New York State
Association of Foreign Language Teachers
Annual meeting
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Looking to Start a Chinese Foreign Language Program?

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New York State Asian Languages BETAC (ALBETAC)
Workshop Goals

• Discuss the benefits of a Chinese foreign language program
• Learning the characteristics of the Chinese language(s)
• Planning to start a Chinese language program
• Exploring resources
Why Learn Chinese?

• Benefits, benefits, benefits…
  – Academic
  – Economic
  – Historical and cultural
  – Political
Globalization

Globalization is driving the demand for an internationally competent workforce

• One in five jobs is tied to international trade
• Most future business growth will in Asian overseas markets, particularly China
• Increasing need for employees with strong academic skills and knowledge of foreign languages and cultures
Why Learn Chinese?

Academics

• Learning Chinese satisfies the New York State foreign language requirements for high school graduation

• Learning a second language increases cognitive and reasoning skills aiding in academic achievement
Why Learn Chinese? Economics

- China accounts for one-third of global economic growth and presents important and new markets for U.S. Companies.
- China is the world’s second largest Internet market behind the United States with more than 110 million users and growing.
Why Learn Chinese?

Historical and cultural

• China has a long and rich history of contributions in literature, philosophy, religion, film, dance, art, music, cuisine and medicine.
Why Learn Chinese? Political

• Chinese is the most widely spoken language in the world – more than 3 billion people.
• China’s political importance in the Asia-Pacific region is critical.
• In the United States, the Asian Pacific Islander population is projected to grow 70 percent by 2020, many of whom will be Chinese speakers.
Learning Chinese

- **An International Trend**
  - Over 30 million people are learning Chinese.
  - More than 800 colleges offer Chinese language studies.

- **A National Focus**
  - National Security Initiative
  - State Level Implementation

- **A New York State movement??**
  - Heritage and non-public schools
  - FLAP Grant Recipients
  - Dual Language Programs in New York City

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China and Chinese in the News...

- **Language of the Future Sounds Like Chinese**  
  (Hartford Courant, August 27, 2007)

- **New Languages will Help Students Thrive in a ‘Smaller World’**  
  (Observer-Dispatch, May 29, 2007)

- **Milwaukee Chinese School Part of Growing Nationwide Interest**  
  (Milwaukee Channel, May 14, 2007)

- **Chinese as a Second Language for Americans**  
  (Osgood File, CBS Radio, May 10, 2007)

- **Chinese-Language Classes Full, But Teachers Scarce in US**  
  (Christian Science Monitor, March 27, 2007)

- **Drilling Kids in Chinese**  
  (Wall Street Journal, March 17, 2007)

- **As China's Power Grows, so do Chinese Programs in Public Schools**  
  (Boston Globe, March 11, 2007)
The Chinese Language – So, just how “difficult” is it?

Chinese is a Category IV Language.*

– Category I: French, Italian, Portuguese, and Spanish
– Category II: German
– Category III: Greek, Hebrew, Moro, Persian-Farsi, Persian-Afghan, Pushtu-Afghan, Russian, Serbian/Croatian, Tagalog, Turkish, Uzbek, and Vietnamese
– **Category IV: Arabic, Chinese, Japanese and Korean**

* Source: The Defense Language Institute's Foreign Language Center www.dliiflc.edu

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The Chinese Language – So, just how “difficult” is it?

- “Distant” might be a better description.
- The Chinese language is easier to learn because its grammatical structures are relatively simple.
- It may take a long time to master the tones.
- The Chinese writing system requires more time for learners to reach the desirable proficiency level.
- More time is needed to acquaint learners with the cultural aspects connected to people and history.

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Special Features of the Chinese Language – the Spoken Language

- Tonal system – 4 tones in Mandarin, 9 tones in Cantonese
- Mono-syllabic
- No verb tenses – the time element is indicated by the adverbial phrases
- Descriptive language
- Two phonetic systems (Pinyin and Juyin Fuhao) were created to assist with pronunciation when children begin to learn the written form.
Special Features of the Chinese Language – the Written Form

• Non-alphabetical

• Seventy percent (70%) of the characters were created by combining a “sound element” and a “meaning element.” There is no direct corresponding relationship between the written form and the spoken language.

