Introduction

As China continues its rise on the world stage, demand for Chinese as a foreign language (CFL) is growing in the United States. Yet schools are facing an acute shortage of trained teachers that threatens to impede the creation and establishment of strong Chinese language programs. The consequences of this shortage were highlighted in a 2004 College Board survey, which found that 2,400 American high schools were interested in offering the AP® program in Chinese language and culture, but could not because of a lack of certified Chinese teachers.[1]

A discipline that has achieved modest success in American education, Chinese language study has traditionally been confined to select university programs, Chinatowns, or weekend Chinese community heritage schools. In fact, data from the 2005 Asia Society Report show that the Chinese enrollment in community schools is six times that of mainstream American schools (i.e.,150,000 students for the former and 24,000 for the latter in 2003). Recent studies on Chinese as a heritage language reveal, however, that the Chinese community schools are not as yet full-fledged educational entities, but transient learning centers between home and mainstream schools where learners typically start Chinese learning at a very young age, but drop out once they begin kindergarten or grade school.[2]

With the increasing need to institute longer sequences of language instruction starting in kindergarten and continuing through college, the Chinese language field is now faced with the challenge of training teachers at all levels for a language that has been represented only marginally in American education and only fleetingly in the collective imagination of the American people. With recent initiatives such as Chinese AP programs, Chinese Flagship Programs, and the U.S. government's Startalk program designed to increase the number of Chinese language high school programs as well as Chinese language teacher development initiatives, the dream of making Chinese language programs available to American students at a variety of levels in every state of the union is gaining momentum among students, educators,

[1]See the Asia Society report "Expanding Chinese Language Capacity in the United States," by Vivien Stewart and Shuhan Wang, 2005, available at http://www.internationaled.org/expandingchinese.htm.
[2]See Xiao, Yun. 2008. Home literacy environment in Chinese as a heritage language. In Weiyun He and Yun Xiao (Eds.). *Chinese as a Heritage Language: Fostering Rooted World Citizenry* (2008), Honolulu, HI: University of Hawaii, National Foreign Language Resource Center, pp. 151–166.

policymakers, and parents. Yet, for such an ambitious enterprise to succeed, it will be crucial that programs at all levels be staffed with highly qualified teachers.

Who May Become a Chinese Language Teacher in the United States?

Needless to say, the task of finding and training qualified teachers is not an easy one. First, many of the candidates who are coming forward to answer the call for more teachers are native speakers of Chinese who may not necessarily have formal training in teaching their own language, and who may instead have professional qualifications in disciplines other than language teaching. Consequently, they do not have the needed subject matter expertise, or an understanding of the common themes and trends that join all foreign language teachers, regardless of the languages they teach. In short, they are not participants in the ongoing conversation that unites members of the foreign language profession, nor are they participants in the specialized conversation that goes on regularly between teachers of Chinese. Secondly, many of these native speakers are coming from Chinese-speaking countries that have educational systems which differ greatly from that of America, thus creating a wide disparity as to how education is viewed, valued, and carried out. Without an understanding of one's teaching context, environment, and particular school culture, Chinese language programs run the risk of failing because they are not matched to the goals, needs, and desires of a particular setting, or because they have not taken into account the makeup of the various students whom they are trying to serve. Thirdly, some of the teacher candidates come from a group that has been important in filling the ranks of teachers in the more commonly taught languages. As non-native speakers of Chinese, they typically major in Chinese as a foreign language in American universities and, upon their graduation, join in the Chinese teaching profession without going through formal Chinese teacher training. Because of the special characteristics of the Chinese language that make it so different from English and from the leading foreign languages typically taught in American schools, these students are challenged in attaining the requisite amount of Chinese proficiency for actually teaching the language. They have, however, advantages over Chinese native speakers in that they have been enculturated from a very early age in the U.S. school system, and also have fresh memories of the challenges of learning Chinese as a foreign language. Lastly, we have a source of prospective teachers that has long been overlooked — heritage language learners, or those who have learned Chinese while growing up in a Chinese family. These learners have traditionally "not fit" into Chinese language programs designed to educate students who are starting their study of the language from square one, and have presented unique pedagogical challenges for programs that wish to serve them, despite the diverse proficiency profiles that characterize them in both speaking and reading the Chinese language.

