

Update to the Report of the Kansas Task Force on Chinese Language Training for Academic Year 2008-2009

In October 2006, the Kansas Task Force on Chinese Language Training, a statewide group of policymakers, educators, and business leaders, released a public report detailing the current status of Chinese language programs in Kansas, opportunities and challenges for future development, and a series of specific policy recommendations. This report was the first step in starting a statewide discussion on the need for increased Chinese language capacity throughout the Kansas educational system.

Three years later, the progress in building Chinese language training capacity in Kansas schools, colleges, universities, and communities continues. Whether measured by the number of students enrolled in Mandarin classes, the growing list of school districts offering the language, or the scope of initiatives (from enrichment sessions and summer camps to ambitious grant-funded projects and distance-learning programs), the achievements of the past year have borne out the potential for growth identified in the Task Force report. This update provides an overview of the developments in Chinese language training in Kansas for the academic year (AY) of 2008-2009 and the progress made in fulfilling the recommendations from October 2006.

Growth in Enrollment and Opportunities

Data collected in at the end of the academic year in 2009 by staff of the Kansas Committee for International Education in the Schools shows that Mandarin Chinese is being offered by more schools, colleges, and universities in Kansas and is being studied formally by more students than was the case a year earlier.

At the post-secondary level, nine Kansas colleges and universities offered Chinese in AY 2007-08, an increase of one over the last academic year. These were Emporia State University, Fort Hays State University, Friends University, Johnson County Community College, Kansas State University, Southwestern College, the University of Kansas, Washburn University, and Wichita State University. Enrollments increased slightly from last academic year, with 43 more students reported as having studied Chinese at the college level by spring 2009.

Chinese Post-Secondary	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Level 6	Level 7	Level 8	Total
AY 2008-09	218	115	58	22	20	6	11	14	464

At the high school level, the growth of Chinese language programs has been striking. In spring 2006, two school districts offered Chinese; Kansas had one licensed teacher of the language, and 24 students had enrolled in Chinese classes. By spring 2007, the number of districts had increased to eleven; enrollment had increased to 65, and a second licensed teacher had been added. By spring 2008, there were twenty districts with a total enrollment of 171, and ten teachers had been licensed by the Kansas State Department of Education to teach Chinese.

In spring 2009, twenty-two school districts reported that they offered Chinese language instruction at the high school level in one of three formats: 1) traditional classes with face-to-face instruction (in Galena, Goddard, Olathe, Shawnee Mission, Pittsburg, Wichita, Winfield), 2) real-time video conferencing classes also known as IDL or interactive distance learning (in Andover, Belle Plaine, Bonner Springs, Clearwater, Circle, Coffeyville, Kingman-Norwich, Lawrence, Maize, Marysville, Riverton, Valley Heights, Washburn Rural, Wichita, Winfield), and 3) online classes (in McPherson and Holton). Approximately 300 students were served each semester.

Chinese: High Schools	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Level 6	Level 7	Level 8	Total
Spring 2009		258		37					295
Fall 2008	283		43						326
Spring 2008		143		23				5	171
Fall 2007	187		23				5		215
Spring 2007		54		4		6		1	65
Fall 2006	64		4		6		1		75
Spring 2006	11	7	2	3	1				24

At the K-8 level, four middle schools offered regular Chinese language and culture classes during AY 2008-2009. The Pittsburg and Galena School Districts did this face-to-face as part of their continuing Foreign Language Assistance Program (FLAP), and IDL classes were received by students at Andover Central Middle School and El Dorado Middle School. One middle school in the Wichita School District also reported that it plans to begin offering Chinese language instruction in the next academic year.

Furthermore, several school districts including Shawnee Mission and Olathe, as well as the Confucius Institute at the University of Kansas and the South Central Kansas Educational Service Center (Clearwater) offered Chinese language and culture programming either as after-school enrichment session during the regular academic year or during summer day camps with multiple sessions.

Chinese: K-8	Regular Classes	Multiple Enrichment and Exposure Sessions	Single Enrichment and Exposure Sessions	Total
AY 2008-09	1086	220+	738+	2044+
AY 2007-08	545	142+	1314+	2001+
AY 2006-07	142	1040		1182

Overall, this data is evidence that there has been steady growth in Chinese language training over the past four years statewide. Indications are that this trend will be sustained especially at the K-12 level during the next academic year.

Making Strategic Progress on the Recommendations

The October 2006 report of the Kansas Task Force on Chinese Language Training made eleven specific recommendations for jump-starting Chinese programs in Kansas educational institutions and communities. The steady progress made on these during AY 2008-2009 is detailed below.

1. Make a public case for the need for Chinese language training. *Businesses, legislators, the media, communities, and youth all need to be engaged, informed, and mobilized. The importance of training in Chinese language and culture to workforce development and to the preparation of young Kansans for the jobs and careers of the future should be emphasized.*

Interest in the teaching of foreign languages especially Chinese remains high in Kansas as it is throughout the rest of the country. Media reports on the value of language training to America's future continue to appear, including articles on federal funding for the National Security Language Initiative, programs of which have helped to build enthusiasm for Chinese language and culture. The Kansas Committee for International Education in the Schools, the Confucius Institute at the University of Kansas, and the

Kansas World Language Association continue to advocate for enhanced foreign language training in the state. However, more remains to be done to raise public awareness of this issue and to increase support for Chinese language training at the elementary, secondary and post-secondary levels especially among elected officials and business people.

