

AAUSC 2016 Volume—Issues in Language Program Direction

The Interconnected Language Curriculum: Critical Transitions and Interfaces in Articulated K-16 Contexts

Per Urlaub, University of Texas at Austin

Johanna Watzinger-Tharp, University of Utah

Editors

Stacey Katz Bourns, Northeastern University

Series Editor





**AAUSC 2016 Volume - Issues
in Language Program
Direction: The Interconnected
Language Curriculum: Critical
Transitions and Interfaces in
Articulated K-16 Contexts**
Per Urlaub, Johanna Watzinger-
Tharp and Stacey Katz Bourns

Product Director: Beth Kramer
Product Assistant: Cara Gaynor
Marketing Manager: Sean
Ketchem
Manufacturing Planner: Betsy
Donaghey
Art and Design Direction,
Production Management,
and Composition: Lumina
Datamatics, Inc.

© 2018 Cengage Learning

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. No part of this work covered by the copyright herein may be reproduced or distributed in any form or by any means, except as permitted by U.S. copyright law, without the prior written permission of the copyright owner.

For product information and
technology assistance, contact us at **Cengage Learning
Customer & Sales Support, 1-800-354-9706**

For permission to use material from this text or product,
submit all requests online at **www.cengage.com/permissions**.
Further permissions questions can be e-mailed to
permissionrequest@cengage.com.

Library of Congress Control Number: 2016953602

ISBN: 978-1-337-27645-0

Cengage Learning

20 Channel Center Street
Boston, MA 02210
USA

Cengage Learning is a leading provider of customized learning solutions with employees residing in nearly 40 different countries and sales in more than 125 countries around the world. Find your local representative at **www.cengage.com**.

Cengage Learning products are represented in Canada by Nelson Education, Ltd.

To learn more about Cengage Learning Solutions, visit
www.cengage.com.

Purchase any of our products at your local college store or at our preferred online store **www.cengagebrain.com**.

Chapter 8

Confronting Literacy in Chinese as a Foreign Language

Michael E. Everson, University of Iowa

Introduction

For teachers, learners, and other stakeholders involved in Chinese language education, the last few decades have been a tremendously exciting time. At the secondary and postsecondary levels, both student enrollment and program growth are on the rise in Chinese language education in the United States, and options for collegiate Chinese majors and graduate-level education are expanding (Abbot, Feal, & Looney, 2014). These trends indicate that today's students value the study of Chinese over the long haul and understand the necessity of participating in longer sequences of coherent, sustained periods of study if they are to attain meaningful proficiency. Moreover, Chinese language learning has attracted support from a number of government stakeholders (McGinn, 2014) and has received notable attention in the area of teacher development (Everson, 2016). But perhaps most exciting are data that indicate a fundamental shift toward an appreciation of foreign language (FL) *as a whole* by the American public (Rivers, Robinson, Harwood, & Brecht, 2013)—a hopeful sign that Americans may be beginning to look outward and realize that, as countries such as China assume a more assertive role on the world stage, U.S. children must develop the skills to compete successfully in the global workplace.

Despite this energy and momentum, however, envisioning a coherent K-16 Chinese educational landscape presents a host of new challenges for Chinese language educators. While these educators are typically very experienced with addressing issues related to learning Chinese at the postsecondary level (the traditional home of Chinese language learning in U.S. education), they tend to be less familiar with issues related to K-12 learners. In keeping with the theme of this volume, this article will explore the challenges that must be met by all levels of education if a true pipeline of K-16 Chinese FL education is to be realized. In so doing, the article focuses specifically on the inherent difficulties in reading and writing Chinese (Everson, 2011) and explores how students arriving at the university with extensive K-12 Chinese experience will need to be challenged with curricular innovations that harness and build upon their existing Chinese literacy skills.

The chapter will begin by reviewing how standards-based instruction has served to rally and focus many elements of the world language (WL) teaching community and then turn to a discussion of the peculiarities and challenges of the Chinese writing system vis-à-vis literacy standards. I will highlight several issues that have been contentious among Chinese educators, such as the use of the transliteration system *pinyin*, the use of authentic versus hybrid texts for instruction, the benefit of learning to write Chinese characters by hand, and the importance of assessment if Chinese literacy development is to be measured. It is my hope that this chapter will provide guidance for Chinese language educators in designing literacy instruction and also introduce department chairs and administrators to the challenges of literacy development facing Chinese language teachers and their learners. In this way, the article provides a jumping-off point for the establishment of a dialogue between the K-12 and university Chinese education communities that is absolutely critical for the success of K-16 Chinese language learning.

