A Dissertation

entitled

Chinese Heritage Language School Teachers’ Pedagogical Belief and Practice of the

Contextualized Language Instruction

by

Yue Gu

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

Doctor of Philosophy Degree in Curriculum and Instruction

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August 2015
An Abstract of
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This study utilized computer-mediated teacher professional development program to involve Chinese Heritage School (CHS) teachers investigating their teaching practices, focusing on the content of building up a contextualized teaching and learning environment for CHS learners. By examining the process of CHS teachers’ development, this study aimed to: first, understand the CHS teachers’ primary understanding and practices of the contextualized language instruction in CHS classrooms; and second, examine the change made on CHS teachers’ understanding of contextualized language instruction over time.

Keywords: Chinese Heritage Schools, teachers, contextualized language instruction, professional development, computer-mediated learning, learning community
This is dedicated to my parents for their unconditional love and support throughout my life. They never allowed me to doubt that I could work through the challenges and achieve this goal.
Acknowledgements

Special thanks are due to my committee members, who made my journey of the research the most intellectually enjoyable time of my life. I am always thankful to have received a great deal of assistance from all participant teachers in my research and some faculty members at UT and many friends accompanied me throughout this arduous journey.

I am extremely fortunate to have Dr. Marcella Kehus as my advisor and committee chair. She has given her enthusiasm, encouragement, research guidance and professional concern to a motivated and perseverant, but anxious and inexperienced teacher educator from China. During the weekly supervision meetings within consecutive four semesters, she spent countless hours providing feedback on my drafts and suggesting different ways of making better arguments. I will always have fond memories of the dinner discussion and academic conference trip, during which she bought me books to let me taste the pleasure of writing and shared her experience of becoming a good writer.

I would like to extend my thanks to my co-chair and also my department chair, Dr. Leigh Chiarelott. The enlightenment and inspiration from his marvelous work “Curriculum in Context: Designing curriculum and instruction for teaching and learning in context” made an indelible impression on me. Without all the supports he provided financially and academically since the first day I came in this program, it would not have been possible for me to finish my doctoral study at UT.

Certainly Dr. Anchung Cheng, a committee member who I have closely worked with for six years deserves special recognition. Serving as a research fellow in two of her
nationally funded research projects helped me to cultivate my interests and research competence in the field of heritage language education and language teacher education. With the opportunities of participating in her research, I had a chance to know and work with the group of the Chinese Heritage School teachers with incredible passion, as well as the chance to collect and use the data in my dissertation.

I am also grateful to another committee member, Dr. Florian Feucht, who has started offering valuable advice since the first semester I came to the UT. He also provided invaluable contributions to the qualitative methodology used in my research by involving me in his advanced research method seminar and his epistemology research. To me, he exemplifies an active and creative scholar, simultaneously demonstrates how to construct and share knowledge with his students.

I would like to express my sincere thanks and appreciations to the dedicated teachers teach in Chinese Heritage School, who provide me with their tremendous support and amazing experiences. This research was originally motivated by witnessing Chinese Heritage School teachers’ commitment to Chinese teaching and willingness to improve their teaching and impact their students. I hope my work has adequately documented their stories and will offer some insight, strategies, and encouragement to other community-based heritage schools and other immigrant communities.
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Operational Definition

*Heritage Language Speaker:* It refers to a student who is raised in a home where a non-English language is spoken, who speaks or merely understands the heritage language, who is to some degree bilingual in English and heritage language (Valdés, 2000a, 2000b). Heritage language speakers are different in their language expertise, language affiliation and language inheritance. There is no single profile that can describe the heritage language speakers, as this term can cover a heterogeneous population.

*Heritage Language School:* Heritage language schools are the educational institutions or programs the ethnic groups have historically set up and maintained to support the teaching of their language and cultures. (Bradunas, 1988; Fishman, 2001)

*Chinese Heritage School:* It refers to a program or school held on weekends which is designed to teach the Chinese language and culture to the community.

*Chinese Heritage School Teacher:* A person who instructs the students in language (and often culture) at a Chinese Heritage School. This person typically works part-time on a volunteer basis and is nearly always a native Chinese speaker and rarely a professional teacher.

*Professional Development:* It is defined as the activities that develop an individual’s skills, knowledge, expertise and other characteristics as a teacher. The definition used in this research recognizes that the development can be provided in many ways, ranging from the formal to the informal. It can be made available through external expertise in the form of courses, workshops or formal qualification programs, through collaboration between schools or teachers across schools, such as observational visits to other schools or teacher networks or within the schools in which teachers work through
coaching/mentoring, collaborative planning and teaching, and the sharing of good practices.

Teachers’ Beliefs: The educational research community has been unable to adopt a specific working definition for teachers’ beliefs, but a number of studies (Brown & Cooney, 1982; Sigel, 1985 & Pajares, 1992) help the author to summarize the working definition for this research as people’s beliefs are subjective attitudes and criteria, from their experience, which guide people to judge relevant objects and make further decisions.

Teachers’ Knowledge: Knowledge of a person refers to the person’s acquaintance with facts, truths, or principles in mind. This research will adopt the constructivist view on knowledge; knowledge is socially constructed through collaborative talk and interaction, and around meaningful and whole activities (Vygotsky, 1987).

STARTALK Program: STARTALK’s mission is to increase the number of Americans learning, speaking, and teaching critical need foreign languages by offering students and teachers of these languages creative and engaging summer experiences that strive to exemplify best practices in language education and in language teacher development, forming an extensive community of practices that seeks continuous improvement in such criteria as outcomes-driven program design, standards-based curriculum planning, learner-centered approaches, excellence in selection and development of materials, and meaningful assessment of outcomes.

Contextualized Language Instruction: Context “as language teachers, refers to the degree to which meaning and situations from the world outside the classroom are present in an instructional approach, method, or classroom activity, thus engaging learners in
constructing meaning and in using L2 to communicate and acquire new information” (Shrum & Glisan, 2010, p. 47).

**Pedagogical Content Knowledge:** Teacher’s pedagogical content knowledge is the intersection of subject-specific knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, and knowledge of the teaching context (Shulman, 1987).

**Inquiry Community:** The concept of learning community in this research refers to an “inquiry community” which is “a teacher community serves the role of systemic inquiry conducted with the support of colleagues as a means of improving teaching and learning in their own classrooms and schools” (Levine, 2001, p. 109).
Chapter One

Introduction

The United States is rich in its diverse language and cultures, given the fact that one in five people in the United States speaks a language other than English. Early in 1972, Fishman urged that these ethnic languages were a national resource that must be preserved. Researchers (Brecht & Walton, 1994; Campbell & Rosenthal, 2000) believed that in order to preserve the national resources and build up the language capacity, there was a serious need for promoting heritage language education and developing the heritage language competence of the heritage language speakers.

Recently, public and private K-12 schools and institutions of higher education have become more aware of this need and combined their efforts to preserve American’s immigrant and indigenous languages. A growing body of research has recognized the central role that community-based heritage schools play in heritage language maintenance and foreign language education among school-age children (Kondo-Brown, 2006; Cummins, 1995; He, 2001; Man, 2006; Shibata, 2000; Shin, 2005). Using the Chinese community as an example, there are more than one thousand Chinese Heritage Schools (CHSs) all over the United States. It has been estimated that more than seventy percent of the Chinese language education that occurs before college in the United States has been provided by community-based CHSs. CHSs also have the to be a potential, viable teacher pool for K-12 education (Sweley, 2006).

However, “a number of heritage language communities face challenges as they seek to preserve and pass on their linguistic and cultural legacies to their children” (Compton, 2001, p. 145). Besides legitimizing and advocating the programs in
mainstream society, improving curriculum and materials and developing teachers were essential to the development of heritage language education.

**Heritage Language as Linguistic and Cultural Resources**

The speakers of these languages and the members of these cultures represent a unique and significant potentiality for the United States to build up the language competence capacity. These ethnic languages and cultures are protected and maintained with the efforts of the local immigrant communities and researchers. Many community schools such as Chinese, Korean and Hebrew schools have served as a place to maintain the heritage language and culture. The need for maintaining the ethnic languages was also recognized, emphasized and re-emphasized by the researchers. Fishman (1972) urged that ethnic languages were national resources that must be preserved. Brecht and Walton (1994) followed the point by Ruiz (1984) which not only considered languages as a resource, but also discovered the hidden treasure to build language capacity. They proposed a framework for examining language education and suggesting five sectors — the government, the private provider, the home country, the educational system, and the heritage sectors — should work together to build the capacity (Brecht & Walton, 1994). Their insight on “publicizing the achievement of ethnic community schools and bringing the heritage sector to the attention of the formal educational system” (Wang, 2004, p.12) was a great contribution to maintain heritage language and culture and enhance the diverse culture of the U.S. Later studies concerning heritage language education in discussing linguistic, pedagogical, social and political issues related to heritage language learners had been widely found (Brecht & Ingold, 1998; Kondo-Brown, 2003, 2005;

The national need for individuals with a high level of proficiency and literacy in Less Commonly Taught Languages (LCTLs) after the September 11 in order to have competitiveness in a global world became another impetus for the development of heritage language education. The focus of kindergarten to the twelfth grade (K-12) public education within the United States has expanded to preparing the students for global citizenship with the ability to navigate through language barriers and cultural differences. “At the present time in the United States, various national initiatives are underway that involve heritage language learners and their education which is designed with a resource orientation” (Wang, 2004, p.17).

Along with the larger society’s initiatives and the efforts of the parents of ethnic communities, there were ever-increasing educational programs available for school-age heritage language learners in the United States, such as integrated classes which were scheduled within the regular school day curriculum, immersion bilingual programs as well as non-integrated classes which were held outside the school day by the communities. A growing body of research also recognized the central role that community-based heritage schools played in heritage language maintenance among school-age children (Kondo-Brown, 2006; Cummins, 1995; He, 2001; Man, 2006; Shibata, 2000; Shin, 2006).

In terms of the merit of heritage language education, there were three levels of benefits. On a national level, languages other than English have been viewed as “an indispensable national resource what will enhance the nation’s economic, cultural, and
moral growth” (Kondo-Brown, 2003, p.2). At an individual level, evidence from the research conducted in the United States and Canada context (Gibson, 1998; Cummins, 1981) suggested that heritage language learning facilitated positive ethnic identity development and academic success. Evidence shown by Tse (2001) suggested students who were already fluent in English and who maintained and developed their heritage language could become bilingual and biliterate which carried personal advantages as well as potential contribution to society. Studies showed that the bilingual children possessed cognitive and linguistic advantages, such as a highly developed executive control system, greater metalinguistic awareness and a better ability to manage multiple tasks (Bialystok & Feng, 2009). As a consequence, the ability developed enhanced school performance (Tse, 2001) allowing access to more socio-cultural capital (Tse, 2001; Wang, 2004), possessing more career options and higher salaries. At the community level, heritage language development of each individual prevented the loss of language and helped to maintain the heritage language and culture within the immigrant community. For the domain community in which the heritage learners were educated or grew up, there was a diversity of visions and perspectives brought to the school community as well as neighborhood by the heritage language learners. The experience and teaching resources from the CHS teachers were valuable for improving the effectiveness of differentiated language classes. The formal education system also benefited from the increased awareness of minority students, which helped them to succeed in their education.

By realizing that the resource orientation was not enough to advocate the mainstream society to recognize the importance of the heritage language development, Wang proposed a way to reframe the resource arguments that “1.) recognizes the
importance and development of competences in the English and heritage language and culture; 2.) goes beyond economic competitiveness and national security to include the cultural, social, and personal benefits of bilingualism and biculturalism; and 3.) provides evidence that will illustrate the strategies and benefits of maintaining one’s heritage language and culture while simultaneously developing literacies in the English and the dominant society” (Wang, 2004; p.21). The main goal of reframing this resource argument was aiming to “convince the formal educational system and society to recognize the value and benefits of biliteracy” (Wang, 2004; p.21) as well as to reassure the confidence of the heritage language groups in continuing to engage in heritage language and culture maintenance.

**Current Situation of Chinese Heritage School**

As mentioned earlier, there were many benefits of heritage language development for individuals, communities as well as a nation. Therefore, it was crucial to optimize this unique opportunity for heritage language learning. Gallagher (1996) suggested that, “communities should better utilize the Chinese language environment, improve teaching materials, and adopt more diversified teaching methods to solve these problems” (p. 77). Enhancing the Chinese language environment both in class and at home, improving teaching materials and adopting more diversified teaching methods could not take place without teachers’ professional development first. The teachers’ ability to teach Chinese language as a heritage language using state-of-the-art-pedagogy was essential to the development of Chinese heritage language education.

The current curriculum the heritage learners were using was analyzed to determine inadequacies that may have led to a call for the development of the new
curriculum. First, there was not a comprehensive review of the existing standards, curriculum and assessment of the CHSs. Second, most of the curriculum was designed in the way of content-oriented, relying on the only material available to them — the textbooks. Third, the curriculum built was based on the conception and misconception of the Chinese language learning and CHS learners. In Gallagher’s (1996) study, she claimed the unique goals of curriculum, learning and teaching could be achieved based on the positive factors in CHSs. Making better utilization of these inherently positive factors would yield results equivalent to the outstanding achievements attained in Chinese language schools in other areas. The following is an overview of the challenges and advantages in terms of three important factors: instruction, curriculum and teacher development; which impact the innovation of the curriculum.

According to the survey conducted by the National Foreign Language Center (NFLC, 2010), the issues and instructional concerns that existed in CHSs included six major groups: professional expertise, credit transfer, instructional materials, curriculum, teaching methodology, and testing and assessment. According to the above reasons, the instructional challenges related to the inherent inadequacy existed in the following aspects: lack of pedagogical information, conflicting teaching styles, teaching materials, lack of practical knowledge for teacher to follow, lack of support outside of community and family.

CHSs were not the most ideal place to develop the heritage learners’ biliteracy; however, it was a possible place to develop heritage learners’ heritage literacy. Some of the researchers (Compton, 1999; Gallagher, 1996) saw Chinese communities and schools as a “source of incalculable riches for their members, their students, and their entire
county” (p.5) and provided “unique opportunities for learning” (p.16). There was still limited evidence showing the effectiveness and advantages of teaching heritage language literacy skills in the CHS environment. It was reasonable to address the benefit that from the experience in learning Chinese in CHSs as an effort to resist language loss for the following reasons. First, learning Chinese in CHSs helped the heritage learners acquire or continue to acquire their heritage language at an early age. Second, CHSs as well as families and communities provided opportunities for students to use the language. Third, from a social-cultural perspective, the CHSs as well as families and communities served as a place to help the heritage learners to know their roots and history in order to develop their self-identity. Lastly, the group of parents, teachers and administrators who cared about the students’ needs served in the CHSs. The dedication of teachers and administrators perceived the students as their own children, who made efforts to enable the children to learn and build up their individual heritage language abilities. If suitable support and information was provided for teachers, the facilitation of learning for part-time teachers at CHSs could be optimized. Most teachers desired to provide quality classes for students.

When examining the goal of CHSs, serving the community, teaching and passing on the Chinese language, culture and heritage were the mission or goal claimed by most of Chinese schools. Most parents expected their children to read and write in Chinese and wanted them to use their bilingual ability to prepare their further career. In order to reach such a high and sometimes unexpected aim, administrators and teachers in Chinese schools concentrated more on developing children’s heritage literacy skills instead of whole language skills. Heritage literacy development was treated in a narrow sense —
reading and writing in heritage language. Based on the characteristics of Chinese heritage learners, Kagan and Dillon (2009) proposed that the instruction should be based on five principles of developing the student’s heritage language ability: from aural to reading from spoken to written, from home-based to academic register, from everyday to classroom activities and from motivation to content.

Teaching literacy in a communicative context to the bilinguals required the awareness of learners’ orality. The development of the literacy was based on existing orality to make the intergenerational language and cultural transmission happen. The following aspects were suggested by the researchers and heritage language educators: emphasizing greater support at home; improving classroom environment; developing a curriculum that included listening and speaking; providing homework materials that encouraged the student to be self-reliant; introducing multiple sources of learning; and making Chinese a living language. There was an urgent need of a deep curriculum change in CHS.

Statement of the Problem

Certain unique instructional challenges were identified in CHS classrooms. Many of these challenges resulted from the conflicting learning and teaching styles between CHS learners and their teachers. There was a pervasive pedagogical gap between the diverse backgrounds and needs of the learners and the one-style-fits-all teaching style of the teachers. Moreover, there was a long history of different beliefs about the heritage language learning and teaching between parents and teachers. Historically heritage language teaching looked nothing like contextualized language instruction. Gallagher (1996) suggested that “communities should better utilize the Chinese language
environment, improve teaching materials, and adopt more diversified teaching methods to solve these problems” (p. 77).

Contextualized language instruction was a relatively new paradigm shift in foreign language teaching spurred by the impetus of concepts of assessment and teaching for language proficiency and Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21st century (SFLS) (Shrum & Glisan, 2010). However, trainings and supports for this new way of teaching had been provided from various organizations across the United States and around the world to improve the language teaching and learning. However, the contextualized language instruction was still not clearly defined in teaching practices. Aligning instructional practice with contextualized language instruction required that teachers built a shared understanding about the knowledge and skills in a specific context, such as the CHS setting, and made this content explicit via their discussion and teaching practices in the classrooms. There was a pressing need to provide the opportunities for the CHS teachers to reflect and deepen their understanding of the contextualized language instruction within a supportive environment and develop their learning through teaching practices.

A wide range of research conducted on CHS improvement described a situation in which part-time volunteer teachers in CHSs faced challenges such as limited resources, insufficient teacher support and little to no funding as well as unrealistic expectations from parents, students with diverse backgrounds with varying needs and levels of language proficiency (Wang, 2004). Few studies have been able to provide the solutions for these challenges. Although there were numerous ways to support teachers in developing their professional knowledge and skills, such as online tutorials and
collaboration between the universities and local CHSs, most development models only emphasized on passing the skills and knowledge from master teachers to trainee teachers and assumed that teacher learning was a passive process of knowledge consumption. This type of professional development model largely neglected that teacher learning was an active process of teachers building up their own knowledge and skills needed in teaching practice. Teacher could only learn when they made their own classrooms and schools as the site to inquiring and applied what they learned to their classrooms.

The gaps in support available to teachers in CHSs were identified in a previous CHS teacher professional development study conducted by Chinese Heritage Language Education Research (2013). One such gap was the lack of supportive material and personnel after training, and another was the content or skills learned in the professional development which was often difficult to transfer from learning within a workshop to applying to one’s own classroom. There was a pressing need for the professional development to improve the teachers’ sustainable and transferable skills of lifelong learning (MacNeil & Kahler, 2002; OECD, 1998) rather than to train teachers to reproduce the existing models of teaching.

To meet the learning needs of the teachers with sustainable and transferable skills, professional development needed to be designed to engage teachers in a learning environment which enhanced progressive inquiry, collaborative knowledge advance and in-depth reflection (Hakkarainen, 2003). This environment needed to be a well-designed program in which the participant teachers were able to collaborate as the knowledge builders in order to understand new ways of teaching and learning in the language education. The 2014 STARTALK Chinese teacher training program was designed to fill
the gap of this kind. This Chinese teacher training program used a blended-model to achieve a learner-centered learning environment in foreign and heritage language classroom, teaching with the use of STARTALK-endorsed principles for language learning and teaching. See Appendix A for a detailed description of STARTALK-endorsed principles for the language learning.

Some guidelines and framework, such as the Teacher Effectiveness of Language Learning Model (TELL), were established to guide the curriculum activities and learning experience designed for teachers to alignment with the STARTALK-endorsed principles for the language learning. The TELL framework synthesized work from the general education field regarding the practice that the effective teachers did and made that information specific to the work of the language teachers. The TELL framework aligned with STARTALK-endorsed principles developed STELLA (STARTALK+TELL) learning tools which were organized into the different learning modules to support teacher development.

These learning modules and dimensions were based on the characteristics and behaviors that model teachers exhibited which were the predetermined processes or products of teachers’ development. From this perspective, teacher educators and researchers could know what the processes and final products might be expected, but the specific experiences and processes the teachers underwent were still unclear. Teachers and teacher educators built a shared understanding about the knowledge and skills taught in a specific context, such as the CHS setting, and used negotiations, elaborations and collaborations to make this content (contextualized language teaching and learning) explicit in talk and action.
This research helped to fill the gap left open in the initial teachers’ perceptions and instructional challenges in newly learned content and to understand what happened “when teachers leave the structured and sheltered realm of teacher education and enter the realities of the FL [Foreign Language] classroom” (Watzke, 2007, p.67). Moreover, by putting theory into classroom practice, this research aimed to elaborate on how the teachers’ beliefs and practices changed. Without an understanding of the nature of teacher learning, as Claxton (1985) stated, “what we do in teacher training may be ineffective because it is the wrong thing to do or because it is the right thing done at the wrong time or in the wrong way” (p.82). An answer to the question, “how does the CHS teacher learn to teach?” was crucial in determining the needs of CHS teachers and in planning and creating a higher quality teaching force in the field. Few have acknowledged the problem of how CHS teachers learn to teach and develop their competencies in order to teach Chinese more effectively in CHSs. Organizations associated with the CHS teacher paid little attention to where the capacity of CHS teacher to teach Chinese language originated and how to best enhance the quality of their teaching based on existing talents and resources.

**Purpose of the Study**

This study was designed to address two major challenges of the heritage language education and heritage language teacher education. First, the purpose was to help CHS teachers explore what the ideas about contextualized learning might mean for the way teach students in a CHS. Second, the purpose was to understand how this understanding of contextualized language instruction changed over time. This study utilized the computer-mediated teacher development program to assist CHS teachers as they learned
and further investigated their teaching practices, focusing on the content of building up a contextualized teaching and learning environment for CHS learners. The essential idea was that the participant teachers worked together to make sense of the learned principles on the 2014 STARTALK workshop and worked toward advancing their shared understanding in their teaching context—CHS classrooms and made them explicit in CHS teachers’ teaching practices. By examining the process of CHS teachers’ development, this study aimed to: first, understand the CHS teachers’ pedagogical beliefs and practices of the contextualized language instruction in their CHS classrooms; second, examined the change made in CHS teachers’ beliefs about contextualized language instruction with the support of the learning community.

**Research Questions**

The following two research questions guided the inquiry of the study:

1. What were Chinese Heritage School (CHS) teachers’ pedagogical beliefs and practices of contextualized language instruction in CHS classrooms after leaving the training site and entering their classrooms?

2. How did CHS teachers’ beliefs about contextualized language instruction in CHS classrooms change with the support of learning community?

