take even one year of a foreign language.<sup>10</sup> Schools in rural areas and those whose students are of lower socio-economic background are much less likely to offer opportunities to learn languages.

Language offerings in U.S. K-12 schools tend to be limited to traditionally taught European languages, with little attention paid to newly important languages. To make matters worse, world language study has been adversely affected by the No Child Left Behind legislation, where its status as a non-tested subject has made it vulnerable to marginalization.<sup>11</sup> In fact, language study in elementary schools went down during the period of No Child Left Behind. As Rosemary Salomone wrote recently in Education Week, "The law's emphasis on reading and math has drawn resources away from language programs, which accountability measures do not cover."<sup>12</sup>

In higher education, a 2006 survey by the Modern Languages Association found increasing interest among students in language study and a broader range of languages being studied. Nevertheless, the study concluded, "While increasing numbers and proportions of students are taking introductory language classes the majority does not pursue the advanced study necessary to achieve fluency."<sup>13</sup>

No wonder a 2007 report from the National Academy of Sciences warned, "The pervasive lack of knowledge of foreign cultures and languages threatens the security of the United States as well as its ability to compete in the global marketplace and produce an informed citizenry."<sup>14</sup>

## The National Need for World Languages

In our increasingly interconnected world, reversal of the traditional U.S. pattern of linguistic isolation has become a national imperative for the United States. "You cannot deeply 'know' the values of a people or a nation's politics unless you can directly access its art, literature, news media, government documents and policy reports," says Salomone. "Relying solely on English as the

9 Salomone, "Does NCLB Promote Monolingualism?"

10 New York Task Force Report on Chinese Language and Culture Initiative.

11 Rhodes and Pufahl, Foreign Language Teaching in U.S. Schools.

12 Salomone, "Does NCLB Promote Monolingualism?"

13 Modern Language Association, "New MLA Survey Shows Significant Increase in Foreign Language Study."

14 Putting the World into World-Class Education.

language of global communication, we risk the world's talking over our heads as we become more culturally trapped."<sup>15</sup>

As the Committee for Economic Development (CED) declared in its report, *Education for Global Leadership*, "The educated American of the twenty-first century will need to be conversant with at least one language in addition to his or her native language and knowledgeable about other countries, other cultures and the international dimensions of issues critical to the lives of all Americans."<sup>16</sup>

If the United States is to be globally engaged and competitive, world language capacity is not only an educational priority but a necessity in multiple respects.

## Economic

With one in five U.S. manufacturing jobs tied to exports, national economic prosperity is increasingly tied to international trade. This collective economic prosperity requires engagement, collaboration, and communication with the rest of the world. A globally competent workforce must possess not only technical skills but also the ability to understand the cultural foundations of work environments in other countries and to communicate with potential buyers, sellers, manufacturers, and service providers.<sup>17</sup> Even when the official language for business is English, it is often the discussions that take place in the local languages that are important.<sup>18</sup>

Such global communication, once the province of large multinational corporations, is increasingly as part of the regular daily work of small businesses and individual entrepreneurs. In the words of the CED report, "To compete successfully in the global marketplace, both U.S.-based multinational corporations and small businesses, increasingly need employees with knowledge of foreign languages and cultures to market products to customers around the globe and to work effectively with foreign employees and partners in other countries."

## National Security

Most of the major issues confronting political leaders today—from economic stability and climate change to migration and pandemic disease control—cannot be solved at the national level. They require diplomatic collaboration among all major nations and the basis of any such collaboration is effective communication.

15 Salomone, "Does NCLB Promote Monolingualism?"

16 Education for Global Leadership.

17 Duggan, *What Business Wants*.

18 Kranhold, et al., "Lost in Translation?"

Indeed, developments such as terrorist attacks on U.S. soil, military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, and looming threats such as a potential shortage of water in certain areas of the world demonstrate the extent to which U.S. national security demands the deep understanding of other cultures that comes through knowing their languages. The State and Defense Departments and Intelligence Agencies have all reported serious shortages of employees skilled in strategically important languages such as Farsi, Arabic, and Chinese. A 2006 *Washington Post* article reported that nearly 30 percent of State Department employees based overseas in "language-designated positions" are failing to speak and write the local language well enough to meet required levels.<sup>19</sup> The Defense Languages Transformation Roadmap has brought an intensified focus on developing language capacity in the military.

## Cultural

The United States itself is becoming an increasingly diverse nation, with more than 380 languages spoken in communities across the country.<sup>20</sup> This diversity affects the abilities of community service providers, such as medical emergency workers, to serve those who need help. Developing a pool of fluent and literate bi- and multilingual individuals sensitive to a variety of cultures is important to the social, economic, and political fabric of such a diverse society.

## Individual

The ability to speak languages other than English has a positive effect on intellectual growth, especially when instruction begins at an early age and a target language is used as a means for content instruction. Knowing another language opens doors to new ideas and new ways of thinking, and it increases career opportunities. American students who enter the business world with knowledge of other cultures and languages are at a competitive advantage in their careers.

In ramping up the study of world languages in general and Mandarin in particular, it is imperative that the instruction go far beyond the traditional focus on grammar and characters. We must equip students with twenty-first century skills such as using language to investigate the world beyond their immediate environment and knowing how to recognize their own and others' perspectives. Students should be led to use their new language to communicate their ideas to diverse audiences and

19 Asthana, "Many in State Dept. Can't Talk the Talk."

20 Modern Language Association, "MLA Language Map."

to translate their ideas and findings into actions.<sup>21</sup>

## The Growth of Chinese Language Programs in the United States

Each of the reasons for studying world languages described in the previous section applies to Mandarin Chinese, which is the most widely spoken first language in the world. Indeed the growth of Mandarin Chinese in American schools over the past few years is a bright spot in the otherwise dismal picture of language study in the United States.<sup>22</sup>

The Chinese people are rightly proud of their five thousand years of civilization and ready to claim their rightful place on the world stage. The Chinese language exists in written records dating back almost four thousand years, starting with oracle bone inscriptions, progressing to inscriptions on bronze vessels, and then to brush writings on bamboo and silk. As China's population, economy, and power grow, more and more American citizens will need to understand how Chinese live and think—and there is no more important means of doing this than learning the language.

Over the last thirty years, China has transformed itself from an underdeveloped country into a major world power. It is the second most important trading partner of the United States after Canada and holds billions of dollars of U.S. debt. A 2007 report from the National Bureau of Economic Research forecasts that by 2040 China's gross domestic product will be larger than that of the entire rest of the world and that the Chinese market will be larger than those of the United States, European Union, Japan, and India combined. The fact that the United States is routinely involved in political and diplomatic discussions and negotiations with China over issues ranging from climate change to currency to sanctions against Iran makes it all the more important that the two countries communicate effectively. As Secretary of State Hillary Clinton observed in 2009, "Today it is tempting to focus our attention on the tensions and perils of our interdependence, but I prefer to view our connectedness as an opportunity for dynamic and productive partnerships that can address both the challenge and the promise of this new century. We believe that the United States and China can benefit from and contribute to

21 Asia Society, Request for Work Demonstrating Global Competency.

22 According to Ethnologue data, only five European languages are represented among the world's fifteen most spoken languages: Spanish, Portuguese, English, Russian, and German. Of these, only German is spoken primarily within Europe itself, rather than by large numbers of speakers in the Americas (Spanish, Portuguese, and English) or Asia (Russia). Nine of the languages in the top fifteen are spoken primarily in Asia, with Chinese by far the language with the most speakers—four times as many as English or Spanish and ten times more than Japanese or Russian. Lewis ed., *Ethnologue: Languages of the World*.

each other's successes. It is in our interest to work harder to build on areas of common concern and shared opportunities."<sup>23</sup>

Following President Obama's meeting with Chinese President Hu Jintao in 2009, the White House released a joint statement on the relationship between the two countries. The two sides noted with pleasure the "continued increase in the number of students studying in each other's country in recent years."<sup>24</sup> Nearly a hundred thousand Chinese are now studying in the United States, while twenty thousand U.S. students are doing likewise in China. The statement noted that the United States is launching a new initiative to encourage a hundred thousand students to study in China over the coming four years. But to fulfill this target the United States will need many more students who are proficient enough in Mandarin to actually be able to study at Chinese universities.

Although the number of students studying Chinese in the United States at the present time is modest—accounting for only 4 percent of foreign language enrollments in higher education—a major attitudinal shift is taking place. Whereas Chinese was once approached as an intellectual or cultural curiosity, it is now viewed as an important world language alongside French, Spanish, German, and other traditionally taught languages.

All signs point to rapidly growing interest in the study of Chinese, not only in educational institutions at all levels but also on the part of governments and non-governmental organizations.

## Elementary and Secondary Enrollments

There are no official counts of American schools offering Chinese, nor have any comprehensive studies been undertaken of the number of K-12 students studying the language and the levels of proficiency they reach.

- A 2000 analysis estimated that 24,000 students in grades 7-12 were learning Chinese.<sup>25</sup>

- Data collected by the Asia Society and College Board from various sources identified 263 Chinese language programs in elementary and secondary schools in 2004 and 779 such programs in 2008, a more than 200 percent increase. Of these, 444 programs were in public schools, 335 in private schools.<sup>26</sup>

23 Stephanie Valera, "Hillary Clinton: 'We Are Ready to Listen' to Asia."

24 Office of the Press Secretary, the White House. "U.S.-China Joint Statement."

25 Asia Society, *Creating a Chinese Language Program in Your School*.

26 Asia Society and College Board, *Chinese in 2008*.

- A 2010 survey of enrollment by American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL), funded by the U.S. Department of Education, found the number of students studying Chinese in K-12 public schools in 2007-2008 to be 59,860.<sup>27</sup>
- A 2010 nationwide survey of 1,962 high schools by the American Councils for International Education to identify schools that offer less commonly taught languages found that “Chinese language instruction is quite widespread within the K-12 school system”. However, because the survey also included afterschool programs and schools that allow students to take course online, the data are not comparable to the ACTFL survey.<sup>28</sup>

## Organizations that Assist the Development of Chinese

It is clear that there is growing interest in increasing the number of Americans who can demonstrate functional proficiency in Chinese. Many organizations are assisting this growth.