• Although some characters were created based on drawings of real objects, only a very small portion of them are true pictographs.

• While more than 50,000 Chinese characters are historically recorded to have existed, 3,500 is needed for daily usage.
Special Features of the Chinese Language – the Written Form

• Despite the differences of “dialects,” the written form is unified into two systems.

• **Simplified Characters** are used in China since 1950’s.

• **Traditional characters** are used in Taiwan.

• Hong Kong and Singapore use both.

• More than 2,000 characters have been simplified.
## Combination of Character System and Phonetic System

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phonetic System</th>
<th>Simplified (China)</th>
<th>Traditional (Taiwan)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ㄅㄆ ㄇㄈ</td>
<td>Unlikely combination</td>
<td>學校</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>學校</td>
<td>学校</td>
<td>学校</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>学校</td>
<td>Xué Xiào</td>
<td>Xue² Xiao⁴</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Simplified vs. Traditional

• 大家好，歡迎今天來到我們的講座。
• 大家好，欢迎今天来到我们的讲座。
Planning to Start:
Decisions, Decisions, Decisions…

• Type of programs
• Setting goals
• Dialects
• Phonetic systems
• Writing systems
• Communication with the community and parents
Planning to Start: Challenges

• Program design
• Materials
  – Curriculum
  – Instructional materials
  – Assessment Tools
• Teachers
• Resources
Planning to Start: Teachers

• Where are the teachers?
  – Many fluent speakers, few certified language teachers
  – Many colleges offer the language courses, few offer a complete program that can lead to teacher certification.
  – Teacher exchange programs???
Human Resource Opportunities

- Hanban* – Volunteer Chinese Language Teacher Program
- Hanban – Confucius Institute graduates
- Fullbright Teacher Exchange programs
- Visiting International Faculty Program

* PRC – National Office for the Teaching of Chinese
Planning to Start: Type of Programs

- Immersion/Intensive
- Bilingual/Dual Language
- Foreign Language in Elementary Schools
- Enrichment
  - School day
  - After school
  - Weekend
Planning to Start:
Setting Realistic Goals

Handout – ACTFL Performance Guidelines for K-12 learners, 1999
Planning to Start: Setting Realistic Goals – as measured by standardized tests

- AP Chinese
- SAT II
- New York State Regents Exam (Check Point A, B, C)
- HSK (China), Chinese Proficiency Test (Taiwan)
- STAMP (the Standards-based Measurement of Proficiency, a Web-based language proficiency assessment)
- NOELLA (National Online Early Language Learning Assessment, nationally norm-based assessment of proficiency for early language learners)
Financial Opportunities

- NCLB – Foreign Language Assistance Program
  - $50,000 to $300,000 grants

- National Security Language Initiative 2006
  - Average grant - $1,000,000
In Summary…

• Learning the Chinese language has many benefits and has gain increasing popularity.

• The Chinese language is not necessarily much more difficult to learn, but it requires more time of instruction and practice because of its “distance” from the English language.
In Summary…

• Program model is influenced primarily on the financial and human resources.

• Decisions need to be made regarding which dialect and writing systems to adopt before teacher hiring and purchasing instructional materials.

• Local community may be consulted in these decision making processes.
Conclusion

Schools should start wherever they are and Build from there!
Informational Resources

- China Institute – [www.chinainstitute.org](http://www.chinainstitute.org)
- Chinese Language Teacher Association – Greater New York (CLTA-GNY) - [www.cltagny.org](http://www.cltagny.org)
- Chinese Language Association of Secondary-Elementary Schools (CLASS) – [www.classk12.org](http://www.classk12.org)
- China National Office for the Teaching of Chinese (Hanban) – [www/english.hanban.edu.cn](http://www/english.hanban.edu.cn)
THANK YOU

謝謝

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What a difference does a tone make?

《施氏食獅史》

石室詩士施氏，嗜獅，誓食十獅。施氏時時適市視獅。十時，適十獅適市。是時，適施氏適市。氏視是十獅，恃矢勢，使是十獅逝世。氏拾是十獅屍，適石室。石室濕，氏使侍拭石室。石室拭，氏始試食是十獅。食時，始識是十獅，實十石獅屍。試釋是事。