Early Language and Immersion Programs in the United States

The United States historically has used a variety of language-learning models in presecondary educational environments, ranging from exploratory FL instruction spaced over a few periods per week to immersion programs that vary in length, target language use, student composition, and the subject matter taught in the target language. Between these two ends of the language education spectrum is the FLES (foreign language in the elementary school) program, which features a curriculum structured along a “four skills” approach, emphasizing listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills as well as cultural appreciation. Of these program types, FLES has historically been the most popular, followed by exploratory, with immersion trailing far behind (Pufahl & Rhodes, 2011). Nevertheless, immersion education has seen steady growth in popularity since its introduction in the United States, with striking increases taking place especially between 2006 and 2011.

Recent surveys of public attitudes indicate support at the grassroots level for public policies and educational approaches that favor language education opportunities and appreciation of languages other than English (e.g., Rivers et al., 2013), and this shift has been accompanied by a growing interest in language immersion education. Chinese immersion programs have been particular benefactors of this increasing interest, with enrollment in Mandarin immersion programs (in CAL’s directory of programs) increasing from 4% in 2006 to 13% in 2011 (Center for Applied Linguistics, 2011). Importantly, studies have found that students in Chinese immersion programs attain higher levels of Chinese proficiency

compared to students learning Chinese in other types of program, without loss of English language skills or knowledge of other academic content (Asia Society, 2012). Additionally, since the 1980s, Chinese FLES programs have benefited from the adoption of immersion methodologies that integrate academic content as a vehicle for language teaching (Curtain & Dahlberg, 2010; Curtain & Haas, 2005). Moving from a more vocabulary-centered approach to a focus on academic content transforms FLES teaching into a more meaningful, cognitively engaging process; at the same time, however, it presents challenges for a language like Chinese, where literacy development involves confronting a very different type of orthographic system.

Part of the push to expand Chinese language education in the United States into the K-12 system comes from stakeholders, who question the wisdom of waiting until college to begin Chinese foreign language (CFL) instruction. The model of language learning that introduces learners to language study for the first time in high school has not resulted in meaningful language proficiency; moreover, the percentage of students who continue their studies beyond the secondary level has been disappointing (Van Houten, 2009), as the dismaying overall attrition rates in this profession have long attested. All these observations, taken together, have resulted in an increasing turn toward a “start early, stay longer” model of language education (Ingold & Wang, 2010).

The Need for Standards

Immersion programs, with their intensity and their emphasis on acquiring language at the intersection of content and culture, offer our students important opportunities for successful and sustained literacy development. In recent years, a clear vision for the parameters of this literacy development has emerged in the United States, born of the demand put forth by citizens and stakeholders for high standards, curriculum frameworks, and precise learning outcomes for students in grades K-12. All of this discussion, of course, is couched within a broader controversy that rages over the need to revamp the U.S. education in meaningful ways. Numerous indicators suggest that American youth are not performing to a scholastic standard worthy of this country's wealth and power. Among these indicators are standardized tests designed to compare students across the world on a variety of measures as they encounter or complete compulsory schooling. The Program for International Student Assessment (PISA), for example, assesses 15-year-old students across 65 educational systems on mathematics, science, and reading literacy, with the intent to measure their preparation for life after school. The test which takes place every three years, is designed to assess competencies in real-life, applied contexts. U.S. results of the 2012 PISA tests, which compared students across the 34 member countries of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), are summarized as follows (“How do U.S. 15-year-olds,” 2012):

Mathematics

- The U.S. average score of 481 fell below the OECD average of 494. This score was lower than the scores of 21 other OECD nations and lower than scores in several non-OECD regions/countries/economies, including Shanghai-China, Singapore, Chinese Taipei, and Hong Kong.

Science

- The U.S. average score of 497 was not measurably different from the overall OECD average of 501, but fell below the scores of 15 other OECD countries.

Reading

- The U.S. mean score (498) beat the OECD average (496) but fell far behind top performers such as Shanghai-China (570), Hong Kong-China (545), Singapore (542), Japan (538), and Korea (536) (Amos, 2013; Stem Education Resource, 2014).