Municipal and state governments are coming to view the study of Chinese language and culture as an investment in economic competitiveness. States such as Ohio, Oklahoma, Minnesota, North Carolina, Wisconsin, and Utah, as well as cities like Chicago, are making concerted efforts to expand the study of Chinese. At least twenty states now have memoranda of understanding with Mainland China or Taiwan to promote Chinese language instruction and to bring guest teachers to their schools.<sup>29</sup>

The U.S. government has invested in seed funding for Chinese language programs. The Foreign Language Assistance Program (FLAP) of the U.S. Department of Education funded seventy Chinese language programs and three states in 2006 and 2007. The STARTALK program offers summer Chinese programs to students and teachers nationwide, while the National Security Education Program supports four Chinese Flagship Programs aimed at producing global professionals who speak Chinese at high levels of proficiency.<sup>30</sup>

Non-governmental organizations such as the College Board and the Asia Society are also playing important roles in the expansion of Chinese instruction. In 2007 the College Board began offering a new Chinese Advanced Placement Language and Culture course and examination in Mandarin<sup>31</sup> that put Chinese on an equal footing with more commonly taught languages such as Spanish and French. Today 12,672 students have taken the AP Mandarin exam and some of these are international students.

The Asia Society has also been active in promoting Chinese language instruction through its electronic clearinghouse, hand-book, and DVD called *Creating a Chinese Language Program in Your School*. The Society’s recent Confucius Classrooms Initiative will provide technical assistance to a hundred schools around the United States, building high-quality programs and linking each one to a partner school in China for exchange of students, teachers, and joint language-learning projects.<sup>32</sup>

Numerous universities, business and engineering schools, and professional organizations have initiated programs for students as well as professional development activities for teachers. Among them are the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL)<sup>33</sup>, the Chinese Language Association of Secondary-Elementary Schools (CLASS),<sup>34</sup> and Chinese Language Teachers Association (CLTA)<sup>35</sup> and its regional affiliates.

Hanban, the non-governmental organization affiliated with the Chinese Ministry of Education that promotes study of Chinese language and culture around the world, has also played a major role in the expansion of Chinese programs.<sup>36</sup> It supports Confucius Institutes in more than sixty American universities and partners with the College Board on the Chinese Bridge Delegation program, which has brought 2,200 U.S. administrators, principals, and school board members to visit China and its schools. Hanban also supports a guest teacher program, which has brought 331 teachers from China to enable U.S. schools to start language programs.<sup>37</sup>

27 American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, National Enrollment Survey Preliminary Results.

28 American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, National Enrollment Survey Preliminary Results, (Alexandria, VA: American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, 2010).

29 Wang, Evans, and Liau. National world language education survey.

30 Asia Society and College Board, Chinese in 2008.

31 College Board AP, Chinese Language and Culture Course Description.

32 For more information on the Asia Society’s Chinese Language Initiative and Confucius Classrooms, please visit [www.asiasociety.org/chinese](http://www.asiasociety.org/chinese).

33 For more information on ACTFL, visit [www.actfl.org](http://www.actfl.org).

34 For more information on CLASS, visit <http://www.classexpress.org/>.

35 For more information on CLTA, visit <http://clta-us.org/>.

36 For more information on Hanban, visit <http://english.hanban.org/index.php>.

37 Asia Society and College Board, Chinese in 2008.

## Innovative Programs

The growing interest in Chinese language instruction is evident not only in growing enrollments and the proliferation of new programs, primarily at the high school level, but in the emergence of innovative new approaches to Chinese language instruction. These include dual language immersion and other early language programs at the elementary level, as well as the application of new technologies such as Skype, podcasting, and online and distance learning.<sup>38</sup>

## Elementary-Level Immersion Programs

Studies have shown that the human brain is most open to linguistic development in the years before adolescence and that children who learn a language in the elementary school years are more likely to achieve native-like pronunciation. When students get an early start, they can achieve levels of fluency that are simply not possible in the typical U.S. high school language program. Such an early start and extended sequence approach is especially important for a language like Chinese, which takes longer for Western students to master than European languages. Estimates vary, but according to the Foreign Service Institute, Category III languages (Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, and Korean) take on average eighty-eight weeks for a native speaker of English to achieve general professional proficiency, compared with Category I languages like French or Spanish that take twenty-three or twenty-four weeks to grasp, just about one-quarter as long.

For this and other reasons—including the cognitive and academic benefits that spill over from language study into other areas of learning—American parents and educators are increasingly interested in having children start learning a foreign language during elementary school. According to a 2007 Phi Delta Kappan poll, 85 percent of U.S. parents want their child to learn a second language and 70 percent believe that such instruction should start in elementary school, which is the custom in most other industrial countries.<sup>39</sup> Indeed, educators have found that wherever a new elementary school with a strong language program opens, including those offering Chinese, it is invariably oversubscribed.

As with other world language programs, there is a range of Chinese language programs of varying intensity at the elementary school level.

At one end of the spectrum are “foreign language exploration,” or FLEX, programs that introduce children to other cultures

and to language as a general concept. Since FLEX classes meet only once or twice a week, such programs do not have linguistic proficiency as a goal. They can, however, provide valuable motivation for students to learn languages later and for districts to start language programs.

Most elementary-school language programs fall into the category of “foreign language in the elementary school,” or FLES, programs where Chinese is taught as a distinct subject. Ideally such classes are taught three to five times a week for no less than thirty to forty minutes per class. Depending on the frequency of classes and the opportunities for practice, children in these classes may attain substantial proficiency.

At the other end of the intensity spectrum are immersion programs in which children spend part or all of the school day taking regular academic courses in Chinese. Research shows that immersion programs bring cognitive benefits, such as more flexible and creative thinking, and that they can provide a significant psychological boosts to students from multicultural families.

In full, or total, immersion programs, which are rare, children learn all of their subjects, including math, science, and social studies, in Chinese. More typical are partial immersion programs in which some, but not all, of the curriculum is taught in Chinese. Research shows that children in both types of immersion programs reach far higher levels of language proficiency than they do in the other programs, while showing no decrease in their achievement scores in other subjects.

Another immersion option is the two-way, or dual-immersion, model in which half the class is composed of native Chinese speakers and the other half is made up of English-dominant speakers. In this model, half of all instruction is in Chinese, the other half in English. A major benefit of this approach is that students help each other learn their new language, thus adding a more natural dimension to the language-learning process. This model also facilitates the integration of immigrant students into a classroom. In some situations, of course, many of the native English speakers are American-born Chinese whose parents are eager for them to master both languages.

Although the number of elementary-school Chinese language programs is still small, those that do exist are demonstrating the power of early language learning in Chinese. Such programs include those in the Oregon Portland public schools; Yinghua Academy in Minneapolis and Yu Ying Academy in Washington, DC, both public charter schools; and the Chinese American International School in the private sector. In Utah, the state has started developing one hundred elementary immersion

38 Asia Society and College Board, *Chinese in 2008*.

39 Rose and Gullup, *Phi Delta Kappan/Gallup poll*.

schools in several different languages, with eight so far in Chinese. The popularity of elementary Chinese programs seems likely to increase and new kinds of teachers will be needed for these programs.

## Immersion Programs

### Portland, Oregon:

#### Public Schools K-12 Chinese Flagship Program

The Portland Public Schools K-12 Mandarin Chinese Language Program is part of the Oregon Chinese Flagship Program, a K-16 program that aims to produce high levels of proficiency in Chinese by giving students the opportunity to learn Chinese from kindergarten up through higher education.

Portland's Chinese immersion programs were started in 1997-1998 as a grassroots effort by parents and educators who saw the need to meet the community's growing interest in learning Chinese language and culture. In 2005, the federal National Security Education Program awarded Portland Public Schools and the University of Oregon a generous grant and a challenging task: to establish the nation's first K-16 Chinese program so that it can be a model for other schools.

The program offers a 50/50 instructional model from kindergarten through fifth grade, where students spend half their day learning in English and the other half

learning in Mandarin. In middle school, students continue with two immersion classes per day—Chinese Language Arts and Social Studies—culminating with an eighth grade capstone project that involves research and field studies in China. Mandarin immersion high school students choose from the program's expanding offerings, which include online-mediated coursework. In addition to the K-12 Mandarin immersion program, the Portland curriculum also offers Mandarin Chinese for heritage students as a second language.

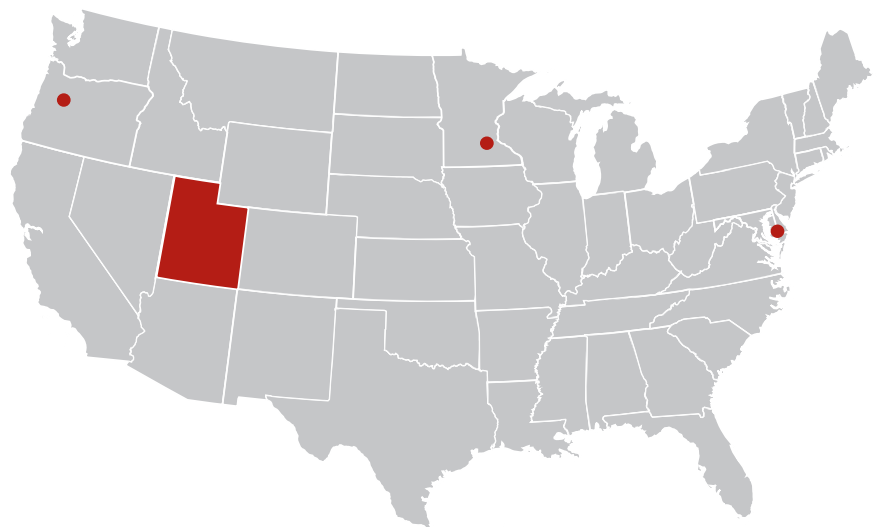
In school year 2009-2010, there were over 700 students studying Mandarin Chinese in Portland's public schools, including 380 Mandarin immersion program students, 28 heritage students, and 304 students studying Chinese as a second language. The program is structured on the total language learning approach, incorporating content-based instruction, explicit language instruction, and experiential language learning practices.

