

Mapping Chinese Language Learning Outcomes in Grades K-12

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Introduction

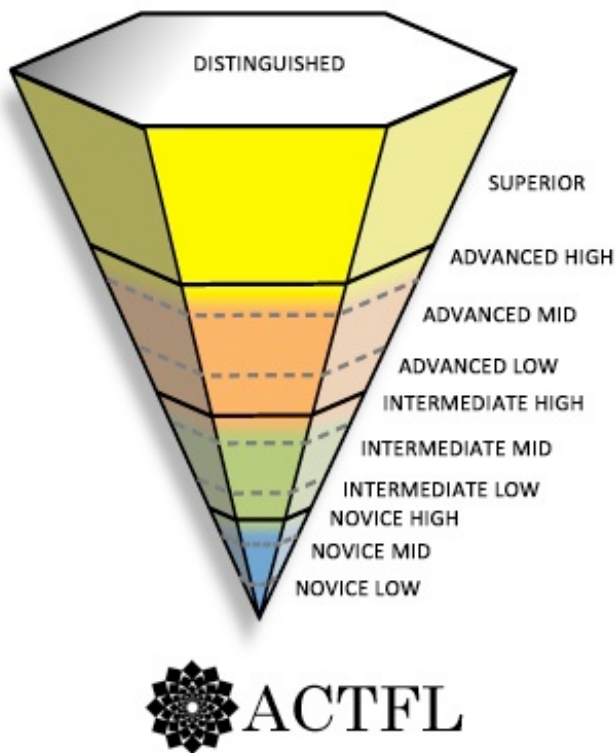
An exciting new development in the field of Chinese language learning in the United States is the increase in the number of students learning Chinese at pre-college levels. While the field has had years of experience teaching Chinese at college and high school levels, early language and immersion programs in elementary and middle schools are relatively new since the 1990s (Asia Society, 2006). In their search for an effective curriculum, many schools realize that they need to have a set of well-defined learning objectives across levels of instruction. This is particularly true if a school district or school would like to design a well-articulated Chinese language program that leads students to attain high levels of language proficiency. The need for well-defined language learning objectives, with expected outcomes, at various levels of instruction, with multiple entry and exit points along the path of K-12 or even K-16, is more urgent than ever. The purpose of this Brief is to describe possible language learning outcomes in terms of a nationally recognized language proficiency scale and K-12 performance standards, which are aligned with language programs in K-12 schools in the United States. It is hoped that the Brief will be useful for Chinese language teachers, parents, curriculum developers, and program administrators for developing meaningful curriculum with clear learning outcomes. (For detail on how to develop a rich Chinese language curriculum, see the CELIN

Brief, *Designing and Implementing Chinese Language Programs: Preparing Students for the Real World.*)

Defining Language Learning Outcomes

In the field of world language learning, many resources for defining and assessing learning progress and outcomes are readily available and internationally recognized. For example, the U.S. government and the world language field have developed world-class assessment and language proficiency scales in listening, speaking, reading, and writing for many languages, including Chinese. These include the U.S. federal government's *ILR Skill Level Descriptors* (Interagency Language Roundtable, 2015), and the ACTFL *Proficiency Guidelines 2012* (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, 2012), and the ACTFL Performance Descriptors for Language Learners (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, 2015a). Other useful tools are the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (Council of Europe, 2001) and Hanban's *Chinese Language Proficiency Scales for Speakers of Other Languages* (Office of Chinese Language Council International, 2007) and *International Curriculum for Chinese Language Education* (Office of Chinese Language Council International, 2008).

In the United States, the proficiency guidelines and performance descriptors developed by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL,



at different levels. These samples are helpful when setting realistic goals for students learning Chinese in K-12 programs. For example, a student at the Novice level is able to list things like foods and colors and to talk about topics encountered daily by using “isolated words and phrases that have been encountered, memorized, and recalled.” An Intermediate High learner of Chinese is able to perform significantly more sophisticated language tasks that include talking about routine activities in social situations using paragraph-level discourse. For samples of Chinese language learners at different levels and more details about the characteristics of various proficiency levels of speakers, see the ACTFL Chinese standards (2012a). Student learning outcomes in different types of Chinese language programs are described later in this Brief.