**Significance of the Study**

The significance of the research was three-fold. First, CHS teachers’ beliefs and practices exhibited in this research enriched the conceptual construct—contextualized language instruction with a great detail as well as broader dimension—in the CHS setting. Second, the process of the contextualized and field-based teachers’ growth contributed to the framework of the transition of teacher’s pedagogical thinking and
practices from a sheltered training to their classroom reality as a whole. Last, by drawing on the community inquiry learning theory, the computer-mediated learning method used by this study provided some implications in designing teacher professional development programs, in terms of supportive content, context, tools and personnel.
Chapter Two

Literature Review

Introduction

This literature review is organized into four sections with each section contributing to the understanding of an aspect of the research topic. The literature review on contextualized language instruction provided the content for the instructional design framework and the focus for this research. It also explained how the teacher professional development affected by the developed understanding of foreign language learning. The review on teacher learning and classroom practices provided a theoretical foundation and some suggestions to sustain the teacher learning outcomes. The experimental research on teachers’ beliefs and their learned knowledge, specifically learner-centered instruction was reviewed to provide the close examples of narrowing down the focus of this research. The preliminary findings in online phases of STARTALK Chinese teacher training program described the needs and the specific context and focus of the current study. The four sections interrelated with each other. The interrelationship of this theoretical framework was illustrated in Figure 1.
Figure 1. Based on Borg’s Model of Teacher Cognition in Language Teaching

This theoretical framework was based on Borg’s (2003) model of teacher cognition in language teaching. Borg’s model has shown the relationships between the teachers’ cognition and teachers’ prior schooling, professional course work, classroom practices, and other contextual factors that might affect the extent to which their pedagogical beliefs reflected their instructional practices. The discussion of this theoretical framework began with an explanation of the source and evolution of contextualized language instruction which was associated with the Standards for Foreign Language Learning (SFLL) (1996) and the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) / National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) standards (ACTFL/NCATE, 2002). An example of how this new paradigm shift in foreign language teaching and learning influenced the professional development opportunities for less commonly taught languages (LCTLs) was provided. STARTALK Chinese teacher training program was used as an example to illustrate the process.
development of teachers’ pedagogical beliefs and practices of contextualized language instruction in this case. This research mainly focused on the teachers’ beliefs and practices after leaving the training site and back to the classroom. From Borg’s model, the teachers’ pedagogical beliefs interacted with teachers’ prior schooling such as the teachers’ previous experience of teaching and learning, professional course work (the learned content—contextualized language instruction in STARTALK program), classroom practice, and the contextual factors (current situation in CHS in this case). Therefore, the teacher’s pedagogical beliefs and practices not only simply reflected what they had learned in the professional development but also expanded the learned content and made the content more concrete after interacting with the other three factors. Each component of this theoretical framework was explained in the following sections.

Development of Foreign Language (FL) Teaching and FL Teacher Development

Evaluation of different methods and approaches of FL. The methods and approaches were evaluated in terms of the degree of the consideration of the role of context which meant evaluating each method by the degree to which the meaning and situations from the outside world were present in the language classroom in each method. This review was not trying to declare one method as superior to the other. “Since there is such a wide variety of teaching situations, types of students, learner needs and the difference in teacher skill in using the method, it is clearly unlikely that one language teaching approach would be better in all situations.” (Horwitz, 2008, p.59)

The context played no role in the earliest method, such as Audiolingual Method (ALM) which focused on translation of printed texts, learning of grammatical rules, and memorization of bilingual word lists (Shrum & Glisan, 2010). “Although the cognitive
approaches advocate creative language practice, usually related to varied contexts, there is often little time left for communicative language use in real-world contexts due to extensive discussion about grammar rules in either a deductive or an inductive mode and mechanical practice” (Shrum & Glisan, 2010, p.48). Chomsky (1965) believed language learning capacity was “hard-wired” into the brain at birth and did not rely on the context in which language is learned or used.

Canale and Swain (1980) among others expended Chomsky’s definition of competence to include gestures, intonation, strategies for making one’s self understood and risk-taking in attempting communication. In reviewing the communicative approach, Savignon (1997) stated “the development of the learner’s communicative abilities is seen to depend not so much on the time they spend rehearsing grammatical patterns as on the opportunities they are given to interpret, to express, and to negotiate meaning in real-life situation” (p. xi). The Natural Approach, Direct Method and Physical Response Method (TPR) were developed since the late 1970s and reflected many of Savignon’s ideas for the communicative approach.

Since World War II, the role of context in proficiency-oriented instruction has evolved gradually. During World War II, the needs for U. S. citizens to be able to communicate with members of other countries became apparent. Many years passed until legislators were prepared to sponsor initiatives that formally proposed the creation of uniform national standards of language teaching and learning by language experts in language associations. During this time, the advocating for the development of language proficiency tests that could be used to measure language proficiency with the support of President Jimmy Carter was instrumental. Later, the orientation of language teaching
started to include the realization that knowing a language meant being able to use it to communicate. Learners used the language to perform functions in a range of contexts and with levels of accuracy in grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, fluency and pragmatic competence, and sociolinguistic competence.

A movement toward serious language study and investigation into language learning and research has resulted in the well-developed content standards and guidelines we have today. This orientation in language teaching approach considered that:

Foreign language has a central role in the learning experience of every learner.

Competence in a language and culture enables the learners to communicate with others in a variety of settings, gain an understanding of self and other cultures, acquire new bodies of knowledge, develop insight into his or her own language and culture, and participate in the global community. Language and culture education enhances communication skills and higher-order thinking skills.

(Shrum & Glisan, 2010, p. 484)

**Contextualized language instruction.** The contextual approach, or contextual teaching and learning, was based on a constructivist theory of teaching and learning. This type of learning took place when teachers were able to present information in a way that students were able to construct meaning based on their own experiences. The characteristics of contextualized instruction included:

1. Emphasizing problem solving;
2. Recognizing that teaching and learning need to occur in multiple contexts;
3. Assisting students in learning how to monitor their learning and thereby become self-regulated learners;
4. Anchoring teaching in the diverse life context of students;
5. Encouraging students to learn from each other; and,
These ideas could be traced back to Dewey’s (1938) ideas which continually emphasized experience, experiment, purposeful learning, freedom, and other concepts of progressive education. Dewey’s (1938) progressive learning theory was based on the idea that people were not just blank slates waiting to be filled with knowledge from kindergarten through college. Instead, Dewey (1938) suggested that students organized the fact-based comprehension through meta-cognition or by building onto prior experiences, preconceptions, and knowledge, and therefore, the educator’s role was in creating an educative experience. Dewey (1938) also introduced the concept of the “experiential continuum” and emphasized building the learning environment, interacting with the world which would promote an understanding of the world and provide a context. Dewey posited that everything must have a context to be able to draw from and have it be educational. To serve this goal, the experience-based model of education required that educators should be able to structure material being studied in a manner that facilitated students making associations between unfamiliar ideas and ordinary life experience. It was also educator’s responsibility to organize the learning experience to allow assimilation of new material in a context appreciable by and beneficial to the student. To sum up, one of Dewey’s preeminent concerns was the educator’s role in creating educative experience that provided “continuity” within the contextualized experience-based student learning process.

“Contextualized instruction has traditionally been used in career and technical classes, and the value of such instructional methods in these courses has been demonstrated by hands-on experience in a shop or laboratory.” (Triyoga, 2010, p.1) On
the other hand, when contextual instructional methods had been used in academic classes, it was historically in low-expectation courses with peripheral references to career and technical applications that were for low-achieving and/or low ability students. “The contextual learning in practices can be categorized in the following three main ways: goal-based, project-based and inquiry-oriented.” (Triyoga, 2010, p.1)

The significance of relatedness among the parts of the world in 21st century had demanded the educators to rethink how they should teach and contextualize the teaching and learning by making learning relevant for students in the classroom. The relationship between content and context became crucial in determining meaning, in that context gave meaning to content. The more students were able to make connections, the more meaning they derived from the content; thus the more retained by the students. At the same time, the students also developed a new sense of appreciation for what was learned. New attitudes to learning were formed, which could facilitate the openness to acquisition of new skills and knowledge. With this concept, the goal of the contextual approach expected that the learning outcomes became more meaningful for students.

Contextual approaches were also applied in foreign language teaching practices. The previous research had narrowed down the contextual teaching and learning approach in foreign language instruction for just providing the simulated context (Yamin-Ali, 2010). As pointed out in the Teacher’s Handbook, context “as language teachers, refers to the degree to which meaning and situations from the world outside the classroom are present in an instructional approach, method, or classroom activity, thus engaging learners in constructing meaning and in using L2 to communicate and acquire new information” (Shrum & Glisan, 2010, p.47).
Under the impetus of the concept of assessing and teaching for language proficiency and the Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21st century (Shrum & Glisan, 2010), the contextualized language instruction emerged as a new paradigm for language teaching which guided curriculum design, instruction, teaching methods and assessment. It was based on Standards for Foreign Language Learning (SFLL) (1996), but enriched the elements of language learning and extended the dimensions of language teaching practices.

The SFLL serve as a set of guidelines, broadly defining the communicative competence that K-12 language learners should have been able to develop as a result of their language study. The original set of SFLL was published in 1996 and was subsequently updated twice. The second publication in 1999 included language-specific applications in Chinese, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, and the Classical languages. The third edition was published in 2006 and included standards for Arabic. The SFLL was composed of five categories, commonly known as the 5Cs: Communication, Cultures, Connections, Comparisons, and Communities. The 5Cs provided guidelines for learning languages and influenced the teaching of languages using practices that focused on developing interpretive, presentational, and interpersonal communicative skills (Communication); studying the products, practices, and perspectives of various cultures (Cultures); connecting foreign language study to other content areas (Connections); comparing the target language and cultures to one’s own (Comparisons); and extending language study beyond the classroom to the local community (Communities).
As a result of the SFLLE, teaching the four skill areas (reading, writing, speaking, and listening) in isolation through the transmission of knowledge from teacher to student was replaced with instructional practices that integrated the four skill areas into three distinct modes of communication. The interpretive mode provided the learner with opportunities to interpret meaning from a wide variety of texts, such as advertisements, newspapers, menus, song lyrics, literary texts, in the target language. The presentational mode allowed learners to share information orally or in writing with a larger audience. The interpersonal mode focused on one-to-one communication on topics that mirrored real-life use of the language (NSFLEP, 1999).

Contextualized language instruction based on SFLLE, enriched the elements of language learning from only a language system to six dimensions: the language system (speech and sociolinguistic elements), cultural traits and concepts, communication strategies, critical thinking skills, learning strategies, other subject matters and technology. Contextualized language instruction could be realized at three different dimensions of the language teaching:

1. Curriculum design in context (what was being taught, content taught in context);
2. Instructional design in context (how to teach, methodology in context); and
3. Language samples (language input in context, teach script & chunks in context).

Table 1 illustrated the Standards for Foreign Language Learning (SFLLE) framework.

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standards: Where We Are Now and Where the Standards Take Us</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Areas of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

23
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>practices</th>
<th>(adapted from Met, 2000, p.52)</th>
<th>(Shrum &amp; Glisan, 2008, original material)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>Concept of proficiency in listening, speaking, reading, writing</td>
<td>Communication in the three modes to mirror real communication and to emphasize the purpose of communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructional goal for tasks</td>
<td>Student pair and group work</td>
<td>Tasks that provide opportunities for students to negotiate meaning, engage in language play, and develop interactional competence (e.g., ability to manage discussions)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interactions between teachers and students</td>
<td>Oral teacher-to-student exchanges that are communicative in nature</td>
<td>Purposeful goal-directed talk that is intellectually meaningful and stimulating (i.e., encourages students to ask questions, expand on their talk, take multiple turns in conversations)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammar &amp; Communication</td>
<td>Grammar as a component of communication rather than an end itself</td>
<td>Grammar that serves communication needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content based learning/skill-based learning</td>
<td>Use of authentic materials and commercially produced materials organized around communicative topic or situations</td>
<td>A central focus on the development of interpretation skills, which are pivotal to acquiring new information cultural knowledge, and connections to other disciplines and target-language communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom activities</td>
<td>Classroom activities that are meaningful and purposeful</td>
<td>A central role for inquiry-based activities, such as cultural investigations, authentic text exploration, and research and technology-based projects—previously considered unit add-ons or supplemental</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment</td>
<td>Classroom environment that focuses on meaningful communication</td>
<td>Classroom environment that fosters a sociocultural community of learners engaged in meaning making and acquiring knowledge through the foreign language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture</td>
<td>Integration of various aspects of culture into language learning</td>
<td>Approach to culture that emphasizes a constructivist approach to exploring the connection of cultural products and practices to their philosophical perspectives, enabling learners to develop more relevant cultural insights into the target culture and their own</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment</td>
<td>Ways of measuring student learning that focus on performance, on knowledge in use</td>
<td>Performance assessments that are integrated with instruction and learning, go beyond paper-and-pencil test formats, and have an expanded role in determining student progress in meeting the standards</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Integrate the contextualized language instruction into planning.** We were hoping the CHS teachers would start to build up their understanding and skills in
STARTALK Chinese teacher program learning community. Table 2 below synthesized the key concepts of the contextualized language instruction from the previous literature which applied to instructional planning. In order to integrate the above teachers’ needs in a more specific level, in view of the contextualized language instruction, the areas of teaching practices in CHS could be integrated into the instructional planning for daily lesson (Chiarelott, 2001; Hadley, 2000; Johnson, 2002, Tileston, 2004 & Yamin-Ali, 2010). This study aimed to explore the focus areas that the participant teachers and the support personnel worked together to make sense of the learned principles from the 2014 STARTALK Chinese teacher workshop and work toward advancing their shared understanding in their teaching context – CHS classrooms and making them explicit in CHS teachers’ teaching practices. Table 2 below has shown the areas of teaching practice were explored in the study, which were based on the contextualized language instruction, addressed the discrepancy between CHS teachers’ visions and performance.

Table 2

*Integrate the Contextualized Language Instructions into Instructional Planning*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Tasks</th>
<th>My interpretation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lesson preparation</td>
<td>• set simulated context for lesson, unit plan, or activities</td>
<td>• explain why student need to learn the content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• choose appropriate content concepts (realistic)</td>
<td>• how that content can be contextualized for learner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• organized the concepts in a meaningful way</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• simulated context flow well or aligned in the plan</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building background</td>
<td>• concepts linked to students’ backgrounds (reduce the cultural conflicts),</td>
<td>• Learners’ comprehension needs other types of background information to support the process, besides the linguistic knowledge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• mapping your lesson in a big plan</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Comprehensible input | • provide language input within richer context  
• provide language input with multiple ways | • The way the input organized and build up the connections with the learners learned information, will facilitate the comprehension.  
• The wider context of authentic use of language will be easier in processing language. |
|---|---|---|
| Design meaningful activities | • set induction, context for activities,  
• adaption content,  
• supplementary materials provided | • Help the students to predict the communicative situation,  
• encourage students to engage in concernful activities,  
• limit the association in the students mind to a limited range, so students can easily use the related associations in their mind to complete the communicative tasks |
| Strategies | • provide the chances to help the students develop different kinds of strategies:  
• meta-cognitive  
• cognitive  
• social/affective | Build-up knowledge by communicating, negotiating the meaning with others |
| Interactions | • Use approaches which promote discovering, exploring, discussing, thinking critically, working on projects and solving problems through working groups | |
| Practice/applications | • contextualized,  
• emphasize on applying new knowledge in new ways,  
• hands-on | • Higher level to use the knowledge  
• Actively engage in real-word tasks  
• Produce active response from learner  
• Form procedural memories by doing thing, which is the same system speech behavior operates. |
| Assessment | • evaluation contextualized  
• providing reflective feedback for future improvement | |

**Professional development of foreign language teacher.** In 2002, the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) approved the Standards for the Preparation of Foreign Language Teachers. These standards were the collaborative work by NCATE and the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages
(ACTFL). They were commonly referred to as the ACTFL/NCATE Standards. These standards were updated in 2013 and are now referred to as the ACTFL/CAEP Standards.

The ACTFL/NCATE Standards have been widely adopted by universities for initial language teacher preparation programs that meet state licensure requirements. The benchmarks for preparing the future teachers to be reflective, professional practitioners who are capable of effectively implementing the SFLL in their teaching and assessment practices were outlined in six domains. These included: 1.) language, linguistics, comparisons; 2.) cultures, literatures, cross-disciplinary concepts; 3.) language acquisition theories and instructional practices; 4.) integration of standards into curriculum and instruction; 5.) assessment of language and cultures; and 6.) professionalism. According to these domains, language teacher preparation programs should include opportunities for pre-service teachers to learn about the varieties that exist among the target language and the cultures where the target language is spoken; integrate knowledge of other disciplines into their instruction; identify distinct viewpoints accessible only through the target language; plan lessons that incorporate the SFLL using a variety of instructional and assessment practices that meet the diverse needs of language learners; and create a plan for on-going professional development. (ACTFL/NCATE, 2002)

**Standard-based STARTALK teacher program.** The urgent demand for qualified critical need language learners and teachers within the United States has been well documented (Ingold & Wang, 2010). The traditional routes might no longer suffice. Ingold & Wang (2010) stated that required coursework might no longer meet the diverse needs of international and domestic future teachers, and the lack of qualified master
teachers presented challenges for placing teacher-candidates in state mandated
internships. STARTALK programs for critical need languages began in 2007 as a result
of federal funding. The STARTALK mission described as:

To increase the number of Americans learning, speaking, and teaching critical
need foreign languages by offering students (K–16) and teachers of these
languages, creative and engaging summer experiences that strive to exemplify
best practices in language education and in language teacher development,
forming an extensive community of practice that seeks continuous improvement
in such criteria as outcomes-driven program design, standards-based curriculum
planning, learner-centered approaches, excellence in selection and development of
materials, and meaningful assessment of outcomes.

To accomplish this mission, STARTALK teacher programs were required to use
six STARTALK Endorsed Principles for Effective Teaching and Learning. See Appendix
A for more details. STARTALK teacher programs might vary in their content and
structure, but they must be aligned with the SFLL and the ACTFL/NCATE Standards.
The importance of aligning STARTALK teacher programs with the SFLL and the
ACTFL/NCATE Standards was the result of the rapid increase in demand to offer critical
need languages in U.S. schools. Creating new programs for critical need languages
included staffing classrooms with highly qualified teachers.

2014 STARTALK Chinese teacher program. 2014 STARTALK Chinese teacher
program utilized in this study was a selected and funded teacher development program by
STARTALK with a specific goal to help experienced teachers who teach heritage
learners and/or leaders of community-based CHSs/programs to improve the learning of
students from preK-12 with diverse linguistic backgrounds. The program included three phases. The four-week online preparation started on June 23 with the goal of filling the gap in CHS teachers’ understanding of the foreign language principles and concluded on July 18, 2014, and then continued with a one-week residency program at the University of Toledo from July 20, through July 26, 2014 which aimed to help the CHS teachers’ learning gap between principles and practices. A follow-up online community provided the continuous support when CHS teachers taught in isolation during 2014-2015 Academic Year.

![Diagram](image)

*Figure 2. 2014 STARTALK Chinese Teacher Program: A Blended Professional Development Model*

The STARTALK teacher programs has shown that improvements in the gateways to traditional and alternative certification programs were a necessity to the critical need language teacher supply system.

**Teacher Beliefs and Classroom Practices**
However, the learning from teacher professional development did not ensure teacher’s success in the classroom. The interrelationship among the professional coursework, the pedagogical beliefs and classroom practices of language teachers (Borg, 2003) made the teacher learning process more complex and mobilizing (Spiro et al., 1987). The difficulty in defining and studying the cognitive dimension of teaching that included what teachers believe, think, and know (Borg, 2003; Pajares, 1992).

**From theory to practice: From perspective of teacher educators.** The following part provides a brief description of the relationships among development of linguistics and other related disciplines, principles of teaching and learning, teaching methods, teaching practices and the students’ learning. Developmental psychology, neuro-linguistics, sign language and linguistics all have impacted the approaches to the study of language teaching. Foreign language researchers and educators have benefited from both the study of learning and language learning specifically to develop a body of work known as “best practices” for the classroom. Teaching methods relevant to foreign languages have been tried and tested by practicing teachers. The insights of the effective language instructors have developed the processes of practice and advanced and deepened the current status of theory and practice today. The best teaching practices, by employing different teaching methods, also facilitated optimal attitudes and performance in the classroom.

**From theory to practice: From perspective of teachers.** Whether foreign language teachers were those with initial training and many years of experience or were trained novice teachers or were practicing without training for any length of time, as Yamin-Ali (2010) suggested, “We can safely surmise that classroom practice is crafted to
varying degrees by a composite of experimentation, experiential knowledge, self-directed research, instinct, published materials (textbooks, audiovisual), and internet sources” (p.17).

Figure 3. Components of Teachers’ Classroom Practice

The process of teaching or learning to teach was that teachers always searched to find solutions to the problems in their classrooms and were eager to try something that might work. On the other hand, it was not uncommon for teachers to use learning methods or principles in ways that did not promote the intention of the researchers and authors of these methods and principles. Using the teachers’ learning of the communicative approach to foreign language teaching as an example, teachers seemed generally convinced by its emphasis on the importance of: 1.) self-esteem; 2.) students cooperatively learning together; 3.) developing individual strategies for success; and, above all, 4.) focusing on the communicative process in language learning (Brown, 1987, p. 12). However, according to Brown (1987), a great challenge for teachers was to move
beyond the traditional approach that focused on form and knowledge about the language divorced from meaningful communication, to genuine and spontaneous use of the language. How to best close the gap between the teachers’ self-directed development and the researchers’ or authors’ intention was a question that remained open.

As Watzke (2007) illustrated, a teacher would experience the three developmental stages of pedagogical content knowledge growth. In the first stage, a teacher’s prior beliefs and values related to teaching and learning affected the development of pedagogical content knowledge. In the second stage, teachers’ pedagogical content knowledge developed before might quickly fall way in a teachers’ thinking and practices depending on the nature of the teacher, the pre-service program and the in-service teaching context. During the third stage, the teachers emphasized knowledge became more complex through problem solving involving the resolution of conflicts, challenges, and dissonance in the classroom context, as well as their professional development and personal relationships with colleges and friends that affected pedagogical thinking and practices.

Watzke (2007) also reviewed the research in foreign language teacher development to yield five themes which all related to the development of pedagogical content knowledge. They were: 1.) teachers prior knowledge about teaching and learning; 2.) teachers’ beliefs and instructional decisions; 3.) professional collaboration; 4.) reflective practice; and, 5.) teacher education programs and field experience.