### Minneapolis, Minnesota:

#### Yinghua Academy

Yinghua Academy is a public charter elementary school with an international perspective. It is the first Chinese immersion charter public school in the United States and the first Chinese immersion school in the midwest. There are currently 310 students in grades K-6. The majority of students are currently in K-2, as there are three classes per grade in K-2, and fewer classes per

Portland, Oregon  
Minneapolis, Minnesota  
Utah  
Washington, D.C.



grade in the older grades. Yinghua Academy is building up to eventually have three classes of seventy-five students per grade in K-8.

Yinghua Academy's academic program offers immersion in Chinese, academic rigor in all content areas, and a nurturing and supportive school culture. The Yinghua Academy curriculum was developed in consultation with the University of Minnesota and the Center for Applied Linguistics in Washington, DC to ensure the most effective research-based immersion education available.

Different components of the curriculum include the Core Knowledge Sequence, which covers history and science and analyzes the work of leaders, great thinkers, and important artists from all backgrounds; Singapore Math, an internationally recognized applied mathematics curriculum; Character Education, instruction that is infused with respect, ethics, peacemaking, and conflict resolution; Cultural Curriculum, which prepares children to participate in a global community; and Fine Arts and Physical Education in partnership with leading arts organizations in Minneapolis.

## Utah Immersion Programs

Utah is rising to the challenge of preparing a globally minded citizenship for the twenty-first century —starting in kindergarten.

The Utah Chinese Dual Immersion program currently offers Chinese immersion strand courses to 1,200 K-2 students in 14 schools across 7 school districts. The response throughout Utah for the second year of the program is very strong, with the number of participants tripling between 2009 and 2010.

The Utah model is based on 50 percent of instruction given in Chinese and 50 percent in English. The instruction time is divided between subjects with math, science, social studies, and Chinese literacy taught for half a day in Chinese, and English language arts taught the other half day in English. Health, physical education, and music are integrated between both languages. Most schools include their entire student bodies in Chinese cultural and language activities.

The program model is cost efficient and sustainable as the immersion strand integrates fully into the schools'

systems. The Chinese immersion teacher is hired as part of the regular hiring process each year and does not displace an English teacher or require any specialized funds for support. The only extra and limited cost to the schools is in classroom supplies and curriculum provided through funding from the Utah State Legislature.

## Washington, DC: Yu Ying Public Charter School

Washington Yu Ying Public Charter School, in Washington, DC, is free for all students that reside in the District of Columbia. The name "Yu Ying" means "nurturing excellence" and was inspired by a famous school established in the early twentieth century in Beijing. As of 2010, the school is in its second year of operation and currently has 198 students enrolled from Pre-K4-2, but will grow to eighth grade by the year 2015.

Yu Ying's curricular framework, Primary Years Program, was developed by the International Baccalaureate Organization for children aged three through twelve. It employs structured inquiry as the principal vehicle for learning all content areas (math, science, social studies, and language arts) and promotes international mindedness and language acquisition. Yu Ying uses a Chinese language immersion model where students alternate between English and Chinese every other day.

Yu Ying has a strong after-school program that is attended by the majority of its students. During the after-school program, students have the opportunity to participate in numerous programs that are related to Chinese language or culture, such as kung fu, brush painting, fan dance, and Chinese homework club. Yu Ying's goal is to create a community of lifelong learners and to develop global citizens through culture and language immersion, demonstrating respect for each other and the planet. Yu Ying also has community partners like the Chinatown Community Cultural Center and is a member of Asia Society's Confucius Classrooms Network.

## Online Programs

Like their counterparts in other areas of education, educators interested in promoting Chinese language study are beginning



to look to online instruction as a way of reaching more students and increasing the options for regular Chinese language programs. Online instruction is a particularly effective way to offer more advanced levels of Chinese and to reach students in rural areas or in schools that lack the critical mass of students required to employ a regular Chinese language teacher. It also offers new opportunities for students to hone their oral communication skills.

Since online instruction in Chinese is so new, good data on the numbers of participating students or the effectiveness of such instruction are not yet available. Some states such as Michigan and North Carolina offer Chinese to large numbers of students through their state virtual high schools; others offer outreach from their universities. Research on online learning in other fields shows that it is at least as effective as in-class instruction.

## Learning Chinese Online: Michigan

Michigan State University's Confucius Institute offers a complete series of Mandarin Chinese courses to middle and high school students through the Michigan Virtual High School. The series includes seven courses to grades 6–12 students online. Two new courses are under construction. As of 2010, there are 237 students enrolled in these courses: 211 students from 40 high schools; 14 students from Stowe Middle School in Vermont; and a dozen home-schooled students. In addition, online Mandarin Chinese courses are offered for adults and include general language and culture education as well as language and culture courses for specific purposes.

An Online Chinese Language and Culture Appreciation Course Series offer introductory courses for elementary, middle, and high school students focusing on Chinese society, geography, economy, history, philosophy, and literature along with an introductory language component. The purpose of this series is to help students gain a better understanding of China. Lastly, the Online and Multimedia Chinese Language Programs for Young Children is a series of online and multimedia materials to support Chinese language learning for young children through video- and game-based Chinese language and culture learning materials.

For more information, visit

<http://ott.educ.msu.edu/confucius/test4/default.asp>.

## Preparing North Carolina Teachers for Online Instruction

Although demand for Chinese language instruction in North Carolina is growing at more than double the national rate, only about 10 percent of the state's 115 public school districts offer Chinese in face-to-face classrooms. To address the twin needs of providing more Chinese language course offerings for students and training more teachers to provide these courses, the state has turned to online distance education.

Three years ago the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction began to develop online Chinese language and culture courses for high school and middle school students with funding from a federal Foreign Language Assistance Program grant. The courses were developed by LEARN NC, a K-12 outreach program of the School of Education at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and made available to every school in the state through the North Carolina Virtual Public School. Special targets include students in poor, rural counties where there are either inadequate resources or low demand within individual schools.

The courses are offered at five levels, from beginning through Advanced Placement. At the first two levels the emphasis is on speaking and listening, with the focus on reading and writing increasing as students progress to the upper levels. Students access the courses daily on a designated computer in the school media center or distance learning lab. They sharpen their listening and speaking skills with the help of an assigned conversation coach who communicates with them by means of Skype. Other elements include interactive games, external links to Chinese language resources, and collaborative student activities.

The courses are published using Creative Commons licensing, which makes it possible for any educational organization to obtain a copy for noncommercial use. Instructional videos, transcripts, language and grammar notes, and cultural components are packaged as a digital textbook that is available free of charge through the LEARN NC Web site listed below.

In order to staff the new program, LEARN NC launched a national search to identify Chinese lan-

guage teachers to develop these online courses and to teach the pilot courses themselves. This requirement assured that the pilots would be carried out by a teacher who had an intimate understanding of the course content, layout, and design.

LEARN NC built the following principles into the online teacher preparation program:

- Recruited teachers had to be licensed or in the process of obtaining certification through regular or alternative methods of certification. They had to have experience teaching in American schools, be comfortable with a student-centered approach to learning a second language, and be fluent in Chinese. Prior experience with technology was also a strong consideration.
- All developers/teachers were required to take three online professional development courses on the topics, respectively, of teaching online courses, facilitating online collaboration, and teaching world languages online.
- Teachers participated in a formative assessment tool, LinguaFolio, in which students evaluate their own progress.
- Recruited teachers became familiar with the content management system Blackboard, which is used by the North Carolina Virtual Public School for all its courses.
- An online virtual mentoring course was developed to assist native Chinese language speakers who were new to teaching in the United States or new to teaching Chinese.
- An online course called Conversation Coach that provides conversation practice via Skype was also offered.

As the online Chinese language program has grown in North Carolina, an online community has grown among teachers, students, program administrators, and other educators who share an interest in its success. The program offers periodic synchronous events that focus on cultural aspects of the various languages taught online in the state. So-called Culture Cafés facilitate activities ranging from discussions of Chinese cuisine to online games and stories. Participating in such online events helps teachers develop their online identity and voice.

For more information visit <http://www.learnnc.org> and use the keyword “mandarin.”

Districts or states intending to set up online Chinese language courses should be mindful that such instruction differs in fundamental respects from regular classroom instruction. The delivery of online instruction is far more complicated than simply setting up a microphone and video camera in a traditional classroom. Experience with distance learning in other content areas has driven home the message that, as with regular classroom instruction, distance learning is an art unto itself with its own special rules and conventions. Online instruction also has significant startup costs. Once up and running, however, the incremental costs of expanding it to reach more and more students are relatively low.

One conspicuous feature of both of the innovations described above—elementary level immersion and online programs—is that they presume a very different set of skills on the part of teachers than traditional classroom instruction. Central to this paradigm shift is the need for Chinese teachers today to see their roles as facilitators of learning in which the student plays an active role, rather than as the sources of knowledge and instruction.

The goals of language learning in the twenty-first century have also changed from an emphasis on grammar and pronunciation to an emphasis on students’ ability to use their new language to investigate the world, communicate their ideas to diverse audiences, and translate their ideas into action. These modern linguistic skills require a very different array of teaching skills than traditional pedagogies. This change, in turn, has major implications for how we go about recruiting and preparing effective Chinese language instructors.

