

[Cultivating Teacher Leaders to Advance the Field of Chinese Language and Culture Education](#)

Robin E. Harvey, Clinical Assistant Professor, New York University

Duarte M. Silva, Executive Director, California World Language Project, Stanford University

The field of Chinese language and culture teaching and learning is both emerging and maturing in the United States. In the past ten years, new programs, including Chinese early language immersion programs, have been established and continue to grow at an unprecedented rate. The Chinese language field needs administrators and teacher leaders who can address the specific and unique features of Chinese language, literacy, and culture, and issues related to program articulation, refinement, sustainability, and teacher preparation and development. The field also must increase its visibility in the world language community; communicate its unique challenges, priorities, and goals to the profession at large; and integrate and sustain Chinese programs as a vital component of world language and general education.

A first potential step in this direction is to cultivate a cadre of leaders who possess the academic background, pedagogical content knowledge, and professional dispositions and experiences necessary to support, expand, and sustain strong Chinese language programs. This Brief outlines the roles of education leaders and the essential knowledge and skills that they need. It focuses on developing these leaders -- administrators and teacher leaders -- for the Chinese language field. It outlines a vision and suggests strategies for how educators in Chinese language and culture programs can be equipped to assume leadership roles. The audience includes Chinese language educators, program and district decision makers, and those who work in teacher programs and other organizations that work to prepare these leaders.

Drawing on literature focused on teacher leadership in education reform, this Brief discusses seven principles of culturally responsive leadership, to guide development of education leaders. Leaders ...

1. Stimulate intentional and purposeful teaching and learning.
2. Lead and influence others by modeling exemplary practices.
3. Challenge themselves and others to pursue a vision of excellence.
4. Build and support the infrastructure for learning and teaching.
5. Develop a culture of collaboration by building trust and effective communication.
6. Promote and facilitate continuous growth and improvement.
7. View development as a continuum of individual and program growth and renewal.

As these principles are implemented, leaders may face challenges in the following domains: cultural, linguistic, and personal barriers may prevent Chinese language educators from stepping up to leadership; their level of mastery of professional and academic English language and control of other pragmatic sociolinguistic cues may compound the problem; intra-language and intra-cultural issues may arise between groups of Chinese educators from different

backgrounds; and the dominant status of English in classrooms, schools, and professional settings may upset the balance between the perceived power of English and Chinese. To overcome these challenges, the Brief proposes the concept of “shared leadership” and instills a process for all educators to explore different dimensions of leadership to create a vision that is inclusive, diverse, and dynamic.

To build on these seven principles and develop leaders who are able to remove these barriers for themselves and others, an effective Chinese education leadership development program must incorporate the following elements into its design and implementation:

- Exploring and navigating the U.S. and Chinese education systems
- Creating and visualizing personalized pathways for career and professional development
- “Stepping out” and “stepping up” capacity building
- Building trust and learning to collaborate
- Creating professional learning communities

This Brief also highlights a few examples to illustrate how to translate these elements into practice, so Chinese educator leaders can become more engaged and maximize their impact:

- Mentoring programs
- Leadership development opportunities
- Professional networks
- A strategic plan for teacher career and leadership advancement

The principles of culturally responsive pedagogy and practices described in this Brief offer suggestions for ways to develop much-needed cadres of education leaders, who can inspire more students to learn and more teachers to teach and engage decision makers and community members to commit to the goal of developing a globally competent citizenry and work force.

The Brief concludes with a list of resources for Chinese educators who aspire to leadership development: national language organizations in the United States to which leaders might belong, educator leadership development opportunities, professional networking opportunities in Chinese, and a professional leadership growth plan.

[*Citation:* Harvey, R.E., & Silva, D. M. (2018). Cultivating Teacher Leaders to Advance the Field of Chinese Language and Culture Education. In S.C. Wang & J.K. Peyton (Eds.), *CELIN Briefs Series*. New York, NY: Asia Society]