

CHAPTER 7

Mandarin Chinese for Professional Purposes for an Internship Program in a Study Abroad

Context

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1 Introduction

In spite of the global economic recession of the past few years, China's economic growth remains comparatively strong. In 2010, it passed Japan and became the second-largest economy in the world after the United States ("World Bank/Data", n.d.). Also, it is now the sole Asian nation to have a gross domestic product/purchasing power parity above the \$10-trillion mark, joining the United States and the European Union since 2010 ("World Bank/Overview", n.d.). In the meantime, more and more learners of Mandarin Chinese as a foreign and second language (CFL/CSL) continue their language study with advanced-level courses relevant to their interest in building a career path that would allow them to work and live in a Chinese-speaking country or community. This tendency is supported by two surveys on learning needs conducted in 2010 and 2013 with students in the Duke Chinese language program on campus, including the Duke students who returned from the Duke Study in China program. The 2013 survey is a replication

study of the 2010 (Lee, 2010). In both surveys, the students were asked to identify their top-two preferences out of five proposed courses¹; Chinese for Business Purposes stood out at top of their list. Additionally, the Chinese host-university, the University of International Business and Economics, recently invited the Duke Study in China program to join their established internship program so as to facilitate the collaborative relationship between the two institutions. The timing of the proposed internship program and the students' learning needs for a Chinese language course focusing on helping them develop proficiency in workplace Chinese propel the author, who directs both programs, to develop a curriculum of Chinese for Professional Purposes (CPP) in the study abroad context.

This proposal will describe the vetting procedures for implementing the internship program and the course proposal that aims at successfully transitioning students from learning Chinese for general purposes in the intensive eight-week curriculum to a month-long internship program proposed by the host university in the summer Duke Study in China program. The needs assessment, the goals and construction of the CPP curriculum, the materials, the assessment, and the timeline for the implementation will be discussed as well.

1.1 Institutional Background

The Duke Study in China (DSIC) program, inaugurated in 1982, is one of the longest-running credit-granting programs in China administered by an American university. Currently, the program offers an intensive summer language curriculum based in Beijing, which requires a language pledge and provides an eight-week curriculum equivalent to two semesters of study. It

¹ The five proposed courses are Chinese for Professional Purposes (or Business Chinese), Media Chinese, Chinese Culture and Society through Films, Chinese-English Translation and Interpretation, Service learning.

is open to students from all accredited American universities and colleges through a competitive review process. The students receive Chinese language training for general purposes in a rich cultural context from second year to fifth year Chinese. The program is fully in charge of its own curriculum, pedagogical methodology, and the hiring and training of the program faculty. The instructional components include lecture, drill sessions, discussion sessions, individual student-teacher conversation sessions, a language practicum, popular Chinese colloquialisms, and learning culture and society through Chinese-language cinemas. The student-teacher ratio of the program is 3:1 as to facilitate individual attention to students. Learning opportunities outside of the classroom include a Chinese language partner program, a homestay housing option, drop-in evening office hours with the faculty, a Chinese Language table, a series of cultural activities, and weekend excursions.

In 2010, DSIC moved the summer program to the University of International Business and Economics (UIBE), which is a national key university in China with a reputation for excellence in teaching and research in the fields of economics, management, law, international trade, and literature. The host university is located in the Chaoyang District of Beijing. This site is convenient to downtown and home to a majority of Beijing's foreign embassies. The relocation has enabled the DSIC program to re-envision its curriculum with greater capacity because of the academic expertise of UIBE and the location of the institution.

1.2 Program Faculty

DSIC program faculty is comprised of a resident director, lead-teachers of each level from Duke and other American universities, and local teachers hired and trained prior to the start

of the program every summer in Beijing. A majority of the local teachers are graduate students or young professionals of Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language (TCFL), Applied Chinese Linguistics, or other related fields. They are selected through a competitive recruiting process in conjunction with a pre-program teacher-training workshop followed by session-long mentoring. The workshop provides these local teachers with a structured curriculum that introduces the DSIC academic standards, methods of teaching in an intensive and immersive program, program goals, and intended outcomes of each curriculum component. The mentoring program offers ongoing support and on-the-job coaching from supervising teachers and the resident director. It is accompanied by peer-mentorship via classroom observation, debriefing meetings, daily group lesson plan preparation, and collaborative team-teaching. The combination of teacher training and the mentoring program facilitates high quality teaching performance and high faculty morale in the intensive summer DSIC program, which is essential to the effectiveness of instruction and the success of the curriculum.