Assessing Chinese Learning Outcomes

The success of a Chinese language program is measured in terms of what students can do with the language at each level. Assessment of learning outcomes includes both formative (ongoing) assessment, to track student progress and guide future instruction; and summative assessment, to determine outcomes at planned points. Assessments determine performance in three modes of communication:

- Interpretive: listening, reading, and viewing
- Interpersonal: listening, speaking, reading, and writing
- Presentational: speaking and writing and in different performance domains:
 - Comprehensibility (how well the person is understood)
 - Comprehension (how well the person understands)
 - Language control (accuracy of the language used)
 - Vocabulary usage
 - Communication strategies
 - Cultural awareness

For detailed information about these performance domains, see ACTFL’s, 2015a, *Performance Descriptors for Language Learners*.

2012b, 2015a) are most commonly used to measure student learning outcomes, especially in the K-12 levels. According to the ACTFL guidelines, learners’ proficiency can be categorized into Novice, Intermediate, Advanced, Superior, and Distinguished levels. The first three levels (Novice, Intermediate, and Advanced) can be further broken into three sub-levels: Low, Mid, and High, as shown in Figure 1.

As Figure 1 shows, the cumulative process of language acquisition is comprised of unequal segments, beginning with a very narrow section for beginning learners to increasingly broader ranges as students’ proficiency increases. This means that it takes much longer for students to move from Intermediate Low to Intermediate High than from Novice Low to Novice High. It should also be noted that any score such as Intermediate Mid represents a range, not a point, of language ability.

The ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines offer samples of student performance in 13 languages (including Chinese and English) in listening, speaking, reading, and writing

Assessment Tools Used in K-12 Chinese Language Programs

The following assessments are commonly used in the United States to measure student learning outcomes in K-12 Chinese language programs. Each assessment, including the NCSSFL-ACTFL Global Can Do Statements, is listed at the end of this Brief with a link to its website.

- ACTFL Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI)
- ACTFL Writing Proficiency Test (WPT)
- ACTFL Assessment of Performance Toward Proficiency in Languages (AAPPL)
- Avant Standards-Based Measurement of Proficiency (STAMP Assessment)
- College Board Advanced Placement (AP) Examination in Chinese Language and Culture
- College Board SAT II: Chinese With Listening
- Early Language Listening and Oral Proficiency Assessment (ELLOPA)
- Hanban Chinese Proficiency Test (Hanyu Shuiping Kaoshi, HSK)
- Hanban Youth Chinese Test (YCT)
- International Baccalaureate (IB) Program examinations
- NCSSFL-ACTFL Global Can-do Statements: Progress indicators for Language Learners
- Student Oral Proficiency Assessment (SOPA)

Program Approaches to Developing Chinese Language Proficiency

There are different types of Chinese language programs in the United States and multiple pathways to developing proficiency in Chinese. Two types of programs that are frequently implemented, particularly in primary grades, are dual language or immersion language programs (referred to here as a Chinese immersion program) and Chinese as a world or foreign language (referred to here as a Chinese language program). In a Chinese immersion program, students may spend all, or a good portion of, of their school time learning academic content in and through Chinese. Based on the amount of time allocated in learning

through Chinese, different models are available; e.g., total immersion, 90% Chinese/10% English, 60% and 40%, 50% and 50% or partial immersion. In most cases, students enter the program early in the primary grades. In a Chinese language program, students learn the language in classes offered three to five days a week for 30 to 50 minutes each day, depending on the age of students. In the United States, most Chinese as a world language programs are offered in high school, although the trend is now moving toward offering classes in middle and elementary school as well. (See Asia Society, 2006, pp. 28-30; and Fortune, 2012, for descriptions of these and other types of programs.) This Brief describes possible learning outcomes in these two program types: 50/50 immersion and Chinese as a world language.

