

Community Based Heritage Language Program Profile Chong Wa Education Society

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Languages: Mandarin Chinese

Levels

- Adults
- K-12

Program Description

Purposes and goals of the program: To teach Chinese language and culture

Type of program

- Immersion
- After-school program
- Saturday academy

We operate from Monday through Friday, 4:30-6:30, on Saturday, 9:00 to 12:00 during the school year. We offer a summer language camp program for 5 weeks, Monday through Friday, 9:00-3:00. Adult classes are 1.5 hours per week, once a week for 10 weeks.

Program mission statement: To teach Chinese language and culture to all those who wish to learn

Program Origins: The exact date is unknown, but the program was founded about a hundred years ago. Therefore, we're the oldest Chinese school in the state of Washington. The program was founded because several Chinese parents requested the establishment of a Chinese school. The school was operated by Chong Wa Benevolent Association until 1973, when it was transferred to Chong Wa Education Society, a 501(c)(3) non profit. The school is located in Seattle's Chinatown, in Chong Wa Hall. This was originally built in 1929 as an opera house, but the school has classrooms in the basement of the building.

Parents' expectations for the program: Parents want their children to be able to read, write, and speak Chinese and to engage in appropriate Chinese behaviors. Additionally, the parents want their children to engage in several Chinese traditions, like calligraphy, arts and crafts, and games.

Staff's expectations for the program: Students will become proficient in Chinese language and culture through sustained study.

Students

- First-generation immigrants
- Second-generation immigrants
- Third-generation immigrants
- Children of interethnic marriages
- Children of interethnic adoption
- Non-ethnic background

It is difficult to give percentages, because the numbers vary from year to year.

Countries of origin: China, Thailand, Vietnam, and USA

Total student enrollment: 65

Identification of a heritage speaker:

Oral interviews: The staff speaks to the students in Mandarin or English to determine individual proficiency. For example, the instructor may ask a student their name and personal interests. Sometimes a child can understand but not speak. If this is the case the instructor will ask a student to perform simple tasks in Mandarin like picking up a book or sitting down.

Percentage of students who complete the program: Most leave when they enter high school because of after-school activities. Rarely does a student stay until 12th grade and "graduate."

Percentage of students who continue to study the heritage language after completing the program: Completing the program means attending class until the 12th grade. Once in awhile, a student will go on to major in Chinese; one student recently took the university Chinese test and tested out of the foreign language requirement.

Possible reasons for their withdrawal from the program: High school students usually become too busy to come anymore, and several students after completing the two years necessary for college entrance.

Students' attitudes toward the language varieties they speak: Generally positive

Instructors

Number of staff in program: 4

Languages in which staff members are proficient:

- Mandarin (2) native speakers; educated in Taiwan

- Mandarin and Cantonese (1) native speaker of Cantonese; educated in Hong Kong
- Mandarin, some Cantonese and Toisanese (1); learned Mandarin in the university, Cantonese and Toisanese from home (but have limited understanding and can carry on a basic conversation--teaches beginning Mandarin to adults)

Credentials

Teacher certification:

- From Taiwan: One staff member in Math and one in elementary education
- From Washington State: English literature and Chinese language and literature
- MA: Language Arts (instructor of adult beginning Mandarin)

Professional development opportunities teachers have: Workshop given by Republic of China (ROC) twice a year for a total of 5 days

Professional development opportunities teachers need: Classroom management--generally in my experience, teachers have trained overseas and can't manage Americanized students.

Instruction

Total student contact hours: 10 hours from Monday to Friday, 3 hours for Saturday, 3 hours (half day) or 6 hours (full day) for the summer program

Times per week: 5 days for the normal school year, 1 day for the Saturday class, and 5 days for the summer program

Student grouping: Students are grouped by ability level, because it's difficult to teach with multilevel classes due to multiple entry points and varying levels of proficiency. There is no religious teaching in the classroom; 100% of the time is given to language teaching and culture.

Language Skills

Heritage Skills

- Listening
- Speaking
- Reading
- Writing
- Other: Calligraphy, arts and crafts, and games (Chinese yo-yo, Chinese chess, hackey sack, lion dancing, songs)

Skills and levels of language proficiency students reach by the end of the program: This varies depending on individual effort, but if diligent, a student can carry on a conversation and write at a new level.

Culture

- Festivals
- Customs
- Traditions/beliefs
- Folktales
- Arts and crafts
- Songs
- Rhymes
- Social and cultural norms
- Cultural appropriateness
- Geography and history only apply if the context of a lesson calls for it. Literature consists of short stories, poems, and rhymes.

Kind of student identity your program fosters: Chinese American; for non-Chinese, an understanding of Chinese language and culture.

Methodologies

Methodologies and instructional strategies are used in the program: Total Physical Response, activity-based instruction

Materials

Textbooks: Texts are provided by Taiwan.

Other materials used for instruction: Paper folding books, craft books from Taiwan for staff to use as reference, ink stamps with Chinese designs, calligraphy equipment, various game components, and short selections from Chinese newspapers

Technology used in the program: We use CDs and videos. We would like to use technology more for instruction, but we need an extra person for the computer room, which only has 6 stations.

Access ROC (Taiwan) website, a free website which offers games and lessons in Mandarin, accessible to anyone:

<http://www.roc-taiwan.org/taiwan/2-visitor/index.htm>

Assessment

- Chapter tests
- Mid-term tests
- Final exams

- Teacher's observations
- Performance-based tasks or assessment

Articulation

Local connections: The school has connections with local schools, colleges, and universities. Generally, our students continue their study at the University of Washington or local community colleges.

Credits: Secondary students receive high school foreign language credit based on state regulations governing study outside the school day conducted by non-school staff. Based on hours of study, 180 hours is equal to 2 semesters of high school credit. However, the student needs prior approval of school authorities and has to fill out an application form for an alternative learning proposal.

Home school connections/parent involvement: The program develops home-school connections and promotes parent involvement. Parents are welcome to volunteer and are invited to a winter party and a year-end potluck party. Additionally, they are asked to carpool and drive kids to all Chinese school events and competitions.

Opportunities students have for using the language and developing cultural knowledge outside the program: These are available at home and in ethnic clubs in the schools. Some students go to China with their parents because the parents are working in China for a time.

What the program has in place

Financial support:

- Tuition
- Donations from other Chinese organizations or individuals and this past year, a small fund raising dinner.

Other types of support the program receives from these or other entities: Texts from Taiwan

Kinds of assistance the program would you like to receive from other entities: Funding. The costs of tuition do not cover all the costs of operating the school, especially the utilities and building insurance.

Solicitation of funding: The Chong Wa Benevolent Association solicits funds for the program.

Students' academic performance: The program doesn't monitor students' overall academic achievement in school, but parents inform us that the students are doing well.

Student development in the heritage language after completion of the program: The program does not track students' development in the heritage language after they leave the school. However, one recent graduate is now in college and is teaching in China through his college program.

Special Challenges and Comments

Challenges the program has experienced: A major problem is retaining students because of the state testing required under the No Child Left Behind Act. We've seen a loss of students because of an increase in after-school remediation programs and activities. Additionally, funding is a constant concern. Although we don't pay rent, we do have teacher salary costs and materials costs (photocopier, colored paper, glue, pens, pencils).

Additional support you wish to receive from any particular source: It would be great to have a steady source of income to subsidize the school.

Other insights: Our students have daily instruction, and it shows in the annual calligraphy, speech, and chess contest.