**Deep understanding of the learned method as a goal.** Teacher educators and researchers needed to know how teachers learn best because teachers cannot form their knowledge and skills of a teaching approach and methodology without providing them
the environment or opportunities to attend to and reflect on their experiences and make sense of their work. If the knowledge and skills they learned from the workshop was fragile, unclear, or not well-organized, it probably would not play a prominent role in their decision making. When a teacher began constructing and reconstructing his/her own knowledge and tried to find meaning and a place for the new information, his/her knowledge became more consistent and coherent. This provided the basis for teachers to interpret, transform, influence and reframe moreover to integrate their informal and spontaneous knowledge with new formal learning that they received from professional development. “Deep understanding of the method is a goal that may be best achieved by continuous professional development in varying forms” (Yamin-Ali, 2010, p.18)

**Sustainability of professional development.** The effect of a professional development program usually had a trajectory that participating teachers reported their knowledge and skills increased and their thinking moved in a direction in which professional development envisioned immediately after a professional development program, but later found this thinking less tenable or more difficult to put into practice in their actual classrooms. The changes reported at the time the training ended were usually high because of an “enthusiasm effect” immediately after a workshop (Ravitz, 2003, p.2). Therefore, the training evaluations filled out immediately after training left the outcomes of transferring the workshop learning into classroom teaching unknown. The main reasons for this inability of sustain the change were that: 1.) learning was not contextualized in teaching practice; and 2.) the environment lacked the support for the change. Even with the best intentions, many teachers never made any real change to their instruction based on what they had learned in one-shot workshops.
**Teachers’ pedagogical content knowledge.** Teacher’s pedagogical content knowledge was the intersection of subject-specific knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, and knowledge of the teaching context (Shulman, 1987). As Levin (2003), Nathan & Petrosino (2003) and Shulman (1987) all proposed, for the purposes of investing teacher development, this construct framed change in teacher’s combined understanding of content knowledge and pedagogical practices for the organization, presentation, and adaptation of instruction to diverse learners.

Although the construct of pedagogical content knowledge was evolving, the fundamental proposition remained that an important facet of teacher knowledge concerned with teaching and learning of specific content (Grossman, 1990). Drawing from the overview of pedagogical content knowledge models (Shulman, 1986, 1987; Grossman, 1990, 1995; Cochran, DeRuiter, & King, 1993; Gess-Newsome, 1999; Turner-Bisset, 1999, 2001 and Tsui, 2003), the six-component synthesized framework was used in this study to guide the interview questions and instructional design for developing the CHS teachers’ knowledge which included pedagogical knowledge and beliefs about heritage language learning, concepts regarding teaching purposes, curricular knowledge, subject matter knowledge, knowledge of learners, such as, understanding of how students learned a language, knowledge of pedagogy, knowledge of self and pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) development. See Appendix B for the component of each category, manifestation in practice and the interview questions derived from each of these categories.

**Teacher learning community model.** Like social constructivists, Lave and Wenger also believed that learning was socially situated (Driscoll, 2000). From their
perspective, learning occurred through lived practices of people in a society; learning was seen as participation in a community of practice. Participants in a community of practice co-constructed knowledge because they changed and learned through their actions and relationships with one another.

Freeman (1993) also described this community from a different perspective. “To influence the reconstruction of practice, a teacher education program needs a unified Discourse, a professional language which is in constant use among members of its community.” (p.495) In a concrete level, this involved more than speaking the same language; it meant operating from a common view of teaching and learning – a shared set of socially constructed facts which made explicit in talk and action. Thus, teacher education faculty came to share, to articulate, and to make explicit a coherent approach to instruction in both philosophy and in practices.

Freeman (1993) stated, “Instruction in the teacher education program should demonstrate the professional Discourse in practice” (p.495). As Gee (1990) pointed out, “a Discourse is more than a way of using language; it is a way of acting and being” (p. 143). When teachers in training were taught as they were expected to teach, they entered into the Discourse of the new professional language in different ways. They should also be encouraged to examine, through critical reflection, how the instruction they were receiving embodies what they were learning about teaching. Gee (1990) continued that it might be a mistake to think that the value lied in modeling of classroom teaching per se; it allowed the teacher-in-training to develop an understanding of the shared Discourse through their direct experience of it.
In order to provide professional development that has a lasting impact on teachers and students, many schools have moved away from a standalone, one-day workshop approach toward a job-embedded, ongoing framework known as learning communities. The teacher learning community model (Shulman & Shulman, 2004) was an excellent model used to develop the teachers’ knowledge together and formed a discourse context to articulate their experiences and share resources. The following features and dynamics of the learning community impacted on and deepened the teacher’s individual understanding:

1. Developing a vision of the possible understandings and learning they can accomplish;
2. The motivation to initiate and persist in that learning;
3. The understanding to pursue such learning (as impetus and outcomes);
4. The skills at negotiating the complex participants’ structures of any serious organized, and,
5. Approaches to instruction that are all necessary for accomplished learning.

In this study, the concept of learning community referred to an “inquiry community” which was a “teacher community [that] foregrounds the role of systemic inquiry conducted with the support of colleague as a means of improving teaching and learning in their own classroom and schools” (Levine, 2010, p.112 ). This type of teacher community focused on how the teachers learned from asking questions and finding answers together which encompassed teacher research community, teacher research groups, and critical friend groups.
Designing an effective online learning experience. From the individual and social constructivist learning perspectives, Garrison, Anderson, and Archer (2000) had developed a theoretical framework for studying meaningful educational experiences specific to text-based online learning. In this model, Garrison, Anderson, and Archer (2000) assumed learning was always situated in a social context, and in the online environment, community was built and maintained through written dialogue. A meaningful educational experience was defined as an experience embedded in a community of inquiry where participants construct knowledge through social interactions. There were three necessary and overlapping components that contributed to a worthwhile educational experience, including cognitive presence, social presence, and teaching presence. In Garrison’s framework, distance educators facilitated learning through the interaction of teaching presence with cognitive presence in order to promote individual and social knowledge construction. The learning was facilitated by promoting community building through the interaction of teaching presence with social presence. The online learning environment instructional designer and the research of the effective online learning environment provided the recommendations and implications regarding how to support promote individual, social knowledge construction and community building respectively.

Speaking of the instructional strategies in general, a great number of researchers recognized that online learning environments should be learner-focused, and the collaborative environment should support both the individual and social construction of knowledge (Bender, 2003; Hannafin et. al., 2003). In order to support the individual’s construction of knowledge, instruction should be built upon students’ prior knowledge
(Hannafin et al., 2003) and related to the students’ personal needs and goals (Bender, 2003). Furthermore, Garrison (2003) explained that much of online learning is self-directed and that learners could benefit from a facilitated curriculum with flexible dialogue, providing learners with support and guidance as well as choices and control over their learning.

Regarding the supporting of the social construction of knowledge, a great number of researchers agreed that instructors should strive to build a community of learners (Bender, 2003; Garrison, 2003; Hannafin et al., 2003). Garrison (2003) believed the goal of online education experiences should be to build mutual understandings as a community of learners through questioning, challenging, and addressing misconceptions. In order to make the learners to be central members in this community, Polin (2004) suggested that program designers, instructors, and the curriculum should make connections between the learners’ personal experiences and the larger professional activity and knowledge in which that experience was integrated. In addition, Granger and Bowman (2003) recommended that instructional design support contextual learning through authentic interactions in the learning community. Finally, Bender (2003) highlighted that when discussion based online learning environments were effective, the technology “disappeared” and the discussion and collaboration could be moved to the forefront, promoting higher-level thinking and reflection by the participants. Each of these recommendations and implications revealed the need to recognize the interactions between the cognitive, social, and teaching presence in the virtual classroom.
Research on Teacher Learning and Classroom Practices

The review of the following empirical research aimed to reveal the relationship between teachers’ beliefs and practices with learned pedagogical knowledge or trend as well as the factors leading to the congruent / incongruent between them.

The literature (Sato & Kleinsasser, 1999) suggested, if a teacher’s practical knowledge in any particular area, such as in a methodology, could be described as “well-developed,” one might look for a number of indicators. First, internal consistency was likely to characterize the teacher’s reported beliefs about teaching and learning. Second, the reported beliefs were likely to draw upon public as well as personal theory. Third, perhaps most crucially, there was likely to be a synergy between reported beliefs and classroom practices.

In a qualitative study conducted by Wyatt (2009), a case study reported the practical knowledge growth in communication language teaching (CLT) of a lower secondary teacher in the Middle East through her in-service Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) program. Qualitative data suggested that this teacher’s practice knowledge of CLT developed during the program and the implementation of their classroom. The author attributed the growth to the exposure to public theory, which led her to question her beliefs and challenge her own classroom practices. The other factor was the process of designing, teaching and evaluating communicative tasks which was considered an investment in self-learning and teaching. As Wyatt (2009) reported, “Sarah embraced CLT enthusiastically, her commitment led to innovative practice that went far beyond fulfilling course requirements” (p.10).
author also found the research participant’s lesson both compatible with CLT and culturally appropriate for the learners.

In a study by Allen (2002), six hundred and thirteen foreign language teachers from three mid-western states reported that on average, they were “somewhat” familiar with the SFLL. Using the survey data, Allen reported that teacher beliefs differed based on the following factors: their membership with professional organizations; where they taught (urban/rural); number of years teaching the language; gender; highest degree earned; and whether they taught in a private or public school. Allen’s follow-up case study (2008) with one French teacher who had twenty-nine years of teaching experience found that the theoretical foundations of educational innovations such as standards-based, learner-centered instruction and teacher beliefs about teaching and learning languages were, in some cases, incongruent. As Allen (2008) described, “unless teachers’ own theories of learning match the theories upon which the innovation is based, it is not likely that the teachers will implement the change in a manner that is consistent with the innovation’s theoretical framework” (p. 45). Allen posited that this incongruence explained, in part, why some teachers only partially adopted the SFLL or were reluctant to adopt them at all.

Findings from Haley and Alsweel (2012) suggested the rewarding aspects of the STARTALK program. The participants in this program who received the standard-based and learner-centered pedagogic trend training openly noted that their own language learning experiences were in teacher-centered English as Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms influenced their perceptions of U.S. schools and U.S. students. These teachers readily acknowledged the importance of understanding the needs of millennial language
learners and actively engaged in meaningful ways to plan lessons and provide assessments that strengthened their teaching.

Another longitudinal study focused on the pedagogical content knowledge, initial representation and changes during the beginning teaching experience of nine foreign language teachers conducted by Watzke (2007). Four core categories were identified to explain the change in foreign language pedagogical content knowledge: prior knowledge that frames instructional decisions, attitude toward teacher control in the classroom changed, instructional goals for daily lessons, transit from focusing on the knowledge about language to focusing on task performance and communication, consideration from responding student affect from instructional and academic consideration to language-orientated outcomes consideration. He also claimed that approaches to instruction, such as communicative language teaching, and their related theoretical underpinnings in language learning developed as pedagogical content knowledge through a process of teaching, conflict, reflection, and resolution specific to the in-service classroom context.

Sun’s (2012) case study was conducted with a native Chinese language teacher who was teaching Chinese as a foreign/world language in an all-girls’ public high school in New Zealand. The purpose of this study was to investigate the personal practical knowledge (PPK) of an immigrant Chinese language teacher who was teaching Chinese as a foreign/world language in a New Zealand secondary school in order to examine the influence of native educational traditions, such as home culture of education, on the teacher’s PPK and instructional practices in a Western educational context. Sun stated that the Chinese virtuoso teaching model was often viewed adversely through Western lenses. To Western educators who advocate for communicative language teaching
approaches, this model seemed to lack experiential learning that fostered creativity, self-expression, and personal interpretation (Sun, 2012). They might also have viewed memorization as rote learning. Cortazzi and Jin (1996) noted that this was actually a misconception, as memorizing in Chinese cultures of learning included analysis, reproduction, and recitation. Sun stated that in order to integrate immigrant teachers into local cultures of education, it was necessary to learn what they knew and believed and how they adapted to new, diverse teaching contexts throughout their professional lives. Implications from this research included the need for additional cross-cultural studies as immigrant teachers were becoming an important part of the teaching force in foreign/world language education as well as other subject areas.

**Current Study**

This research was conceptualized from earlier analysis of the data from online phase of 2014 STARTALK Chinese teacher training program. The preliminary findings revealed that, across the cases of participants, teachers had heightened the social-cultural factors in the CHS classroom in terms of their understanding of contextualized language instruction. This finding not only reflected the dimensions the contextualized language instruction envisioned, but also extended this framework. The qualitative research was needed to investigate what exactly CHS teachers’ beliefs and practices of contextualized language instruction. The following part explains in detail the primary findings in online data about congruent / incongruent area between teachers’ understanding and contextualized instruction framework. The considerations and clarifications of choosing the timing of conducting the research are explained in this last part.
**CHS teachers’ beliefs of heritage language instruction in online data.** The data in the pilot study included the participant teachers’ online discussion entries from the online preparation phase and the lesson plans and reflection journals from the onsite phase of STARTALK training. As seen in the pilot data, the teachers started to develop mutual visions and expressed the motivation about the curriculum and instruction for CHS classes during the process that teachers addressed their concerns. In the STARTALK online workshop, CHS teachers started building up their visions toward contextualized language instruction in CHS as a community in the following aspects: differentiating teaching instruction, improving the interactions between teachers and among students, balancing communication and grammar, promoting content-based learning, designing curriculum by adopting Understanding by Design (UbD) model, organizing the concept by themes, planning and assessing for performance and providing effective feedback and setting instructional goals for students to improve their language performance.

Besides the considerations for the instructional designs of their classes, social factors were also mentioned by the participant teachers, such as enhancing the parents’ involvement, motivating students by improving learning experiences, taking heritage learners’ needs (social, linguistic and diverse) into consideration. Compared with the Standards framework, the areas CHS teachers were concerned with were not only their own teaching and learning but also included the concerns in a larger and richer context for students to develop socio-culturally. This was consistent with the research by Watzke (2007) based on understanding of the main concerns and impacts of the teachers in their different developmental stages. Heritage language learning was a social-cultural issue.
See Appendix C for the detailed description of the teachers’ vision in different dimensions of the contextualized language instruction in Chinese Heritage School. From the primary data analysis of the STARTALK online workshop, a discrepancy between CHS teachers’ visions of pursuing the learning experience for the learners in CHS and their understanding and performance in the real teaching was also found.

**Considerations of the timing of this research.** The timing of researching the teacher learning process was an important factor to understand the teacher-learning process and develop the pedagogy and programs to support teacher development. This study focused on the post-workshop phase which was the phase after leaving the training site and entering their classroom with computer-supported learning community. This phase was chosen because this study was more interested in understanding the teachers’ pedagogical beliefs and knowledge “which is directly related to action…that is readily accessible and applicable to coping with real-life situation, and is largely derived from teachers’ own classroom experience” (Caderhead, 1988, p.54). In particular, it is not yet understood what happens to the teachers’ PCK once CHS teachers on their own in the classroom and how to support their continued professional development.

In order to deepen the understanding of the teacher learning process, it was important for this study to focus on the phase when the changes that sustain themselves or emerge over time as the initial impact of the workshop fades and the reality of the classroom comes to the fore. In addition, the author believed that what was more important than teachers’ initial willingness to change, however, was their ability to sustain that change through a year of teaching in the classroom.
Chapter Three
Methodology

This chapter described the methodological background, the design of this study, its participants, as well as data collection and analysis procedures. In the methodological background section, the qualitative approach and case study method is described and the choice is justified. Following an overview of research methodology, the rationales to select the participants are justified, and the research participants are described. Third, the design of the study is explained, including the methods and sources for the data collection and analysis. In the conclusion, the study’s validity and its trustworthiness are discussed.

Methodological background

The review of the literature in Chapter Two demonstrated that there was an increased interest in teacher learning in the field of teacher education. This trend has stimulated the discussion about how such studies should be carried out. Several methodologies were available, but in order to create a coherent research design, compatibility between research questions and methods was established. These methods should be the best means to answer the research questions. The aim of this study was to explore the issues of learning process in CHS teachers’ beliefs and practices of the language instruction in CHS, how changes could be facilitated with the teacher learning program and what changes actually did or did not happen in CHS teachers’ understanding and practices and their underlying concerns. These themes were translated into the following research questions:
1. What were Chinese Heritage School (CHS) teachers’ beliefs and practices of contextualized language instruction in CHS classrooms after leaving the training site and entering their classrooms?

2. How did CHS teachers’ beliefs about contextualized language instruction in CHS classrooms change with the support of teacher learning community?

The exploration of each of the research questions and the direction the study took determined the choice of the research methodology and design. Since the intention in this study was to obtain an in-depth understanding of the process of CHS teachers’ knowledge and practice development, not to measure their growth as the quantitative approach was adopted. The choice of choosing case study method for this study was primarily due to the case study methods captured complexities and subtleties of human thoughts and behaviors rather than measuring a large number of people for predicting the tendencies as the questionnaire survey did. Thus, the qualitative case study method was an appropriate method to identify information that would be relatively unknown.

Participants

This study included eight teachers who went through three professional development phases intended to develop their competencies and dispositions toward facilitating student-centered learning with contextualized language instruction. Given that this was a study of a small number of CHS teachers who were motivated to integrate STARTALK-endorsed principles into their curriculum in the CHSs in the United States, the research findings could not be generalized to other contexts. However, implications might be investigated more deeply with further research.
The eight participants of this study were in-service teachers with one or more years of teaching experience in CHS. Table 3 provided the background information on the eight teachers.

Table 3

*Backgrounds of Research Participants*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. of participants</th>
<th>Participant name (Pseudo)</th>
<th>Teachers’ background</th>
<th>Teachers’ School context</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Yrs of teaching</td>
<td>Taiwan/mainland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P1</td>
<td>Fendy</td>
<td>8yrs</td>
<td>Taiwan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P2</td>
<td>Jia</td>
<td>4yrs</td>
<td>Taiwan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P3</td>
<td>Qin</td>
<td>6yrs</td>
<td>Mainland China</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P4</td>
<td>Jane</td>
<td>½ yr</td>
<td>Mainland China</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P5</td>
<td>Peter</td>
<td>15 yrs</td>
<td>Mainland China</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P6</td>
<td>Tao</td>
<td>15 yrs</td>
<td>Taiwan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P7</td>
<td>Ming</td>
<td>8 yrs</td>
<td>Mainland China</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P8</td>
<td>Mei</td>
<td>1 yr</td>
<td>Mainland China</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Purposive sampling was used for selecting these eight participant teachers.

Merriam (1998) emphasized purposeful or purposive sampling as an effective means to obtain as many messages as possible, “purposive sampling is based on the assumption that one wants to discover, understand, gain insight and therefore must select a sample
from which most can be learnt” (p.61). Eight teachers involved in this study had all participated 2014 STARTALK Chinese teacher workshop in summer 2014. Both experienced teachers and novice teachers were selected because the learning process and the knowledge or the skills the teachers picked up from the training might be different. Likewise, teachers serving in two different teaching contexts, solely in CHS and both in CHS and K-16, were also selected since one’s teaching context impacted their learning. Teachers needed wide-ranging professional competence, drawing on a combination of experience, understanding, principles and procedures and specific skills (Stenhouse, 1975). Furthermore, schools serving both immigrants from Mainland China and Taiwan were selected because these two different groups of schools adopted different teaching materials, received the support from different organizations, taught different variations of writing form of Mandarin (Simplified and Traditional Characters), and met different needs from their own communities. The returning teachers and new participants were purposefully selected because the previous knowledge based on the contextualized language instruction made a difference in their learning. Finally, the teachers with no prior experience with STARTALK and returning participant teachers of STARTALK program were selected because their existing experience and beliefs had a great impact on their further learning.

Initially twelve participant teachers were selected to join in the research. Two of them were returning participants, four of them had taught in CHS for more than eight years, four of them for four to seven years, and four of them less than one year. Half of the participants were from Mainland China and half of them from Taiwan. Due to the
incomplete data from some of the participants, finally this research only adopted the data from eight participant teachers as the research sample.

**Data Collection**

This study employed different qualitative data collection methods. There were five data collection instrument for this study: semi-structured interview, online discussion entry, teaching video and explanation form, lesson plan and teaching materials, and the STELLA self-assessment tool. See Appendix D, E and F for more details. This study strategically combined the all of these qualitative data collection instruments to establish a data collection procedure in accord with the research design and questions.

**Semi-structured interview protocol.** The semi-structured interview protocol was developed to explore and validate the CHS teachers’ pedagogical beliefs and practices of the contextualized language instruction. All questions were pilot tested with a group of six teachers who had attended a Chinese teacher’s workshop in 2013. In general, the method of semi-structured interviews combined a structured interview protocol of fixed questions with the freedom to ask additional ad hoc questions to ensure the necessary depth and clarity of participant’s response.

The semi-structured interview was the primary data collection instrument to explore the beliefs about contextualized instruction in terms of the teacher’s prior teaching experience, teaching purpose, curriculum knowledge, subject matter knowledge, knowledge of learner, knowledge of pedagogy, knowledge of self, role of context and the perceived change through attending STARTALK. See Appendix D for the question sets.
Interview questions 1-3 were crafted to encompass the understandings about the participants’ personal learning and teaching experiences since their prior learning and teaching experience would influence on their teaching practices.

Interview questions 4-18 were developed to assess the understanding of participants about their pedagogical content knowledge needed by the CHS teachers. For this purpose, a re-wording of question set by Shulman as cited in Van der Valk and Broekman (1999) was adapted and used in this research.

1. What prior knowledge of areas do you suppose the students have?
2. Do you expect the students to have certain difficulties with the leaning area?
3. What materials used for expressing representations, e.g. on the blackboard or on transparencies, were supplied?
4. Describe the strategy you use when teaching the area concept.
5. What materials do you intend to use when teaching the lesson? (p.14)

Questions 3-9, 15 and 18 were used to explore the beliefs on teaching purpose, Chinese as subject matter, students’ knowledge, knowledge of self in general. The purpose of questions 10-14 was to ask the participants to report their understanding with a specific teaching practice in order to gain an understanding of their beliefs and practices in terms of the goal of the instruction, specific teaching strategies and the role they played in the learning process. Questions 10-14 were used to accompany with teachers’ teaching video. Questions 16-17 were created to gain an understanding of the participants’ understanding of role of context and technology in specific.

Questions 19-21 were designed to examine participants’ attitudes of and responses to the STARTALK Chinese teacher professional development program,
including knowledge they constructed during the process that affected their classroom practices.

**Online forum discussion entry.** Online learning phase of STARTALK program required all participant teachers to analyze their past classroom situation, participate in an online discussion forum. The topics of the online discussion forum were designed based on the reading materials which used to provide a conceptual orientation for STARTALK participants. The topics based on the STARTALK-endorsed principles which included differentiated instruction, foreign language teaching standards (ACTFL standards), backward design principles and lesson planning and assessment. The participant teachers used the online supporting system to collaboratively discuss their confusion about newly learned content, the issues that happened in their classroom and their successful products.

**Teaching video and explanation form.** After a semester teaching from the STARTALK workshop, eight participant teachers were required to submit a teaching video which they believed to be their best practice along with an explanation form. More details about the explanation form could be seen in Appendix E. The purpose of this video submission was to know the ability to make practical use of the learned methodology and what was the public and personal theory regarding their practice.