Possible Learning Outcomes in Two Types of Programs

Students reach different levels of proficiency in different grades in the two types of programs. Possible learning outcomes are shown in Figure 2, based on ACTFL Language Proficiency Levels. The middle column lists possible outcomes for dual language/immersion programs. The suggested proficiency levels reached in each grade (or after an amount of time in the program) are based on field studies of student proficiency levels in three immersion programs -- Chinese American International School (CAIS) in San Francisco (CA), Portland Public School immersion programs (OR) (both are 50/50 immersion from grades K to 8), and Yinghua Academy, in Minneapolis (MN), which is 90/10 immersion in grades K to 4 and 50/50 in grades 5 to 8. (Because these programs are one-way immersion and students are mostly English-speaking children, this Brief refers to learning outcomes in one-way immersion programs.) The third column lists possible learning outcomes for a Chinese as a world language program, adapted from the results of a national study conducted by the Center for Applied Second Language Studies (CASLS) at the University of Oregon of high school students who are enrolled in foreign language study (Chinese, French, German, Japanese, and Spanish) in 30 states across the United States (Center for Applied Second Language Studies, 2010).

ACTFL Language Proficiency Level	K-8 Immersion Program 150 minutes per day, 5 days per week (750 minutes per week)	Grade 6/7 to Grade 12 Chinese as a World Language Program 50 minutes per day, 5 days per week (250 minutes per week)
Intermediate High to Advanced Low	Upon entering Grade 9 and above	AP
Intermediate Mid to Intermediate High	Grade 8	AP
Intermediate Low to Intermediate Mid	Grade 7	AP preparation course
Intermediate Low	Grade 6	Chinese Level 5
Novice High to Intermediate Low	Grade 5	Chinese Level 4
Novice High	Grade 4	Chinese Level 3
Novice Mid to Novice High	Grade 3	Chinese Level 2
Novice Low to Novice Mid		Chinese Level 1 (Could begin in Grade 6/7 or Grade 9, depending on the local context)
Junior Novice Mid- Junior Novice High	Grade 2	
Junior Novice Mid	Grade 1	
Junior Novice Low to Junior Novice Mid	Kindergarten	

Figure 2. Language Proficiency Levels Reached in Immersion and World Language Programs

It is important to consider a range of proficiency levels for any given class of students; e.g., Intermediate High to Advanced Low, instead of a single level. This is to suggest that students develop their language proficiency at different rates, and each individual may perform at different levels in different skill areas ranging from listening, speaking, reading, to writing. In the chart below, the suggested proficiency level is a composite of four skills, not delineated by oral proficiency and literacy. For a character-based language such as Chinese, it is recommended that a program establish differentiated expectations for listening and speaking and another set for reading and writing. The targeted level should be slightly lower for literacy development.

Further, it must be emphasized that the correspondence of immersion programs and Chinese as a World language programs is not as seamless as the chart suggests, particularly when local conditions and individual differences are taken into account. What the chart offers is a rough base upon which a program may make further adjustments in establishing its own learning outcomes.

In immersion programs, it is likely that students will follow the progression of their grade levels. Junior levels are not in the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines. However, Junior levels are included in the rating scales for the Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL) Oral Proficiency Exam (COPE) and Student Oral Proficiency Assessment

(SOPA), which adopt the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines with a junior proficiency rating scale (<http://www.cal.org/what-we-do/projects/chinese-curriculum-development>). While the ACTFL guidelines reflect learning at older ages and levels, CAL's guidelines reflect young children's language learning in relevant contexts. Therefore, CAL uses the "Junior" designation for students in grades K-8. (See Thompson, 2010, for discussion of Junior levels.) These junior levels are shown for Kindergarten to Grade 2 in Figure 2.

In the column for Chinese as a world language programs, the nomenclature of CHN 1 to CHN 5 is used to indicate the student's year in the program (1st through 5th year) rather than the grade level. For example, students may enter CHN 1 in Grades 6 or 7 and be in a class of students in both grades. Similarly, they may begin the study of Chinese in high school and be in mixed-grade classes from grades 9 to 12. (See below for descriptions of ways that students may continue to attain higher levels of proficiency in Chinese.)