To enhance the curriculum articulation between DSIC and the Chinese program on the Duke campus, DSIC extends invitations to two outstanding DSIC local teachers to teach for the Chinese Program at Duke University in the regular semester. This opportunity is intended to assist these teachers in learning about the students' educational and living experiences in the U.S. and understanding the process of language development among CFL learners. They are expected to return to teach for and take on more responsibilities in the DSIC program the next year. For example, in preparation of the prospective internship program and the CPP course, one of the local teachers, who had a bachelor's degree in International Economy and Trade and some work experience in industry before pursuing graduate education in Teaching Chinese as a Foreign

Language, was invited to teach at Duke in fall 2014. The instructor is a potential candidate as the liaison for the proposed internship program and the instructor for the CPP course.

1.3 Student Profile

The rigorous DSIC curriculum, balanced with interesting travel opportunities, attracts highly qualified and motivated undergraduate students who want to accelerate their mandarin Chinese proficiency and cultural literacy in a short period of time. The students who apply for DSIC are required to have at least one year of formal Chinese language instruction prior to the program. A majority of the DSIC participants come from the College of Arts and Sciences in a variety of American private and public academic institutions. The demographics of the CFL learners has gradually changed over the past twenty years, in part due to the economic growth of China and its impact on the international stage. For example, 31% of the forty-seven 2014 DSIC program participants came from Social Science and Humanity Studies (15.5% each), while 24% were in Science including Engineering, 18% were undecided in their major, 18% were pursuing double majors outside Chinese, and 9% were pursuing single or double majors with a Chinese minor (see Appendix A). One thing worth noting is that all of the humanities students were pursuing a secondary major in Chinese. Most of the students continued to study Chinese without declaring a Chinese minor.

The composition of the students' study background for the 2014 summer DSIC reflects a growing trend in the Duke Chinese Program that students continue to advance their proficiency in the Chinese language to enhance their professional profile without pursuing a degree in Chinese. This indicates a growing demand for advanced-level Chinese language instruction that

would nurture a deeper understanding of the Chinese language, culture, and society. In addition, the increasingly diverse academic background of CFL learners and the growing number of heritage students suggest a need for domain-specific CFL instruction. A language for specific purposes course could effectively enable students to develop knowledge on language features, discourse patterns, and communication skills relevant to their particular needs for subject matter and expertise (Long, 2005; Hyland, 2009; Orr, 2002). Therefore, integrating a CPP course into an internship program in the study abroad context would not only maximize opportunities for students to interact with Chinese native speakers, but also expand their network with professionals in a prospective career in the ever-increasingly competitive global market.

2 Needs Analysis

The needs assessment starts with the collection of information from stakeholders and proceeds with an analysis of their needs (Brown, 2009; Norris, 2009; Long, 2005). Stakeholders include the DSIC committee, the DSIC participants, and two administrators from the Chinese host university. Survey, meetings, and email communications are the instruments used in the assessment process.

The survey with the DSIC participants was conducted through a questionnaire at the end of the 2014 summer program. The goals of the survey were two-fold. One was to gauge the students' interest in and learning needs for an internship program. The other was to determine the duration of the internship program and the possible timing of implementation into the current summer intensive curriculum. For example, one question asked, "do you wish that DSIC had an internship program? If your response is 'yes,' please describe what kind of internship program would interest you." Fifty-three percent of the students were in favor of an internship program

while forty-seven percent did not express interest or indicated “no” (see Appendix B). The comments from students who supported the idea of adding an internship component to DSIC outweighed those who did not express interest. The topics of interest spread across business, finance, international relations, health or biotech companies, medicine, NGOs, media, and law. Nevertheless, there was a hint of concern in the responses over the workload if DSIC had an internship program concurrent with the regular summer intensive program. Similar concerns also appeared in the responses from the participants who chose “no” or did not answer the survey question. The comments from this group of participants were few and representative responses included, “we're plenty busy without it. If the workload decreased then I think an internship program would be feasible”, “if the program had an internship, have it before or after course starts”, and “no strong feeling, either way”. Although the survey questions did not offer the participants specific information about the types and timeline of the internship program in relation to the summer DSIC program, the comments indicated a demand for an internship program that would provide hands-on experience with an application of their domain knowledge as well as fostering their linguistic development and cultural literacy in Chinese (see Appendix B).

The DSIC committee concluded that a current UIBE internship model designed for the international students and which cooperates with a wide variety of industries would suit program academic interests and goals. The committee also recognized that once the DSIC agrees to form an affiliation, it should actively participate in the design of the internship program with the host university and incorporate a course that facilitates internship and co-curricular activities as an extended learning opportunity for students from the regular summer program. This month long

course is the proposed Chinese for Professional Purposes course. In the meantime, the UIBE collaborators have agreed to tailor the internship model to meet the needs of DSIC.

