

Report of the 2006 Washington State International Education Leadership Summit: **Expanding Chinese Language Capacity**

China's emerging as one of the centers of the world, if not the center of the world. If my kids were of very young ages today, I would be asking them, and encouraging them, to learn Chinese.

– Howard Schultz,
CEO of Starbucks
(quoted in *The Seattle Times*
12/25/2005)

English will continue to be an important – even dominant – language in the years ahead. But most of our fellow humans will continue to be non-English speakers. Our ability to communicate effectively is directly related to our ability to speak the language.

– Bill Center,
President, Washington Council
on International Trade



Participants from Seattle S.D.

Co-conveners of the Leadership Summit this year were the [Trade Development Alliance of Greater Seattle](#), the [Washington Council on International Trade](#), and [Associates in Cultural Exchange](#). Major funding for the International Education Leadership Summit was from a State Innovations Grant from Longview Foundation to the Washington State Coalition for International Education. Alexander Hutton hosted the morning breakfast at the Rainier Club in Seattle.

The Washington State Coalition for International Education held its International Education Leadership Summit: *Expanding Chinese Language Capacity in Washington State* on January 30, 2006 at the Rainier Club in Seattle. The event, attended by nearly 60 business, education, and government leaders, explored the possibility of reaching a "tipping point" for interest in expanding Chinese language capacity in the U.S. and Washington State. The inspiration for the focus this year came from the report published in 2005 by the Asia Society: "[Expanding Chinese Language Capacity in the United States](#)" (PDF). We were delighted that **Dr. Shuhan Wang**, Supervisor for World Languages and International Education in Delaware and coauthor of this report, was able to be a keynote presenter at the Summit events on January 30.

Are We Reaching a Tipping Point with China?

Dr. Wang cited China's **economic power** as a New "Globalizer" (World Bank, 2002). China is now the largest producer of coal, steel and cement in the world, second largest consumer of energy, and third largest importer of oil. China's imports to the U.S. have grown by 1600% in the past 15 years, while exports to China from the U.S. have grown by 415%. China now manufactures two-thirds of the world's copiers, microwave ovens, DVD players, toys, and shoes. In the past 25 years, 300 million people moved out of poverty and quintupled the average income. *Data taken from *Newsweek Magazine*, "Special Report, China's Century." May 9, 2005.

China's growing **political power** means that engagement with China is crucial. China is emerging as a new superpower in the world and a player in balancing international stability. This could be key to the national security of the U.S. In addition, China will be an actor in global human security challenges, such as the environment, health, poverty, human rights, migration, and peace.

China's **cultural heritage** enriches our lives. China has the longest uninterrupted civilization in the world with great literary and artistic traditions, and linguistic influences. America is experiencing the influence of East-Asian philosophy, social structure, and ways of being in the world, including culinary arts, scientific and technological inventions, and Chinese medicine.

What would it take to have 10% of Washington students learning Chinese by 2015?

If we are to build the infrastructure to support a K-16 pipeline of Chinese-language learners in our state, three critical needs must be addressed:

1. Creating a supply of qualified Chinese language teachers;
2. Increasing the number and quality of school programs; and
3. Developing appropriate curriculum, materials, and assessments, including technology-based delivery systems.

Washington State has the potential to lead the way in the expansion of Chinese language study in the U.S. We have close ties with China and a well-developed trade relationship. Internationally recognized programs at the University of Washington set a high bar for college and graduate studies in Chinese language, culture, and area studies. Washington State is an international leader in technology. Let's explore how Washington can address these needs in our state.

Qualified Chinese-Language Teachers

Washington is fortunate to have a tradition of well-developed Chinese community schools and access to a significant number of both heritage speakers and recent immigrants who are fluent speakers of Chinese. A number of schools, such as Washington Middle School in Seattle, have hosted visiting teachers from China for some years.

Recommendations:

1. Washington's higher education institutions need to step up to the challenge of preparing and certifying more Chinese language teachers.
2. The state needs to provide professional development opportunities for visiting teachers from China to prepare them to be successful in U.S. classrooms.
3. Heritage and immigrant language teachers need training in early language learning and teaching to help meet the demand for language teachers in preschool, weekend, and before and after school programs.

Why Learn Chinese?

Language study helps the development of problem-solving and creative-thinking skills.