Partially in response to these data—which indicate that the United States is not improving in its goal to compete more successfully with other nations in its educational outcomes—the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) were developed to ensure that students are receiving a first-rate education that prepares them to move successfully through Grades K-12 and beyond high school. The CCSS are the product of the work of political and educational leaders in 48 states, 2 territories, and the District of Columbia, who signed an agreement with the National Governors Association (NGA) and Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO). These efforts, which commenced in 2009, initially began by defining the knowledge and skills our children need to master throughout their K-12 education to succeed in higher education and the workforce. Stakeholders identified two major steps to be taken: (i) develop a set of national educational standards to counter the bewildering array of state-level standards, the existence of which was making it difficult to evaluate whether states were performing in line with uniform learning goals and (ii) develop a range of assessments that could meaningfully measure progress in students' mastery of critical knowledge and skill sets. Upon completion of these steps, a single set of educational standards for K-12 in English language arts and mathematics for each grade level was released in 2010.

The English Language Arts (ELA)/literacy standards of the CCSS focus on the development of critical thinking skills and the ability to closely and attentively read, understand, and enjoy complex informational and literary texts. These standards promote instruction that will help students to learn and use cogent reasoning and evidence-collection skills deemed to be essential for success in college, career, and life. The standards also lay out a vision of what it means to be a literate

person who is prepared for success in the 21st century. The ELA/literacy standards are designed to shift literacy development in three ways (Key shifts in English Language Arts, 2016):

- Through emphasis on regular practice with increasingly complex texts and with the academic language that learners will need to face post-secondary study and their careers. An emphasis on textual understanding and vocabulary development is seen as vital for achieving reading comprehension.
- Through insistence that reading, writing, and speaking skills must be grounded in the ability to discover and evaluate evidence from informational and literary texts. By drawing this connection explicitly, the standards aim to ensure that texts are understood not only through students' prior knowledge but also through careful reading, demonstrated by an ability to answer text-dependent questions. As students progress, they are expected to develop writing abilities that display skills in building evidence-based arguments with clarity of written presentation.
- Through the building of knowledge through content-rich nonfiction as well as through works of literature.

To help students develop this knowledge, CCSS recommends a model that addresses language arts in the following way:

“In K-5, fulfilling the standards requires a 50–50 balance between informational and literary reading. Informational reading includes content-rich non-fiction in history/social studies, sciences, technical studies, and the arts; the K–5 Standards strongly recommend that texts—both within and across grades—be selected to support students in systematically developing knowledge about the world. In grades 6-12, there is much greater attention on the specific category of literary nonfiction, which is a shift from traditional standards. To be clear, the standards pay substantial attention to literature throughout K-12, as it constitutes half of the reading in K-5 and is the core of the work of 6-12 ELA teachers. Also in grades 6-12, the standards for literacy in history/social studies, science, and technical subjects ensure that students can independently build knowledge in these disciplines through reading and writing. Reading, writing, speaking, and listening should span the school day from K-12 as integral parts of every subject” (Key shifts in English Language Arts, 2016).

In their evaluation of the connection between the CCSS and the discipline of WL education, The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) proclaimed the language arts initiative embodied in CCSS to be a natural fit with FL education. ACTFL is confident that FL education can serve a vital role in the development of students' language and literacy as outlined in CCSS. With ACTFL's World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages (WRSLL) (National

Standards in Foreign Language Education Project, 2015) already experiencing a significant degree of buy-in from states and districts (ACTFL, 2011), the WL community has spent decades developing and promoting standards in FL education, even in less commonly taught languages such as Chinese (Everson, 2009a). With a recently published document that aligns the World-Readiness Standards with the CCSS (ACTFL, 2012), WL educators and teachers now have a way to bring their curricula into alignment with the CCSS, thus promoting “. . . a long sequence of language study in grades K-12 so that students have the opportunity to gain a high level of communication ability in a WL in addition to English” (Heining-Boynton & Redmond, 2013, p. 53).

Toward a Chinese-Specific Standard

In addition to the guidance provided by the CCSS and ACTFL, Chinese language learning in the United States will require its own instructional roadmap and its own pedagogical documents. The conditions and variables that informed the development of the CCSS for English do not apply to Chinese as it is learned in U. S. educational settings. Chinese characters, the primary units that comprise Chinese written text, represent sound, meaning, and orthographic structure differently from alphabetic systems (for more information, see Shen, 2013). Sometimes termed a “logography,” in which each character represents a word or morpheme, Chinese writing is more meaning-based, and the pronunciation of characters is represented orthographically in imprecise and irregular ways. Indeed, the pronunciation of Chinese characters is very difficult to discern from their printed makeup, and the phonetic clues that *are* embedded in many characters are mostly unusable for beginning Chinese learners or young children learning to read Chinese as their first language (L1). Research investigating literacy development among Chinese children indicates that “visual cue recognition may be a strategy used for a longer period of time in Chinese as compared to alphabetic orthographies, because Chinese characters have fewer reliable sound cues than English words” (McBride, 2016, p. 101). As their experience in acquiring Chinese characters increases over time, however, children do come to make use of phonetic and semantic components of Chinese characters to remember and learn characters.