The videotaping guideline was provided to all the participant teachers to make sure all the teachers have the same quality and quantity of their teaching practices video. The specific guidelines were as follows: the teachers were asked to select one of their best lesson plans and submit a video of a lesson. The teachers could select either one or two segments from the lesson to illustrate teaching activities and skills. Each segment had to be at least two minutes in length; the segments taken together could not be more than
fifteen minutes in length. Voices of the students as they were working were audible. The teachers were also asked to fill out an explanation form. The goal of the explanation form was to help the researcher to understand the content of their teaching video.

**Lesson plans and teaching materials.** The participant teachers were also asked to provide their lesson plans, teaching materials, class notes, assessment tools and students’ products which were related to their submitted teaching video.

**STELLA self-assessment tool for planning.** The self-assessment tool for planning was adapted from Teacher Effectiveness for Language Learning Framework (TELL) to help the participant teachers identify their level of effectiveness in terms of planning relative to the growth they made. See Appendix F for the TELL tool. To assist teachers in this aspect of reflective practice, this self-assessment tool allowed an educator to pause and consider their current practice to identify possible areas of professional growth. In this research, the data about teacher’s self-reported instructional practice after the STARTALK program provided another tool to triangulate the interview, discussion entry and teaching video data.

**Data collection procedures.** After receiving the required approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) committee at the university, the recruitment of teachers and the collection of data began. The participant teachers were invited to provide their consent to conduct an interview to use their fifteen minutes teaching video and their written accounts online and lesson document, including lesson plans, unit plans, teaching material and the anecdotes or reflection journals if any.

The participant teachers were asked to provide a fifteen-minute teaching video of their best practices. The purpose of this teaching video was to observe the target language
used in class, the activities adopted and the interactions between teachers and their 
students and among students, the assessment and feedback provided by teachers. The 
video file was only accessed by the researchers and would be destroyed upon the 
completion of this study. If the participant teachers permitted, the videos would be used 
as the learning samples and shared with the future STARTALK participants with the 
participant teachers’ permission. Participant teachers were also asked to fill out the 
explanation form to accompany their teaching video. In the follow-up interview, the 
researcher provided the participant teachers a chance to elaborate their teaching practices 
in the teaching video in terms of making corrections, adding information, or indicating 
any part of the information that they would like the researcher to exclude from the 
research findings.

The participant teachers were invited to participate in a 45-minute interview, in 
which the questions were described in the semi-interview protocol section. The 
interviews were audio recorded with their permission.

All the online discussion accounts and teaching documents, including lesson 
plans, unit plans, teaching material and anecdotes and reflection journals if any, were 
asked of the participant teachers as a part of the data analysis.

After the interview and teaching video submission, eight participant teachers were 
asked to responded to the TELL self-assessment survey. The collection and storage of the 
raw data from the online survey was done using the online survey tool—Qualtrics.
Data Analysis

Data analysis of the interviews and online discourse records followed grounded theory procedures (Miles & Huberman, 1984; Strauss & Corbin, 1998) with triangulation measures in the teaching video and explanation form and self-assessment survey to confirm emergent categories. The goal of this study was not to test theory, but to use the data in order to propose a theoretical framework relevant to CHS teachers’ beliefs and practices of contextualized language instruction. According to Strauss and Corbin (1998), “It is impossible to know prior to the investigation what the salient problems will be or what theoretical concepts will emerge.” (p. 49) Rather than studying individual participants, these data analysis procedures worked to develop an explanatory theoretical framework across participants. These procedures included data reduction, analysis and identification of emergent categories, online discussion entries were used to draw the primary categories, interview answers and teaching videos to confirm categories and refine their dimensions. Merriam (1998) emphasized that qualitative design was emergent, with the process of data collection and analysis being recursive and dynamic. In the following part, first, the author discussed two strategies used to analyze data which was collected through different procedures; second, the author described how the data was utilized and retrieved in order to answer the research questions.

Analysis of interviews. Interviews were conducted to gain a deeper understanding of the participants’ learning. Interviews were transcribed and analyzed qualitatively to gain an understanding of learning by individual participants in the program as well as understanding of the development of a community of learners. Examination of interview responses attempted first, to discern evidence that directly
relate first to the research question and; second, to compare any changes in the self-reported beliefs in the online phase and to perhaps get at underlying reasons.

The pedagogical content knowledge framework guided the first set of the interview questions and the conceptual themes as reported directly by the participant teachers to answer the first research question. The second set of the interview question used the same questions that guided analysis of online discourse above with conceptual themes being developed and the process through which learning occurred became evident in the interview transcripts. Summaries and quotes from transcript analysis were compared to similar information from discourse analysis to verify and expand on the evidence of learning by participants.

**Discourse analysis.** The discourse analysis in the study included following the progression of dialogue, rather than examining individual messages in a stand-alone mode. This analysis placed dialogue in the context in which it was written to help understand the meaning of the thought process shown by participants. Pilkington (2001) contended that detailed analysis of dialogue and its position within exchanges between discourse participants could suggest common themes for understanding the reasoning that built learning.

Besides analyzing the dialogue in a progression manner, the author followed the three-phase model proposed by Merriam (1998) in the qualitative data analysis: intensive analysis, developing categories, and developing theory. Intensive analysis began as reading and re-reading the data independently, each time making notes and reflections to isolate the most striking aspects of the data. The themes related to the research questions were compared. A list of the major ideas that cut across the data was noted. The author
searched for the regularities and tried to look for the patterns in order to visualize how teachers drew the public, personal theory or other resources to develop their beliefs and practices.

The overall principles of the data analysis were as described above, but in answering the research questions, the primary data sources were drawn upon multiple times and the content looked for when coding varied. In the following, an explanation of the primary data sources and the result was explored in coding to answer the research questions respectively was explored.

**Research question 1: What were Chinese Heritage School teachers’ beliefs and practices of contextualized language instruction in CHS classrooms after leaving the training site and entering their classrooms?**

The interviews, the documents and records of the CHS teacher during their previous online and onsite training phase were the primary data sources. The meaning CHS teachers described about their pedagogical beliefs and activities they reported in the practice of contextualized language instruction were the focus of the coding. In answering this research question, the nine essential themes identified in the data during their pervious online and onsite training phase were used to start the coding scheme: Communication; Instructional goal for daily lesson; Interactions; Grammar & Communication; Content based learning/skill-based learning; Class activities; Environment; Culture; Assessment. A sociocultural lens and the teachers’ concern focus were used to determine the underlining reasons of CHS teachers’ primary pedagogical beliefs and practices about contextualized language instruction that occurred after leaving the sheltered training site and entering their classroom.
Research question 2: How did CHS teachers’ beliefs about contextualized language instruction in CHS classrooms change with the support of the learning community?

In answering this research question, the process of the teacher learning with the collaborative inquiry and discourse community of this case study with the support of the context, content and personnel were examined. Thus, the development of the relationship between beliefs and practices/instructional competence was further examined. Online discussion records and the semi-structured interviews were the primary data sources. When possible, data from the participants personally, uploaded teaching video, self-reflection and self-assessment survey were also considered to triangulate the findings. Again, the constant comparative method (Glaser, 1978) of inquiry and analysis should be utilized to generate and continually refine grounded theory.

Second, the internal consistency of the learned content which included the understanding, conceptualizing and planning tasks as well as the ability to make practical use was examined through the interview questions responses, online discussion discourses, uploaded video and resources as well as the classroom observations. These last few items were indicative of how the participants drew public and personal theory and were closely examined through the online discussion discourse and triangulated with interview question responses. Henri (1992)’s questions served as a model for the questions developed to examine discourse in the present study:

1. Were participants drawing on their own experiences?
2. Were participants building on previous messages?
3. Did they refer to material in the online phase reading material content?
4. Did they refer to their own classroom environment?

5. Did they exhibit reflection on teaching practices?

These questions served as the lens for identifying patterns in online discourse and understanding the nature of participants’ learning. Using these questions served as a way to organize findings and help make results coherent. The Henri’s questions model was primarily used to analyze the discourse and interview data. If new categories were identified, developed and defined, categories were to be examined to add into the primary list.

**Trustworthiness and Credibility**

Patton (2002) provided two basic elements for the organizing criteria for study quality: the researcher and the methods. In the following section, the role of the researcher, trustworthiness and credibility were discussed.

**Role of the researcher.** Throughout the process of this research, the role of the researcher positioned as both the researcher and member of the STARTALK team. Besides being a primary investigator, this researcher was the co-designer of the peer and mentor phase. The role of participant observer, there were some advantages and disadvantages for the research. Patton (2002) contended that the credibility of the researcher was advanced by the presentation of self. As a Chinese Heritage School teacher, with five years of experience teaching heritage language learner from age 6-12, the researcher had some teaching experiences similar to STARTALK participants which provided her with an understanding of their situations. She had also become familiar with STARTALK program as a learner and a program coordinator.
All participants were familiar with her because of her participation in facilitating the STARTALK program. During the online preparation and onsite phase of STARTALK program, she was very visible and interacted with all participants closely, both in person and online in a variety of situations. During the post-workshop phase, she had little interaction with participants. Her role was taken over by the program principal investigator and mentor teachers. Her reduced interaction and visibility might have allowed participants to see her in a diminished capacity in relation to facilitate the program. The familiarity she developed with STARTALK participants might help the interviewed subjects feel relaxed while the distance established during the post-workshop phase might preclude the participants shaping responses for the benefit of a STARTALK team member.

**Trustworthiness.** For the examination of the quality of the methods, Lincoln & Guba (1985) provided the guidance to pay attention to trustworthiness and credibility. The trustworthiness associated with data collection and analysis measures, and credibility with the process of interpreting results.

Lincon & Guba (1985) contended that trustworthiness could be a way of convincing readers that findings were worth paying attention to. Lincon and Guba (1985) also provided the method for data collection and analysis in a qualitative study to increase the probability of trustworthiness in findings.

In their study, various strategies including keeping a research journal, avoided overdoing rapport and triangulation were carried out between different methods and data sets. For example, data from the interviews and discussion discourses was checked against data from other sources such as the lesson plans and direct observations. Multiple
data analysis was conducted to gain a more holistic understanding of the CHS teachers in the study. Clarifications were asked in subsequent interviews. These were repeated whenever there was a chance to clarify with their interpretation of their experiences of learning and teaching over time. The follow-up interviews and online discussion forum for participant teachers, served as an important platform for inviting these teachers to comment, react and form an important part of the reflectivity. Sharing transcripts of classroom observations and interviews with the teachers supported this form of collaboration and these kinds of reflective collaborations lasted during the entire process of reporting.

**Credibility.** Credibility measures were applied after data collection and analysis. Licon & Guba (1985) contended that reliability involved insuring that the data and the findings were aligned. Peer debriefing and member checking were the two major strategies to avoid bias in data analysis. One of the mentor teachers discussed the result with the researcher in the interview and teaching video collection phase. Another research oversaw the data analysis process. The participants’ statements and interpretations were also sent back to the participants for their review if there was any discrepancy between their intention and my interpretation. This served as a member check.

Instead of eliminating the researcher’s perceptions and values for the research, bias should be explained and detailed, stating how it would be dealt with once it is known (Maxwell, 1996). Schensul, Schensul & LeCompte (1999) clarified that bias and perceptions were not weaknesses but were important for protecting the study’s validity. For example, researcher interactivity should be considered in analysis of interview
transcripts. During the interview, this awareness of other might affect the responses by the interviewee. As Warren (2002) pointed out that each participant in the interview process incorporated both self and other, such as the researcher, into interpretation of meaning. During analysis, the pre-existing knowledge of the researcher might affect interpretation (Warren, 2002). In the present study, the researcher brought specific knowledge of STARTALK-endorsed principles to the interpretation of interview transcripts. As a method to control for this bias, interview transcripts were sent to participants to allow them to clarify the meaning of their statement.

Limitation

There were some limitations to this study. First, the sample size of the teachers as participants had only less than ten in this study. The results of these participants might not necessarily represent all other Chinese Heritage School teachers due to a variety of unknown factors or situations. Second, this research was primarily a qualitative study. Therefore the results were open to different interpretations. Third, language and translation might be problematic methodologically. Almost all of participants were Chinese speakers. I interviewed them in Chinese and then I had to translate or write their interview or video/online results in English. Even though another Chinese and English bilingual speaker worked with the researcher to discuss the translation strategies and cross check the English transcription, the language discrepancy and translation process might not be a hundred percent accurate.
Chapter Four

Results

Overview

The results section is structured in accordance with steps of the data collection procedure and in response to each research question separately. First, this section reports on the CHS teachers’ initial conception of contextualized language instruction. The teachers’ pedagogical beliefs about the contextualized language instruction were solicited through the online discussion and reflection journals during the online phase of the training. Second, this section also describes the CHS teachers’ understanding and instructional practices actually processed after they left the training and returned to their classrooms. The semi-structured interview and video collection of CHS classroom teaching practices from eight participant teachers was described and coded. The comparison of these results from these two phases provided a clear picture of the changing categories from these two phases. In the end of this chapter, a section pertaining to the impact of the contextualized language instruction in terms of teacher’s belief and practices was presented. All of these data collection approaches were relevant in answering two research questions of this research as below.

1. What were CHS teachers’ beliefs and practices of contextualized language instruction in CHS classrooms after leaving the training site and entering their classrooms?

2. How did CHS teachers’ beliefs about contextualized language instruction in CHS classrooms change with the support of learning community?
It was important to recall the differences between the knowledge and beliefs made by Woods (1996) who defined knowledge as conventionally accepted facts and beliefs as propositions for which there are no conventionally accepted facts. Wood cautioned that these concepts should be viewed on a “spectrum of meaning” as they could become blurred when investigating their influence on instructional decisions. Therefore, it was important to note that findings for beliefs and practices were presented separately here; however, the intention was not to view them as separate cognitive domains, but to facilitate the presentation of the study’s results.

**Initial Conception about Contextualized Language Instruction**

Foreign language teacher educators and stakeholders sought to understand foreign language teachers’ learning experiences. Thus, it was imperative to discuss the CHS teachers’ initial understanding of contextualized language instruction during the learning process. The most relevant data source for this was the online discussion and reflection journal during the online phase which was part of class activities in the training online phase during the first to fourth weeks. Seven out of eight participants participated in the entire online discussion process.

The online phase of the training provided a conceptual orientation for the participant teachers in the following areas of contextualized language instruction: differentiated instruction, the 5Cs (Communication, Cultures, Communities, Comparisons and Connections) and foreign language learning standards, thematic unit and backward design principles and performance-based assessment. The concept of adopting the 5C standards in planning referred to a teacher’s use of the five domains of language learning as specified by the Standards of Foreign Language Learning (SFLL).
These included developing communicative skills (Communication), studying the products, practices and perspectives of other culture (Cultures), connecting foreign language study to other disciplines/content areas (Connections), making cultural or linguistic comparison (Comparisons) and extending language study beyond classroom (Communities). The five domains in the 5C standards interrelated among each other. For example, the Culture domain usually related with the Comparisons domain.

The above-mentioned topics generated various responses and revealed the subtleties of the CHS teachers’ initial understanding of contextualized language instruction. The data in the online and onsite phases included the participant teachers’ online discussion entries from the online preparation phase and the lesson plans of the training.

As seen in the online and onsite data, the teachers started to develop mutual understandings and expressed motivation about innovating curriculum and instruction for CHS classes during the process that teachers addressed their concerns. During the online phase, CHS teachers started building up their understanding about contextualized language instruction in CHSs as a community with the following themes: contextualized language instruction as catering the learners’ needs, contextualized language instruction as sustaining learning, contextualized language instruction as motivating learners, contextualized language instruction as accommodating learning and learners, contextualized language instruction as enriching the learning culturally, and contextualized language instruction as promoting performance-based learning.

By analyzing the above-mentioned themes, the researcher found that besides the consideration for the instructional design of their class, social factors were also
mentioned by the participating teachers, such as enhancing the parents’ involvement, motivating students by improving learning experiences, and taking heritage learners’ needs - social, linguistic and diverse - into consideration. Compared with the standards framework, the area’s CHS teachers were concerned with were not only their own teaching and learning but also included the concerns in a larger and richer context for students to develop socio-culturally. This was consistent with the research by Watzke (2007) based on understanding the concerns and impacts of teachers in their different developmental stages. Heritage language learning was a social-cultural issue. See Appendix C for a detailed description of the teachers’ understanding in different dimensions of contextualized language instruction in the CHS environment.

The following part gives a brief description of the emerging themes of the initial conception of CHS teachers about contextualized language instruction with examples.

**Contextualized language instruction was catering the learners’ needs.**

Contextualized language instruction served as catering to the learners’ needs was one of the themes that emerged from the analysis of the data. This theme was congruent with one of the STARTALK-endorsed principles: facilitating learner-centered classrooms. Under this theme, the codes were divided into two broad categories: one was the challenge; the other was the strategies used to solve the challenge. The codes about the challenge included the following words and phrases: *teaching the learner with the extreme gap of language abilities in the same class, emotional and psychological issues of the students with larger age-differences, creating a suitable curriculum for a heterogeneous class, teach a L1 (learning language as the first language) and L2 (learning Chinese as the second language) combined class, language developmental...*
needs of heritage learners and so on. The codes about the solutions to cater to the learners’ needs included adopting teaching materials, use backward design and standards to plan curriculum, using peer influences, tailoring the teaching materials to meet both needs, project-based class, utilizing the students’ background information to design class, using pre-assessment to design curriculum, differentiated tasks, parent involvement and group work and so on.

Based on the aforementioned codes, many of the CHS teachers described and considered that providing contextualized language instruction meant to cater the leaners’ needs included catering to a diverse class as well as addressing the heritage learners’ social, linguistic and emotional needs. Throughout the discussion records, catering to the learners’ needs was their prominent challenge in their teaching. The strategies they usually adopted included tailoring the curriculum, teaching materials and assessment to meet the students’ needs, adopting learner-centered instruction such as peer influence, group work, and project-based lessons and using measurable evidence of the students’ language ability to guide the lesson design.

**Contextualized language instruction was sustaining the learning.** Some of the participant teachers who participated in the online discussion phase with the initial understanding of contextualized language instruction needed to sustain the learning of the CHS learners. This theme served as an extended dimension of the STARTALK-endorsed principle applied in the Chinese Heritage School context. Under this theme, the codes were also divided into two broad categories: one was the challenge; the other was the strategies used to solve the challenge. The codes about the challenge included the following words and phrases: *Chinese has less priority, conflicting needs with the*
students’ extra-curriculum activities, difficulty covering every content during the limited class time, limited time, and difficulty implementing learner-centered language instruction and so on. The codes about the solutions to cater to the learners’ needs included clear goals and teaching procedures in the syllabus, parent communication, preparing in advance before coming to class, parents’ involvement and motivation, preparing self-study materials for students provided online with adequate support and so on.

Based on the aforementioned codes, many of the CHS teachers described and considered that providing contextualized language instruction meant to sustain the learning which included extending the time and location beyond the classroom as well as enhancing the students’ positive disposition about Chinese language learning. Throughout the discussion records, sustaining the learning was challenged by the limited contact hours and non-legislated status of the Chinese heritage education in the U.S. education system. These were non-instructional problems which affected the motivation and learning outcomes. CHS teachers still considered that these problems could be compensated by adopting contextualized language instruction. The strategies they usually adopted included using technology to extend the learning, such as providing the self-study materials and a syllabus, involving parents to support students outside of class and equipping students’ with a positive disposition about the culture to let them explore more information beyond the class.

**Contextualized language instruction was motivating the learners.**

Contextualized language instruction as motivating the learner was the third most prevalent theme that emerged from the online discussion. This theme was congruent with
one of the STARTALK-endorsed principle: implementing a standards-based and thematically organized curriculum which engaged the students. Under this theme, the codes were divided into two broad categories: one was the challenge, and the other was the strategies to solve the challenge. The codes about the challenge included the following words and phrases: *using sound and movement for the young learners, use multimedia to attract higher level students, using a variety of resources to prepare the lesson, well-designed and prepared lesson plan, teaching materials being cognitively challenging, focusing on teaching the meaning, not the language itself, building up the confidence and providing the environment with less pressure.*

Based on the aforementioned codes, many of the CHS teachers described and considered that providing contextualized language instruction was regarded as motivating students which included motivating students to learn as well as keeping students’ engaged in class. Throughout the discussion records, for the participants one of the prominent challenges in their teaching was finding all kinds of solutions to motivate students’ to learn. The strategies they usually adopted included tailoring the curriculum, adopting a variety of teaching techniques to stimulate students’ interests and providing a supportive learning environment.

**Contextualized language instruction was accommodating the learning and learners.** Accommodating the learning and learners stood out in the data analysis as the fourth theme. This theme was congruent with the STARTALK-endorsed principle: facilitating learner-centered classroom. Under this theme, the codes were divided into two broad categories: one was the challenge, and the other was the strategy to solve the challenge. The codes about the challenge included the following words and phrases:
heritage learners identify themselves as one, two and more culture groups, reluctant to speak Chinese with others in Chinese school even class, adopting materials based on students’ need, collaborating with parents, and responding to students’ affect. The codes about the solutions to cater the learners’ needs included collaborating, supporting the students’ learning with parents and stakeholders, assisting identify-formation and motivating target language use.

Based on the aforementioned codes, many of the CHS teachers described and considered that providing contextualized language instruction meant to accommodate the students’ needs which included accommodating with lesson planning as well as other aspects besides academic teaching, such as forming the students’ identity, counseling and advocating and collaborating. Throughout the discussion records, teachers took their multiple roles for granted. The strategies they usually adopted included the strategies used individually and collaboratively with others.

**Contextualized language instruction was enriching the learning culturally.**

The participant teachers all emphasized that culture was an integrated part of their language instruction during the discussion phase. This theme was congruent with one of the STARTALK- endorsed principle: integrating culture, content, and language in a world language classroom. Under this theme, the codes were divided into two broad categories: one was the challenge; the other was the strategies to solve the challenge. The codes about the challenge included the following words and phrases: *some customs which are not part of American culture had to ask the learners to practice, some concept in Chinese culture which do not have the equivalent in American are hard to teach*. The codes about the solutions to cater the learners’ needs included *integrating the customs*
into the daily routine, providing a heritage cultural environment in the Chinese school and community, outreach to the organizations outside of Chinese community, and providing the lesson based on culture standards.

Based on the aforementioned codes, many of the CHS teachers described and considered that providing contextualized language instruction needed to integrate culture practice, products and perspective and comparison in their lesson. Throughout the discussion records, providing culturally enriched learning experiences was one of the CHS teachers’ instructional goals. The strategies they usually adopted were preparing the class with cultural content, providing the students’ views that they were contributing the multi-cultural and diversity in the U.S. society and connecting their learning with the communities.

