

Seattle Schools FLAP Grant 2007

Chinese Teacher Survey about Chinese Language Program

Interviewed 6/8/2007 by Michele Anciaux Aoki

Mandarin Teachers:

Rose Yang (Beacon Hill, John Muir), Cindy Lin (Beacon Hill), Pollyanna (Yea-Jae) Wang (Graham Hill)

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| <p>1. What do you like best about the opportunity for students at your school to learn Chinese?</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pronunciation is very good if you start early. • Math in Chinese – Public Schools’ math curriculum is very slow; Chinese math is good; if we’re able to do that we can help them improve their math. • Kids need more math practice (not just learning concepts). Chinese class can help (if the classroom teacher accepts that). • Chinese teachers bring tricks to stimulate brains, not just teach cultural awareness, such as finger play and origami. • Regular teachers can show the curriculum before it is taught in Chinese; then, Chinese teachers can use some of the same materials. • Chinese is not easy to learn, so learning it early is best. |
| <p>2. What are your concerns?</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If Chinese class is teaching math, when do you teach just the language (basics)? • Teacher’s support and involvement are needed, especially help in disciplining the kids. This influences the students. The classroom teacher’s style of discipline may be very different though. • There’s a lot of pressure on the classroom teacher (1st grade) to cover the curriculum. Time is an issue. • Mandarin math should be different from classroom math. (Classroom math is too slow.) • There is confusion on the part of the classroom teachers. Some thought that Mandarin class was going to replace doing math in regular class time. • Curriculum questions: teachers need to know the direction of the classroom curriculum. It would be better to match the teacher’s curriculum. • Environment: Open concept is harder for the kids to concentrate; the classes bother each other (for example, when they sing). Psychological factors make it hard for the teacher. (The students may be more used to it.) • Chinese teacher needs supplies and space in the classroom or else it takes a lot of time to set up for class. • Time: Pollyanna is currently teaching 20 minutes in 1st grade and 25 minutes in K. It’s enough. Rose feels that 20 minutes in K is good, but need more time in 1st-2nd (if you design good activities). There are concerns about expanding to 45 minutes/day. • Parents are concerned about Math performance. • Chinese teachers are disappointed by parents’ attitudes toward the class. • Concern at Graham Hill that not all K-1 students are participating in Chinese. What will happen next year when the students are mixed up in new classes? |

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| <p>3. How well did the Chinese program go this spring?</p> | <p>___ Very well <u>X</u> Well ___ Not well ___ No opinion</p> <p>In most cases, the teachers thought their classes were doing well (esp. K classes).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Now students are beginning to learn sentences (not just words). • Class discipline is good where the classroom teacher participates (e.g., John Muir). • Sometimes disciplining students at the beginning of class wastes time (e.g., Beacon Hill). • They do not currently have time to help students who are behind. • Having Chinese as the last class of the day is hard – in part because parents are entering the classroom to wait for their children. • Kristin helped take the curriculum in a good direction with pair work, but they feel it is too slow. |
| <p>4. What are your suggestions for next year?</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The environment needs to be relaxed to be successful for learning language. (Teachers can be too harsh on discipline.) • Parent Newsletter or Information Night • Maybe allow parents to visit the class (so they can see what it's about). • Training for Chinese teachers on new math curriculum • Chinese teachers need to see the curriculum and materials in advance. They need to prepare teacher materials in advance. • Clarify the direction and priorities – is it to improve the students' math or to teach them Chinese language? • Perhaps have a Mandarin-speaking Instructional Assistant to help the Chinese teacher (to give more flexibility in class time for small groups and personal attention). (Though Pollyanna doesn't feel it's needed if class time is only 20-25 minutes.) • What's the policy about language use? Teachers are not using Chinese 100% of the time. Should they be? • At Graham Hill, better to have all students participate in Chinese to alleviate pressure on the classroom teachers (because they'd all be in the "same boat"). |