Because of the lack of sound-to-symbol transparency within the character itself, second language (L2) learners of Chinese typically begin to acquire the spoken language through the use of romanization, a system that transcribes the sounds of Mandarin Chinese using Roman letters, with diacritical markings representing the tones of the Mandarin dialect. The most prominent system of romanization used today to teach Mandarin Chinese is called *pinyin*; most Mandarin learning materials presently available in U.S. educational settings use this system. Depending upon the pedagogical strategy employed to teach reading,

textbooks for beginning learners will typically present vocabulary, sentences, and dialogues in pinyin (often alongside the relevant characters), and then slowly substitute the pinyin words with Chinese characters as the students learn them. The goal, of course, is to eventually have students learning, remembering, and reading Chinese characters while becoming less reliant on pinyin—but research and experience indicate that this transition is difficult and requires a significant investment in time and effort on the part of both teachers and students.

Frameworks for Beginning Chinese Literacy

Fortunately, frameworks are beginning to appear that provide guidance for curriculum designers and teachers, such as Ohio's K-4 curriculum (2014) that sets forth principles to guide classroom pedagogy for literacy development and the creation of standards that specifically target the recognition, reading, and writing of Chinese characters. Ohio's FLAP K-4 Mandarin Curriculum Reading and Writing Guidance (Ohio Department of Education, 2014) sets forth a number of principles, including:

- All language classrooms should support integrated literacy development through language-rich environments with meaningful print displays.
- Language acquisition in first and second language progresses naturally from oracy skills (listening and speaking) to literacy skills (reading and writing).
- Writing skills should be introduced at developmentally appropriate points and in a developmentally appropriate manner.
- Students will be able to recognize more than they can produce. Therefore, before writing is encouraged, recognition skills (sight words) should be practiced through the use of flashcards and environmental print.
- Roman alphabet phonetic systems, such as pinyin, may be used as a bridge to literacy, but students ultimately need to read and write characters to be considered literate.

In this framework, attention to preliteracy and literacy activities is highlighted, especially through the use of the Roman alphabet at an early stage. According to the Ohio literacy modules, “In Ohio, we have come to see that pinyin provides a necessary bridge from oracy to literacy. The advantages of additional clues to pronunciation outweigh any interference. In addition, the teaching of pinyin early on enables learners to communicate via computer” (Ohio Department of Education, 2014, Module 4, Oracy & Literacy Development).

Frameworks for Chinese language learning are also being developed in Europe. The European Benchmarking Chinese Language (EBCL) Project (Guder, 2015) aims at creating a framework for the acquisition, teaching, and evaluation of Chinese language knowledge on the basis of the Common European Framework

of Reference for Languages (CEFR, 2001). The EBCL takes the particularities of the Chinese writing system into account, and, like the Ohio framework, stresses the importance of novice learners becoming proficient in the use of pinyin as a pathway to character literacy. EBCL also stresses the importance of “sinographic control” or mastering the fundamental skills of character production, such as knowing the basics of character stroke order and that characters are composed of component parts.

Future Challenges

The frameworks cited earlier provide guidance for developing curricula for learners of Chinese as an FL and have the potential to influence pedagogical applications. Yet, a variety of important issues still need resolution, as they remain contentious and controversial among Chinese language educators. These issues include the role of pinyin in Chinese language learning, the use of authentic materials, the role of handwriting Chinese characters, and the best way to assess literacy development.

The Use of Pinyin

As previously discussed, because Chinese characters do not employ an alphabetic system that pairs Chinese sounds to letters, literacy acquisition is a two-stage process for students of Chinese: first, they learn a system where the pronunciation of Chinese characters is represented using Roman letters, with diacritics to denote the tone, and only later, gradually, do they learn to read actual Chinese characters. It is commonly agreed that, for learners in high school or college who are already literate in English, this system aids the rapid acquisition of vocabulary and thus the development of spoken language proficiency. However, the issue of when and how to introduce Chinese characters to beginning learners—and how to use pinyin effectively with these learners—still remains contentious. Some theorists (Everson, 2009b; Walker, 1984) and textbook designers (Ross, He, Chen, & Ye, 2010) support a model that mirrors first-language literacy development; this model holds that students will learn and remember Chinese characters better if these characters represent words they have already acquired orally/aurally through pinyin and through listening and speaking practice. Supporters of this model argue that the use of pinyin can help students to gain an early sense of the phonological and syllabic structure of the Chinese language, which will in turn feed a later understanding of how sound, character, and meaning correspond. From a pedagogical point of view, supporters of this model argue that learners who have not first acquired a firm basis of vocabulary and structure supported by pinyin will quickly become overwhelmed if character learning is added to the student’s learning task too early and too often.