2. Emphasize exposure to Mandarin Chinese, especially in elementary and middle schools. *Learning Chinese should be introduced to Kansas students from a young age as something enjoyable, valuable, and achievable.*

The number of Kansas elementary and middle school students that received beginning instruction in Chinese language and culture doubled in AY 2008-2009 from 542 students in the previous academic year to a total of 1086. Enrichment programs also were offered in several school districts as were summer language camps. The Center for East Asian Studies at the University of Kansas, a federally-funded Title VI National Resource Center, also brought Chinese language experiences to pre-school students in the Lawrence School District through its Five Days of Chinese Program, which introduces basic Chinese vocabulary through children's games and songs.

3. Expand distance learning programs. *The delivery of Chinese language instruction through interactive distance learning (IDL) technology and online classes is well suited to Kansas, given the state's geography and demographics.*

Kansas continues to be a leader nationally in the delivery of Chinese training via IDL. Further growth in such programs is projected. In 2006-2007, forty-five high school students in seven Kansas school districts received Mandarin I instruction from licensed teachers located at the Confucius Institute at the University of Kansas using IDL technology facilitated by the Southeast Kansas Education Service Center (Greenbush). By 2008-2009, this had grown to 111 students in nine Kansas high schools enrolled in Mandarin I (level 1 and 2) or Mandarin II (level 3 and 4) classes.

The South Central Kansas Education Service Center (Clearwater) provided Mandarin instruction to seven Kansas high schools via IDL. Greenbush and Clearwater also employed IDL technology to offer a variety of after-school and enrichment programs for Chinese language and culture, as well as teacher training sessions in AY 2008-2009. IDL also was used to provide Chinese language instruction in some Wichita School District high schools where nearly fifty students studied the language with a licensed teacher who was physically at just one school. The growth of demand for Chinese language instruction in Wichita has been so strong that the District reports it plans to hire two additional licensed teachers in 2009.

4. Use existing resources and structures in creative ways. *Student familiarity with and interest in Chinese language can be effectively promoted by working through existing curricula, supplementing familiar programs, and tweaking proven models.*

The Center for East Asian Studies at KU provided professional development workshops on Chinese language and culture for elementary and secondary teachers during AY 2008-2007. Additional support including a graduate seminar for in-service schoolteachers and school librarians on integrating the study of Chinese history and culture into all subject areas was provided by the Kansas Consortium for Teaching about Asia. Twenty-one elementary and secondary educators working in the northeast part of the state participated in this seminar.

The Global Learning program at Wichita State University also provided curriculum consultation and other services to schoolteachers wishing to connect their students to world areas. With their assistance, the Douglass School District opened a Global Learning Center for elementary and secondary students using technologies such as Skype, iEARN, and ePals to forge sister-school connections in China state.

Lansing High School also has used Skype and email to keep in touch with its sister high school located in Kaifeng, China.

5. Expand Chinese language training at community colleges. *Priority should be given to developing Chinese language programs and world language programs more generally, in the state's community colleges.*

Johnson County Community College remains the only two-year institution offering Chinese language classes in Kansas at this time.

6. Better articulate programs at different educational levels. *To create an effective pipeline for students through the schools and on to college or university, better articulation of Chinese language programs (especially between high school and post-secondary institutions, and between community colleges and universities) should be studied and implemented.*

As instruction in Mandarin Chinese spreads through Kansas schools, the need to better articulate secondary and post-secondary programs will become more crucial. Since elementary and secondary curricula for Chinese language learning are created by individual school districts locally and by the Kansas State Department of Education at the state level, articulation with community college and university programs, as well as alignment with Advanced Placement Chinese standards, needs to be addressed.

Last year, several licensed teachers of Chinese attended sessions on this topic at the national conference of the American Council on Teaching Foreign Languages (ACTFL) while the World Languages Consultant at the Kansas State Department of Education has continued to work with them as a group to implement a model Chinese curriculum. This curriculum has helped to standardize Chinese language instruction throughout the state, insuring better articulation with post-secondary coursework.

7. Aggressively pursue national grant funding and other opportunities. *Schools across the state should actively seek funds to expand Chinese training through grants like the Teachers of Critical Languages Program and the Foreign Language Assistance Program.*

School administrators and teachers of Chinese were made more aware of potential funding sources for Chinese language programs through targeted listservs created by the Kansas Committee for International Education in the Schools and the Confucius Institute. Because of information disseminated through such listservs for instance, the Shawnee Mission School District applied for and received a teacher of Chinese from the Teachers of Critical Language Program, and several school administrators participated in College Board sponsored study tours to China. In-service and pre-service teachers of Chinese are also made aware of professional development opportunities through these listservs. Several traveled to other states and even to China in the summer of 2009 to attend seminars and workshops on the latest pedagogical techniques for teaching Chinese as a second language.