Contemporary world language instruction goes well beyond the teaching of declensions and verb tenses—effective foreign language programs in schools today introduce students to the cultures, societies, and communication strategies of speakers of the target language. In learning about different cultures, students not only learn the specifics of those countries or regions, but also develop a set of skills that will enable them to better understand and adapt to other cultures more generally—critical skills for students in an increasingly globalized world. Just as students learn to “code switch” between different languages, they will also learn to do so in terms of cultural practices and communicative strategies. (8)

# Meeting the Future Demand for Chinese Language Teachers



Partnership for  
Global Learning

As noted earlier, once a Chinese language program is in place, the most important requirement for making it effective is to put a qualified and effective teacher in charge. Developing and equipping a strong corps of Chinese language teachers to teach in U.S. classrooms is thus the all-important first step toward producing the linguistically competent workforce that the United States needs today.

This is a time of great opportunity for the Chinese language field in the United States. As the significance of China continues to grow, demand for Chinese language programs seems likely to continue to grow as well. Chinese could, in fact, go from being a less commonly taught language to a mainstream language in American schools.

There is no precise way to estimate exactly how many and what type of Chinese language teachers will be needed in coming years. We can, however, use historical experience with other languages to make some projections:

- If Chinese were to become as common as German (280,000 students), we would need 2,800 teachers over the next five years.
- If Chinese were to become as common as French (about one million students), we would need 10,000 teachers.
- If more Chinese programs began in elementary school, where language is more easily learned and which allows a long enough learning sequence to develop real proficiency, we would need a supply of teachers with the training and skills to work in elementary and immersion settings.
- If online programs continue to expand as a way to bring opportunities to students in areas where they do not have in-person classes, we will need teachers with new kinds of technology-oriented teaching skills.

How are we to meet the demand for more Chinese language teachers who are equipped to teach effectively in the range of American learning environments? We have several good potential sources of teachers, but since the teaching of Chinese as a world language is a relatively recent phenomenon in the United States, the infrastructure for identifying and preparing teachers still needs to be developed.

## Characteristics of an Effective Chinese Language Teacher

What does it take to be an effective Chinese language teacher in a U.S. classroom? Experts in the world language field have reached broad agreement on the basic requirements for such a teacher. These standards are laid out in the internationally accepted standards developed by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, Hanban, and various professional organizations (see appendix).

Whatever their background, teachers of Chinese working in U.S. schools should be:

- **Fluent in Mandarin.** Teachers need to speak standard Chinese (Putonghua) and have solid content knowledge regarding the linguistic features of the Chinese language.<sup>40</sup>
- **Well-versed in American foreign language pedagogy.** They should understand and be skilled in foreign language pedagogy such as methods of teaching, curriculum design, assessment and testing, second language acquisition, and material design
- **Knowledgeable about and skilled in managing students in a U.S. classroom.** The culture of American classrooms differs in important respects from that in other countries, especially China.
- **Certified or willing to pursue certification and continuing professional development.** Certification by states is necessary for teaching in U.S. public schools. Continued professional growth is particularly important in a field such as Chinese language instruction.

- **Able to work with the school and community at large.** Given the newness of the field, teachers are crucial to efforts to build program support. They need to be both willing and able to be advocates for Chinese

<sup>40</sup> There is a high degree of variability in regional dialects and accents in China, so it is important that the teacher be a model of “standard” Mandarin. This may differ slightly by region, as for example, there is a standard Beijing Mandarin and a standard Shanghai Mandarin, which are basically the same language but with a slight difference in accent, akin perhaps to the difference between the standard American English spoken in the Northeast United States and that spoken in the Midwest. There is also Beijing “dialect” and Shanghai “dialect,” which are completely distinct (as distinct as German and French, for example) and mutually unintelligible.

language teaching and also for an international focus in the school.

- Proficient in speaking and writing English. Foreign-born or non-native speakers of English must be able to communicate effectively with students, parents, and school administrators.

While these skills are the foundation of effective teaching of Chinese in the American context they are also only the starting point. As already noted, a paradigm shift is occurring in the roles of teachers in the twenty-first century, especially in the teaching of world languages.

The focus has shifted from teaching to learning, from how the schooling process operates to how—and how much—students are actually learning. Teachers who may have begun their careers providing direct instruction need to learn how to become facilitators of learning in a context where the student exercises ownership. While relevant to Chinese language instruction in all settings, this shift of emphasis from schooling to learning is particularly evident in the settings of immersion classrooms and online instruction.

## Challenges Involved in Producing More Chinese Language Teachers

With general agreement on the characteristics of effective Chinese teaching in traditional and new settings, the challenge is to build a system that will provide schools with a teaching force that meets the growing needs for Chinese language instruction in terms of both quantity and, more importantly, quality. Such a system requires new policies at the institutional, state, and federal levels.

The challenges involved in building a system capable of giving U.S. schools this much-needed teaching force fall into four general categories: recruiting, training, certification, and continuing professional development and support.

### Recruiting

Clearly, our country needs more Chinese-language teachers as well as better instructors in terms of national and international standards. We also need to develop our ideas about effective teaching and learning in general, pursuing innovation in elementary and online programs. The three types of Chinese language teachers in U.S. classrooms—guest teachers, heritage speakers, and native English speakers—each bring their particular strengths and weak-

nesses and pose very different challenges in terms of training, certification routes, and needs for professional support.

### Guest Teachers

Guest teachers are Chinese nationals who travel to the United States to work at a school or district for a period of one to three years through a visiting faculty arrangement. These visiting teachers serve as the essential building block for numerous fledgling Chinese language programs across the United States. They have made it possible to initiate Chinese language programs in communities that do not have access to certified teachers of Chinese, and they have played an invaluable role as linguistic and cultural resources for existing programs seeking to expand.

According to the College Board, a total number of 449 guest teachers have been placed in American schools through the Chinese Guest Teacher Program from 2006 to 2010. In 2009-10 there were 138 Chinese guest teachers working in 30 states. They worked in 79 public school districts and 14 independent schools. Of these teachers, 40 percent were in high schools, 29 percent in middle schools, and 27 percent in primary schools. The majority (about 85 percent) of Chinese guest teachers are female, all have bachelor's degrees, and most are in their late twenties to early thirties.<sup>41</sup> Mainland China has guest teacher agreements with 20 states, while 4 states have guest teacher agreements with Taiwan.<sup>42</sup>

Visiting teachers enter and remain in the United States through a visa-granting process. Several programs are available to facilitate employment of guest teachers. These include the Office of Chinese Language Council International (Hanban), the Fulbright Teacher Exchange Program of the U.S. Department of Education ([www.fulbrightexchanges.org](http://www.fulbrightexchanges.org)), and the College Board. While arrangements vary from program to program, the usual procedure is for a school district to file a request to the placement program for a qualified visiting teacher. The program may provide the stipend on which the teacher lives during the year. The district may be asked to provide accommodations and health insurance and assist with local transportation. The school district also commits to provide orientation and classroom mentoring support and to assist in the acculturation of the visiting teacher into the community.

Guest teachers bring with them the obvious advantage of being fluent in the target language of Mandarin, and they offer strong role models for how to speak the language. They also represent powerful resources for introducing American students to

41 Lin, "Chinese Guest Teacher Program."

42 Wang, Evans, and Liau, National world language education survey.

Chinese culture and customs, thus enhancing their skills in cross-cultural communication. The flip side of this strength is that they have not gone through the experience of learning Mandarin as a second language and thus may not fully identify with their students' problems in learning a language that is so different not only from English but from other Western languages. This is why, in many respects, Chinese teachers of English can often be more effective language teachers for American schools than their counterparts who teach Chinese, in the same way that a teacher of English literature in an American high school, for example, would probably not be as effective in teaching English to students with no background as someone with experience teaching English as a second language.

Moreover, there is a large gulf between Chinese and American styles of teaching and learning. Pedagogy in Chinese schools and universities—including teacher training programs—is typically teacher-oriented. Chinese teachers view their task as the transfer of knowledge and information. Thus in language instruction they often tend to focus on teaching Chinese characters rather than on communication skills. This approach contrasts sharply with American pedagogical values, which emphasize student-centered instruction and “learning by doing.”

Another challenge for guest teachers is lack of knowledge of American society and culture. They are not used to dealing with nontraditional families, boys who cry, and, above all, the particular culture of American young people. Most are also likely to be unfamiliar with classroom management in an American context. To state the most obvious point, Chinese young people are acculturated to show respect for their elders, including—even especially—teachers, so teachers in China have little difficulty maintaining order in classrooms with large numbers of students that their American counterparts might find difficult to control. It is, of course, important that guest teachers are able to communicate clearly with their students in English as well as in Chinese, and training in cross-cultural communication skills is also important.

Given the culture shock and isolation that many guest teachers from China often experience, especially if they are working in communities with few residents with Chinese backgrounds, it is impossible to over-estimate the importance of providing immediate, vigorous, and consistent support for guest teachers during their time in the United States. Such support can come in the form of professional and cultural mentors, dedicated host families, a local Chinese community, or networking with other Chinese teachers.

The principal limitation of guest teachers is the fact that, by definition, they are guests who are in the United States for a relatively short time. Thus it is difficult if not impossible for a school to sustain a Chinese language program by relying entirely on guest teachers. Other sources of teachers must be found to assure program continuity from year to year.

## **U.S. Native or Heritage Teachers**

Educated native speakers of Chinese who reside in the United States constitute another important source of teachers for Chinese programs in local schools. These native or heritage speakers of Chinese share with guest teachers the important ability to speak Chinese fluently, and most have the added advantage of being familiar both with American culture and with the way that U.S. schools function. They are also highly motivated to promote Chinese language and culture in the United States through teaching.<sup>43</sup>

Historically, Chinese heritage communities have organized after-school and weekend programs to provide Chinese language and culture teaching to their children. There are more than 750 such schools in the U.S., enrolling approximately 150,000 students annually. (See the Web sites of the Chinese School Association in the U.S., [www.csaus.org](http://www.csaus.org), and the National Associations of Chinese Language Schools, [www.ncacis.org](http://www.ncacis.org).) These Chinese community schools are a potential source of educators who may or may not have teaching credentials but who could become certified teachers.