Pinyin, however, is anathema to many native Chinese language teachers, who view it as grossly unauthentic, cumbersome for them personally to work with, and something to be dispensed with as quickly as possible. They claim that the use of pinyin oftentimes results in an overdependence and reliance on this scaffolding device and produces an attitude among learners that makes the learning of Chinese characters even more difficult. Indeed, among high school teachers of Chinese, one of the most oft-voiced challenges is the difficulty of weaning their resistant students off of pinyin once it is time to introduce the corresponding characters. It is, however, heartening to see some emerging inquiry that investigates pinyin usage. For example, one study (Ye, 2013) has revealed that most collegiate programs introduce Chinese characters from the beginning of instruction, but that, after they study the pros and cons of doing so, both instructors and students seem to favor delaying the introduction of Chinese characters.

While the controversy over pinyin continues among high school and collegiate specialists, less has been published about the use of pinyin among elementary and/or middle school learners of Chinese, whose literacy skills in their first language are still being nurtured and developed. There is, however, research involving Chinese children exposed to pinyin (Lin, McBride-Chang, Shu, Zhang, Li, Zhang, Aram, & Levin, 2010) that suggests that this system is valuable for early learners. The authors report that pinyin serves as a direct and reliable tool for teaching characters that have unreliable phonetic elements. It also facilitates awareness of tone, syllables, and phonemes, and thus acts as a self-teaching resource for students when away from their teachers. Lin et al.'s research emphasizes the importance of developing this phonological sensitivity at an early age and suggests that such sensitivity, aided by the use of pinyin, may actually promote Chinese character reading and boost literacy development in the long run. Additionally, Guan, Liu, Chan, and Perfetti (2011) suggest that, for Chinese L2 learners, pinyin supports the acquisition of a phonological representation and helps to retrieve resources learned through the acquisition of the spoken language. When instruction emphasizes written language more than spoken language, the phonological representation becomes more a decoding of pinyin spelling than a phonetically precise spoken language form; this decoding offers learners a distinctive cue (i.e., an associated pronunciation) for the character in addition to its meaning.

Handwriting Chinese Characters

A second and related aspect of literacy development, which is presently gaining increased attention thanks to its mention in the Common European Framework, is the value of handwriting in the Chinese curriculum. There is much discussion over the ways that this practice benefits learners of all age groups. A time-honored tradition in China is the extensive and ritualized writing practice that students undergo to ensure proper stroke order and artistic form of the characters, as well

as the detail and mastery of Chinese character orthographic representation that differs so strikingly from the alphabetic system and cultural traditions of written English. Calling into question the time-consuming and labor-intensive practice necessary for L2 learners to master the writing of Chinese characters from memory, Allen (2008) suggests that, with the advent of Chinese word-processing programs, students of Chinese could learn to write Chinese electronically and thus dispense with learning to write characters by hand. With this potential solution in mind, the question is: if learners produce written language with tools and activities that eliminate the need for handwriting, is anything lost?

In a study of Chinese children's acquisition of writing skills, Tan, Spinks, Eden, Perfetti, and Siok (2005) state that "through writing, children learn to deconstruct characters into a unique pattern of strokes and components and then regroup these sub characters into a square linguistic unit. This type of decoding occurs at the visual orthographic level and is assumed to facilitate children's awareness of the character's internal structure (orthographic awareness). This awareness supports the formation of connections among orthographic, semantic, and phonological units of the Chinese writing system and may be associated with the quality of lexical entries in long-term memory" (p. 8781).

In a series of studies involving college learners of Chinese as a FL, Guan et al. (2011) theorize that handwriting increases the quality of the orthographic form and selectively strengthens the connection from orthography to meaning, but not the connection from orthography to phonology; they also suggest that handwriting practice may refine visual/spatial information and improve students' associated memory of individual characters. In other words, they suggest that handwriting practice allows a tight coupling of visual and sensorimotor representations of Chinese writing, but not of visual and speech-motor representations. The researchers conclude that, whereas the "writing effect" is specific to knowledge of character form and its connection to meaning, the addition of alphabetic coding through pinyin training increases knowledge of the spoken forms that are connected to characters. Handwriting, then, should be integrated with exercises involving pinyin to help students with the demands involved in processing Chinese characters.