The major differences between immersion programs and Chinese language programs are time allocation for use of the target language and the "density" of the language learning opportunities embedded in this allocation of time. In immersion programs, approximately half of a school day is devoted to use of the target language, and students are exposed to a richer, more academically challenging language environment than their counterparts in a Chinese language program. This, in general, will provide more opportunities to use the language and facilitate learning in a more natural and authentic way. This setting will also force students to use the language more often and to stretch beyond what they think they are capable of, which builds confidence over time. All other factors being equal (teaching strategies, classroom environment, supportive peers, etc.), immersion students have more opportunities to practice. In addition to learning language patterns and vocabulary, young learners in an immersion setting will develop better pronunciation and are more likely to reach a native-like accent (Cameron, 2001; McLaughlin, 1992).

Because the focus of and settings for the two types of programs are vastly different, they produce qualitatively

different linguistic results. In an immersion setting, students learn the target language through academic content, and the vocabulary and communication structures of the language tend to be those used in an academic environment. For this reason, immersion students may use language that is less grammatically accurate when they are in a social setting. While they may possess a larger vocabulary related to the content, the words that they know are not always useful in social contexts. When examining outcomes via assessment in immersion programs and world language programs, it is vital to note that even though world language program students began to learn Chinese at an older age and in a less "dense" and less frequent class setting, it may appear that they are reaching proficiency levels comparable to students in immersion settings. However, immersion students often show evidence of higher proficiency through better pronunciation, more confidence in communication with native speakers, and a more natural response to Chinese-speaking interlocutors. Furthermore, immersion students tend to develop enhanced literacy and intercultural skills that are seldom developed in a world language classroom (Fortune, 2012).

Alternatively, students in world language programs tend to spend ample time studying the language structures and thus display better grammatical control when using Chinese. World language program students may also study and practice Chinese in a setting that provides them opportunities to use the language in social or business settings. In summary, when comparing the proficiency of students in immersion and Chinese as a world language programs, it is important to take into account the goals and characteristics of the program. When a community or education agency is considering which Chinese program type to design and implement, it is important to develop a deep understanding of the potential learning outcomes and choose the program type that will produce the desired outcomes.

In the next section, profiles of students in an immersion program and a Chinese as a world language program are described. Although the proficiency levels of some of the students may be the same or similar (e.g., Grade 4 in an immersion program and Chinese Level 3 in a Chinese as a world language program), profiles of what these students

can do are qualitatively different due to the content of instruction, contexts and topics, student age, and time on task (Xu, Padilla, & Silva, 2015). Therefore, student profiles are discussed separately by program type.

Profiles of Students in an Immersion Program, Grades K-8

At the end of kindergarten or first grade, the majority of students immersed in a 50/50 immersion program for one year will reach the Junior Novice Mid proficiency level. They can recognize and understand some high-frequency, highly contextualized words and phrases. They can use Chinese to answer simple questions on familiar topics related to the curriculum such as nursery rhymes, songs, and poetry, and use Chinese in very basic social conversations using memorized words and phrases.

At the end of second grade, most students immersed in the program for three years will reach the Junior Novice Mid to Junior Novice High levels on the SOPA scale. They can recognize and read with accuracy frequently seen words and highly contextualized words and phrases that relate to the school's or district's 2nd grade Chinese curriculum. They can maintain simple conversations with their teachers and peers at the sentence level and respond to topics that are related to a second grade curriculum both in academic and social interactions, without interruption. They have basic concepts of the structure of Chinese characters and knowledge of radicals. (For discussion of radicals, see the CELIN Brief, *Developing Initial Literacy in Chinese*). They are also able to decode the form and meaning of characters. They will begin to write short essays with topics that are familiar to a second grader's life experiences with a topic sentence, supporting details, and concluding sentences.