The challenges that heritage teachers face start with pedagogical issues such as understanding the needs of students who are learning Chinese as a second language and addressing their needs appropriately in instruction. While some heritage teachers have rich experience teaching in after-school and Saturday schools organized by local Chinese communities, others lack teaching experience entirely. In either case, if schools are hiring heritage teachers for their programs, it is important to provide them with thorough and continuous professional development and to put them on a track to acquire standard teaching certification.

Some school districts have grown their own teachers. For example, in Chicago, the school district approached Chinese speakers who were working in schools and offered them financial support to become certified as Chinese language teachers. Then the school district approached local universities to offer training and certification programs for these teachers. If there is an institution of higher education in the area of an interested school district, there may be

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Ping, “Community-based Chinese schools in Southern California.”

graduates who are native speakers of Chinese who could become Chinese language teachers in local schools.

## Chicago Grows its Own Teachers

When the Chicago Public Schools (CPS) began offering Chinese in 1999 there was no such thing as “world language certification” in the state of Illinois. Teachers were initially staffed on transitional bilingual certificates, which allowed them to work in K-12 classrooms as long as they passed the language examination attached to the certificate. But clearly there was a need for a long-term solution to the problem of how to certify Chinese language instructors.

When CPS approached the Illinois State Board of Education it found that there was no plan to offer endorsements in Chinese or other new language, mainly because of low demand and the cost of developing them. It was given the green light to demonstrate the demand and find a university which would offer certification programs in the languages. CPS approached DePaul University, which was developing K-12 curriculum for both Japanese and Chinese, and wrote a Foreign Language Assistance Program (FLAP) grant proposal requesting requested funds for CPS teachers to become certified at DePaul. CPS identified all teachers currently working with language instruction, as well as additional potential language teachers working in the district but in different subject areas, and created a cohort of teachers to enter the certification program.

Simultaneously the Illinois State Board of Education began developing language tests for Japanese and Chinese, which would become the instrument to assess fluency and ability to teach in the target language. These tests remain the basis for endorsement in the State of Illinois today, and CPS currently has fifty-eight fully certified teachers working in the Chinese program.

In the absence of K-12 certified Chinese language teachers, some school districts have collaborated with community colleges to provide language programs that serve high school as well as college students. Still others have identified Chinese-speaking paraprofessionals and paired them with a certified ESL teacher or teacher of another language. Another option is to form a consortium in which several schools share a teacher. This option

can be an effective way to get a Chinese language program started from scratch.

Sometimes it is hard for schools to identify heritage speakers who might become teachers. One way to do this is through the STARTALK program, a federally funded program that is implemented by the National Foreign Language Center at the University of Maryland. STARTALK provides short summer programs of instruction in less commonly taught languages, including Arabic and Chinese, that offer both language instruction for high school students and professional development programs for instructors, many of whom are interested in becoming language teachers. Most of the Chinese language participants have heritage backgrounds. Over 2,600 students and 1,000 teachers participated in the 2008 STARTALK programs.<sup>44</sup>

## Native English Speakers

The final category of Chinese teachers consists of graduates of American colleges and universities who have learned Chinese as a second language. A likely source of such teachers is students who have majored in Chinese or other world languages in college and thus have a demonstrable interest in languages. Such persons can then be encouraged to acquire teaching credentials. This pool may also include people who have used languages in other professions, former diplomats and military personnel, returning Peace Corps volunteers, and college graduates who were language majors but may not have given much thought to a career in teaching.

These teachers understand the culture of American classrooms, and, assuming that their knowledge of Chinese is sound, they bring to the classroom the advantage of understanding what students are going through as they learn Chinese as a second language. While small in number, the numbers of such native English speakers/Chinese language learners is growing.

Many existing Chinese language programs have adopted a strategy of relying at the outset on guest teachers and gradually moving toward a situation where there is a good balance of teachers in all three categories. By doing so, they minimize the turnover problems that come with reliance on guest teachers. Programs can create very vibrant and effective programs by utilizing a mix of native speaker teachers, who have depth in the language and culture of China, and non-native speaker teachers, who better understand the dynamics of the American classroom, the attitudes and behaviors of American students and parents, and the politics of the American education system.

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For more information, please visit <http://startalk.umd.edu/>.

Independent schools, religiously affiliated schools, and other private schools are not restricted by the same credentialing requirements that public schools face in recruiting teachers of Chinese. Thus they have access to a significantly broader pool of potential teacher candidates. However, such schools need to be sure that prospective teachers have the requisite linguistic and pedagogical background to deliver a sound program of Chinese language and culture to U.S. students.

The new pools of potential Chinese language teachers and the opening of alternative routes into the profession both offer the opportunity to expand and enrich the Chinese language teaching corps in U.S. schools. The next hurdle is to tap into these potentially important resources. As Paul A. Garcia and Sheri Spaine Long observed:

Tomorrow's foreign language teachers are already present in our classrooms and communities. Future foreign language teachers will come from elementary, middle and high school language programs in districts that have established well-articulated, continuous K-12 foreign language sequences. They are undergraduate college and university students; they are adults seeking another career path. Some will be native speakers or foreigners who are new to the United States. Tomorrow's foreign language teachers will enrich our profession.<sup>45</sup>

## Training

Once prospective Chinese language teachers are recruited, there is an urgent need for rigorous yet flexible teacher education programs to train them. These programs must simultaneously provide suitable training to students following traditional routes while meeting the needs of the increasingly diverse pool of teacher candidates. Emphasis must be placed on the twin goals of increasing both the number and the effectiveness of Chinese language teachers.

An important obstacle to producing more Chinese language teachers is the relatively small number of U.S. colleges and universities that offer such programs and the small numbers of graduates that they produce. Such programs also rarely provide training for the emerging elementary and online Chinese language programs.

The unfortunate fact is that most states simply do not have intentional programs to produce Chinese language teachers at

any level. There are many reasons for this. One reason for the shortage is the frequent lack of a critical mass of students that is required before an institution of higher education will offer a full-fledged teacher education program. A prospective Chinese language teacher may be the only such candidate in his or her geographic area.

Within higher education institutions, there is often a disconnection between the priorities and culture of liberal arts faculty members who provide language instruction and their counterparts in schools of education who are charged with training teachers. Arts and science faculty members tend to be primarily interested in promoting knowledge of Chinese language, culture, and literature and they typically have little interest in the pedagogical challenges and priorities of their peers in schools of education.

Schools of education face their own challenges. One problem is the difficulty of finding Chinese language classrooms with master teachers who can supervise the clinical experience of new teachers. Another is the lack of faculty members who are fluent in both English and Chinese and the lack of faculty with expertise in the critical area of Chinese language pedagogy, though it should be noted that significant areas of foreign language pedagogy in general are applicable to all languages.

Many university programs also lack the flexibility to deal with the increasingly diverse pools of potential Chinese language teachers. For example, they assume that students need to first learn the language, and they have rigorous requirements relating to "seat time" or "classroom credits." These assumptions are not warranted in the case of many prospective teachers, notably native or heritage speakers of Chinese. Such people should have the ability to test out of particular courses, while non-native speakers should have different options such as study-abroad programs to improve their language skills.

The current and emerging programs for training Chinese language teachers fall into three broad and overlapping categories: traditional long-form university courses, alternative routes, and online training.

## University Teacher Education Programs

Just as consensus has been developing around standards for teachers of Chinese in U.S. classrooms, agreement is also emerging regarding the key features of effective Chinese language teacher education programs in institutions of higher education. These include:

- A coordinated plan. Senior leaders of both the East Asian studies and teacher preparation programs need to develop a plan for preparing and certifying teachers that

<sup>45</sup> Garcia and Spaine Long, *New Visions Teacher Recruitment Issues Paper*.



has flexible requirements and schedules to fit the needs of a diverse pool of potential teachers.

- **A clear course of study.** The curriculum should cover all of the important topics, including Mandarin, linguistics, Chinese history and culture, language pedagogy, and educational foundations.

- **Qualified faculty.** All faculty members should be well qualified and have the appropriate credentials to teach their particular courses.

- **Differentiated requirements.** An effective program will have requirements and offerings that respect the different needs of native and non-native speakers of Chinese. Native speakers may receive more training in linguistics, teaching methodology, or contemporary society and culture, for example, while non-native-speaker teachers complete advanced work in the Chinese language.

- **Good pedagogical practices.** Instructional practices should be based on research on second language acquisition, instruction, and assessment. They should also be aligned with accepted professional standards.

- **High-quality field experiences.** Access to classroom practice is essential for teacher candidates to better learn the dynamics of classroom instruction on Chinese. Field experiences also provide a platform for connection to be made between educational theory and practice.

- **Technological literacy.** The technological systems that today's students take for granted must be incorporated into an effective teacher preparation program. Instructors must make use of new technologies and future teachers must be well prepared to make use of these technologies in their own teaching.

- **Measures of success.** As with any significant educational program, it is important to identify the criteria by which success will be measured and to devise and implement appropriate metrics for doing so.

- **Sustainability.** The core elements of the program, especially those relating to finances and staffing, must be designed with sustainability in mind.

Fortunately, there are a number of established and emerging teacher preparation programs that embody these features and prepare Chinese language teachers for K-12 schools. See below for the list of universities that have teacher preparation programs.

Still, we need more.