Importantly, a recent strand of research (Xu, Chang, Zhang, & Perfetti, 2013) investigating the effects of different literacy activities on Chinese L2 learners revealed that reading, the use of animation, and handwriting may facilitate character learning in multiple ways. Writing, for instance, engages the learner's attention and analysis of characters' internal structures and adds a sensorimotor representation to the visual representation—factors the researchers believe help students form high-quality representations of the characters' orthographic forms. Inquiries such as this one lay the groundwork for a research agenda that must be pursued if we are to understand more about the learning of Chinese characters, especially keeping in mind that much of the extant research on this topic involves

collegiate learners of Chinese or children learning to read and write Chinese as L1. How the process of Chinese character learning develops among early language learners in both FLES and immersion settings (Asia Society, 2012) will be of crucial interest to a wide range of literacy, FL, language arts, and cognitive science specialists.

Authentic Texts

Another issue where many Chinese pedagogues part company with current best practices relates to the use of authentic texts. Classroom teachers who watch the struggle that their students experience in mastering one- or two-character Chinese words—let alone sentence- and paragraph-level written discourse—view their students' encounters with authentic materials as a clinic for experiencing word recognition failure, demotivation, and despair at even the prospect of engaging homework assignments that invariably involve working with too many new characters in too short a time. To address this problem, some textbooks employ innovative pedagogical techniques such as mixing romanization and characters and putting spaces between word units. The hybrid materials produced in this fashion allow learners to integrate L1 literacy into the Chinese reading process (Ross et. al., 2010). Contemporary textbook designers clearly recognize the importance of harnessing L1 literacy to develop literacy in Chinese. In addition, publishers have developed modified versions of canonized texts that could be termed “graded readers.” For example, the famous Chinese folktale *Lady in the Painting* (Ross & Ross, 2009) has been published in a modified version that uses only a finite number of characters already studied by the student, thus giving them the opportunity to read longer texts within a character and linguistic bandwidth they have already encountered. Such experiences give students a sense of accomplishment associated with reading a lengthy, well-woven story in Chinese. Readings of this sort also have the salutatory effect of inviting explicit review of characters the students have already learned. When used in the hands of a skilled classroom teacher who employs intensive and sustained reading activities, such materials can help the learner master important elements of the reading process, such as the use of strategies, the development of automaticity, reading fluency and stamina, and the ability to engage in reading texts over longer periods of time.

Assessment and Evaluation

Lastly, the issue of assessment and evaluation presents numerous challenges as learners move toward increasingly advanced levels of proficiency. For example, Ho, Yau, & Au (2003) describe the various developmental stages that Chinese children pass through as they gain an understanding of the use and written composition/construction of phonetic and semantic radicals in Chinese characters. It is

important that we ascertain how well this model describes the development of orthographic knowledge among L2 learners in our various educational settings and then calibrate assessments to measure their performance during these various stages of development. Other L1 models (Ho, Wong, Yeung, Chan, Chung, Lo, & Luan, 2012) describe the importance of four core reading components—oral language, morphological awareness, orthographic skills, and syntactic skills—in teaching elementary school students to read Chinese.

Developing assessments that measure these components as they develop in L2 students will not only help us evaluate their developing proficiency but also illustrate the importance and validity of these skills in modeling the L2 reading process in Chinese. Importantly, these models highlight attributes of preliteracy and beginning literacy development that describe character and word learning and that are critical to vocabulary development. While it is important that we develop age-appropriate assessments that indicate learner progress along multiple dimensions, it is also critical that we capture student performance in reading and writing using methods that reflect the development of reading fluency, critical reasoning through textual understanding and written expression, and understanding over a variety of reading texts and genres. Providing curricula and assessments that develop and measure these aspects of advanced reading will present crucial challenges to educators as a truly coherent K-16 infrastructure develops.

Conclusion

This chapter has discussed several major issues worthy of consideration if literacy programs in K-16 Chinese are to be sustained and enhanced in the United States under CCSS. I have focused in particular on research and frameworks that can guide us in designing standards for Chinese literacy curricula. While considering these issues, it is important to remember that the overall educational setting of K-16 Chinese language learning is still developing as compared to programs in more established FLs. This dynamic system presents an additional challenge to achieve a coherent and seamless educational experience for our learners.