At the end of third grade, most students immersed in the program for four years will reach the Novice Mid to Novice High proficiency levels. They can recognize and read with accuracy frequently seen words and highly contextualized words and phrases that relate to the school's or district's third grade Chinese curriculum. They can use context clues to determine the meaning of unfamiliar characters and comprehend the given texts. They can communicate needs, personal experiences, opinions, and ideas in classroom discussions in all core

content areas. They can maintain conversations with their teachers, peers, and standard Mandarin speakers in familiar topics at the short paragraph level and respond to topics that are related to the third grade curriculum both in academic and social interactions, without interruption. They have basic concepts of the radicals and structures of Chinese characters and are able to use certain grammatical structures to make meaningful sentences. They will follow step-by-step written directions and begin to write a multiple-paragraph essay using a structured model and teacher guidance. They can write essays with topics that are familiar to a third grader's life experiences with a topic sentence, supporting details, and concluding sentences.

At the end of fourth grade, most students immersed in the program for five years will reach the Novice High to Intermediate Low proficiency levels. They can recognize and read with accuracy frequently seen words and highly contextualized words and phrases that relate to the school's or district's fourth grade Chinese curriculum. They can generate and answer questions to demonstrate reading comprehension, monitor their comprehension, and use strategies to self-correct when needed. They can maintain conversations about familiar topics with native Mandarin speakers at the sentence or a string of sentences level and respond to topics that are related to a fourth grade curriculum both in academic and social interactions, without interruption. They have knowledge about the Chinese writing system and are able to use certain sentence patterns to write meaningful sentences. They can follow multiple written directions and begin to write a multiple-paragraph essay using a structured model and teacher guidance. They can apply the writing process and write in a variety of modes.

At the end of fifth grade, most students immersed in the program for six years will reach the lower ends of the Intermediate Low proficiency level. As they continue through sixth grade, they will progress through to the higher ranges of this level; i.e. Intermediate Low. They can recognize and read with accuracy frequently seen words and highly contextualized words and phrases that relate to the school's or district's fifth and sixth grade Chinese curriculum. They can generate and answer questions to demonstrate reading comprehension, monitor their comprehension, and use strategies to self-correct when

needed. They can maintain conversations with native Mandarin speakers at the short paragraph-like level and respond to topics that are related to the fifth and sixth grade curriculum in academic and social interactions. They have knowledge about the Chinese writing system and are able to use certain grammatical patterns and connected sentences to write meaningful paragraphs. They are able to follow steps to do research papers and present topics that are focused and organized with regard to personal interests or studies. They can follow multiple written directions and begin to write a multiple-paragraph essay using a structured model and teacher guidance. They can apply the writing process and write in a variety of modes.

At the end of seventh grade, most students immersed in the program for eight years will reach the higher end of the Intermediate Low to Intermediate Mid proficiency levels. They can recognize and read with accuracy frequently seen words and highly contextualized words and phrases that relate to the school's or district's seventh grade Chinese curriculum. They can generate and answer questions to demonstrate reading comprehension, monitor their comprehension, and use strategies to self-correct when needed. They can maintain conversations with native Mandarin speakers at the short paragraph level and respond to topics that are related to the seventh grade curriculum in academic and social interactions, without interruption. They have knowledge about the Chinese writing system and are able to use certain sentence patterns and connected sentences to make meaningful paragraphs. They are able to follow steps to do research papers and present topics that are focused and organized with regard to personal interests or studies. They can follow multiple written directions and begin to write a multiple-paragraph essay using a structured model and teacher guidance. They can apply the writing process and write in a variety of modes.