Gearing up to meet the expanding demand for teachers in K-12 Chinese programs is a new area of opportunity for higher education institutions. Seizing this opportunity, however, will require filling some important gaps in the system. University programs struggle to find enough master teachers to guide and mentor prospective teachers. Not enough university faculty members have first-hand teaching experience in K-12 schools. Lack of support from the university's central administration may be a problem, as is the lack of communication and collaboration between teacher education programs lodged in schools of education and the Chinese language programs that reside in divisions of arts and sciences. Another Great Wall seems to have grown up between those who study Chinese language and culture and those who are seriously interested in teaching them to a new generation of students.

In order to build effective Chinese teacher training programs, collaboration with external partners is essential. Universities need to connect with schools to recruit prospective teachers for their programs, to offer student teaching opportunities with mentor teachers, and to place graduates in professional positions. They need to coordinate with their state education department to navigate some of the challenges of licensing and certification requirements (see the following section on certification). And they need to build consortia with other higher education institutions, including those in China, to offer the best possible programs with all the essential components, even if these institutions do not have all of the requisite expertise on their own faculty.

## Chinese Language Teachers Preparation Programs:

### New York University

New York University (NYU) programs in foreign language education are offered at varying degree levels: BS, MA, dual certification MA in foreign language education (7-12) and TESOL, and post-MA advanced certificate.

The programs are designed to prepare teachers, researchers, and curriculum developers in foreign language education at all levels, and are based on communicative methods of foreign language learning and a reflective model of teaching, which incorporates collaboration with colleagues, students, and community

The programs aim to prepare pre-service and in-service teachers with a firm foundation in language, literacy, and applied linguistics. Another key goal is to give teachers a range of second-language teaching approaches that can be adjusted to suit the needs of different learner populations from diverse educational and ethnic backgrounds. The undergraduate program prepares students for teaching in local or international settings through pedagogical core courses in which students learn about teaching techniques and methods and creating curricula, liberal arts courses, and two semesters of teaching opportunities in a public or independent school setting. Recent graduates of this program have become teachers of foreign language in New York City, New Jersey, Westchester County, Rockland County, and Long Island public schools, as well as at LaGuardia High School of Music and Art and Performing Arts and United Nations High School.

The master's programs are aimed at prospective and practicing teachers, heads of departments, supervisors, and coordinators of foreign language programs as well as professionals in international settings. For students seeking New York State certification, the program requires a completed bachelor's degree in the target foreign language (Chinese), a bachelor's degree in one of the liberal arts and science areas with a concentration in the target foreign language, or an equivalent of thirty points in the target foreign language. For students not seeking New York State certification, a completed bachelor's degree with a major in one of the liberal arts or sciences, a strong GPA in undergraduate studies, and demonstrated advanced proficiency in the target language are required.

For more information regarding Chinese language teacher preparation programs at NYU Steinhardt School of Culture, Education, and Human Development, visit <http://steinhardt.nyu.edu/teachlearn/foreign/> or contact Frank Tang at [frank.tang@nyu.edu](mailto:frank.tang@nyu.edu).

## Chinese Teacher Preparation Programs: Ohio State University

Ohio State University offers an M.Ed teacher licensure program, summer professional development, and STARTALK training programs. These programs largely attract native Chinese speakers and current teachers as well as career changers. In order to apply to these programs, students must have a BA in Chinese or education-related areas, native or non-native Chinese language proficiency demonstrated through standardized tests and interviews that include questions in Chinese, as well as teaching experience demonstrated in a portfolio. A majority of graduates from the program continue to teach within the state.

The M.Ed. teacher preparation program is a full-time graduate program that begins in the Summer and may be completed in four quarters. The program includes professional courses leading to initial Ohio teacher licensure in foreign language (grades K-12). Much of the course work and the field experiences are scheduled during the day. Students engage in a coherent series of interdisciplinary core courses, content-specific courses, seminars, a research and inquiry component, field experiences, a clinical practicum, and a culminating project focused on critical issues in education. Most of the professional courses are open only to those students who have been admitted into the program. The University faculty works closely with the Franklin

## Universities with Chinese Language Teacher Preparation Programs



County Professional Development Schools and other school-based professionals to prepare new teachers.

The Training Programs for Teachers of Chinese and for Teachers of Japanese are intensive seven-week programs designed to develop participants' language teaching skills through lectures, discussion, and observation of classes and practice teaching in a parallel language program of SPEAC. Both programs aim to develop competency in the performed culture approach to East Asian language teaching. Participants in the two teacher-training programs share some of the lecture hours but work in separate sections for language-specific work. Participants are required to have a high level of competency in both the target language (Chinese or Japanese) and English.

For more information regarding Chinese language teacher preparation programs at Ohio State University, please visit: <http://ehe.osu.edu/edtl/academics/downloads/med-fled.pdf> <http://deall.osu.edu/programs/summerPrgm/summer.cfm#teaching> or contact Dr. Patrick McAloon at [mcaloon.1@osu.edu](mailto:mcaloon.1@osu.edu).

## Chinese Teacher Preparation Programs: Rutgers University

Rutgers University, the State University of New Jersey, offers an array of programs to prepare students for a career in Chinese language teaching. These programs include shorter, accelerated summer certification programs as well as longer five-year combined BA/BS/EdM programs. Students within the Rutgers Chinese language teacher preparation programs consist largely of native Chinese speakers and Chinese language undergraduate students, as well as career changers. Upon completion, many graduates go on to teach within the state.

The accelerated Chinese language teacher preparation

program offers a two-summer long certification track to proficient speakers of Mandarin Chinese seeking a career in teaching. In response to a critical need for the teaching of Chinese at the K-12 level, the Rutgers

Department of Asian Languages and Cultures and the World Languages Institute has created a specially tailored, flexible curriculum that provides state-approved courses in pedagogy, methodology, Chinese linguistics and literature, intensive day and evening courses taught by highly qualified faculty and experts in the field. Depending on the student's prior academic background, it is possible to fulfill the K-12 Certificate of Eligibility requirements in as little as two summers.

The five-year combined BA/BS/EdM teacher preparation program in foreign languages (Chinese) is a joint master's degree and initial teacher certification program. Rutgers undergraduates are admitted to the program at the end of their junior year; they complete courses related to foreign language education (Chinese), totaling twenty-seven credits, and common professional education core, totaling fifteen credits, as well as a teaching internship.

For more information regarding Chinese language teacher preparation programs at Rutgers University, please visit [http://catalogs.rutgers.edu/generated.gse\\_current/pg28411.html](http://catalogs.rutgers.edu/generated.gse_current/pg28411.html) and <http://wli.rutgers.edu/wli.php?page=chinese> or contact Mary Curran at [mcurran@rci.rutgers.edu](mailto:mcurran@rci.rutgers.edu).

## Alternative Training and Certification Programs

As new pools of potential Chinese language teachers and of alternative teacher training programs emerge, states have begun to offer Alternative Route Teacher Certification (ARTC) for world language teachers.

Arizona State University  
California State University at Long Beach  
Columbia University, Teachers College  
DePaul University  
University of Iowa  
Hunter College of the City University of New York  
Indiana University  
University of Illinois  
University of Maryland

Middlebury College  
University of Minnesota  
Ohio State University  
University of Oregon  
Rice University  
Rutgers University  
Stanford University  
University of Utah

- Alternative certification programs offer certification to individuals with undergraduate degrees who can demonstrate oral and written language proficiency through nationally recognized testing but who lack the educational coursework required for regular state certification. They typically entail rigorous screening processes, combine coursework with field-based experiences, and employ mentor teachers or other support personnel. Alternative certification offers the opportunity to move toward competency-based certification without relying on traditional coursework and tests.

According to a 2009 state-by-state analysis from the National Center for Education Information, nearly all states now have at least one alternate route to teacher certification, more than half of which have been established in the last fifteen years. In 2007-2008, the latest year for which data are available, 62,000 individuals were issued certificates to teach through alternate routes—nearly double the number of five years before.<sup>46</sup>

One problem is that most states do not have ARTC programs geared specifically to teachers of Chinese or other world languages. Programs need to be tailored to the specific needs, including language facility, of such teachers, with special reference to teachers seeking to work in elementary, immersion, and online programs.

Several states, including New Jersey, Minnesota, Utah, and Wisconsin, have established alternative route licensure programs or heritage language teachers' certification programs.

Connecticut has a summer-plus-weekends program for certifying language teachers, while the California State University at Long Beach has added a Single Subject Credential Program for candidates seeking to become certified in that state.<sup>47</sup>

According to a survey by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), there are over 137 institutions of higher education that collaborate with their respective state education agencies to offer alternative route certification programs. A significant number of these indicated that they are open to expanding such programs to include Chinese. As among traditional training programs, there are large variations among alternate route programs. Many are associated with universities; some are not. There are also significant quality differences among them. However, they offer the flexibility to respond quickly to the growing numbers of prospective teachers of Chinese from non-traditional backgrounds.

<sup>46</sup> Wang, Evans, and Liao, National world language education survey.

<sup>47</sup> Asia Society, *Expanding Chinese Language Capacity in the United States*, 10.

## Online Teacher Training

In recent years educators and policy makers have begun developing online programs to facilitate the training and continuing professional development of teachers of world languages, including Chinese. These programs, which can be used either on a freestanding basis or as components of more traditional training courses, offer enormous potential for expanding and improving the development of Chinese language teachers, especially in rural or other areas where Chinese language programs are still being developed.

North Carolina has been a leader in the development of online training for Chinese language teachers. Bobby Hobgood, who developed this program for LEARN NC, emphasizes that teaching online is quite different than teaching in a face-to-face classroom setting. "While this sounds obvious," he says, "it is nonetheless an essential realization toward developing a quality online learning experience." Eagerness to embrace online learning without understanding these differences has led to all too many "poorly designed, poorly taught, and poorly administered experiences for learners."