Linguistic: Knowledge of and skill in another language; native language becomes concrete

Cultural: Knowledge of another culture outside Europe; stronger self- and U.S.-identities

Social: Pride in being able to learn a "difficult" language; feeling "smart"

Cognitive:

- ❖ Tap into multiple intelligences
- ❖ Develop and use better learning strategies
- ❖ Become self-managed and life-long learners
- ❖ Character-Based languages: 2-dimensional patterning, geometry
- ❖ Relationship with Math (e.g., number values)

– Dr. Shuhan Wang



Everyone is talking about Chinese, but now it's time to see if the business and education communities in our state are ready to work together to make it happen. Then, we need to look to our resources in the community and in our universities, as well as partnerships with China, to help us develop effective programs with excellent teachers and innovative curriculum.

– Dr. Michele AnCIAUX Aoki,
Project Director
2005 State Innovations Grant

More and Better Chinese Language Programs

There is ample evidence of a growing interest in Washington for programs in Chinese language and culture. More than 80 people attended the Heritage Language Learning and Teaching program highlighting Chinese language at the U.W. on January 30. Several elementary schools in the Seattle area, for example, have begun or plan to offer Chinese after school. Bellevue S.D. is expanding its Chinese offerings in high school.

Recommendations:

1. Washington schools need state leadership on World Languages. The Legislature and Washington Learns should include World Languages in the definition of "Rigorous High School Curriculum" aligned with college admissions requirements.
2. The state should look to the experiences of Washington's and Oregon's award-winning elementary language immersion programs to design elementary Chinese language programs that will help students attain high levels of proficiency.

Curriculum, Assessment, and Technology

Washington has a foundation in technology that can be a powerful vehicle for connecting schools to each other, to curriculum resources, to assessment training, and to schools and students in China.

Recommendations:

1. The state should establish a clearinghouse for high-quality Chinese language curriculum materials to support schools throughout the state, perhaps through the Digital Learning Commons.
2. Washington should collaborate with the Center for Applied Linguistics and the University of Oregon to develop and offer effective language proficiency assessment tools and training for teachers of Chinese.
3. Schools should embark on virtual exchanges between Washington and China through programs such as iEARN (International Education and Resource Network), which use computer technology to connect classrooms around the world.
4. High-tech companies in Washington should be enticed to develop software for cutting-edge language learning applications.

Key Players

Six traits in future employees at UPS:

- ❖ Trade literate
 - ❖ Sensitive to foreign cultures
 - ❖ Conversant in different languages
 - ❖ Technology savvy
 - ❖ Capable of managing complexity
 - ❖ Ethical
- Michael Eskew, CEO,
United Parcel Service
December 8, 2005
Washington, DC

- ❖ **Washington businesses** must communicate to the education community that global competence, including knowledge of other languages and cultures, has become critical for success in the global economy.
- ❖ **Washington State Legislature** must recognize that learning languages is an essential part of a world-class education and add languages back into the Education Reform agenda, while funding staff at OSPI to lead the way.
- ❖ **State Universities and colleges** must make preparing teachers of Chinese a priority and collaborate to build on their collective strengths in teacher pre-service and in-service training.
- ❖ **Technology companies** must build on their success with music and video games to create powerful language learning environments that will connect students to the best the world has to offer.

Specific Action Steps

The Washington State Coalition for International Education

is a network of community leaders, non-profit organizations, schools, colleges, and individuals committed to preparing *all* students for today's interconnected world. For more information, visit International Education Washington
<http://internationaledwa.org>.

To track our progress on these action steps, visit
<http://internationaledwa.org/chinese/>

1. Develop a cross-disciplinary M.A. in the Teaching of Chinese at the University of Washington.
2. Offer summer institutes to prepare teachers of Chinese (from the U.S. and China) through a collaboration between China and our state colleges and universities.
3. Create a new Certificate in Early Language Teaching and Learning to be offered through state community colleges.
4. Align recommended high school graduation requirements to college admissions standards by adding "Two credits (or equivalent proficiency) in a World Language" to the recommended high school graduation requirements in HB2706 "Rigorous High School Curriculum" when it is reintroduced next session in the Legislature.
5. Fund a full-time position at the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction to support World Languages/International Education. Some specific responsibilities would include:
 - collecting and disseminating information about best practices in language learning, teaching, and assessment, including experiences in the award-winning language immersion programs in our region
 - working with the state-funded Digital Learning Commons to provide a technology-based portal to resources on learning Chinese (and other languages and cultures)
 - offering training in high-quality language proficiency assessment to teachers and schools
 - helping language teachers align their curriculum and assessments to the voluntary World Language Standards adopted by Washington state, based on the National Standards for Foreign Language
 - assisting teachers and schools in developing strong virtual exchanges with China through programs like iEARN (International Education and Resource Network)