At the end of eighth grade, most students immersed in the program for nine years will reach the Intermediate Mid proficiency level. Some students will reach the lower range of the Intermediate High proficiency level, whereas some students will still be at the higher end of the Intermediate Low level. For the most part, students can recognize and read with accuracy frequently seen words

and highly contextualized words and phrases that relate to the school's or district's eighth grade Chinese curriculum. They can easily and confidently generate and answer questions to demonstrate reading comprehension, monitor their comprehension, and use strategies to self-correct when needed. They can maintain conversations with native Mandarin speakers at the short paragraph level, even when the topics are unfamiliar. They are able to respond to topics that are related to an eighth grade curriculum in academic and social interactions, without interruption. They have knowledge about the Chinese writing system and are able to use certain sentence patterns and connected sentences to make meaningful paragraphs. They are able to follow steps to write research papers and present topics that are focused and organized with regard to personal interests or studies. They are able to explain historical events and trends that require clear understanding of timeframes and logical thinking. They can follow multiple written directions and write a multiple-paragraph essay using a structured model and teacher guidance. They can apply the writing process and write in a variety of modes.

When a K-8 program is articulated with a high school program, most students who have participated in an immersion program for ten years will reach the Intermediate High and Advanced Low proficiency levels at the end of ninth grade, if they continue to study Chinese. They can recognize and read with accuracy frequently seen words and highly contextualized words and phrases that relate to the school's or district's ninth grade Chinese curriculum. They can easily and confidently generate and answer questions to demonstrate reading comprehension, monitor their comprehension, and use strategies to self-correct when needed. They can maintain conversations with native Mandarin speakers at the paragraph level, even when the topics are unfamiliar. They are able to respond to topics that are related to a ninth grade curriculum in academic and social interactions, without interruption. They have knowledge about the Chinese writing system and are able to use certain sentence patterns and connected sentences to make meaningful paragraphs. They are able to write research papers and present topics that are focused and organized with regard to personal interests or studies. They are able to explain historical events and trends that

require clear understanding of time frames and logical thinking. With guidance and preparation, they are able to participate in debate and argue and express their own thoughts clearly. They can follow multiple written directions and begin to write a multiple-paragraph essay using a structured model and teacher guidance. They can apply the writing process and write in a variety of modes. In the ninth grade, students may choose to enroll in a Chinese AP class and take the AP exam if the school offers them.

Profiles of Students in a Chinese Language Program, Grades 6/7 to 12

This section describes profiles of students at different levels of instruction in a Chinese as a world language program for grades 6/7 to 12.

At the end of Chinese Level 1 (after the students are in the program for one year), most students will reach the Novice Low to Novice Mid proficiency levels. They develop basic knowledge about initial Chinese character literacy (see the CELIN Brief, *Developing Initial Literacy in Chinese*) and can recognize, understand, and write some high-frequency, highly contextualized words and phrases related to daily activities. They can communicate about a limited number of very familiar topics, such as greetings, self-introduction, and basic information about everyday life, using Chinese words and phrases they have practiced and memorized.

At the end of Chinese Level 2, most students will be solidly at the Novice Mid proficiency level, and some will reach the Novice High level. They can understand frequently seen and highly contextualized words and phrases and simple statements on very familiar topics. They can maintain simple conversations at the basic sentence level and respond to topics that are related to the school's or district's Chinese curriculum in academic and social interactions. They can begin to write short essays using a combination of Chinese characters and pinyin and mostly in a few sentences, and other written pieces such as short notes, a pen pal letter or email, or other tasks that are familiar to the life experiences of eighth graders or high school students.

At the end of Chinese Level 3, most students will reach the Novice High proficiency level, with some students achieving the Intermediate Low level. They can recognize and read with accuracy frequently seen words and highly contextualized words and phrases that relate to the school's or district's Chinese curriculum. They can use context clues to determine the meaning of unfamiliar characters and comprehend the given texts. They can communicate needs, personal experiences, opinions, and ideas in classroom discussions in all core content areas. They can maintain conversations with their teachers, peers, and standard Mandarin speakers in familiar topics at the short paragraph level and respond to topics that are related to the curriculum both in academic and social interactions, without interruption. They have basic concepts of the radicals and structures of Chinese characters and are able to use certain grammatical structures to make meaningful sentences. They will follow step-by-step written directions and begin to write a multiple-paragraph essay using a structured model and teacher guidance particularly if they are allowed to key in pinyin to compose on a computer. They can write essays with topics that are familiar to the life experiences of students at their grade level with a topic sentence, supporting details, and concluding sentences.