As already noted, the major change is in the role of the teacher. In traditional face-to-face instruction, the teacher is solely in charge of the learning process, including the delivery of information, classroom management, speaking practice, evaluation, and so forth. In the online context, however, these tasks are carried out through a combination of the technology, student support services, and the instructor. The teacher in an online situation is a facilitator. Instead of standing in front of a video camera and providing direct instruction, the teacher focuses on laying out assignments and projects for the student to carry out, providing feedback, and managing the work of conversation coaches.

Given these differences in the role of the online teacher, it follows that preparing teachers for such instruction must take different forms than traditional teacher training programs.

Obviously, teachers preparing for online instruction must become comfortable using the new technologies involved. Since online learning is in many ways an extreme example of student-centered instruction, teachers also have to become comfortable with this particular pedagogical approach. Then, too, online teachers need to acquire a very different set of communication skills than they would use when students are in the same room. Perhaps most important, says Hobgood, teachers need to develop their own particular online identity and online "voices."<sup>48</sup>

<sup>48</sup> Hobgood, *Preparing Chinese Teachers for Online Teaching*.

Another important role for online teacher training is in helping to solve some of the faculty expertise shortages noted above. Institutions that lack certain critical courses, such as Chinese language pedagogy, can share course content online and thereby be enabled to offer training programs even if they do not have all the appropriate faculty at their own institutions.

## Certification and Licensure

Under the No Child Left Behind legislation, which is now up for reauthorization, all classroom teachers in public schools had to obtain certification within a specified time period and be highly qualified to teach their subject. Certificates can range from fully certified to alternatively certified to provisionally certified, but all teachers must be “licensed” to teach students.

If the United States is going to develop an effective system for producing the Chinese language teachers it needs, however, significant changes must be made to certification processes. Because interest in less commonly taught languages is a relatively recent development, states have not geared up to certify the growing number of teachers that are needed. And because they are decentralized and vary from state to state, current certification procedures are unnecessarily complicated and difficult to navigate. They are also badly outdated in that they may have not kept up with the needs of teachers who may be native speakers of Chinese or who may be moving from state to state, coming out of alternative training programs, or preparing for online instruction.

It does no good to recruit and train teachers if they cannot obtain certification. Teachers frequently find these procedures impenetrable. Ms N, who teaches Chinese at an independent school in Illinois and learned the language while living in China, expressed a common complaint. When she approached one of the three Illinois universities with a certification program, about becoming certified, she was told that she would have to devote twenty-five to thirty hours a week to studying Chinese, with no opportunity to work over the summer, and that she would have to take a leave of absence from her job to go to another school for her student teaching. “People should not be expected to give up their job to get certification,” she observed.

Current policies with regard to teacher certification are cumbersome and dysfunctional in several important respects.

Because Chinese is a relatively new addition to the menu of certification areas, not all states have certification procedures in place to license teachers of Chinese and other less commonly taught languages. Even among states that do have such procedures, lack

of consistency is a major problem. Some states use a certification system, while others have abandoned this approach in favor of licensure. Some states use the two terms interchangeably.<sup>49</sup> Some require demonstration of speaking proficiency in Chinese of Advanced-Low or above on the ACTFL scale of speaking proficiency. Some states also require a rating on the ACTFL Writing Proficiency Test, while others require proof of credits or a major in Chinese. Some states issue certification for K-8 while others do so for K-12 or even for a single grade level. Fourteen states require foreign-born or non-native speakers of English to take TOEFL or its equivalent in order to demonstrate their ability to communicate with students, parents, and administrators.<sup>50</sup>

The fact that certification procedures differ so widely across states is an obstacle to teacher mobility. As a result, states and districts looking to hire a Chinese language teacher are forced to spend inordinate amounts of time and energy recruiting and certifying them, while prospective teachers have to struggle to meet the local requirements even though they may have already obtained adequate credentials in another state. There are, however, agreements among many states through which reciprocity of teaching certificates may be honored and these reciprocity agreements need to be expanded.

The traditional approach to certification has focused on input measures such as course credits or seat time measures, and, as noted above, some of these measures such as an emphasis on the number of credits in courses in Chinese, are wasteful and inappropriate for candidates such as heritage speakers or others who have learned Chinese in a non-academic setting.

The profession is now moving to replace this reliance on coursework with competency or performance-based evaluations. While it is important that prospective teachers demonstrate their command of the language, there are ways to do this other than through an accumulation of college-level language credits. Praxis II is a test that many states accept for other languages but it is not available for Chinese. Fifteen states allow the use of the Oral Proficiency Interview and Writing Proficiency Test developed by ACTFL, but this test does not align with the Praxis type of test. California has a system for certifying both the subject matter and pedagogical skills of beginning teachers, whether from traditional or alternate route programs, that other states are beginning to adopt.<sup>51</sup>

The absence or complexity of state-by-state teacher certifica-

49 Everson and Wang, *An imperative for change*, 23.

50 Shuhan, Evans, and Liao, *National world language education survey*.

51 Jacobson, *Commission on Teacher Credentialing*.

tion or licensure requirements has been widely recognized as a national problem that will require a concerted effort from national organizations working across states. . It should not matter how a candidate meets the state standards for certification, just that they do meet the competence standard. A new system needs to be developed that allows certification to be portable, flexible, and competency-based. This would enable heritage and other speakers of Chinese to become certified without having to take courses in Chinese, for example. Given the bewildering array of certification requirements across the country, there is a strong need for a multistate or national discussion about establishing a consortium for developing multistate certification requirement agreements.

Because matters related to certification vary from state to state, schools should contact the state foreign language supervisor or the state teacher accrediting agency for information about their specific state's certification procedure. A useful web site is [www.ncssfl.org](http://www.ncssfl.org).

## Professional Development and Continuing Support

Even the best initial training cannot provide teachers with everything they need to know to become and remain an effective teacher. In order to teach world languages effectively in the twenty-first century, world language teachers must go beyond “covering the curriculum” and become reflective and adaptive professionals, constantly improving the quality of their programs.

As mentioned earlier, research carried out at the National Foreign Language Center on high school Chinese and Japanese programs concluded that the single most important variable influencing program success was the professionalism of the teacher.<sup>52</sup> Such high demands imply that all teachers of Chinese—whether they are guest teachers, heritage speakers, or native English speakers—need continuing support and nurturing in the form of induction, mentoring, and in-service professional development.

In addition to normal educational duties, teachers of Chinese frequently find themselves in the position of creating an entirely new program and then explaining and defending the program to the local education community and even beyond. Such skills are not part of the usual curriculum of teacher training colleges, so support from the school principal and other administrators is important.

Learning to teach is a continuum that extends from the beginning teacher to the accomplished practitioner. New teachers

need mentoring and individualized support to help them create effective learning environments for students, plan instruction, manage the classroom, and reflect on their own practice. Experienced teachers need to keep up with best practice and new needs such as immersion approaches, the use of technology, and new approaches to assessment. A California report found that language teachers describe professional development as their greatest need.<sup>53</sup>

Areas where professional development is particularly needed include:

- Effective pedagogical methods to improve student learning
- Linguistic and cultural proficiency
- Use of new technologies for instruction and assessment
- Classroom management
- Information on best practices

Over the past three years a number of sources of short-form professional development for Chinese language teachers have emerged. The professional associations CLASS and CLTA offer professional development programs. Some university-based Confucius Institutes organize workshops for practicing teachers on different aspects of Chinese language and culture. The federally funded STARTALK program offers two-week summer programs for both prospective and current teachers, while the College Board offers workshops for teachers who are teaching AP Mandarin.

Programs are also available in China to enable teachers to strengthen their language skills and cultural knowledge. In addition, the annual National Chinese Language Conference, organized by Asia Society and the College Board, provides a forum for sharing best practices and exploring the frontiers of the field.

While these forms of professional development are useful, there is a great need for continuing support in each school district or region that addresses teachers' everyday challenges. For example, both Hunter College and New York University teacher preparation programs offer monthly seminars for their graduates to share challenges that they are facing in classrooms.

A strong mentoring program is particularly important for foreign-born teachers coming from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Their needs extend beyond the pedagogical and other classroom issues faced by all new teachers to the challenges of everyday life in a new country. Such teachers need considerable personal support and guidance. As one educator wrote

52 Everson and Wang, *An imperative for change*, 28.

53 O'Connor et al. *Learning World Languages and Culture in California*, 38.

based on observations of guest teachers in Ohio, “most of them need additional training in acclimating to a new culture, including skill in dealing with inter-cultural conflicts.”<sup>54</sup>

It is important that on-the-job support for Chinese teachers move beyond occasional workshops and take the form of a sustained and continuous program. Moreover, because Chinese teachers are coming through different routes—some through long-form training programs, some by working as teachers while they take courses for certification, still others coming from Chinese universities as guest teachers—it is imperative to build versatility into these programs. Establishing online communities, as Asia Society is doing with its network of Confucius Classrooms, is another way of providing Chinese language teachers with professional development, sharing best practices and reducing the sense of isolation that many feel.

## Supporting Mr. Tang

When the Hubbard Exempted Village School District in Ohio employed Tang Peibin as a guest teacher in the Chinese language program at the Roosevelt Elementary School, officials were keen to provide him as much professional and personal support as he might need.

Lucille Esposito, the assistant superintendent, explained that “because of his infectious, positive personality,” Mr. Tang ended up with four teacher mentors who helped him with instructional design, discipline issues, and personal experiences. The latter included “Tuesdays with Tang,” when mentors taught him to drive a car or go hunting, took him shopping at the outlet malls, or invited him on family picnics.


On the professional development front, Ms. Esposito explained, “we have supported Mr. Tang in his quest for education, especially in his continued improvement of spoken English.” He attended workshops on topics such as curriculum design and state standards for global language instruction. The district encouraged his contact with other Ohio guest teachers and he assisted the College Board and Hanban in the orientation of other guest teachers when they first arrived in the United States.

The district used FLAP grants to send Mr. Tang to New York, Chicago, and elsewhere in the United States.

