

Wang Shuhan:

My job is Executive Director for Chinese Language Initiatives at the Asia Society, and I am also working on STARTALK. This past summer there were 34 programs in 22 states. Of these, 17 were Chinese teacher programs and 17 were programs for students learning Chinese. In all 681 students and 292 teachers participated. 4% of teacher trainees hold a doctorate degree, 55% hold a Master's degree, and more than 30% have a Bachelor's degree.

STARTALK is part of the National Security Language Initiative that was signed into law in 2006. In the summer of 2007, it supported Arabic and Chinese programs for students and teachers. Next summer the project will add Persian, Hindi and Urdu. STARTALK will be having a certification summit in early 2008 on the topic of teacher certification for critical languages, including Chinese.

Currently 35 states have state supervisors for foreign languages. In order to solve teacher certification issues, we need the support from states, and from universities. We need to work with each other between K-12 and college level, including heritage students and the community.

Q: Who will be attending the Spring Conference (April 17-19, 2008) that Asia Society is hosting in Washington D.C. at the Renaissance Hotel? Is this a summit about teacher certification?

Wang: Many organizations are collaborating on this conference. It will especially be appropriate for administrators and policy makers to attend, in addition to teachers. Topics covered will include teacher certification and much more.

Q: CLASS/CLTA are doing a great job promoting teaching etc., but are they able to affect state certification organizations?

Q: How many participants in today's forum teach on the college level? (relatively small show of hands). We need to get more help from the college level.

3rd Session. Report and future plans: Collaborative and research projects

Moderators: Jerry Packard (CLTA) and Lin Yu-lan (CLASS)

Lin Yulan:

One important initiative is the Teacher to Teacher program (U.S. Dept. of Education) – for the teacher, by the teacher. One of the special features of this program is that every session starts with research related to the topic, i.e., research informs classroom practice. This kind of approach is very helpful. We have questions about teaching, but we often don't have research-based answers; and we often have to guess or go by our intuition. "What is the best time to start teaching pinyin? What is the gap between speaking and writing?" nobody knows the answer; therefore, two suggestions are made for the field:

1. For K-12 teachers: action research is a great professional growth opportunity. We want to be able to try some strategies in class, get the results, and apply them or improve further, the teaching strategies.
2. For teachers on the college level: note how research can be applied to teaching at various levels. Present research that is classroom based and classroom teacher-friendly so that K-12 teachers could apply it in their teaching.

Jerry Packard:

A new certification program for teachers of Chinese was approved by Illinois six weeks ago. Although I teach Chinese, my area of research is learning Chinese both as L1 and L2 and sentence processing research among 2nd language learners of Chinese. I am interested in the Comparison of different characters teaching methods, tones, word structure, and vocabulary acquisition. Recently we got a new eye-tracker in our lab (\$40K), and we are using it for eye-tracking studies to measure what part of characters kids are looking at as they attempt to pronounce it.

Scott McGinnis: Michael Everson also has great resources regarding what research has been out there for the last twenty years.