In their recent discussion of collegiate Chinese programs, Li and Zhang (2016) are skeptical that many programs would consider themselves to be standards-based—a discrepancy that they are concerned has led to a disparity of quality across Chinese programs as a whole. The authors also express concern that a demand for accountability, or the proliferation of inconsistent assessment practices, will undermine the establishment of proficiency benchmarks for the overall Chinese language field. In describing the challenges confronting K-12 Chinese language education, Peng (2016) highlights as major challenges the lack of articulation between courses and schools and the lack of qualified teachers and effective teacher certification programs. Clearly, to meet these challenges, there is a

need for more interaction between K-16 educators and administrators to determine what is expected from learners at various stages in their Chinese literacy development. What is also clear is that, without the creation of standards that resonate with the particularities of Chinese literacy, and without assessments that demonstrate achievement, interactions between these educators and administrators will be largely pointless.

References

- Abbott, M., Feal, R. G., & Looney, D. (2014, March). Foreign language educators in K-12 and postsecondary institutions: Needs, shortages, and new directions. Paper presented at *Internationalization of U.S. education in the 21st century: The future of international and foreign language studies, A research conference on national needs and policy implication*. College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, VA.
- ACTFL. (2011). *A decade of foreign language standards: Impact, influence, and future directions*. Alexandria, VA: ACTFL.
- ACTFL. (2012). Alignment of the National Standards for Learning Languages with the Common Core State Standards. Retrieved from www.actfl.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/Aligning_CCSS_Language_Standards_v6.pdf
- Allen, J. R. (2008). Why learning to write Chinese is a waste of time: A modest proposal. *Foreign Language Annals*, 41(2), 237–251.
- Amos, J. (2013, December 3). Significant data: schools receiving school improvement grants increase math and reading proficiency at higher rates than non-sig schools, according to new data from U.S. Department of Education. Retrieved from <http://all4ed.org/articles/straight-as-pisa-results-u-s-slips-in-international-reading-science-and-mathematics-rankings-according-to-latest-results-from-programme-for-international-student-assessment/>
- Asia Society. (2012). *Chinese language learning in the early grades: A handbook of resources and best practices for Mandarin immersion*. New York, NY: Author. Retrieved from <http://asiasociety.org/education/chinese-language-initiatives/chinese-language-learning-early-grades>
- Center for Applied Linguistics. (2011). *Directory of foreign language immersion programs in U.S. Schools*. Retrieved from <http://webapp.cal.org/Immersion/>
- Common Core State Standards Initiative. (2013). Implementing the Common Core State Standards. Retrieved from www.corestandards.org
- Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). (2001). *Learning, teaching, assessment*. Retrieved from http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/cadre1_en.asp
- Curtain, H., & Dahlberg, C.A. (2010). *Languages and children: Making the match. New languages for young children, Grades K-8* (4th ed.) (pp. 443–456). Boston, MA: Pearson.
- Curtain, H., & Haas, M. (1995). *Integrating foreign language and content instruction in grades K-8*. CAL Digest. Washington, DC: Center for Applied Linguistics.
- Everson, M. E. (2009a). The importance of standards. In M. E. Everson & Y. Xiao (Eds.), *Teaching Chinese as a foreign language* (pp. 3–18). Boston, MA: Cheng & Tsui.
- Everson, M. E. (2009b). Literacy development in Chinese as a foreign language. In M. E. Everson & Y. Xiao (Eds.), *Teaching Chinese as a foreign language* (pp. 97–112). Boston, MA: Cheng & Tsui.
- Everson, M. E. (2011). Best practices in teaching logographic and non-roman writing systems to L2 learners. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 31, 249–274.