Contextualized language instruction was promoting performance-based learning. This theme – promoting performance-based learning – was congruent with one of the STARTALK endorsed principle: conducting performance-based assessment. Under this theme, the codes were divided into two broad categories: one was the challenge; the other was the strategy to solve the challenge. The codes about the challenge included the following words and phrases: challenges in teaching grammar, performance-based learning not applicable to the Chinese learner, instructional goal of the school was not clear, hard to find materials to teach and assess in a performance-based manner, and a challenge in handling the relationship between the students and providing the effective feedback. The codes about the solutions to cater the learners’ needs included using backward design and standards to plan curriculum, using
technology to integrated all modes of communication and using rubrics to evaluate students’ integrated assessment tasks.

Developing Ideas of Contextualized Language Instruction

As noted in the research design, to answer the first research question, the study was to gain an understanding of the teachers’ pedagogical beliefs about contextualized language instruction after they re-entered their own classrooms. Several factors of the participants’ beliefs were extrapolated from the data as self-reported. These seven themes for understanding how the participants’ beliefs were impacted by the contextualized language instruction are presented in the following subsections:

1. Attitudes and impact of standards-based, learner-centered instruction;
2. Beliefs about challenges in their teaching practice;
3. Beliefs about Chinese as a subject matter;
4. Beliefs about the context;
5. Beliefs about their self-efficacy;
6. Beliefs about knowledge of self; and
7. Beliefs about ways to maximize students learning.

Attitudes and impact of standards-based, learner-centered instruction. There were two interview questions (Interview Questions 19 and 20) directly asked of the teachers to describe if there were any changes they made in their teaching as a result of participation of STARTALK program, and which parts of program had been most beneficial to them and their students. In the answers to several other interview questions (Interview Questions 3, 6 and 7), participants had provided their reasons regarding changes in their teachings, teaching in a specific way and why they thought their students
learned by referring back to the impact of standards-based, and learner-centered instruction. Attitudes were defined as a settled way of thinking or feeling about someone or something, typically one that was reflected in a person’s behavior. It included positive and negative thinking and impacted behavior (for instance teacher’s instructional practice). All eight participants stated that teaching had been impacted positively in different aspects of their teaching and their students. The three sub-codes identified demonstrated specific parts of standards-based, learner-centered instruction impacted CHS teachers’ teaching as well as specific learner-centered principles they believed had a positive impact on their students’ learning. CHS teachers expressed the beliefs changed by the standards-based, learner-centered instruction or a certain part of it (n=8), self-reported beliefs about learner-centered (LC) instruction (n=4), instructional practice changes (n=3).

**Belief changed by the standards-based, learner-centered instruction.** This sub code described the participants (n=8) teaching changed into a more student-focused manner as a result of their learned content in STARTALK program, such as backward design principles, 5C standards, online tools, performance-based assessment, a clear frame and goal or deepened their understanding of learned content. For example, one participant stated the impact of this program as a guided framework as a whole:

A very helpful tool was backward design: set up a goal, the key point to be taught in class, how to realize the goal, how to apply the 5Cs, how to measure the achievement of my goal, whether I have some nice Apps or other tools to help this class. Every time while preparing for the class, keeping this guide in mind, it helps a lot. (Jane, interview, May 27, 2015)
One participant mentioned a specific aspect of the program that “backward design and student-centered activities. Right now I always give students more time to practice themselves, let them to talk and teach. I think the class becomes more efficient.” (Tao, interview, May 24, 2015) Another participant wanted to attribute this impact as deepen the exiting understanding instead of total change:

I already have some awareness before training. I myself reflect on difference between education in the United States and education in China, and Western education, specifically Chinese education. But it is not very systematic. Therefore when I participated in the training, as soon as I experience the backward design, I just picked up immediately. (Ming, interview, May 27, 2015)

**Self-reported beliefs about Learner-Centered (LC) instruction.** This sub-code was assigned to participants (n=4) who discussed their positive beliefs about LC instruction in terms of helping to build up close relationship among students, making teaching more interesting, making learning more meaningful and providing students’ a clear goal. When one participant stated that the backward design and task-based learning gave her and her students a lot of help and indicated that “because the students get to know what they are learning and they can focus more in the classroom”(Jia, interview, May 27, 2015). This participant also discussed how student-centered activities enhanced the relationship among students by saying “the interactions in the whole class can help them to build a feeing between them” (Jia, interview, May 27, 2015).

**Instructional practice changes.** This sub-code was assigned to participants (n=3) who described in detail their instructional practices by integrating the standard-based and learner-centered principles such as planning including the backward design principle,
planning which integrated technology and creating activities according to the learning objectives. Self-reported practices could be considered as a result of the changes which both happened in beliefs as well as practices. This part was also compared with the video analysis in part to see the consistency between the teachers’ espoused practices and their enacted practices. One participant talked about the process when she planned a lesson with more awareness to align the activities with the learning objective:

Sometime when you search online, you can find more teaching materials, but which is best for your students, after STARTALK workshop, you know how to choose from that, how to choose meaningful activities for your students, you choose the activity because of a reason. (Mei, interview, May 27, 2015)

In sum, all 8 participants reported positive attitudes and impact of standards-based, learner-centered instruction. Some of the impact was expressed at a belief change level, and some of the impact was described with more detail at the self-reported practices level. Most of the participants described the impact on themselves as well as on their students. They also described this impact from the perspective of the students’ learning outcomes.

**Beliefs about challenges in their teaching practice.** There was only one interview question (Interview Question 5) that directly asked the participants to elaborate on what was the most challenging part of teaching these languages. This theme also included some challenges the participants mentioned when they tried giving more information to explain other interview questions (Interview Questions 4, 8, 14 and 15). Challenges were defined as something that by their nature or character served as calls to battle, contest, or special effort. All eight participants reported the challenges that were
met in their teaching practices. The reported challenges could be categorized into three categories: instructional challenges that were directly learner-centered (LC) (n=6), instructional challenges that were more teacher-centered (n=8), and challenges that were non-instructional challenges (n=3).

**Instructional challenges directly related to implement LC instruction.** This sub-code was assigned to the answers of 7 participants who reported the challenges directly related to implement LC instruction which included challenges with adjusting to learner-centered teaching in general, students’ providing peer feedback, meeting needs of special needs students, meeting a diverse group of students’ needs, increasing students’ motivation and interests, keeping up with students’ ideas, utilizing the time beyond class and lack of language environment to maximize the students’ learning. One participant who just taught in CHS only for one semester described generally the challenges in adjusting to learner-centered teaching as “the most challenging thing is to adjust to the student-centered teaching style. What do the students need to know and how could they learn with interests?” (Jane, interview, May 27, 2015) Other participants described the different aspects of the challenges during implementing the LC instruction. Two participants reported their biggest challenge as dealing with children with special needs. For example, one teacher stated:

I think the big challenge is students’ mental and psychological problem…teachers like us who did not receive the teacher education training, lack of enough knowledge on children psychology and classroom management. Those students’ parents are Chinese, for Chinese people, they really don’t like to talk their issue like that, maybe because of culture, they felt ashamed of talking about it. So we
don’t have a good understanding of the student’s (needs)” (Fang, interview, May 21, 2015)

Increasing students’ motivation and interests were another most frequently mentioned challenges by participants. One teacher thought the low motivation was the root to all kinds of instructional problems in her class:

I think the challenges are that the students don’t have interests to learn. It’s a very common phenomenon. A huge amount of students came to Chinese school because of their parents. And some of them came here because of their friends…I think that’s the biggest problem. The problems and challenges I mentioned before is because I want to try different ways to motivate them to learn, but the conditions limited. (Qin, interview, May 21, 2015)

Another teacher not only identified the same challenge in his class, but also analyzed the reasons why the students had low motivation by attributing it to conflicting teaching styles between the regular school and CHS.

When they grow up, they start realizing that the teaching methods used in Chinese school class don’t match the teaching method in their regular school. As long as some children have their own ideas, some kids like to challenge, they will stay away from Chinese schools. They will quit. From regular schools to Chinese school, they are like a fish from the sea to the fresh water; they do not fit the environment. (Ming, interview, May 27, 2015)

One participant described in detail about how she adopted peer feedback as a strategy in her class:
I felt some students ask the questions too direct, too blunt. I did not know how to handle it at that moment. Because of the students in a higher level class will feel their face threaten. Sometimes when they ask questions to the other group in the way the other group cannot accept, then there will be a problem. I also want to know how to handle this situation. Before that, I told the students that before you give your suggestions, you need to tell a good [aspect] first. (Jia, interview, May 27, 2015)

One participant also stated in detail how she wanted to help the students build up their language performance ability, but the lack of language environment beyond the classroom was one of the challenges she mentioned. “Even though as a heritage language, it’s much easier for the kids to learn rather than to learn other languages, it’s really hard for them to have more progress…that’s because the chances for them to use Chinese outside of class are so limit[ed].” (Tao, interview, May 24, 2015)

**Instructional challenges of teaching in CHS.** This sub-code was assigned to 8 participants who considered the challenges that resulted from the context of their teaching, specifically in Chinese Heritage Schools. These challenges included finding suitable materials, aligning curriculum within school, a lack of clear goals, lack of teaching skills, lack of communication with parents, students’ motivation and persistence, students learning beyond the class time and teaching a certain concept and learning from peers, some of which were consistent with the challenges reviewed in the literature review. One participant not only identified her challenges in her classroom practice, but also identified the challenges in a larger context of school. She stated:
Another problem is that the students in my class will be in high school this fall. The thing they are facing now is that they can continue their study. Our school thinks that they already learn enough because they don’t have a very clear goal from now on. The president thinks that they can graduate, so I just ask the students themselves, what they think. Are they ready to graduate? My point is that the goal I think they should have is to have a Chinese SAT exam or any other Chinese standard test. I just want to give them a goal. However what I feel is only based on my own class, but I feel a lot of pressure. (Qin, interview, May 21, 2015)

In terms of the challenges of teaching in CHS, students’ motivation was still a challenge that stood out. The same participant analyzed the conflicting teaching strategies between the regular school and CHS - the low motivation of students which also provided the reason rooted from the role of Chinese as a heritage language which led to low motivation and the lack of persistence of CHS learners.

Unlike English in China where it is one of the required courses when you take the college entrance exam. If the SAT exam also tests Chinese, many problems would not exist now. Without this pressure, if you expect a student to learn something, unless he likes the subject, it is difficult to keep on learning it. (Ming, interview, May 27, 2015)

Two participant teachers expressed their challenges which were that they had no chance to learn from their peers who taught the same type of class or to learn the teaching practices which could directly apply to his/her own classroom. “I think the Chinese language schools [are] still in the situation that all the teacher are on their own” (Qin,
interview, May 21, 2015). The most challenging part is that I cannot draw too many lessons from other’s teaching” (Peter, interview, June 4, 2015). Two teachers expressed that it was hard for CHS students to learn beyond the class time. One mentioned that she had no solution to keep track of the students’ effort in their take-home assignments “…because after the class, I can’t track them all the time like that. I gave them homework, but some of them never finish that on time.” (Qin, interview, May 21, 2015) The other teacher expressed that “time is not enough in school. Learning Chinese for only once a week is too limited.” (Tao, interview, May 24, 2015)

**Non-instructional challenges in CHS.** This sub-code was assigned to 3 participants who reported the challenge which could not be solved by instructional design for teacher which included challenges with lack of funding, poor equipment and facilities and teacher’s accent. One of the participants expressed earlier that to motivate her students was her biggest challenge. The school’s poor equipment and facilities also added another layer of difficulties in putting her ideas into practice. “I think the problem is how to give them motivation…also some of the teaching environment like technology is not that good, and classroom is small. We didn’t have enough money to add more education aids.” (Qin, interview, May 21, 2015)

To sum up, most of challenges the participants reported were not resulting only from one cause. Most of the participant teachers talked about their challenges by putting the students in the center of their focus. Like one of the participant teachers claimed that the deepest reason for all the challenges was the challenge to motivate the students. Some of the challenges specifically existing in CHS emphasized the existing challenges which made the problem more complicated to solve.
Beliefs about Chinese as a subject matter. There were three interview questions which directly asked what the easiest, most important and most difficult aspects of learning Chinese as subject matter was and what Chinese language learning meant to your students in CHS. “Teaching involves the translation of subject matter knowledge into subject matter knowledge for teaching” (Grossman, Wilson & Shulman, 1989, p. 26), therefore the beliefs about the subject matter powerfully affected their teaching. According to the questions, the CHS teachers’ beliefs about Chinese as a subject matter could be divided into the beliefs about the easiest part of learning Chinese (n=3), beliefs about learning challenges for students (n=8), beliefs about the importance part of learning Chinese (n=8), and visions about learning Chinese for students.

Beliefs about the easiest part of learning Chinese. This sub-code was assigned to the participants (n=3) beliefs about what is the easiest part for the Chinese heritage language learners to master Chinese as a heritage language. Three participants all considered the oral communication as the easiest aspect for students. Two of these three participants firmly believed that “the easiest is speaking and oral Chinese for communication” (Fang, interview, May 21, 2015) and indicated the reason why it is easy for them because “kids’ parents are Chinese. I think speaking and listening are the easiest parts for them. They also can write words and remember different meanings.” (Qin, interview, May 21, 2015)

One participant had mixed feeling about the easiest part of learning Chinese. She felt, “It is a common thought that heritage students have no problem in listening and speaking. I found out that they were fine in casual conversation but had problems to make a phrase or a sentence with the new character.” (Jane, interview, May 27, 2015) Other
participants considered culture and mastering the basics respectively as the easiest part of learning Chinese for their students.

**Beliefs about learning challenges for students.** This sub-code was assigned to certain beliefs that the participants (n=8) had identified as challenging for CHS learners in learning Chinese. Four participants all reported the students have difficulties with writing. One teacher reported that her students had problems understanding some concepts which lacked equivalent concepts in English. One teacher that stated her students had problem understanding certain concepts because of their young age. Two teachers considered grammar to be the hardest part for her students. One participant teacher stated literacy and reading freely was her students’ challenges. One participant teacher thought retaining the knowledge and content they learned to be very difficult. Two participant teachers worried their higher level students’ ability to apply what they have learned to other situations or tasks rather than textbooks and class.

For the teachers that reported that their students were challenged by writing across the lower level classes such as, “to learn to write the Chinese characters because it’s different from the English language system” to higher level classes. For instance, “they also can write words and remember different meanings. I still think writing is the most difficult part. I don’t have specific writing class for them, and I didn’t give them more practices about this part.” (Qin, interview, May 21, 2015) One teacher explained in detail that when she is teaching a lesson, students were confused with the concepts which did not have a similar meaning in English.

I think the students didn’t have a good understanding about strength and weakness. They couldn’t differentiate very well. They couldn’t clear cut them.
think that’s because of their age. They couldn’t differentiate. Sometimes the strength has some weakness and weakness has some strength as well. Someone’s strength might exactly his/her weakness. I will explain to them with English and give them examples in Chinese… Sometimes we take some concept we learned for granted in this case will be strength and not strength. But for them, because of their age, they couldn’t differentiate this clearly. I think maybe next time when I choose the more appropriate words to elaborate on the concept of strength and weakness, the learning outcomes will be better. I need to adjust this next semester.

(Fang, interview, May 21, 2015)

Two teachers identified their higher-level class learners as having difficulties with applying language in a setting other than classrooms and textbooks. One stated that:

For the 11th grader in high school, the most difficult part is to apply. Before the way they learned this language is basically they learned by teacher teaching from textbooks. What they have learned is dictation, answering questions. They learned some usages of the words and application of the sentence structures on their class.

(Peter, interview, June 4, 2015)

Beliefs about the importance part of learning Chinese. 4 out of 8 teachers considered the most difficult part to also be the most important parts and these were:

1. “the use of language” (Peter, interview, June 4, 2015);
2. “learning Chinese characters” (Ming, interview, May 27) (Mei, interview, May 27);
3. “writing” (Qin, interview, May 21);
4. “the importance of literacy which built up the student’s life-long learning skills to continue to learn Chinese” (Tao, interview, May 24, 2015);

5. “the importance of cultural practices for young learners to apply in the real life” (Jane, interview, May 27, 2015);

6. “the importance of oral communication to support real-life performance” (Jia, interview, May 27, 2015); and,

7. “the importance of vocabulary to support typing and writing with computer” (Fang, interview, May 21, 2015).

**Purpose of learning Chinese for students.** The participants described the beliefs about the purpose for learning Chinese in CHS in a number of ways. Three out of eight teachers immediately responded that Chinese language was being learned by students in CHS only “because of their parents.” Two teachers believed learning Chinese seemed a way to inherit the language of family. Two teachers considered the Chinese school as the only language environment the Chinese heritage learners had. One teacher expressed keeping the Chinese culture and heritage for CHS learners as contributing to cultural diversity. One teacher thought that for his higher-level students in an AP class, it provided them abilities to “self-teach” or learn more things in life. One teacher believed the purpose of learning Chinese in CHS was not only to learn Chinese but also for students to know other content knowledge and skills from their teacher.

One of these three teachers added “making friends” as another purpose, and she explained, “Chinese school is established by the parents and used this community to provide an environment to learn” (Fang, interview, May 21, 2015) which indicated the purpose of learning Chinese in CHS was creating a Chinese community or environment.
to inherit their parents’ language. Two of these three teachers who taught higher-level students identified the changes of the meaning or purpose of learning Chinese in CHS made while the students were getting older. One teacher said:

For most of the children, the reason why they keep learning Chinese is only because their parents speak this language, and they use this language at home. Now I feel some kind of change is that they feel like they are going to use this language in the near future. For example, they may use that when they are going to college. (Tao, interview, May 24, 2015)

One teacher used a very vivid example to explain the purpose of learning Chinese for her young heritage students was in keeping the identity and contributing to their cultural diversity.

I think the point of learning Chinese is to keep some unique culture identity inside, not just the unique outlook. For example, if I come across E.T. in the street and really would like to know what his/her home planet looks like. If she/he tells me that she/he was raised in the Earth and knows nothing about home planet. I would be quite disappointed. It is the similar situation for the heritage Chinese student. Our kids are raised in North American culture. If we try harder to pass the Chinese culture and heritages to our kids, we are contributing to the culture diversity. (Jane, interview, May 27, 2015)

To conclude, the answers from the participants regarding the purposes for Chinese heritage learners to learn Chinese provided a clear overview of how CHS teachers perceived this subject matter of teaching Chinese as a heritage language. In addition, this
section also provided a snapshot of the subject matter knowledge the CHS teachers possessed currently.

**Beliefs about the context.** There were two interview questions directly asking the about the role of context in language instruction and the role of technology in providing a richer context for language instruction. All 8 participants believed that context played a very important role in language instruction. The different roles mentioned by the participants were:

1. “motivating students’ learning because of providing a simulated environment” (Mei, interview, May 27);
2. “providing the background information for communication” (Ming, interview, May 27);
3. “providing the usage of a word in a real word” (Jia, interview, May 27, 2015);
4. “providing cultural connotation for words in Chinese” (Jane, interview, May 27, 2015); and,
5. “being easy to interpret the meaning of a word in Chinese” (Tao, interview, May 24, 2015).

All 8 participant teachers viewed technology as providing a richer context for language instruction. The role of arousing students’ interests was mentioned by three participant teachers. One participant teacher mentioned that he adopted technology to help the learners to access language, culture and content in a context as well as facilitate the understanding of the deeper meaning behind cultural products and practices.

In my class, the students listen and watch movies that will provide them with the context. While watching the movies, I will pause the movie when the attractive
scene is coming next which will arouse their desire to watch. For example, when we watched a classic martial arts film “Shaolin Temple,” I will introduce the temple structure, what street markets look like. There is someone selling stuff, someone doing street performance. So I use the movie scene to extend the learning. If there is no such technology, teaching is very boring. (Peter, interview, June 4, 2015)

Two participants believed that technology can be used a tool to make the teaching more scientific which referred to how teachers can keep track of the learners achievement through a body of evidence. One of them described her teaching practice of using technology with the students to document, track and interact on their performance over time:

I really like to use technology to improve students’ ability of language study. On one hand, it can make the teaching more alive; on the other hand, it can make the students more focus. For example, at the end of the class, I asked them to use the APP Seesaw in iPad or iPhone to take a picture of their writing and also asked them to record their writing. So everyone in the class can share their reading and give each other suggestions. (Fang, interview, May 21, 2015)

Three participants stated that they used technology as a facilitating tool to produce language and provide more authentic input. One stated:

I think the computer technology gives more space for students to learn. The language study before is more focus on grammar and words, but now the technology brings more convenience for us. Like if we can’t understand the meaning of the word, we can check that online. We can find more examples about
how native speakers use. We can find more dialogue related to real life. It can give them more examples to see how to use the word more like native speakers.

(Mei, interview, May 27)

To sum up, all the participants recognized the important role of context and technology played in providing effective language instruction. The participant teachers had integrated the different types of roles the context played in their language teaching. Technology was also a powerful tool for the participants and their students to develop their ability with contextualized language instruction.

**Beliefs about teachers’ self-efficacy.** There was only one interview question (Interview Question7) which directly inquired of teachers what were the most rewarding aspects of teaching Chinese to CHS learners. Teacher’s self-efficacy refers to “the capability to organize and execute courses of action required to successfully accomplish a specific teaching task in a particular context” (Bandura, 1977). Six teachers reported they felt more effective under certain circumstances. Two teachers not only reported the moment or circumstance they felt more effective, but they also reported that under certain circumstances they felt less effective. These types of self-efficacy were categorized into two broad types: one type was related to themselves (n=4), and the other type was related to the students’ outcome (n=7).

**Self-efficacy related to self.** One teacher expressed that she felt a sense of achievement because she shared the updated professional development information with peers and home schools (Fang, interview, May 21, 2015). One teacher was really satisfied with the success of her implementation of certain classroom activities (Jane, interview, May 27, 2015). One participant always felt less effective when she conducted
classroom activities because she believed she lacked subject matter knowledge and there were always more things she needed to learn. She felt more effective when students showed positive attitudes toward her (Qin, interview, May 21, 2015). One teacher designed his own teaching materials that were widely used by another church-based community school which made him feel a sense of accomplishment. (Ming, interview, May 27)

**Self-efficacy related to students’ outcomes.** Three participants felt more effective when the students engaged in class (Fang, interview, May 21, 2015) (Tao, interview, May 24, 2015). Two participants expressed that they felt the most rewarding parts of teaching when CHS learners were seeing their progress (Jane, interview, May 27, 2015) and their attitude change toward learning Chinese as a subject (Peter, interview, June 4, 2015). One teacher expressed that she felt a sense of reward when she learned new information with students (Tao, interview, May 24, 2015). Another teacher expressed that she felt less effective when there are challenges with the relationship between her and her students (Qin, interview, May 21, 2015).

