

Strategies for Improving Placement, Curriculum, and Instruction in a Heritage-track Chinese Language Curriculum

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A considerable amount of scholarly research on heritage language learning has been created concerning the program effectiveness of dual track language curriculum in mainstream education system. In looking at the characteristics of heritage learners and their learning motivations, this study investigates ways in which contextualizing a language placement test for heritage speakers of Chinese can better meet the learning needs of heritage language learners (HLL) and enhance the efficacy of curriculum planning and instructional practice in a Chinese program at an American university. The data collected from an online learning background questionnaire, a few examples of placement interviews and writing samples from students who went to Chinese community schools will be discussed. The contextualized placement procedure includes self- placement guidelines, an oral proficiency interview (OPI), and reading and writing assessments.

It empowers learners' participation in the decision making process and aligns the objectives of the placement test with the curriculum goals. At the same time, teachers are encouraged to work with each other as a team and consult with one another with respect of making final recommendation to students for placement. The contextualized placement procedure has not only improved the placement accuracy for each Chinese course, but also established the group morale that encourages interaction and communication between the teacher and students. The supportive learning environment further inspires the faculty to innovate the curriculum based on HLLs' learning needs. Examples of curriculum innovation project will be shared with the audience at the presentation.