At the end of Chinese Level 4, most students will reach the Novice High to Intermediate Low proficiency levels. They can recognize and read with accuracy frequently seen words and highly contextualized words and phrases that relate to the school's or district's Chinese curriculum. They can generate and answer questions to demonstrate reading comprehension, monitor their comprehension, and use strategies to self-correct when needed. They can maintain conversations with native Mandarin speakers at the short paragraph level and respond to topics that are related to the curriculum in academic and social interactions. They have knowledge about the Chinese writing system and are able to use certain grammatical patterns and connected sentences to write meaningful paragraphs, particularly when writing on the computer. They are able to follow steps to write research papers and present topics that are focused and organized with regard to personal interests or studies. They can follow multiple written directions and begin to write a multiple-paragraph essay using a structured

model and teacher guidance. They apply the writing process and can write in a variety of modes.

At the end of Chinese Level 5, most students will be solidly at the Intermediate Low level, while many of them may reach the Intermediate Mid proficiency levels. They can understand short texts that deal with basic personal, social, and academic topics that relate to the school's or district's curriculum and their life experiences. They can generate and answer questions to demonstrate reading comprehension, monitor their comprehension, and use strategies to self-correct when needed. They have developed knowledge and strategies for recognizing the specific aspects of the Chinese language such as Chinese characters and grammar structures and have started to create meaning in the language. They can maintain conversations on familiar topics in sentences or strings of sentences and sometimes at the paragraph level. They can write, by hand or on a computer, simple reports about their school subjects or simple stories or notices for public distribution. They can easily understand messages that relate to everyday life situations and authentic material such as public notices, announcements, and advertisements. They can generate and answer questions to demonstrate reading comprehension, monitor their comprehension, and use strategies to self-correct when needed. They can maintain conversations at the paragraph level and respond to topics that are related to their grade-level curriculum in academic and social interactions. They are able to follow steps to write research papers and present topics that are focused and organized with regard to personal interests or studies.

At the end of Grade 12, most students who have been in the program for six years may be at the higher range of the Intermediate Mid or Intermediate High level, with some students reaching the Advanced Low level. They can understand short texts and messages about basic personal, social, and academic topics that relate to the school's or district's curriculum and their life experiences. They can generate and answer questions to demonstrate reading comprehension, monitor their comprehension, and use strategies to self-correct when needed. They can maintain conversations at the paragraph level and respond to topics that are related to the curriculum in academic and social interactions. They are able to follow

steps to write research papers and present topics related to work and career writing needs.

The expected learner profile for the AP level seems to be the same as that of Chinese Level 5 and above. Generally, students who score 4-5 on AP exams will be ready for a third-year Chinese language course at the college or university level. Other factors, such as the student's cognitive and emotional levels, may also need to be considered.

Multiple Paths to Attaining Higher Levels of Proficiency

Although there is diversity in types of language learning programs, the most prevalent are those described here. However, the goal for many Chinese immersion programs is considerably broader than the programs described, allowing students who participate in an immersion program in their elementary school years, through Grade 8, to continue their intensive study of Chinese in middle school, high school, and college. Many programs in the United States are moving in this direction. Figure 3 shows possible pathways that Chinese programs can develop and make available to students that will give them opportunities to reach high levels of Chinese proficiency in speaking, listening, reading, and writing and ways that elementary and secondary school Chinese programs can articulate with postsecondary Chinese Language Flagships.