During his first year, Mr. Tang lived with a host family who not only housed him but also introduced him to university professors who teach Chinese. The following year his mentors found him an apartment of his own, but the district continued to provide transportation for him as well as two meals a day. The district also pays for his personal Internet “because he uses it as an instructional tool,” said Ms. Esposito.

The personal and professional support has run both ways. Mr. Tang has presented workshops explaining the rich Chinese culture and language to groups ranging from the International Reading Association to the local Chamber of Commerce, and he has taught in summer classes for global language teachers.

For his thirtieth birthday last fall, the staff at Roosevelt treated him to another American custom: a surprise birthday party.

For more information, contact  
Lucille Esposito at 303-534-1921, ext. 1008  
or on her cell phone, 330-550-6661. 



Partnership for  
Global Learning

# Conclusions and Recommendations



**Y**oung Americans growing up and seeking their place in a globalized world need knowledge and skills that differ from those demanded of previous generations. High on the list of these new global competencies is facility in world languages.

Five years ago, there were only a tiny number of Chinese language programs in the United States and the lack of teachers seemed an insurmountable roadblock for schools wishing to start programs. Although we still lack complete and accurate data on the number of schools offering and the number of students studying Chinese at different levels, we know that there has been a more than 200 percent increase in the number of schools offering such programs. These new programs now have hired teachers, primarily through guest teacher programs or because school districts found ways to grow their own local Chinese language teachers. The field is also developing new approaches—beyond the traditional high school programs—to include elementary/immersion programs and online courses.

There is no precise way to measure the demand for Chinese language teachers over the next five to ten years, but using historical experience with other languages, we can say that if Chinese were to become as popular as German, we would need 2,800 teachers. If it were to become as popular as French, we would need ten thousand teachers. In addition, if more Chinese programs began in elementary school, where language is more easily learned and which would allow long enough learning sequence for students to develop real proficiency, we would need teachers with the training and skills to work in elementary and immersion settings. And the spread of online teaching for students in areas where small numbers limit the possibility of in-person classes, will also require teachers with different kinds of skills.

The experience of the past few years of rapid program expansion has also demonstrated the challenges involved in starting and sustaining programs in a language that is farther afield from English than European languages. Whatever their national or linguistic background, future teachers will need strong command of both Mandarin and English, understanding of both Chinese and American cultures, effective classroom management skills, and the requisite pedagogical skills for engaging and teaching Chinese in a twenty-first century American context. In order to meet the demands inherent in expanding and sustaining high-quality Chinese language and culture programs in American schools over the long term, we need to build a system to recruit, train, certify, and support more and better teachers.

This can be done. There are large potential pools from which to

draw an increasing supply of Chinese language teachers—from guest teacher programs, to the large Chinese-speaking population in the United States, to the increasing number of native English speakers who are learning Chinese in schools and universities, to people who have learned Chinese in other professions but might consider a new career in teaching. But tapping these pools requires overcoming some significant barriers.

In most parts of the country, prospective teachers cannot find teacher training programs for Chinese language teachers. Some states do not have a way to certify Chinese language teachers, while the certification requirements of others have been described as “impenetrable” and not suited to candidates who already speak the language. Lack of communication between higher education and the schools, and between Asian studies programs and schools of education within higher education institutions have often prevented the development of effective teacher preparation programs. And inflexible requirements at many universities mean that programs are not well suited to this diverse pool of prospective teachers. Moreover, once the teachers are in the classroom, there is, as yet, no sustained system of supports and professional development to help teachers grow and continually improve the quality of their programs.

The task before us is to expand the supply of Chinese language teachers, increase their effectiveness, and produce teachers who are ready to innovate in both elementary schools and online programs. Accomplishing these tasks will require vision and partnerships between all the critical stakeholders—schools, colleges and universities, and states.

## Recommendations for Colleges and Universities

Since demand will vary regionally, one or more major teacher preparation institutions in each state should work with their state education department and schools to examine the status of, and need for, Chinese language programs in their state over the next five years, both at the elementary and high school levels and online.

These colleges and universities should work with interested schools and state policy makers to design a comprehensive program to recruit, train, certify, and support Chinese language teachers who can create and sustain high-quality programs that lead students to useable proficiency. To accomplish this task, these universities will need to have or develop:

- Strength in Chinese language teaching

- A coordinated plan between the school of education and East Asian studies programs for preparing and certifying teachers through one or more routes, traditional or alternate
- Differentiated requirements for native versus non-native speakers of Chinese, such as language proficiency tests rather than seat-time for native speakers, study in China programs for non-native speakers, and flexible scheduling options (weekends, summers, and online)
- Pedagogical practices that align with research on second language acquisition, K-12 instruction, and assessment (some courses could be shared regionally between institutions and offered online)
- Stronger links between Chinese language teaching programs and teaching programs for other languages, including specific exposure of prospective Chinese teachers to strategies used to teach other languages and the Teaching of English as a Second Language
- Exposure of prospective teachers to the latest strategies in immersion and early language instruction; use of technology in language teaching; and a wide range of instructional approaches
- Collaboration with K-12 schools in the region that wish to teach Chinese on matters of recruitment, student teaching, teacher mentoring, placement of graduates in jobs, and ongoing professional development and action research

## Recommendations for States

States are critical leaders and innovators in the U.S. educational system. Each state should:

- Convene a state languages council of business, economic development, international trade, police, military, medical, education, and cultural organizations to assess the state's need for and resources to support greater world language competence, especially in less commonly taught languages like Chinese
- Help to educate the public about the importance of language proficiency and encourage schools to start programs early, especially for languages like Chinese that take longer to achieve proficiency
- Put in place a high-quality alternative route to teacher certification. This route should form an accelerated pathway to teaching for the large numbers of

heritage and native speakers of Chinese who already have degrees

- Develop targeted early language initiatives at the state level
- Modernize its certification procedures so that they are consumer-friendly. Each state should assess all beginning language teachers against common measures of both language and pedagogical competence, rather than through the traditional accumulation of credits. States should also work together to make certification, once achieved, portable across state lines
- Use its state virtual high school to make blended instruction in Chinese and other languages available to every student in the state—even if there are not enough interested students in their particular school to form a whole conventional class

## Recommendations for Schools


Individual schools and districts have been leading the way in creating Chinese language programs over the past few years. In order to continue to expand these programs to more grades, sustain them over time, and continue to improve their quality, schools and districts need to:

- Systemically recruit and grow their own Chinese language teachers. In order to do so, they should reach out to local heritage communities, STARTALK programs, midcareer professionals who have worked in China, and students learning Chinese in schools and colleges
- Work with local higher education institutions to develop programs that train and certify effective teachers who can engage students and develop proficiency
- Provide greater professional support for their existing Chinese language teachers. Because such teachers are often the only Chinese speakers in a district, they can feel very isolated. They often face the task of developing a new program on their own while, in the case of guest teachers, living and working in a culture that is very different from their own
- Support the Chinese language program and the development of students' global competence by integrating global content across the whole curriculum

- Work with other schools to develop professional learning and support networks at the local, regional, state, and national levels, such as the Hanban-Asia Society Confucius Classrooms Network

## Recommendations for the Federal Government

It has been widely recognized that languages, especially less commonly taught languages, are a national need that will never be met by purely local decisions of school districts. Therefore as Congress considers reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)—with its stated goal of preparing students to compete in the global economy—policy makers should include efforts to develop students’ language and cultural competence.

The U.S. Department of Education, working in conjunction with other federal agencies with a national interest in languages, should regularly assess the national need for languages, collect data on programs, and disseminate best practices. It should provide incentives for states to adopt common standards, address the shortages of language teachers, and use innovative approaches such as elementary immersion and online programs. 

# Appendix

## Standards for Chinese Language Teachers: ACTFL and Hanban

### ACTFL Program Standards for the Preparation of Foreign Language Teachers

#### ***Standard 1: Language, Linguistics, and***

##### ***Comparisons***

Demonstrating Language Proficiency  
Understanding Linguistics  
Identifying Language Comparisons

#### ***Standard 2: Cultures, Literatures, and Cross- Disciplinary Concepts***

Demonstrating Cultural Understandings  
Demonstrating Understanding of Literary and Cultural  
Texts and Traditions Integrating Other Disciplines in  
Instruction

#### ***Standard 3: Language Acquisition Theories and Instructional Practices***

Understanding Language Acquisition and Creating a  
Supportive Classroom  
Developing Instructional Practices That Reflect  
Language Outcomes and Learner Diversity

#### ***Standard 4: Integration of Standards into Curriculum and Instruction***

Understanding and Integrating Standards in Planning  
Integrating Standards in Instruction  
Selecting and Designing Instructional Materials

#### ***Standard 5: Assessment of Languages and Cultures***

Knowing assessment models and using them  
appropriately  
Reflecting an assessment  
Reporting assessment results

#### ***Standard 6: Professionalism***

Engaging in Professional Development  
Knowing the Value of Foreign Language Learning

### Hanban Standards for Teachers of Chinese to Speakers of Other Languages

#### ***Module 1: Language, Abilities, and Skills***

***Standard 1:*** Chinese Language Ability and Skills

***Standard 2:*** Foreign Language Ability and Skills

#### ***Module 2: Culture and Communication***

***Standard 3:*** Chinese Culture

***Standard 4:*** Chinese-Foreign Cultural Comparison  
and Intercultural Communication

#### ***Module 3: Second Language Acquisition and Learning Strategies***

***Standard 5:*** Second Language Acquisition and  
Learning Strategies

#### ***Module 4: Teaching Methodology***

***Standard 6:*** Chinese Language Teaching Methodology

***Standard 7:*** Testing and Assessment

***Standard 8:*** Curricula, Syllabi, and Teaching Materials

***Standard 9:*** Technology-Enhanced Language Teaching

#### ***Module 5: Professionalism***

***Standard 10:*** Professionalism

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