In sum, the self-efficacy of the participants was simply described here, but the beliefs of self-efficacy always related to a larger context or a specific task. By examining more details in the practices of CHS teachers and which specific contexts or tasks these beliefs related to in each individual case, one begins to identify and explain the relationship between the teachers’ reported self-efficacy beliefs and their knowledge and skills.

**Beliefs about knowledge of self.** There were three interview questions asking the participants about their knowledge of self. Knowledge of self-referred had two notions: a
teacher’s professional identity in terms of the investment of self in teaching and a
teacher’s professional learning attitude in terms of the extent of their self-motivated
learning. According to these ideas and the teachers’ answers, four sub-codes were
identified which demonstrated that a clear motivation to teach (n=8), devoted investment
of self in teaching (n=2), developing reflective thinking (n=5) and strong self-motivated
learning (n=3).

**Motivation to teach.** This sub-code described the reasons or motives to make the
participants decide to become a Chinese teacher. The participants’ (n=8) answers could
be summarized into five categories: being part of community, personal interests, CHS
lack of teachers, teach their own children and continuing to be in the teaching profession.

**Investment of self in teaching.** This sub-code was used to exemplify one of the
teaching professional identity—investment of self in teaching which referred to investing
their time and efforts to try teaching practice innovations. A teacher described that it was
a strong call for him to devote himself to explore how to teach a newly opened-class in
CHS school.

Our school has tried a few years to start this class, but the school cannot provide
this class because of having difficulty to find the teacher. Therefore, I started to
teach it. The inner drive is very strong. From 1998, I started working with
Chinese school and served Chinese school. I’m very familiar with Chinese school
and also have strong feelings of it. (Peter, interview, June 4, 2015)

**Developing reflective thinking.** This sub-code described how teachers started to
develop a reflective thinking while they were learning to teach. Five participants
mentioned the professional development programs, including STARTALK program,
were the trigger to make them reflect and start comparing their teaching practices between before the workshop and the present. For instance, one teacher talked about the difference of her teaching before the STARTALK and after.

After [I] attended that program, every time before I prepared my lesson, I always thought that what I was going to teach would really help the students to use those languages in real life or I would think that if it would help those kids inherited the Chinese culture. But before I attended that program, I never thought about questions like that. I think that’s one of the most important questions the Chinese teachers should think about which [is] how to let the next generation to inherit the Chinese language and culture. (Qin, interview, May 21, 2015)

Another teacher talked about the uncertainty of the effectiveness of his students learning, but later, after he attended the STARTALK, he reflected that what he did in his class closely reflected what the learner-centered principles had proposed.

Nobody told me before that teaching should be like student-centered. I felt the interactions with the students were very effective. We were pleased after we finished each class, we felt that time passed too fast; and later after learning, I discovered that my teaching was the teaching practice which emphasized the student-centered classroom. I also have gotten to prove my own teaching practice and get more knowledge about the teaching theories. (Peter, interview, June 4, 2015)

**Self-motivated learning.** This sub-code emphasized the participants who invested their time and efforts to learn to teach seemed to possess the strong intrinsic motivation to let their students to learn better. All the participant teachers reported that they learned at
work and kept developing themselves by attending different professional development programs, learning from master teachers or being self-taught. One teacher with 20 years teaching experience stated that she started teaching without any professional development support and developed continuously by attending all kinds of teaching-related workshops and the professional development programs.

After the Chinese language school became more and more organized, we began to have activities every summer that teachers could share their teaching experience with each other. I think that these would be count as kind of training experience and it actually began after I have taught for over 7 years in CHS. I also attended many lectures of talking about how to teach Chinese. Most of those lecturers were from China and had taught multiple teaching skills. (Tao, interview, May 24, 2015)

Another teacher not only expressed how he spent time to learn to teach but also described the different routes he took advantages to learn to teach.

But how to teach Chinese, I had to spend a lot of time to explore. There were several ways. Every time I went on a working trip overseas, I spent a lot of time in the bookstores. I read all the books related to Chinese education overseas. I got the experience from comparing different teaching materials and by self-taught. In addition, I went back to China to attend several training, as well as the STARTALK training here. (Peter, interview, June 4, 2015)

To sum up, CHS teachers show very strong motivation to teach at CHS and took advantages of any opportunities they had to improve their teaching. They started to
improve their teaching practice by trying newly learned content and skills as well as developing their reflective thinking gradually.

**Beliefs about ways to maximize students learning.** There was only one interview question (Interview Question 14) that solicited the participants’ beliefs regarding how the students could learn better. The participants’ answers were divided into four categories, including beliefs about learner-centered instruction (n=4), applying standard-based learner-centered instruction (n=2) and self-development (n=2).

**Beliefs about learner-centered instruction.** This sub-code was assigned to the participants’ beliefs related to the principles of learner-centered instruction. All 8 participants expressed certain principles of learner-centeredness they believed would improve their students’ learning, such as designing class based on student’s interests, creating a caring relationship with students, viewing students as active learners, teacher’s role of facilitating students as the lifelong learners, creating a target language environment, learning by teaching, taking care of students’ social needs. For instance, one teacher described one of the characteristics of a qualified CHS teacher in her mind should build up a caring relationship with students:

> Teachers should not just teach the students, they should also care about the students, not only have a loving and caring heart but also play different roles, such as psychologist, love expert and how is the student’s mental status as well as how to help them to finish the SAT exam. I think the teacher should have all of this qualifications and ability, because language relates to a lot of aspects. (Fang, interview, May 21, 2015)

One teacher thought if a teacher wanted her students to learn better, she should
not only have a good understanding of students’ interests but also should take care of students’ social needs. She stated, “I also think the peer influence is important, many kids come to Chinese language school to study because their friends learn here, so you can also use some students (friends) to motivate other students to learn.” (Mei, interview, May 27, 2015)

In terms of teacher’s role, the participant teachers thought the teacher played an important role in facilitate students’ learning. One teacher hoped that her students could develop a lifelong learning ability to continue to learn this language after they left Chinese school. “After they get to know the Chinese culture, they will have interests to learn Chinese by themselves when they get into the college”. (Qin, interview, May 21, 2015) One of the teachers also talked about her role as a facilitator if she could re-teach the class in her teaching video next time as below:

I watched my own teaching video, I felt like I talked too much. Then I changed my teaching style that I didn’t talk at the beginning …I just gave the task to the students. Every student needed to explain each new word by them. If found out in this way, they become more motivated….if I gave them task, let them teach me, they became more motivated than before…I allowed them to use them (the smart phones) to find out the meaning of the new words. I also let them to teach the whole class first. Each student had the responsibility to teach two to three words. …After their performance, I debriefed the ideas. I think teacher is a facilitator, don’t need to teach all the things Teacher just provides the chances of learning. Teacher should teach students how to study, give them guideline, and give them chances to practice. (Tao, interview, May 24, 2015)
Practices of learner-centered instruction. This sub-code was assigned to participants (n=4) who used the implementations of the learner-centered practices in their class to explain how learner-centered instruction made the students learn better. Four participants expressed that they not only deeply believed the learner-centered principles could improve students’ learning but also implemented into their CHS classrooms which included integrating technology to enhance learning, making learning more meaningful, encouraging the collaborative learning, meeting students multiple intelligence needs, building on students’ background information/life-related information, and rearranging the content in a meaningful way.

One teacher firmly believed the technology could improve the students’ learning outcomes and attempted to integrate technology in her teaching practice, so she described it as:

If this [technology] was the case, it could be indeed a great help for the students. The students could get more information. They could learn by themselves. …For example, in my class on last Sunday, we learned a lesson about the environment protection. The students discussed intensely. I divided them into two teams, supports and against. I asked them to give reasons to support the opinion of driving by themselves and give reasons to support the opinion of taking buses. The debate on both sides was very intense. If we had the internet connection, then a lot of problems could be immediately resolved. For example, they gave their reasons to say if they should drive; they argue that the high fatal accident rate caused by the car accident every year by comparing with the rate of the bus accident every year. If the WiFi works, they could immediately go on internet to
search the statistics to support their argument. They also mentioned the aspects of economic growth. Driving a car could stimulate the economy, the automobile industry and the insurance. They went very deep. But it was only because at that time the internet didn’t work. This task couldn’t be finished. I let them make up with this task after they went back home to browse the information. (Qin, interview, May 21, 2015)

One participant reflected on the teaching practices on her teaching video and commented on the most satisfying part of teaching as the collaborative learning among her students. She said, “The most satisfied part is the interactions among the students. They asked questions to each other. Because when they asked questions, the interactions involved some other topics. Although they couldn’t speak Chinese very fluently, they all had great ideas.” (Jia, interview, May 27, 2015)

One teacher provided a very specific example of how he re-arranged the content in a meaningful way to help his students to learn better:

I would re-arrange the content the students need to learn and put them together. Let me give an example. I chose 3 articles from a certain teaching material. The first article was about transport, the inconvenient of travel-traffic jam; and the second article was about a couple, one in China and one in Canada to study overseas. Because of thousands of miles apart, they connected through the Internet. The third article talked about how to recycle the waste. I let the students write a composition about reducing the vehicle pollution. When they started to write, they would think of something about the pollution when it resulted in the traffic jam. The longer time of the traffic jam, the more pollution it produces. In
order to reduce traffic jams, everyone should reduce the frequency of travel, or when traveling, we should try walking, so the pollution and traffic jams could link together. Some of the students suggested using an electric car or using some other new energy vehicles or using a hybrid automobile. Therefore the students could talk about this. (Peter, interview, June 4, 2015)

**Applying standard-based learner-centered instruction.** This sub-code described how the participants (n=2) applied standards-based learner-centered instruction as envisioned by the STARTALK program to enhance the students’ learning, such as applying the 5C standards, applying integrated performance assessment, and applying the culture standard. One of the participant teachers described how she applied 5C standards, especially communication standard, in her class to make the students’ learning more effective. “My teaching philosophy is learner-centered, backward design and the application of 5C. Such as, I usually use individual or group presentation, performance, voice recording or game to let the students learn, as well as check the progress of their learning outcomes.” (Fang, interview, May 21, 2015)

Two participants stated that the culture standard would enhance the depth of learning by providing their students a cultural perspective. One stated:

The most important thing is that talking about culture according to their age. The culture includes main festivals, celebrations, calendars, etc. Hopefully they would have some idea about these cultural backgrounds, understand and remember the key words and expressions in these circumstances better. And they might use this knowledge in their daily life, for example, singing the birthday songs in Chinese,
remembering shorter and longer months with their fists. (Jane, interview, May 27, 2015)

**Self-development.** This sub-code was assigned to the participant teachers (n=2) who described that developing themselves would be one of the routes to maximize the students’ learning. Whether a teacher had only a semester of experience or a teacher with 12 years teaching experience, all expressed that developing themselves was very important to help the students learn better. One novice teacher said, “This is the question I’ve been thinking all the time and still in the process of finding the answer. To help them progress, I need to study more theory, learn from other teachers, and take some technology classes.” (June, interview, May 27, 2015) One experienced teacher said that “As a teacher, I have devoted enthusiasm, work hard, am eager to learn and should be creative.” (Ming, interview, May 27, 2015)

In summary, CHS teachers perceived that the best way to maximize the students learning it was to be either from their teaching practice or from reading and learning from secondary experience or both. It was very obvious that the teachers had started to make the students learn better by taking students’ needs into consideration and the students’ needs became the essential focus of all the teaching goals and their teaching decisions.

**Summary.** The seven themes that participants reported closely related to the two research questions. The first theme – attitudes and impact of standards-based, learner-centered instruction directly related to the second research question. The two themes – beliefs about Chinese as a subject matter and beliefs about the context reflected the inquiry of first research question. Another four themes — beliefs about challenges in their teaching practice, beliefs about their self-efficacy, beliefs about knowledge of self
and beliefs about ways to maximize students learning all related to both research questions. Since the second research question was to explore the process of the change over time, these four themes reflected the current understanding of contextualized language instruction developed by the CHS teacher; and it also included information regarding how the contextualized language instruction impacted the teachers’ beliefs and practices during the process. In the discussion section, a more detailed analysis is provided.

**CHS Teachers’ Practices of Contextualized Language Instruction**

As noted in the research design, the first research question was to explore what the practice about contextualized instruction might mean for the way CHS teacher taught the students in CHS. The following section first will provide the general description of teaching video within the specific classroom environment and teaching focus and learning outcome. Second, the result of teaching video observations and rating will be explained by relating to the principles envisioned by contextualized language instruction. Third, participants’ self-reported teaching practices in terms of their instructional decisions and instructional goals will be described with the examples of teaching videos.

The findings of the present section on teachers’ use of contextualized instructional practices and strategies built upon the previous results in this chapter on teachers’ understandings and beliefs about the contextualized instruction. To understand the ways in which the teachers in this study implemented contextualized language instruction, data from the interviews and teaching video were analyzed to gain a better understanding of the teachers’ beliefs and practices. There were two main themes which emerged from the interviews which included instructional decisions and instructional goals. In addition, the
teaching video observation and inter-raters’ rating were used to expand upon the descriptions in these two aspects. The areas of investigations were discussed in the following sections.

There are two research questions to be addressed. First, what were CHS teachers’ understandings and practices of contextualized language instruction in CHS classroom after leaving the training site and entering their classroom? Second, how did CHS teachers’ understandings of contextualized language instruction in CHS classroom change with the support of learning community? After the seven out of eight teachers submitted their video clips to the researcher, two evaluators or raters were asked to evaluate those teaching videos separately based on eleven questions shown in the table. The correlation between two raters (or inter-raters’ reliability) was .50 ($r = .5$, $p < .01$), which was found significantly high. It means that the two evaluators demonstrated a consistency and stability of their ratings of the video clips. The overall alpha reliability was also reported to be very high ($\alpha = .67$). In other words, evaluating of all videos by two independent raters among the seven teachers was found relatively reliable with regard to three categories (fully observed = FO, partially observed = PO, or not observed or not applicable NO/NA).

How did those eleven questions address the two research questions as two research objectives above? Video question (VQ) 8 and VQ 9 were explicitly or implicitly related to my research second question. As could be seen in Table 4 below (see VQ 8), it was found that over 50% of teaching behaviors were fully observed with regard to the question item that CHS teachers’ understandings of contextualized language instruction in CHS classroom changed with the support of computer-mediated communication.
community, but 36% were not observed. For VQ9 (i.e., “To what extend does the self-reported teaching practices on the videotaping guideline forms and interview reflect the STARTALK endorsed teaching principles?”), 36% were fully observed and 50% were partially observed. Please refer to Table 4 for more detailed information.

Table 4

**Teaching Video Ratings of Observations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teaching practice</th>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>P1</th>
<th>P2</th>
<th>P3</th>
<th>P4</th>
<th>P5</th>
<th>P6</th>
<th>P7</th>
<th>FO</th>
<th>PO</th>
<th>N/A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VQ1 The lesson’s performance objectives are clearly stated in student-friendly language and posted in the classroom for the duration of the lesson.</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12/66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VQ2 At least 35% of what the teacher says and/or materials the teacher shares with the students is in the target language.</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1/2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VQ3 The teacher uses a variety of strategies (e.g., visuals, concrete objects, hands-on experiences) to make language comprehensible.</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1/6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VQ4 Students are engaged in activities designed to meet the daily performance objectives.</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1/6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VQ5 The teachers design a variety of activities that are based on student attention/interest level and time needed for task.</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1/6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VQ6 The teacher employs a variety of feedback strategies designed to assist the learner in growing toward the target.</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3/16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VQ7 Students are receptive to feedback given by the teacher.</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1/6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VQ8 The teacher uses available technologies to develop real-world language abilities.</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1/6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VQ9 To what extend does the self-reported teaching practices on the videotaping guideline forms and interview reflect the STARTALK endorsed teaching principles?</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1/6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VQ10 To what extend does the observed instructional practice in the video reflect the STARTALK endorsed teaching practices?</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1/6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VQ11 To what extend does the observed instructional practice in the video reflect their statement on the videotaping guideline forms?</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1/6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Instructional decisions. Three interview questions directly asked teachers to report on the ways that they thought their students learning Chinese was present, if the textbooks or teaching materials met their teaching needs, how they adapted the teaching materials to instruction what the teaching strategies they usually use in their daily CHS class teaching and what the philosophy was to use these strategies. When the participants provided the teaching practice examples to explain some interview questions, they also exposed their instructional decisions they made when conducting certain teaching practices. The instructional decisions CHS teachers reported included 6 aspects: assessment and feedback, classroom management, content selection, teaching materials, activities and teacher’s role.

Assessment and feedback. This sub-code was assigned to the participants who used the strategies to assess the students and to provide the feedback which covered a spectrum of strategies ranging from reflecting contextualized instruction principles to the other end of reflecting teacher-centered principles. The reported assessment practices included student self-assessment, assessment by peers, students’ performance tracked over time, assessing students’ integrated competence, and assessing students with a written test. See Table 5 for the examples from teachers’ teaching video explanation form.

Table 5

Excerpt of CHS Teachers’ Assessment Practices
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Instructional goals (Ss will be able to do)</th>
<th>Assessment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fang</td>
<td>tell the story in Chinese, analyze the characters of the story psychologically, extend this concept to other topics</td>
<td>Group, Oral and Progress-assessment Two person in one group to debate “chopsticks v. s. fork” Summary why and why not using chopsticks and fork Discuss if any other alternative without chopsticks and fork</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jia</td>
<td>use the vocabulary to explain the water cycle use the previously learned vocabulary and their basic common sense to finish a complete presentation</td>
<td>Pre-Lesson assessment: activate students’ prior knowledge; Post-lesson evaluation: poster presentation Group: three small groups Oral: discussion, presentation; Writing: write key words and sentences on the poster;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qin</td>
<td>Use the vocabulary to do the physical examination Have the concept of the healthy life style use fluent Chinese to express their life style</td>
<td>Pre-assessment: Answering question to the individual students Post-assessment: Filing the check-up form Post-assessment: Role play</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the rating table above, 57% of teaching behaviors were fully observed with regard to the students were receptive to feedback given from the teacher (VQ6). But in terms of the teachers, a variety of feedback strategies were designed and employed to assist the learner to grow toward the target. The strategies the teachers utilized to provide feedback included the feedback focused on meaning, feedback focused on monitoring students’ progress, and feedback focused on building student confidence in existing language abilities. Two teachers employed peer feedback on their classes.

**Classroom management.** This sub-code was assigned to the participants who made instructional decisions and specifically employed certain classroom management strategies. The reported and observed classroom management strategies included...
encouraging target language used for classroom routines, establishing clear procedures, rewards, using procedures to start the class, using smooth transitions and attention getters and utilizing good lesson planning.

Table 6

*Examples of CHS Teacher’s Classroom Management Strategies*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Classroom management strategies</th>
<th>Sources from</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fang</td>
<td>Classroom routines, rewards planning</td>
<td>Interview, May 21, 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jia</td>
<td>Share lesson plan and procedures with the students planning</td>
<td>Interview, May 27, 2015 Teaching video, May 12, 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peter</td>
<td>Maintain a supportive environment (build up confidence), planning</td>
<td>Interview, June 4, 2015 Teaching video, May 10, 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mei</td>
<td>Body movement or song as a transition, planning, classroom routines</td>
<td>Interview, May 27, 2015</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Content selection.* This sub-code was assigned to the participants who made the decisions on the topics or content they chose to teach when they were planning their lessons. The reported teaching content in their videotaping forms indicated the participants decided what to teach by using the curriculum guide, textbooks, school syllabus, or by simply choosing topics that the teacher thought would interest the students or choosing topics based on the feedback from their students.

Table 7

*Examples of Topic and Content Selected by CHS Teachers*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Topic &amp; Content Selection</th>
<th>Sources from</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Teaching materials. This sub-code was assigned to the teacher who indicated that the teaching materials they adopted now were either sufficient or insufficient to them and what their goals were when they were selecting teaching materials. 3 of the 8 participants felt the textbook met the students’ interests; 5 out of 8 participants felt the existing textbooks hardly met the students’ needs. The teachers who were not satisfied with the teaching materials adapted the materials to meet the students’ needs. One participant wrote his own textbook series and said:

I started designing my teaching material in accordance with the five C principles. So this is no problem for me. I am currently writing my series of AP Chinese. It is also in accordance with the requirements of College Board. There is no conflict between the philosophy of textbooks and my teaching. (Ming, interview, May 27, 2015)

Another teacher integrated different resources together to compile his own teaching materials in two years. Some teachers integrated authentic literacy text such as short stories, poetry, and fairy tales or audio and video materials into their teaching. One
teacher expressed, “I always find some videos on YouTube to help my students to learn. And also I would let them watch or listen some CDs attached with textbooks.” (Tao, interview, May 24, 2015) In the teaching video rating table, it was found that nearly 72% of teaching behaviors were fully observed with regarding teacher beliefs and at least 90% what the teacher says and materials the teacher shares with the students is in the target language (VQ 2).

**Activities.** This sub-code was assigned to the teachers’ decisions regarding the types of the classroom activities they adopted to meet the course objectives. The activity decisions were reported and observed from the participant teachers included the individual activities for building listening skills, writing skills and vocabulary, activities encouraging students to interact with each other, create and share together, small group or paired activities where student’s role was assigned, using materials from textbooks to create activities and communicative activities that provided the authority to the students.

For more examples, see the Table 8 below.

Table 8

*Examples of Classroom Activities*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Instructional goals (Ss will be able to do)</th>
<th>Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fang</td>
<td>tell the story in Chinese, analyze the characters of the story psychologically, extend this concept to other topics</td>
<td>Individual activity for building up listening skills and vocabulary activities encourage students to interact, with each other paired activities the role is assigned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topic: camel &amp; sheep</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jia</td>
<td>use the vocabulary to explain the water cycle use the previously learned vocabulary and their basic common sense to finish a</td>
<td>activities encourage students to interact, create and share with each other paired activities the role is assigned communicative activities provides students’ authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topic: water cycle</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

105
complete presentation

Qin

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic: physical examination</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Use the vocabulary to do the physical examination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have the concept of the healthy life style</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>use fluent Chinese to express their life style</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual activity for building up listening skills, writing skills and vocabulary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paired activities where student’s role assigned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use the communicative activities from textbook</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Teachers’ role.** This sub-code was assigned to the teachers’ decisions on the role they needed to play during the teaching practices. The participate teachers considered themselves the facilitators to building up student’s critical thinking ability, connecting student’s interests to the learning, building up the student’s confidence and preparing the student to be a life-long learner.

**Instructional goals.** There were three interview questions which directly asked the teachers to report on what was the focus of this lesson and what were the expected students’ learning results during this lesson. This theme could be divided into two categories: the lesson focus and the specific techniques used to realize the teaching goal.

