

NEWS OF THE FIELD

3rd CLTA and CLASS Joint Forum Minutes

Saturday, November 17, 2007
4:45 PM - 6:00 PM
Convention Center 103

Topic: Articulation in K-16 Chinese Language Education

Chairs: Madeline K. Spring (CLTA) and Dali Tan (CLASS)

Madeline Spring opened with a brief introduction to the forum. As stated in the announcement to the meeting, the focus of the forum is “on shared concerns, issues, and goals, with the aim of improving communication, creating synergy among schools, and initiating long-term collaborative and research projects.”

Dali Tan:

It is indeed an exciting time to be an educator in Chinese language and culture. An increasing number of schools want to establish a Chinese program or expand the existing ones. Believing it to be the language of the future, more and more American parents want their children to learn Chinese. However, unprecedented opportunities also bring unprecedented challenges. The inauguration of the AP exam in May of 2007 makes it imperative for all of us to have better K to 16 articulation. Let me share an experience about a student from another school who went to China with Landon’s summer home stay language immersion program. Although this student signed up for an AP course at his school, he didn’t get an opportunity to take the class. Nevertheless, he tested into Chinese 3 in college this fall and is doing very well. This shows the need for more articulated programs in K-16.

1st Session. Opportunities and challenges presented by the new AP curriculum

Moderators: Richard Chi (CLTA) and Diane Mammone (CLASS)

Diane Mammone:

I have been teaching Chinese at Quabbin for last 14 yrs. Currently I have 150 students. All the interest in Chinese is very exciting. However, while we are happy to see that Chinese is getting interest and support, we’re also concerned that this is becoming more than just a trend. In addition to the work on the Standards for Chinese, AP is also going to help stabilize this trend. From the perspective of administrators, Chinese is now a serious subject. We know that we must be honest with administrators, that if the students are going to be successful in AP, they must start Chinese sooner than 9th grade. We must help each other, and be aware of standards. As popularity increases, the quality of students might go down.

Richard Chi:

In Fall ‘06 the first AP course in Chinese was launched and the first test took place in May ‘07. Chinese and Japanese are the first LCTLs that College Board has added to AP since 1955. This also added to the effort towards articulation between HS and college Chinese programs. The new AP curriculum has already started to have its effect on the field, both in HS and on programs at the college level. 3261 students who took AP, 97% scored 3 and above. Colleges and universities will have to adjust their curriculum to fit the needs of more talented students coming in. They will also need to offer more specialized courses, such as Business Chinese.

This leads to two important observations: firstly, the AP course reflects developments in proficiency based teaching from 80s and 90s. Sec-