How This Book Addresses the Needs of CFL Teachers

Given this widely diverse profile of students who wish to become Chinese language teachers, a volume dealing with teacher development that will help them in their quest towards teacher competence and professionalization is sorely needed. This volume, then, is designed to serve as a resource guide for teachers-in-development who will confront a host of important issues in their everyday teaching, and can be used for both mentors and students involved in both pre-service and in-service teacher education programs. Although its pages contain a variety of hands-on suggestions and recommendations for the practicing teacher, its purpose is not only to be a pedagogical guide, but also a volume that introduces foundational issues and theories of foreign language acquisition that all language educators will encounter on a daily basis. As well, the volume will discuss topics that unite all foreign language teachers, while also probing those issues that are specific to the teaching of Chinese. The book is state-of-the-art in terms of the research that is discussed, and every one of the authors has been a leader in the creation, management, teaching, and/or directing of Chinese language programs or Chinese language teacher development programs.

About the Essays in This Volume

Michael Everson's piece, **The Importance of Standards**, begins the volume and our first section exploring the context of Chinese. It is presented here because the standards represent a general consensus among a variety of stakeholders to articulate a common educational framework in foreign language education, regardless of the foreign language that is being taught. His article traces some of the theoretical and methodological foundations that have led to the creation of the national standards. Since some of the teacher candidates who will be using this volume have learned English or other foreign languages through antiquated methodologies, Everson's essay provides an important foundation as it requires new teachers to look at language learning and teaching through a different lens. His article also discusses how the standards will change the way we look at assessment, and sets the stage for other articles in this volume that will also talk about the standards from different perspectives.

While at first blush, the study of Chinese always seems to be about mastering tones in speech or producing characters with the proper stroke order, Matthew Christensen's article on **Bringing Culture into the Chinese Language Classroom** through Contextualized Performance helps us to understand that our ultimate goal in using Chinese is to get things done in culturally appropriate ways. How this is to be achieved is no mean feat, and his article puts forth solid recommendations for how the social and cultural demands of communication can be presented to students so as to enhance their cultural "performance" through the use of

language. Cynthia Ning's article, **Focusing on the Learner in the Chinese Language Classroom,** continues this thread, as her experience in teacher development has indicated that while we can explain the principles of proficiency-based Chinese language instruction to students in our teacher development courses, actually developing and conducting proficiency-based language classes can be extremely difficult for new teachers, especially if their own language learning experience was highly teacher-centered and grammatically-based. Explaining and illustrating, then, what communicative language learning "looks like" will go far to help prospective teachers take the logical next step to making their own lessons more communicative in nature. The last chapter in this section, **AP® Chinese Language and Culture** by T. Richard Chi details the recent creation of the Advanced Placement (AP) Chinese course and examination, newly administered in 2006 and 2007, respectively. This extremely comprehensive article presents an ambitious and exciting view into the future of what Chinese language teaching and learning might hold, and what is possible when high school students are given the opportunity to take a Chinese course equivalent to a fourth-semester college course. His article provides initial data taken from the first administration of the course that holds out promise for the success of this program, while pointing out challenges that need to be addressed if this program is to be implemented on a wider scale.

Section 2 gets to the heart of classroom instruction by presenting issues of both a theoretical and practical nature that are always discussed by Chinese language teachers. Michael Everson begins this section with a chapter on the **Literacy Development in Chinese as a Foreign Language**, and organizes his chapter with an "issues" approach, boiling down the topic of literacy into important theoretical principles that teachers need to understand, while giving general guidance for classroom practice based upon these issues. His ideas are especially relevant for dealing with beginning learners of Chinese who are struggling to adjust to a totally different orthographic system, and he preaches caution in how we teach our beginners to read so as not to overwhelm and de-motivate them in our beginning courses. In the next chapter on **Teaching Chinese Orthography and Discourse**, Yun Xiao continues the discussion of how Chinese characters should be taught, giving important guidance as to how they are structured, and how a principled pedagogy must be developed if our learners are to understand this complex orthographic system. She also writes about the importance of teaching our learners how Chinese speakers build and use discourse to convey more complex and varied meaning when they speak and write. All too often, Chinese teachers wonder why their students are not building fluency and discourse competence, when in fact it is because they are not being taught how. As foreign language educators strive to find ways to take learners to the advanced levels of spoken and written proficiency, this chapter provides solid guidance on the steps teachers need to take to facilitate this process.