Furthermore, the Confucius Institute at the University of Kansas received funding under the National Security Language Initiative to hold a STARTALK intensive language camp during summer 2009. High school students from five Kansas school districts (Auburn-Washburn, Chanute, Galena, Independence, Lawrence) were able to get a head start on learning Chinese this way. CIKU plans to apply for funding to repeat the camp in summer 2010.

8. Develop programs to “prime the pump” in the supply of certified Chinese language teachers. *In order to meet the state's long-term need for certified Chinese language teachers, immediate action must*

be taken to start the flow of students through the existing training and certification program at the University of Kansas.

During AY 2008-2009, the Confucius Institute at KU (CIKU) awarded three \$7500 Accelerated Chinese Teacher Certification Scholarships to students in the University of Kansas licensure program in Mandarin Chinese. The Scholarship has been a significant factor in attracting students both nationally and internationally to the University, helping to ensure a pool of licensed teachers available for employment by Kansas schools.

In AY 2008-2009, the Kansas State Department of Education (KSDE) Visiting Teacher from China Program brought six teachers to our state. These visiting teachers are now employed in Kansas school districts and educational service centers under the 2006 Memorandum of Understanding between KSDE and the Office of the Chinese Language Council International (Hanban). KSDE, working with Hanban, Huazhong Normal University (Wuhan, China), and CIKU, screens, provides orientation for, and mentors the visiting teachers from China allowing Kansas students to receive Chinese instruction from highly qualified, well-trained and licensed educators.

9. Increase opportunities across the state for lifelong learning of Chinese. *Community Chinese language courses like those offered by the Confucius Institute and Johnson County Community College should be extended across Kansas.*

Demand for Chinese language classes by the general public in Northeast Kansas continues to be strong. The Confucius Institute at KU expanded its course offerings in Lawrence and Overland Park to serve not only adults, but also parents and their children learning together. Total enrollment was more than 200 individuals. Continuing education classes through Johnson County Community College also have been popular with adults traveling to China for business or pleasure. Future efforts should be made to expand such opportunities to more areas of the state.

10. Appoint a dedicated world languages consultant at the Kansas State Department of Education.

Phyllis Farrar, the World Languages and ESL Program Consultant was hired by the Kansas State Department of Education in January 2007 continues to work to support Chinese language teachers across the state.

11. Convene a statewide summit on the teaching of Chinese and other critical world languages in Kansas. *To build on the work of the Kansas Task Force on Chinese Language Training and forge a broader consensus on the need for increased emphasis on Mandarin Chinese and other strategic languages in our schools, a statewide summit of legislators, policymakers, business leaders, and educators should be convened.*

As a follow-up to the successful “Chinese Spoken Here: An Intensive Workshop on Starting Chinese Language Programs in Kansas” held in 2007, a day-long forum on international education programs in Kansas schools was organized by the Kansas Committee for International Education in the Schools (KCIES). Eighty educators representing school districts, community colleges and universities attended the Forum held December 9, 2008 on the campus of Washburn University in Topeka. The Forum positioned Chinese language instruction within the larger context of global competencies so as to generate additional support for such training. More information from the Forum is available online at www.KansasintheWorld.org.

Looking Ahead

China's prominence in world affairs, and especially in the global economy, continues to impact Kansans today. The importance of Chinese language programs to the future prosperity and security of our youth, our nation, and our state is even more apparent now than when the report of the Kansas Task Force on Chinese Language Training was released in 2006. Over the past three years, a variety of institutions and individuals around the state have risen to the challenge of expanding Chinese language capacity by creating and expanding programs in schools, colleges, and communities. Sustaining this progress, ensuring high standards, and bringing Chinese to even more Kansas students will require energy, commitment, and collaboration, but the broadly based and growing support for Mandarin Chinese among educators, parents, policymakers, and the business community in Kansas bodes well for the future.

The fundamental goals articulated by the Kansas Task Force on Chinese Language Training in 2006 seemed ambitious at the time. Though the goals below are bold ones indeed, they seem more attainable due to the accomplishments in Chinese training throughout the Kansas educational system during AY 2008-2009.

- **By 2011, all K-12 students in Kansas should have the opportunity for exposure to Mandarin Chinese, whether in traditional classroom settings, through IDL or other distance learning platforms, in after-school and summer programs, or as part of introductory world language sessions.**
- **By 2016, Mandarin Chinese should be one of the three most-taught languages in Kansas schools, measured both by the number of students enrolled and by the number of schools offering the language.**

For more information on this Update, please contact Nancy Hope (nfhope@ku.edu, 785-864-3918) at the Kansas Committee for International Education in the Schools (KCIES). The 2006 Report of the Kansas Task Force on Chinese Language Training and subsequent updates are publications of KCIES and are available on its website at <http://www.kansasintheworld.org/kcies/publications.asp>.