The Language Flagship Program, which began in late 2000, focuses on developing pathways for undergraduate students at U.S. universities to develop highly advanced language skills and cultural competence in critical languages such as Chinese, Arabic, Korean, and Russian. The goal is for these students to reach Superior Level language proficiency (i.e., Interagency Language Roundtable [ILR] Level 3 and/or the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages [ACTFL] Superior Level) and high levels of cultural competence. The Language Flagship Program has 22 U.S. Flagship Centers, 8 overseas Flagship Centers, and 3 K-12 Flagship programs, in African languages, Arabic, Chinese, Hindi and Urdu, Korean, Persian, Portuguese, Russian, and Turkish. Each of the 12 postsecondary Flagship Programs in Chinese (as of 2016) offers well-defined pathways for

students who are committed to attaining high levels (Advanced High or Superior Levels) of language proficiency and cultural literacy. The program combines rigorous language training and content-rich instruction and culminates in a final Capstone year in a country where the language is spoken. This year includes direct enrollment in courses related to the student’s major in a foreign university plus an extended, structured, language-intensive internship in a public or private organization in the country. In sum, the Flagship Program offers students the opportunity to reach professional-level language proficiency while also completing an academic major of their choosing.

There are significant challenges in curricular planning for middle school and high school students who have been in a Chinese immersion program throughout elementary school. One example of curricular programming that motivates and propels students through middle school years has been developed by the Portland Public Schools Chinese Immersion program, which combines classroom instruction with an in-country component in China area and includes significant community engagement and a one-week homestay with a Chinese family. While in China, students in the program are compelled to negotiate Chinese culture and society independently using learned language and culture skills. (Read a more detailed description of this program

here: <http://asiasociety.org/china-learning-initiatives/portland-public-schools-mandarin-immersion-program-oregon>.)

Conclusion

This Brief describes learning outcomes at various levels of Chinese language learning in terms of a nationally recognized language proficiency scale and K-12 performance standards, which are aligned with language programs in K-12 schools in the United States. The clearly defined learning outcomes specify what students at each level should know and be able to do across the three communicative modes — interpersonal, interpretive, and presentational. They are aligned with the newly revised *World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages* (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, n.d.), which “create a roadmap to guide learners to develop competence to communicate effectively and interact with cultural competence to participate in multilingual communities at home and around the world.” The standards-based and performance-oriented learning outcomes for various language proficiency levels described in this brief will help guide the effective teaching and learning of Chinese in the early grades through high school, because all Chinese language programs need to set clear learning outcomes that are aligned with nationally and internationally recognized proficiency scales. The description of the learning outcomes will also help students and their parents have an understanding of what Chinese language proficiency looks like and means at different levels and have a sense of the progress that students are making in learning the language.

Flagship Capstone Program in China
Summer in China or One-Year Study Abroad in China
College/University Language Flagship Program
High School (2 classes per day, each of 55 minutes, 5 days per week)
Middle School (2 classes per day, each of 55 minutes, 5 days per week, with possibility for blended learning)

Figure 3. Possible Pathways to Higher Chinese Proficiency in Immersion and Non-Immersion Programs

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Assessment Instruments Used in Chinese Language Programs in Grades K-12

ACTFL Writing Proficiency Test (WPT)
<http://www.languagetesting.com/writing-proficiency-test>

ACTFL Assessment of Performance Toward Proficiency in Languages (AAPPL)
www.languagetesting.com

Avant Standards-Based Measurement of Proficiency (STAMP Assessment)
<http://avantassessment.com/stamp4s.html>

College Board Advanced Placement (AP) Examination in Chinese Language and Culture
<http://apcentral.collegeboard.com/chinese>

College Board SAT II: Chinese With Listening
<https://sat.collegeboard.org/practice/sat-subject-test.../chinese>

Early Language Listening and Oral Proficiency Assessment (ELLOPA)
www.cal.org/ela/

Hanban Chinese Proficiency Test (Hanyu Shuiping Kaoshi, HSK)
<http://www.china.org.cn/english/features/hsk/105146.htm>

Hanban Youth Chinese Test (YCT)
http://english.hanban.org/node_8001.htm

International Baccalaureate (IB) Program Examinations
<http://www.ibo.org>

NCSSFL-ACTFL Global can-do statements: Progress indicators for language learners.
http://www.actfl.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/Can-Do_Statements_2015.pdf

Student Oral Proficiency Assessment (SOPA)
www.cal.org/ela/sopaellopa/