Continuing in this section, Xiaohong Wen tackles the topic of **Teaching Listening and Speaking.** Drawing from cognitive models that detail the

components of listening comprehension and speaking proficiency, she defines these two skills while also showing how they relate to one another. As the integration of these two skills is critical for comprehension to take place, her chapter details both strategies and activities for the classroom practitioner to include in their pedagogical repertoire. This section concludes with a chapter on the use of **Technology in Chinese Language Learning** by Tianwei Xie and Tao-chung Yao. It is no secret that the Chinese language poses its own set of technological challenges — tone marks, presentation of characters in two different forms (i.e., simplified and traditional), and romanization systems such as *pinyin* and *zhuyinfuhao*, and word processing capability are just a few of the basic capabilities technology has given that were just coming into existence twenty years ago. This chapter will be extremely valuable to classroom practitioners, who will find it an endless resource for all aspects of Chinese educational technology, from word processing to web pages, from podcasts to blogs.

Our last section looks at issues of the American classroom that are fundamental for prospective teachers to gain a strategic view of Chinese language education in general with all the complexities and aspirations it entails. Yun Xiao begins this section with her chapter on Teaching Chinese as a Heritage Language, long viewed as curricular oddities in the sense that they came to beginning Chinese classes with different degrees of proficiency in the various language skills, often in dialects different from standard Mandarin. As the profession has begun to view heritage learners as more of a resource and less of a placement nuisance, serious efforts have been put forth in the area of pedagogy, materials development, and thoughtful class placement so as to nurture the language development of these students. This article will be valuable for all teachers who find that their classes are populated more and more by heritage learners. Madeline Spring also deals with the topic of heritage learners in her essay on **Linking Curriculum, Assessment, and Professional Development**, as she details how the K–16 Chinese Pipeline Program in the Portland, OR, schools is attempting to offer Chinese language starting in Kindergarten so that students will be eventually able to enter colleges at a proficiency level high enough to take content courses in Chinese. Perhaps the most ambitious and coordinated Chinese language effort in the United States, this program is one of the Flagship language initiatives, dedicated to bringing language students in a variety of languages to the superior level of language proficiency. As such, its curriculum is based on a plan that totally rethinks language learning across a child's entire educational career and, as such, represents a vision of language learning that is revolutionary in its conception. Our last chapter, **Understanding the Culture of American Schools, and Managing the Successful Chinese Language Classroom** by Leslie Schrier, completes and grounds the volume by explaining the complexities of The American Educational System, a system that differs from Chinese education in very fundamental ways. We hope that by understanding these differences, prospective teachers not well versed in the American system will avoid the

problems and pitfalls that can potentially bring well intentioned Chinese programs to termination because they have not been able to acclimate to the educational context in which they find themselves. The chapter concludes with a much needed discussion dealing with classroom management, a topic that even American teachers feel they could have used more of in their teacher education programs as they navigate their way through their beginning careers in K–12 American education.

As with any work of this scope, there are many people deserving of thanks for helping to get this volume into the hands of the many stakeholders committed to fostering Chinese language teacher development. We would first like to thank the contributors, who shared our vision of the importance of this volume, and found time in their busy schedules to write compelling and comprehensive articles. We also wish to thank Jill Cheng of Cheng & Tsui Company for her enthusiastic support for this project from its inception, and Kristen Wanner, also of Cheng & Tsui, for her unflagging and thorough editorial support to help make this the book that we wanted it to become.

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