3 Student Learning Outcomes

In spite of student demand for an internship program suggested by the needs analysis, students have rarely had systematic and critical reviews of communication needs in the Chinese business context. The employment of the CPP course could fill an essential need in the students' learning experience and assist them to make a smooth transition from studying the language for general to specific purposes. This course, therefore, aims at developing the learner's knowledge of cross-cultural communication and domain-specific vocabulary and topics in the Chinese business setting.

The needs analysis has helped to identify broader goals for learners in the course, with the expectation that all students will be familiar with the following by the end of the course:

- Popular online Chinese newspapers and magazines with a special emphasis on business and economic news
- The values and trends that shape business practices in China
- An array of linguistic structures essential to the Chinese business setting
- The tools and knowledge that decode the social behaviors in Chinese business and cross-cultural settings

More specific learning outcomes based on the needs analysis have been identified in regards to the kinds of tasks, knowledge, and skills learners will be able to do at the end of the course, such as:

- Compose emails, notes, and public announcements with proper business writing etiquette

- Receive and give instruction over the phone with proper business communication etiquette
- Translate, design and compose their resume in Chinese
- Compose a cover letter in Chinese
- Paraphrase and summarize information from a business newspaper column
- Recognize and compare certain Chinese business etiquette and cultural behavioral conventions
- Describe, interpret, and compare the functions, structures and marketing strategies of different business organizations in their own field

Additionally, the course outcomes will likely be negotiated based on the needs of the learners in a way that will best recognize their background knowledge and past experience, as a way for learners to take ownership of creating their learning goals for the course (Robison, 2009; Nation & Macalister, 2010). The internship students will receive the syllabus in advance, and they will be encouraged to discuss the content in the syllabus with their fellow students and participate in the curriculum planning. Therefore, the course syllabus and outcomes are fluid. It will be adjusted according to the students' learning needs and completed when the course is implemented. The categories organized in the syllabus will be based on the project and theme designed for each week.

4 Materials and Curriculum

The CPP course will be a non-credit, mandatory course for students who have successfully completed the summer intensive language study with the Duke Study in China-Beijing program and who want to participate in a follow-up month-long internship program

organized by the host university UIBE. The DSIC students from all levels are eligible to apply. A language pledge will be honored in the campus environment and classroom meetings.

To enhance the student's cross-cultural competency and the meaningful use of the language in real business settings, the course syllabus will be content- and task-based with an emphasis on project-based learning. The course format consists of group reflection and tutorial sessions, each meeting twice a week. During these meetings, students will be encouraged to share their viewpoints on the reading materials, examine the meaning systems of Chinese culture and its impact in business settings, and share their experiences from the work place. As they seek council on workplace communication situations, they will gain support and guidance from their peers and the instructor. Additionally, the instructor will work with individual students on linguistic errors and improve presentation skills during the tutorial sessions. The combination of group reflection, tutorial sessions, and readings aims at raising the student's awareness of cultural similarities and differences in the Chinese business settings when they compare cultural values and behaviors to their own culture, and helping the students develop cross-cultural communication skills and the knowledge of domain-specific vocabulary, discourse practices, and topics.

Because the course is only four weeks long, the course materials will be drawn from various media resources in both the Chinese and English languages instead of one course book. While English reading materials will provide an in-depth discussion and analysis to help students learn about Chinese communication styles and the belief system in Chinese society, the Chinese learning materials will complement the English articles and mainly be adopted from popular

online media resources such as video clips, interviews, articles from Chinese business journals, and pedagogical texts from published textbooks for courses on Business Chinese. Some examples for the topics introduced through the reading materials include *qunti yishi* (group-oriented consciousness), *guanxi* (networking), *shehui dengji* (hierarchy), and *mianzi* (public self-image). To verify whether the cultural perspectives introduced in class have changed in modern day Chinese society, learning activities will include conducting interviews with native speakers outside of class. Students will be required to write about their interviews in a diary, which will be submitted to the instructor twice a week.