**Lesson focus.** This sub-code was assigned to the teachers’ reported lesson foci during their teaching videos which could be summarized in the following types: lesson focus on teaching cultural customs, lesson focus on production of three modes, lesson focus on a certain mode (presentational mode), lesson focus on the production of vocabulary, lesson focus on production of language in the real world context, lesson focus on the production of analytical skills, and lesson focus on expressing opinions. See Table 8 above for more examples.

**Techniques.** This sub-code was assigned to the techniques the participants adopted to realize the lesson goals described above. There were techniques of
contextualizing language, synthesizing vocabulary, rote memorization, presenting opinions, cooperative tasks, searching for information, sharing about themselves, inquiry and textbook exercises.

**Impact of Contextualized Language Instruction**

During the process from training to teaching practice, the CHS teachers discussed and implemented the contextualized language instruction in terms of the dimensions of catering the students’ needs, motivating students and accommodating students. Moreover, many teachers perceived contextualized language as sustaining the students’ learning and enriching the students’ performance-based learning culturally. After a year of teaching in the context of the CHS classroom, albeit the CHS teachers still discussed the above-mentioned aspects, but they also discussed contextualized language instruction as a way of understanding and building on students’ background knowledge and making the learning experience meaningful. The CHS teachers described their reflections based on newly learned content and the reflections on implementation of the contextualized instruction. Moreover, as the teaching videos demonstrated, the CHS teachers reflected upon the learned content and students’ needs started to implement the teaching practices in a specific way in classrooms in terms of curriculum, teaching practices and teaching techniques.

The responses to interview questions highlighted this change. The theme - impact and attitude of standards-based learner-centered instruction — emerged from the data, the vast majority of the CHS teachers indicated that the STARTALK training either changed and/or enhanced their understanding of standard-based learner-centered instruction.

Several CHS teachers attributed their understanding of contextualized language
instruction to their engagement in implementing this in their classroom practices and getting feedback from the students. For example, Peter stated:

STARTALK plan advocated for American teachers to teach a language is to teach the student’s language ability. If keeping this in mind, each teaching step needs to attract the students’ attentions; teacher needs the continuous improvement and reflects on the students’ responses to assess his/her own teaching, in the end needs to see if it is able to meet the purpose of teaching. It is not enough for teacher to only have passion to teach, but also to have the ability to teaching, more importantly, to be creative. (Peter, interview, June 4, 2015)

Moreover, the CHS teachers’ responses reflected various ways in which the contextualized language instruction enhanced their understanding of teaching Chinese in CHS. For example, Ming reported that the contextualized language instruction enhanced his understanding of sustaining the language learning with more strategy tools“ the concept of flip classroom, I have never heard of it before, which means the learning can be extended outside of the class and increase higher level language learning activities”. (Ming, interview, May 27) Moreover, Mei talked about the training not only provided her with a theoretical foundation of conducting her teaching practice, but also provided the same concept and language to talk to other teachers and collaborate with them. She stated, “After I knew the principle, I followed that to design the activity. Like which activity evaluated what kind of students’ ability, the activity was not just activity. Also, teachers sometimes shared their teaching experiences with others. So after the sharing, some teachers came out the new ideas of teaching. New things I always gave students have motivation to use” (Mei, interview, May 27, 2015).
The detailed analysis of the data described the CHS teachers’ initial conceptions and developing understandings and practices of contextualized language instruction and, more specifically, the changes that occurred. The discussions through the online phase revealed how the CHS teachers’ initial ideas about contextualized language instruction were related to catering the students’ need, motivating students and accommodating students, sustaining the students’ learning and enriched the students’ performance-based learning culturally. The interviews and teaching videos as well as self-assessment survey results indicated a change in the CHS teachers’ understanding of contextualized language instruction. The CHS teachers described contextualized language instruction in terms of the understanding of the students, reflection on their own teaching practices and collaborative with other teachers, in addition to above mentioned categories. Thus, the majority of the CHS teachers indicated that the STARTALK training and the content provided enhanced and/or changed their understanding and practice of teaching in CHS.
Chapter Five

Discussion

Introduction

This research was guided by two research questions:

1. What were CHS teachers’ beliefs and practices of contextualized language instruction in CHS classrooms after leaving the training site and entering their classrooms?

2. How did CHS teachers’ beliefs about contextualized language instruction in CHS classrooms change with the support of learning community?

As the two research questions suggest, the goal of this study was to use the data to propose a theoretical framework relevant to the development of CHS teachers’ beliefs and practices. This chapter adopted a holistic view to analyze the findings from the results section. By reducing the information to significant statements or quotes, the emerging theory about the CHS teachers’ beliefs and practices of contextualized language instruction was explained with the themes of engagement, sustainability, cultural enrichment, accommodation and performance-based teaching. Three noteworthy aspects that impacted the CHS teachers’ development were identified: self-motivation, reflective practice and a teacher learning community.

The first section of this chapter discusses the developing ideas of the CHS teachers’ beliefs about contextualized language instruction. Since the discussion focused on the developing ideas of CHS teachers, the findings of this section aim to answer the first and second research questions. Even though the eight participant teachers did not develop precisely in the same way, the commonalities of CHS teachers’ experiences and
understandings that ran through many of the themes were identified in the results section. This section attempts to make sense of these identified themes to propose a theory about the CHS teachers’ beliefs about contextualized language instruction. To be specific, the above-mentioned themes were discussed by integrating each area of their teaching practice. Engagement, cultural enrichment and sustainability were seen in the development of learning experiences for CHS learners, and accommodation were visible in the multi-dimensional role these CHS teachers played.

The second section of this chapter seeks to identify the particular ways of the CHS teachers’ lesson planning, teaching purpose, teaching materials, teaching techniques and assessment practices. The discussion of this section also provided the answers to the first and second research questions.

The third section of this chapter discusses the crucial factors that facilitated the teacher’s growth. The data analysis indicated that, through the support of the program, the changes in the CHS teachers’ understanding of contextualized language instruction were prevalent. CHS teachers’ learning approach and the support ensured and sustained the teachers’ growth were discussed. The themes of self-motivated learning, reflective practices and the learning community facilitated the forming of a unified discourse and collaboration are discussed.

**An Emerging Theory of CHS Teachers’ Pedagogical Beliefs of Contextualized Language Instruction**

**Engagement.** An effective language learning experience in CHS teachers’ beliefs was characterized by engagement, cultural enrichment and sustainability. The teachers provided such kinds of experiences by utilizing a variety of strategies, purposefully
designing and selecting the activities and authentic materials. Engagement refers to the learning experience as motivating and meaningful to the students and capturing the students’ energy and commitment. CHS teachers also perceived that this type of learning experience needed to be facilitated by the use of teaching and learning strategies designed to move students toward the attainment of the learning goals which were purposefully planned. The strategies reported and adopted by the CHS teachers included the following sub-categories: stimulating students’ interests, addressing students’ diverse needs and giving students responsibility of their own learning. In the following section, the strategies used and challenges encountered by CHS teachers in terms of providing an engaging learning experience of CHS learners will be discussed.

*Stimulating students’ interests.* All the participant teachers considered motivating students with the classroom activities and learning content as the most important concern. CHS teachers utilized a variety of classroom activities and teaching materials to stimulate the students’ interests and motivate them to come and engage in the CHS class. In order to stimulate students’ interests, one of the essential conditions was that the learning experience should be meaningful and relevant to CHS students. For example, one teacher believed that in order to engage the CHS learners in the higher-level class, the teaching materials needed to be cognitively challenging. He stated a desire for, “making Chinese learning more fun and challenging, relevant to their formal education content, mak[ing] Chinese a help and blessing for their learning” (Ming, interview, May 27, 2015).

Teachers purposefully selected and designed the lessons in order to meet the students’ interests which was among the strategies teachers claimed to use in their classes:
… there is also another game, which my students like. It is the last class of the semester. I designed the game called “Amazing Race” to review what they have learned from this academic year. It’s like the backward design I learned from the online and onsite teacher training. I need to design something which can let the student take back home something, that is to say, after the students finished ‘MaLiping’ textbook 4, what they have learned in the end. (Fang, interview, May 21, 2015)

In order to stimulate students’ interests, the variety of strategies teachers adopted included integrating technology to enhance learning, encouraging collaborative learning, rearranging the content in a meaningful way, and learning by doing. Table 9 includes excerpts of quotes or teaching practices from other participants regarding stimulating students’ interests.

Table 9

*Excerpts of Stimulating Students’ Interests*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Engagement: Stimulating students’ interests</th>
<th>Strategies</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Peter</td>
<td>In my class, the students listen and watch; movie will provide them with context…while watching the movies, I will pause the movie when the attractive scene is coming next, which will arouse their desire to watch….if there is no such technology, teaching is very boring.</td>
<td>integrating technology to enhance learning</td>
<td>6/4/2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fang</td>
<td>I really like to use technology to improve students’ ability of language study. On one hand, it can make the teaching more alive; on the other hand, it can make the students more focus....</td>
<td></td>
<td>5/21/2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jia</td>
<td>The most satisfied is the interaction among the students; they ask questions to each other. Because when they ask questions, the interaction will involve some other topics.</td>
<td>encouraging collaborative learning</td>
<td>5/6/2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peter</td>
<td>I will re-arrange the content the students need to learn and put them together. Let me give an example: I chose three articles in a certain teaching material. The first article is about transport, travel, inconvenient traffic jam, and the second article about a couple, one in China and one in Canada to study overseas, because thousands of miles apart, they had connected through the Internet. The third article talked about how to recycle the waste. I let the students write a composition about reducing the vehicle pollution…so they can connect the new content with their real life. That's how I helped them learn better: I brushed around, again I connect what they have learned with what they need to use together.</td>
<td>rearranging the content in a meaningful way</td>
<td>6/4/2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qin</td>
<td>The class on last Sunday, we learned a lesson about the environment protection. The students discussed intensively. I divided them into two teams, support and against: giving reason to support the opinion by drive by yourself or taking buses. The debate on both sides is very intense. The also mentioned the aspect of economic growth: driving a car can stimulate the economy, the automobile industry, insurance. They went very deep…</td>
<td>Life-related and meaningful content</td>
<td>5/21/2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mei</td>
<td>Like role play, singing the song and group activity. Those are my teaching strategies. I focus on learner-centered. Teacher is a guide, most of the time. Students need to practice the oral Chinese…after I teach them new materials, we will also have games and played by one student or as a group. In order to make students focus, I usually ask the student to stand up and</td>
<td>learning by doing</td>
<td>5/27/2015</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
motivate them.

Teachers also discussed the challenges to stimulate the students’ interests. The most common reason for the need to stimulate students’ interests was that students were forced to come to CHS by their parents. One of the teachers described the situation as follows:

I think the challenge is that the students don’t have interests to learn. It’s the common phenomenon. A huge amount of students came to Chinese school because of their parents … It’s so hard to motivate them in the class. I think that’s the biggest problem. The problems and challenges I mentioned before is because I want to try different ways to motivate them to learn. (Qin, interview, May 21, 2015)

The conflicting teaching strategies between the regular school and CHS led to the low motivation of the students. Furthermore, the non-legislated status of CHS in formal education led the students to be less motivated when they were unable to persist in this learning process.

As Dr. John Henrik Clarke stated, “A good teacher, like a good entertainer, first must hold his audience’s attention. Then he can teach his lesson” (Swanston, 2003, p. 83). All eight CHS teachers highlighted the learning experience in which being able to stimulate students’ interests was essential to keeping their students engaged in the classroom and even sustaining the process of heritage learning. All the teachers also believed that, besides the purposeful planning with embedded effective strategies, teachers also needed to have a good understanding about students’ needs. The following section will discuss another strategy to engage students.
Addressing students’ diverse needs. Another strategy teachers expressed frequently was purposefully selecting the teaching materials to plan lessons that catered the students’ needs. The needs discussed by the participant teachers included general students’ needs, diverse needs in a heterogeneous class, students’ multiple intelligence needs, the needs of heritage speakers, and the needs of exceptional learners. One teacher expressed that in order to facilitate a diverse group of learners in the same class and keep all students engaged, he needed to select teaching material purposefully:

I will choose some textbooks which make everyone feel they can keep up with the progress of the course. The easier practices were assigned to the students have lower language competence; it can help them build up confidence. The harder practices were assigned as a group work, and then submit to me. I will discuss the answer together with students. In this way, students with higher language competence felt proud, since I gave the appraisal to their work. The lower level students can learn what they could learn from the textbook by involving the discussion and listening to the feedback from me. (Peter, interview, June 4, 2015)

Table 10 includes a selection of excerpts from quotes concerning the theme of addressing students’ diverse needs from CHS teachers.

Table 10

Excerpts of Addressing Students’ Diverse Needs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Engagement: Addressing students’ diverse needs</th>
<th>Needs type</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fang</td>
<td>That is to say, the school should not divide the students into different tracks based on textbook; instead they should base on the students’ needs and design the courses based on the level of different needs of heritage/Chinese as</td>
<td>Different needs of heritage/Chinese</td>
<td>5/21/2015</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Jia  Appropriate textbooks and teaching materials used to plan lesson for a heterogeneous class. I spend more time on finding a variety of resources. We as a group should share our resources of lesson planning.

Peter  I design my teaching based on the students’ needs. Each year, the students are not at the same level. From this aspect, I change every year.

Ming  To write and edit my own textbooks, I have to teach, and only continued to teach, I can know how to write the materials which suit their needs. If we write the material to serve these overseas students, it is necessary to relate what they need and cultural habits. … I know what American-born Chinese students need.

Jia  Most important is that the teachers need to know the students. Once you know the students, you will do some differentiation according to their needs because each student has their own learning style.

Jane  I will design some activities to help understand the textbook content. In my activities, I will try to engage as many senses as possible, so they could have better memory.

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**Giving students responsibility for their own learning.** The other category of strategies to keep the students engaged was giving the students the responsibility to set and monitor their own goals. For example, one teacher shared her lesson plan with her students. She described:

The most rewarding thing is to see students reach their learning goal and succeed.

Let the students know the lesson planning help us to use time wisely and focus on
the lesson. The lesson plan itself can be teaching objects to provide a meaningful communication opportunity. Students have the authority to remind me of the transition to next tasks. It helps to provide a better understanding of the learning objectives and sequence. (Jia, interview, May 27, 2015)

Another teacher also reflected on her teaching video and said that she would like to release some of her control and provide students the chance to be the experts of teaching Chinese.

Now, I just gave the task to the students. Every student need to explain each new word by themselves. I found out in that way they become more motivated. I allow them to use that to find out the meaning of the new word. I also let them to teach the whole class first. Each student have the responsibility to teach two to three words, and let them to teach at first, like explain the meaning of the word, how to use this word. After their performances, I will generalize the idea. I think teacher is a facilitator, don’t need to teach all the things. Teacher just provides a chance of how to study. Teacher should teach students of how to study, give them guideline, and give them a chance to practice. (Tao, interview, May 24, 2015)

Besides sharing the teaching sequence and plans and letting students be the experts, other strategies are described in Table 11.

Table 11

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Engagement: Giving students responsibility for their own learning</th>
<th>Strategies</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fang</td>
<td>The paper test is one way of the assessment. I also use other method to assess the students’</td>
<td>Provide choice in</td>
<td>5/21/2015</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
learning progress, such as presentation, homework, class participation.

Jia

They are asked to write a summary. After they finished, I also used another task. Because all the students will bring their cell phone, they will put what they wrote in Seesaw app; it a bit like e-Portfolio. What they wrote will be all there. After they put their writing there, they will record themselves. They can keep track of their own learning.

Peter

That lesson in the teaching video I taught about discussing a topic in the last year AP exam, “A Chinese movie you watched.” If I just poured what I want to say into their mind, from my perspective to talk about it, my students may not absorb because they may not have seen this movie. Therefore, I should put myself in their shoes to inspire him. I know what movie they like to watch, and then connect what I want to teach with that.

Ming

Give the students authority and mobilize the enthusiasm, both of them must be based on interesting and useful. That is to say Chinese classroom should be first interesting, and second is to be able to be their academic help. The latter is especially important for high school students.

Allow students interests to dictate the learning while still covering the needed content

Connecting with their other disciplines

Sustainability. Sustainability of the learning experience emphasized that the CHS learners’ learning experiences were not constrained within the CHS classroom and the limited contact hours. Instead, learning could be continued outside of the class, in their families, in the larger community and in lifelong experiences. Limited by the contact hours in the CHS classroom, the teachers believed that providing an engaging class in CHS was not sufficient to provide a complete learning experience for CHS students. CHS
teachers perceived that the sustainability of the CHS learners’ learning experiences and the learning ability beyond the CHS classroom were crucial.

**Enhancing positive disposition.** During the learning process, the teachers helped the students to develop a positive disposition toward learning Chinese. For instance, during the online discussion, one teacher expressed that his students started to form their cultural identity in the learning process. “My students said, ‘If we do not learn Chinese, then nobody will learn Chinese,’ so we do not need to worry about our students’ understanding about the cultural inheritance” (Ming, discussion thread, July 1, 2014).

Another teacher echoed his statement by saying, “In my class, I always tell my student if you do not learn Chinese, you cannot communicate with the world” (Fang, interview, May 21, 2015).

Table 12

**Excerpts of Enhancing Positive Disposition**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Sustainability: Enhancing positive disposition</th>
<th>Strategies</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ming</td>
<td>Only can the class which moved the teacher move the students. To teach the lesson “The Last Lecture,” I found Randy Pausch’s “The Last Lecture”…. Why I choose this material to write my book? Because it touches our heart. The students are the same with us, or I should say we are the same with them; if the message can touch us, it can touch them as well.</td>
<td>Delivering inspirational message</td>
<td>5/27/2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fang</td>
<td>The things I feel satisfied is that I saw the students feel so happy after the class and told their parents what they played and learned today because I know that they engage themselves in the class and make connection with me. Because of that connection, it means they got 50% of my goal. Because my goal is passing my information to the students without</td>
<td>Fun and exciting</td>
<td>5/21/2015</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
they noticing. In the future, they will have impression of what I teach them.

Mei  I also think the peer influence is important. Many of the kids came to the Chinese language school to study is because their friend learning, so you can also use some students to motivate other students to learn.

Fang  For example, in this semester, one of my students didn’t have good score in his mid-term, but I just encourage him that I talked with him a lot and after that. He made a great progress in his final. He felt so happy and his parents when his parents came to pick him up. Even though the grade is not that high, I can tell the happiness from the eye contact the student made with their parents.

**Extend learning beyond the classroom.** The teachers cultivated the students’ positive disposition by involving students in service learning and by using technology to extend the students’ learning beyond the classroom. One teacher shared his experience of bringing his students to a mission trip to China:

In the summer of 2009, several families in our Chinese school, through AW mission ministry, visited two private schools in CQ city. AW is a Christian charity mission ministry to support some students from poverty and provide part of salaries for the teachers in these private schools. After we got back to the U.S., I encouraged the students to donate books and write letters to the students in China. We also educate our students to care about the issues which happened in the other side of the world and accept and love the people and things around us… The staff in our school and church said those seven children who attended these cultural
exchange activities became more mature. I explained that what they learned from the trip can’t be provided in our CHS classroom. (Ming, interview, May 27, 2015)

Four out of eight teachers had their own Google sites as a tool to house all their teaching materials and tools for students. Students could access the sites during the weekdays to review or preview the lesson content. One of the teachers said, “A portion of the homework for my textbook are online homework. The website can record the records when the students visited. From the records, I know student frequently visited during the weekends” (Ming, interview, May 27, 2015). Some teachers also talked about connecting the students’ learning with their Chinese community or mainstream community. One participant described that, “My students sometimes will attend some other activities in the community, like speaking, singing and dancing. Their performance also can be seen as kind of evaluation if they remembered what they learned. If their performances got praises, it will also motivate them to learn more” (Mei, interview, May 27, 2015).

Cultural enrichment. Cultural enrichment was identified as important by the CHS teachers, in that the learning experience in CHS integrated cultural elements which helped students to understand the heritage and cultural perspectives by experiencing the culture practices in order to appreciate the cultural products. Culture was considered a very important part of traditional inheritance according to most of the CHS teachers. One of the participant teachers made a clarification that culture “is not just what is traditional. It is what closely related to the modern life. So I teach [that] Chinese culture is not limited to the ancient Chinese culture. Modern life always reveals elements of Chinese culture” (Peter, interview, June 4, 2015). The results indicated that all the teachers integrated culture into their lessons. They believed that without enriched cultural
elements in the learning experience, the learners would feel that the learning experience was engaging and would be unable to sustain their motivation and ability to learn.

Adopting the 5C standards in planning. The concept of adopting 5C standards in planning referred to a teacher’s use of the five domains of language learning, as specified by the Standards for Foreign Language Learning (SFL). These included Communication, Culture, Connection, Comparisons and Community. In order to provide an engaging learning experience, teachers integrated the Culture standard into their teaching. The five domains in the 5C standards were interrelated. For example, the Culture domain usually related to the Comparisons domain. One teacher’s teaching video indicated that she extended the learning of identifying items’ advantages and disadvantages (Topic: chopsticks vs. forks) via debate skills in her classroom practices. During this process, she also integrated cultural comparisons. She helped the students to learn about cultures from tools used for meals, for example, using chopsticks to eat sushi, forks for spaghetti, hands for pizza, and so on (Fang, teaching video, April 12, 2015).

Another teacher drew upon the relationship between cultural practices and cultural perspectives in his teaching practices by helping his students build upon their ability in AP Chinese oral presentations. His main goal was helping them to sustain a topic by deepening the cultural implications. He used the classic Disney cartoon Mulan as an example and showed the students how to extend the basic story plot to get at the cultural meaning behind the story. He fostered inquiry by using questions. The following was the communication between the teacher and his students.

Teacher: “What the main theme of the movie, Mulan?”

Student 1: “Honor.”
Student 2: “Boys can attend the army, but girls cannot.”

Teacher: “Good! Why she needs to join the army?”

Student 3: “She needs to protect her father.”

Teacher: “This exactly is the Chinese tradition, right? My father became old; I don’t want him to join the war. I have the responsibility to protect him. Another thing is woman is not allow to join the war. What did she do?”

Student 4: “She cut her hair.”

Teacher: “Is that the solution?”

Student 5: “She dressed up to pretend she is a boy”

Teacher: “That’s right! So let’s connect it together. Why she needs to join the war? Because she has the Chinese tradition in mind. She needs to protect her father. She replaces her father to join the army. Because in Chinese culture, children want to pay back what their parents devoted for them. Then what’s the result?”

Student 6: “She was caught by Shan Yu and kick off from the army.”

Student 7: “She lived in the mountain and back home finally.”

Teacher: “Then what is the good aspect of this result? The good aspect is not she leave the army, right? This is the process, not the result. The good aspect is she is alive, right? Keeping alive is very important, right?”

Student 6: “The war is finished, but she was caught by Shan Yu later again.”