- Everson, M. E. (2016). CFL teacher preparation and development. In J. Ruan, J. Zhang, & C. B. Leung (Eds.), *Chinese language education in the United States* (pp. 231–244). Switzerland: Springer International Publishing.
- Guan, C. Q., Liu, Y., Chan, D. H. L., & Perfetti, C. A. (2011). Writing strengthens orthography and alphabetic-coding strengthens phonology in learning to read Chinese. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 103*(3), 509–522.
- Guder, A., & Fachverband Chinesisch e.V. (Eds.). (2015). European Benchmarks for the Chinese Language (EBCL) / Europäischer Referenzrahmen für Chinesisch als Fremdsprache. München, Germany: Iudicium Verlag. Retrieved from http://edocs.fu-berlin.de/docs/receive/FUDOCs_document_000000022875
- Heining-Boyton, A., & Redmond, M. (2013). The common core framework and world languages: A wake-up call for all. *The Language Educator*, January, 51–56.
- Ho, C. S.-H., Wong, Y. K., Yeung, P. S., Chan, D. W. O., Chung, K. K. H., Lo, S. C., & Luan, H. (2012). The core components of reading instruction in Chinese. *Reading and Writing, 25*(4), 857–886.
- Ho, C. S.-H., Yau, P. W. -Y, & Au, A. (2003). Development of orthographic knowledge and its relationship with reading and spelling among Chinese kindergarten and primary school children. In C. McBride-Chang & H. -C. Chen (Eds.), *Reading acquisition in Chinese children* (pp. 51–72). Westport, CT: Praeger.
- How do U.S. 15-year-olds compare with students from other countries in math and science? (2012). Retrieved from <http://www.nsf.gov/nsb/sei/edTool/data/highschool-08.html>
- Ingold, C. W., & Wang, S. C. (2010). *The teachers we need: Transforming world language education in the United States*. College Park, MD: National Foreign Language Center at the University of Maryland. Retrieved from http://www.nflc.org/publications/the_teachers_we_need.pdf
- Key shifts in English language arts. (2016). Retrieved from <http://www.core-standards.org/other-resources/key-shifts-in-english-language-arts/>
- Li, Y., & Zhang, Z.-s. (2016). CFL education at the college level. In J. Ruan, J. Zhang, & C. B. Leung (Eds.), *Chinese language education in the United States* (pp. 141–166). Switzerland: Springer International Publishing.
- Lin, D., McBride-Chang, C., Shu, H., Zhang, Y., Li, H., Zhang, J., Aram, D., & Levin, I. (2010). Small wins big: Analytic pinyin skills promote Chinese word reading. *Psychological Science, 21*(8), 1117–1122.
- McBride, C. (2016). *Children's literacy development: A cross-cultural perspective on learning to read and write* (2nd ed.). London and New York: Routledge.
- McGinn, G. H. (2014, March). Government needs and shortages in foreign language and regional expertise and knowledge: Signals, facts, and clues. Paper presented at *Internationalization of U.S. education in the 21st century: The future of international and foreign language studies, a research conference on national needs and policy implication*. College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, VA.
- National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project. (2015). *World-readiness standards for learning languages (WRSLL)*. Alexandria, VA: Author. Retrieved from <http://www.actfl.org/publications/all/world-readiness-standards-learning-languages>
- Ohio Department of Education. Ohio's K-4 content-enriched Mandarin Chinese curriculum and professional development modules (2014). Retrieved from <http://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Ohio-s-New-Learning-Standards/Foreign-Language/World-Languages-Resources/Ohio%E2%80%99s-K-4-Content-Enriched-Mandarin-Chinese-Curri>
- Peng, K. (2016). Chinese as a foreign language in K-12 education. In J. Ruan, J. Zhang, & C. B. Leung (Eds.), *Chinese language education in the United States* (pp. 123–140). Switzerland: Springer International Publishing.

- Pufahl, I., & Rhodes, N. C. (2011). Foreign language instruction in U.S. schools: Results of a national survey of elementary and secondary schools. *Foreign Language Annals*, 44(2), 458–288.
- Rivers, W., Robinson, J. P., Harwood, P. G., & Brecht, R. D. (2013). Language votes: Attitudes toward foreign language policies. *Foreign Language Annals*, 46, 329–338.
- Ross, C., He, B., Chen, P., & Yeh, M. (2010). *The Routledge course in modern Mandarin Chinese, textbook level 1*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Ross, C. & Ross, J. (2009). *The lady in the painting: A basic Chinese reader* (Expanded Edition). New Haven, CT: Yale University.
- Shen, H. H. (2013). Chinese L2 literacy development: Cognitive characteristics, learning strategies, and pedagogical interventions. *Language and Linguistics Compass*, 7(7), 371–387.
- STEM Education Resource. (2014). Retrieved from <https://www.nsf.gov/nsb/sei/edTool/>
- Tan, H. T., Spinks, J. A., Eden, G. F., Perfetti, C. A., Siok, W. T. (2005). Reading depends on writing, in Chinese. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 102, 24, 8781–8785.
- Van Houten, J. (2009). The state perspective on teacher shortage, certification, and recruitment. *The Modern Language Journal*, 93(2), 274–277.
- Walker, G. (1984). “Literacy” and “reading” in the Chinese language program. *Journal of the Chinese Language Teachers Association*, 19, 67–84.
- Xu, Y., Chang, L., Zhang, J., & Perfetti, C. A. (2013). Reading, writing, and animation in character learning in Chinese as a foreign language. *Foreign Language Annals*, 46(3), 423–444.
- Ye, L. (2013). Shall we delay teaching characters in teaching Chinese as a foreign language? *Foreign Language Annals*, 46(4), 610–627.