The teaching and learning activities applied to CPP anchors on content- and task-based instruction. This will also serve as common ground for the DSIC internship students who come from different academic institutions with diverse study backgrounds and varied advanced proficiency levels in the Chinese language, ranging from Advanced-Low to Advanced-High in reference to the ACTFL proficiency guidelines. To integrate the student's prior knowledge into performance, the assigned projects will proceed with pre-, during-, and post-task activities. These activities will support different learning modes and provide ample learning opportunities for students to use knowledge (e.g., the language and content) learned in the classroom in real-life situations and reflect on the significance of those experiences. For example, students will learn Chinese social and business etiquette related to writing emails and memos, making requests, declining invitations, and receiving and giving instructions over the telephone, as well as creating a company portfolio that introduces the company where the student will do an internship. The students will be exposed to a variety of learning opportunities that facilitate student initiative to express their thoughts and opinions in Chinese and strive for achieving

“adequate mutual understanding of meaning intensions” through socialization (Van den Branden, Bygate, & Norris, 2009, p. 3). A large body of research has supported the effectiveness of task-based instruction in foreign language education (see for example Ellis, 2005; Long & Crookes, 1993; Nunan, 2004; Skehan, 2003).

5 Assessment and Evaluation

To evaluate if the curriculum design can help learners effectively achieve the intended outcomes, an assessment plan consisting of multiple sources and methods will be implemented into the internship program and the CPP course. The information will be systematically collected from and shared with the stakeholders comprised of the DSIC internship students, the instructor, the DSIC committee, the UIBE counterparts, and the intern supervisors in the companies. The students will be asked to prepare a work log that records their daily activities at work and write a diary wherein they jot down any thoughts and particular experiences for the day. They will also write reflection papers in response to the weekly readings and reflection sessions. These documents will be submitted at the end of the program. In addition, we will also survey the internship students, the liaison of the internship program, the supervisors in the companies, and the CPP course instructor at the end of the program. Survey results and the analysis of the texts from diaries, work logs, and reflection papers will be followed up by selective interviews. The assessment will be triangulated by different sources and methods so as to attain objective information to help evaluate the effectiveness of the course and further develop the course in the future.

6 Conclusion

This CPP course, in conjunction with an internship program, could maximize the efficacy of the DSIC student's study abroad experience. Nevertheless, a few challenges for the new curriculum initiative are anticipated. First, to ensure a successful collaborative experience with the host university on the new endeavor, it is important for the administrators from both institutions and the course designer to work out a plan that suits each other's working style and institutional systems. An onsite visit and face-to-face meetings are scheduled for the coming summer so as to overcome this challenge. Secondly, because of different academic calendars in China and the U.S., it is challenging to find a fixed date for the short-term internship program. A tight schedule may require some adjustments on the course materials and learning objectives. Upon a full agreement between the participating parties of the logistics of the internship program, a second phase of needs analysis could help avoid compromising the intended curricular expectations. Lastly, working with people from a different culture, system, and, in this case, a different industry could present challenges. An open-minded attitude will help the involved parties to set the program off to a good start.

Two of the DSIC committee members will visit some companies involved in the UIBE internship program and discuss logistics with the host university in summer 2015. If things follow through, both the internship program and the CPP course will be implemented into the 2016 summer program. Until then, the author will prepare rubrics for the course and design another needs assessment with all stakeholders to refine the curriculum of Chinese for Professional Purposes.

Appendix A

Participant Majors in the 2014 DSIC

Major	Percent
Social Sciences	15.5%
Humanities (Double major including Chinese)	15.5%
Science, Math, Computer Science, Engineering	24%
Undecided	18%
Double major (not including Chinese)	18%
Double major OR single major with Chinese minor	9%

Appendix B

Internship Survey Responses from the 2014 DSIC

Do you wish that the program had an internship?

Yes	53%
No	47%

If your response is 'yes,' please describe what kind of internship program and in what area of China would interest you.

Yes, any type, but the opportunity would be nice to have.

Yes, in a Chinese company with some international relations, but then the program has to adjust its intensity for this to happen.

Yes, business, econ, management.

Yes, medicine.

I'd be interested to see what you can come up with.

Yes, I would like to work in China at some point, but don't know the specifics.

Yes, commercial, law, anything

Would be an interesting option, but tough to balance the workload, personally I would be interested in interning at a health/biotech company, but obviously my Chinese level is insufficient for them.

Yes, finance.

Yes, Chinese workplace environment e.g. a bank/hospital/non-profit

Yes, political/journalism

Yes, law/business

Yes, but couldn't be too much, we already have a ton of work! women's health, economic development

Yes, and what kind would interest you?

hospital, health-related

afternoon internship in a business company

working with an NGO

public policy

bank, non-profit, foreign service of some sort?

Anything business-related, engineering possibly

related to my major, or research about social issues

international relations or business

one that allows me to speak and practice Chinese