Teacher: “Then think about one sentence to summarize the result of this movie. Mulan is a kind person who protects his father. What is the result then?”

Student 7: “Both her and her father are alive.”
Teacher: “So kind person are well rewarded, right? This is a Chinese tradition, right? The good are well rewarded and the bad are punished.” (Peter, teaching video, April 20, 2015)

**Assisting identity formation.** Developing a sense of identity was an important feature for the CHS learners, along with maintaining and developing their heritage language competence. As Wang (2004) stated, a positive attitude about their self-identity helped them to recognize and draw upon the capital in both their culture and heritage domains. One teacher used a very vivid example to explain the purpose of learning Chinese for her young CHS students in keeping their identity and contributing to their cultural diversity.

I think the point of learning Chinese is to keep some unique culture identity inside, not just the unique outlook. For example, if I come across E.T. in the street and really would like to know what his/her home planet looks like, if she/he tells me that she/he was raised in the Earth and know nothing about home planet, I would be quite disappointed. It is the similar situation for the heritage Chinese student. Our kids are raised in North American culture. If we try harder to pass the Chinese culture and heritages to our kids, we are contributing to the culture diversity. (Jane, interview, May 27, 2015)

One teacher hoped that the students could develop a lifelong ability and desire to continue learning this language after they left CHS because of their exposure to their culture. “After they get to know the Chinese culture, they will have interests to learn Chinese by themselves when they get into the college” (Qin, interview, May 21, 2015).
In summary, all three aspects – engagement, sustainability and cultural-enrichment – were indispensable for providing an effective learning experience. In addition, some teachers expressed that a caring and safe learning environment was important for the learners as well.

**Accommodation.** The theme that emerged from the CHS teachers’ perspectives and captured their understanding of the teachers’ role was accommodation. To provide a learner-centered and effective learning environment to the CHS students, the teachers accommodated the role of the teacher according to the students’ needs. CHS teachers, in order to create a motivating and engaging class, used two common solutions: having students work on their own and having them cooperate with others. Teaching by their own means in the teaching process, the teachers functioned in several different roles, such as facilitator, counselor, audience, role model, advocate and classroom teacher. Working with others referred to the teaching process in which a group of people cooperated so that the classes involved not only the teachers but also others supported during a learning period. One teacher described it as “not only have a loving and caring heart but also plays different role, such as psychologist, love expert…I think the teacher should have all of this qualifications and ability…” (Fang, interview, May 21, 2015). In order to accommodate learning, CHS teachers adopted two kinds of tools to actualize their multi-dimensional role: foreign language standards and teaching strategies. In the following section, the emerging theme of accommodation in terms of the role of the CHS teachers is explained in detail.

**Adopting 5C standards in planning.** CHS teachers considered the 5 C’s as important factors in supporting accommodation in the CHS classroom. Some teachers
adopted the 5C standards as a tool to set up the learning goals to facilitate the class. For example, one of the participants remarked, “The standards provide the specific goals and guidelines for teachers’ lesson planning and the skills for students’ learning. I enjoy planning project-based learning curriculum for a language class. It is easier to embed all 5 Cs in the curriculum. It also motivates students’ learning as well” (Jia, interview, May 27, 2015). In some of the cases, the teachers referred to standards-based performance assessments to evaluate the learners’ language ability in order to accommodate a diverse class:

Every fall when my class began, I must identify the gap between the highest and lowest level of the students. It often took weeks with standard-based measurable practices in listening, reading, and writing. The results helped me to sort the students into three groups, to finalize my teaching plan at medium level and to set individual goal for each group. Also, the standard-based assessment is adjustable to fit the students’ progress. (Peter, interview, June 4, 2015)

**Responding to student affect.** Working individually, the teachers also considered using different strategies as an effective way to facilitate the students’ needs, which included stimulating students’ interests, differentiated instruction, and building up student confidence to take risks in using the language. For example, one teacher described how he built up the students’ confidence in a higher-level CHS class:

As for writing, all the students were worried when they just came to my class. I don’t want them to [be] worried about it; otherwise, it will be an obstacle for them once they come across writing…the students all felt they don’t know how to write. I asked them to sit in a line in front of the class and gave them the pictures
and asked them to make up a story based on the pictures. They take turns to come up with one sentences to complete the story. During the process, I told them if you did not add more details, it was not a story; it’s just paraphrasing. Therefore they start adding more details. They all felt made up a story is so easy … they only need us to continue the story. It can be short or long. During this process, everyone in the class made some improvement. They felt more confident. (Peter, interview, June 4, 2015)

Teachers also stated that their roles extended beyond teaching language and cultures and included introducing to students a sense of identity. The roles of psychological and emotional counseling and advocating for Chinese language education also contributed to the CHS teachers’ developing understanding of teaching and learning in the CHS classroom.

*Advocating for Chinese language education.* One participant teacher considered this as an important role in advocating for Chinese heritage language education. He stated that, “You might be the changing force in your school, through teaching Chinese; I want to improve myself to impact my students, parents and teachers” (Ming, interview, May 27, 2015).

Of course, all these factors cannot be separated from one another; they are also interrelated. For example, a CHS teacher, in order to accommodate the students’ learning, might modify the whole teaching process, including the curriculum, assessment, and teaching strategies. CHS teachers can examine the learning results of the assessment which in turn can guide the teacher to accommodate students better. The modification of assessment is certainly based on the adaptation of curriculum. The whole process can be a
spiral that develops and evolves gradually. Two participant teachers stated that effective language teaching in CHS requires the teachers’ “adaptability” and “creativity,” which allowed them to adjust and create lesson plans in order to accommodate the learners’ needs.

**Collaborating with parents and stakeholders.** The CHS teachers also emphasized that working with the other people was helpful for them in facilitating the student learning in their classrooms. Besides working with the different personnel and the resources inside of the CHS program, such as the principal, the teaching assistant, and the other teachers and students, the most important aid was the parents. They considered collaborating and educating the parents as part of their role as well. One teacher described how he used the teaching material he wrote to educate the parents to further realize the potential of the family as a resource that CHS learners could utilize. He said:

The reality is the parents do not care [about] Chinese language learning. There is a section in my teaching materials called “Family time” in every lesson which provide an opportunity for the whole family to communicate together. It will help to strengthen the determination and patience for everyone in the family. In addition, every quarter, our school holds a public speaking event. Every parent need to help the students to find materials, preparing and practices. (Ming, interview, May 27, 2015)

In conclusion, to accommodate the students’ learning in the CHS classroom, the teachers usually play various roles when working individually, and they need to cooperate with other people to achieve their teaching goals.
Development of CHS Teachers’ Planning and Teaching

Task-performance and communication comprised an important theme that emerged from the CHS teacher’s perspectives and captured their practices for contextualized language instruction. To provide a learner-centered and effective learning environment to the CHS students, the teachers aligned the curriculum of the CHS with the students’ needs and experiences in a construction-oriented and meaning or a function-focused manner.

Teaching purpose. The findings indicated that all the teachers in this study had knowledge of and were able to implement standards-based, learner-centered instruction to some degree. They also reported some challenges in implementing this type of instruction beyond their own knowledge of learner-centered instruction. The participant responses in terms of how they viewed the students, perceived the teachers’ role and made instructional decisions also revealed that their thinking featured a growing consciousness and slight emergence of initial constructivist teaching with student-based approaches, to varying degrees. All of the teachers progressively developed new ideas about teaching and students in different aspects of the learning process. Table 14 provides examples of their beliefs and practices as illustrated through the data.

Table 13

Excerpts of Teachers’ Teaching Purposes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Instructional goals (Ss will be able to do)</th>
<th>View of the learners</th>
<th>Learners’ skills</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fang</td>
<td>Tell the story in Chinese, analyze the characters of the story psychologically, extend this concept to other</td>
<td>Actively engaged in learning, interact with other students</td>
<td>Story retelling skills; extend the content of the story to evaluate the pros and cons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topic: camel &amp; sheep</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jia</td>
<td>Use the vocabulary to explain the water cycle, use previously learned vocabulary and basic common sense to complete a presentation</td>
<td>Interact with other students</td>
<td>The three modes: interpersonal, interpretive, presentational</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qin</td>
<td>Use the vocabulary to do the physical examination, understand the concept of a healthy lifestyle, use fluent Chinese to express their lifestyles</td>
<td>Interested in learning, actively engaged in learning</td>
<td>Have language skill, help them to use Chinese whenever they are in a similar situation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The instructional goals in their interviews and teaching videos focused more on the function of the language which stressed the actual use of new language. Most of the teachers showed their intended combination of forms, meanings and functions of language during the process of teaching and learning. Their understanding of curriculum, teaching materials and assessment emphasized the ability of learners to construct knowledge.

**Learning materials.** Most of the teachers developed their critical understanding of the teaching materials in terms of tailoring or restructuring school-adopted materials. One teacher even wrote and published his own teaching materials. Two novice teachers were found to stick to the content of the textbook without showing their adaptation and tailoring. From the interview data, these two novice teachers appeared to be conscious of the importance of handling the textbook selectively, but because of a lack of teaching techniques and a lack of subject matter knowledge, they relied heavily on the textbooks to provide necessary knowledge and classroom activities. One of the novice teachers felt the current textbook could meet her needs, compared to the previous textbook. She said,
Now we adopted [the] textbook series, *Learn Chinese with Me*, published by Hanban which is more suitable for overseas Chinese school children. The lesson design was livelier. There are some good classroom activities for the teacher and a lot of tips and activities which is more practical. In general, it was much better than previous Chinese textbooks which can meet the needs. (Qin, interview, May 21, 2015)

As Grossman et al. (1989) described, the textbooks became “major sources of new content knowledge, as novice teachers often assume that the text is valid and represents ‘knowledge’” (p. 24). The interview data also supported the impact of the teachers’ adequate understanding of concepts and content of a subject matter which supports teachers in appraising the adequacy, accuracy and salience of the text, as described in Wilson’s (1988) research. In contrast to the way novice teachers relied upon the textbook and its supplementary materials, the more experienced teachers dealt with the challenges of adapting the existing textbook. One experienced teacher spent six years writing his own textbooks and kept revising them based on students’ feedback. He stated, “In order to write textbooks, I have to teach, and only continued to teach. I can know how to write the materials which suit their needs. If we are writing the material to serve these overseas students, it is necessary to relate it to what they need and cultural custom” (Feng interview, May 27, 2015). This experienced teacher reflected that through the interaction with the subject matter content and students, he had developed his pedagogical knowledge in this specific area. Therefore, his challenge was similar to those of beginning teachers in terms of the transformation of his disciplinary knowledge into a form of knowledge that was appropriate for students, as Feiman-Nemser et al. (1989)
stated. Grossman et al. state that “The ability to transform requires more than knowledge of one’s discipline; it requires knowledge of learners and learning, of curriculum and context, of aims and objective, of pedagogy” (Grossman et al., 1989, p. 32).

The same participant teacher also expressed that he hoped CHS teachers could take initiatives to develop the teaching materials to cater to students’ needs:

American schools do not provide the textbooks for foreign language teachers. The teachers must make full use of the network, develop the resources, and collect data and information from all kinds of places – make connections, including horizontal and vertical links. School allows their teacher to have authority. Then the teachers can motivate the students’ initiative. But in our Chinese school classroom, everyone [is] still confined to a unified textbook. The teacher is also limited to teaching materials accompanied with the textbook. If the teacher's creativity and initiative cannot fully be motivated, then how can we motivate the students? (Ming, interview, May 27, 2015)

The above cross-case comparison implied the belief that a close relationship could exist among the knowledge of subject matter, the knowledge of students and knowledge of pedagogy.

**Teaching techniques.** In terms of knowledge of pedagogy, the teachers’ responses from the interview data demonstrated that the teachers learned a lot of teaching techniques from the trainers and peers during the online and onsite teacher training program, through which they started to develop knowledge of pedagogy by possessing a broader repertoire of teaching techniques. Based on the evidence from the teaching video,
teachers used the initiative to select teaching techniques based on the needs for reaching
the learning objectives which they implemented into their classroom practices.

Table 14

*Examples of Teachers’ Teaching Techniques*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Instructional goals (Ss will be able to do)</th>
<th>Techniques adopted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fang</td>
<td>Tell the story in Chinese, analyze the characters of the story psychologically, extend this concept to other topics</td>
<td>Individual activity for building listening skills and vocabulary, Activities encourage students to interact with each other, paired activities in which the role is assigned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jia</td>
<td>Use the vocabulary to explain the water cycle, use the previously learned vocabulary and basic common sense to complete a presentation</td>
<td>Activities encourage students to interact, create and share with each other, paired activities in which the role is assigned, communicative activities provide students authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qin</td>
<td>Use the vocabulary to complete the physical examination, understand the concept of a healthy lifestyle, use fluent Chinese to express their lifestyles</td>
<td>Individual activity for building listening skills, writing skills and vocabulary, paired activities in which the student’s role is assigned, use of communicative activities from textbook</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The process of presenting the new content and scaffolding student learning, as demonstrated in the interview data and teaching videos, also supported the development of the teachers’ knowledge of pedagogy. In several participants’ video teaching segments, the teachers taught new vocabulary in a created context, situated their teaching topics in an authentic context, and assessed learning using meaningful tasks. Table 15 shows how a participant teacher presented the new content with situated context and scaffolded students’ learning to achieve the expected learning results.

Table 15
Examples of Teaching Procedures Facilitates the Learning Objectives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lessons topic</th>
<th>Procedures &amp; objectives of each task</th>
<th>Expected students learning results (Students will be able to)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I can change</td>
<td>Task 1: One student guesses the vocabulary while the rest of the students explain the meaning of the vocabulary from the PowerPoint. Base on this activity, students will be able to understand the meaning of the new vocabulary.</td>
<td>Fully understand the vocabulary, talk about water cycle by using the vocabulary and sentences from the article “I Can Change,” produce a poster about the water cycle, present the poster and Q&amp;A in a group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Task 2: Students read the article and analyze the water cycle, in addition to learning the vocabulary that is not listed on the vocabulary list.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Task 3: Each group of students will produce a poster about the water cycle and then present a poster and Q&amp;A.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The participants in this research appear to develop context-related knowledge of pedagogy and show their increasing maturity in adopting the teaching techniques to reach the students’ learning goals.

**Assessment and feedback.** The data collected on the teachers’ assessment practices included teaching videos and video explanation forms. These indicated that the teachers frequently used a variety of performance-based assessment to assess student oral and written language. Additional data from interviews showed that the teachers used a wide range of vocabulary related to standards-based, learner-centered assessments, including formative and summative assessment practices involving Integrated Performance-based Assessment (IPA).
It became evident through their responses that some of the participant teachers were unable to adopt learner-centered assessments fully, while others demonstrated confidence using a wide range of these assessments. The most commonly used informal, formative assessment that emerged from the interview data was the use of teacher-led questions. Their examples included questions that elicited one correct response as well as questions that encouraged student opinion and the creative use of the language. In some instances, the teachers allowed students to use Total Physical Response (TPR) to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding, rather than forcing language production with learners who might not have been ready to do so. There was some evidence from the interview data that the teachers in this study were using these informal, formative assessments to inform their instructional practices. Table 16 provides examples of assessments used by the participant teachers.

Table 16

*Examples of Assessment Practice*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Instructional goals (Ss will be able to do)</th>
<th>Assessment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fang</td>
<td>Tell the story in Chinese, analyze the characters of the story psychologically, extend this concept to other topics</td>
<td>Group, Oral and Progress assessment Two people in one group to debate “chopsticks vs. fork,” summarize why and why not to use chopsticks and fork, discuss other alternatives to chopsticks and fork</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jia</td>
<td>Use the vocabulary to explain the water cycle, use the previously learned vocabulary and their basic common sense to finish a complete presentation</td>
<td>Pre-Lesson assessment: activate students’ prior knowledge; Post-lesson evaluation: poster presentation Group: three small groups Oral: discussion, presentation; Writing: write key words and sentences</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Interestingly, a few teachers demonstrated a strong understanding of standards-based, learner-centered assessment practices that included the use of student portfolios, peer feedback on assessments, and using rubrics for an IPA. Figure 8 provides an example of rubrics adopted by one participant teacher.

Table 17

*Example of Rubric of IPA*
The results from descriptions of their formal assessments were not as robust but indicated that it was common for these teachers to have implemented required formal summative assessments designed by their schools or national standardized tests for Chinese competence such as the HSK or SAT mock test. Some of these required

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Needs more work</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2 points</td>
<td>3 points</td>
<td>5 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Not enough information was presented or was not relevant</td>
<td>Content has some relevance to story and makes sense</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaking Skills (Delivery, Eye Contact, Posture, Volume)</td>
<td>Shows absolutely no interest in topic presented, no eye contact</td>
<td>Speaks in soft voice, but can be understood, good facial expression and communicative enough</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fluency</td>
<td>Hesitates too often when speaking, which often interferes with communication</td>
<td>Speaks generally at normal speed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pronunciation</td>
<td>Frequent problems with pronunciation and intonation</td>
<td>Pronunciation and intonation are usually clear/accurate with a few problem areas</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Project**: Storytelling
- **Language**: Mandarin Chinese
- **Content**: Based on story of “乌鸦和狐狸的故事” or “萝卜回来了”, you can re-tell or modify/create your own story.
- **Medium**: You can use digital media, poster or any kinds to present
- **Time of presentation**: 2-5 mins per person
- **Rubric**: Peer Assessment

Instruction for Mid-Term Presentation
assessments were intended to measure discrete factual information on language and culture, while others included performance-based assessments that were intended to evaluate student performance in the target language.

The final characteristic investigated related to the participants’ implementation of standards-based, learner-centered instructional and assessment practices was providing feedback. The literature on providing feedback in foreign world languages described teacher-centered error correction as frequent and immediate correction that focused on the accuracy of linguistic form, pronunciation, and vocabulary (Antón, 1999). Interview results showed that the error correction strategies these teachers self-reported using most frequently for addressing errors were in speaking and writing. The majority of these teachers perceived that the focus of providing feedback was to eliminate errors that affected meaning and to teach students to monitor their own speaking and writing. One teacher expressed the right timing to provide error correction. She suggested, “Do not correct the error when the learner start to learn the language…instead the teacher should repeat the correct form during the teaching process” (Qin, interview, May 21, 2015).

Four out of eight teachers indicated that they sometimes encouraged peer feedback on oral presentations and written assessments. Two teachers expressed challenges when using peer feedback. As one described:

I felt some students ask the questions too direct, too blunt. I did not know how to handle it at that moment. Because of the students in a higher-level class will feel their face threaten[ed]. Sometimes when they ask questions to the other group in the way the other group cannot accept, then there will be a problem. I also want to know how to handle this situation. Before that, I told the students that before you
give your suggestions, you need to tell a good (aspect) first. (Jia, interview, May 27, 2015)

Interestingly, some of the teachers were challenged by balancing the relationship with students and giving effective feedback. One of the participant teachers suggested that the feedback should be based on the goal of the learning.

I agree, with every person [it] is unique. The particular personality and characteristics of a person might affect the feedback to the feedback receiver. But as long as we know the goal of the learning, then we will be able to provide the ‘goal-referenced’ feedback. (Jia, interview, May 27, 2015)

These findings indicated that the teachers recognized that errors are a natural part of the language learning process and that at times it is better to focus on meaning than on accuracy.

**Understanding CHS Teachers’ Professional Learning**

There were several crucial factors impacting the CHS teachers’ professional development: self-motivation, reflective practices and involving the learning community. Each of them had one or two particular aspects that played a major role in their development due to the different teaching contexts and prior experiences. However, they all shared commonalities and referred to the roles of reflection, personal motivation and devotion to teaching, the impact of contextualized language instruction, and the learning community (the 2015 STARTALK program, specifically in this case). Among all of these factors, self-motivation and a devoted attitude served as a foundation, and the professional development activities played the role of the learning community to help teachers to develop individually and collectively. The professional development content
helped the teachers and served as an orientation to guide their teaching practices and to provide a unified language to communicate and collaborate with one another. Their interaction with the teaching context was viewed as central to joining and interrelating the other two aspects.

**Self-motivated learning.** One of the prominent common factors among all eight participant teachers was their motivation and desire to engage in self-directed learning for professional development. All the participants voluntarily enrolled and participated in the STARTALK program. Some of the teachers took personal leave from their daytime jobs to participate in the onsite phase of the program. They all reported that they sought all kinds of professional opportunities whenever possible. One participant teacher described the ways of his self-regulated learning in detail:

There are several ways. Every time I went on a working trip, I spent a lot of time in bookstores. I read all the books related to Chinese education overseas. I got the experience from comparing different teaching materials and [am] self-taught. In addition, I went back to China to attend several training[s], as well as the STARTALK training. From this training, it gave me a lot of inspiration. Both domestic and training abroad are very important because a lot of things. It is impossible for yourself to think out of box. After attending the training, you will feel a lot of things you put into use is successful. There is a theoretical basis. Through attending the training, you will know a lot of new content you do not know before and you will immediately use it in their work. (Peter, interview, June 4, 2015)
CHS teachers not only sought all kinds of opportunities to develop themselves. They also devoted themselves to being innovative in their teaching and learning in CHS. One teacher who wrote and edited his own textbook which took six years of effort, described that, “Before I've written and used my own textbooks, children cannot accept the contents of textbooks. I cannot accept the contents of textbooks either. It is not suitable for overseas Chinese. I realized the problem, so I decided I must write my own teaching material” (Ming, interview, May 27, 2015).

The teachers not only invested their time and effort to try teaching innovations, but also shared their updated information and best practices with their peers and schools. Some teachers expressed that they felt a sense of achievement because they shared the updated professional development information with peers and home schools.

After I came back from the [online and onsite teacher training program], I bring the updated information back to my home school teachers and board members. I also shared my own experience. Except the application of the technology, the big achievement I had is I persuade our president to use the learner-centered teaching and learning to run the school. That is to say the school should not divide the students into different tracks based on textbook; instead they should base on the students’ needs and design the courses based on the level of their language and their background. I felt very fortunate that our school and board members would like to accept new ideas. But sometime, when we promote new plans or courses, we still face some pressure from the parents because the parents are still the kind of the owner. There is big improvement in teaching material and curriculum.

(Fang, interview, May 21, 2015)
The self-development concern was different from the self-related concerns and task-related concerns (Fuller, 1969) that reflected a focus on self-survival with an emphasis on issues, techniques, classroom management and implementing the practices. These self-development concerns revealed that teachers viewed “self-development and the impact of effective teaching within the broader context of student growth, motivation and socio-emotional well-being” (Schipull, 1990, p. 11).

Reflective practice. The eight participant teachers’ thinking and practices in their interviews and their written accounts in online discussions demonstrated that reflection was an important part of their practice. The results suggested two main points: that the act of reflection was not an automatic, but a self-directed purposeful behavior; and that reflection created a bridge between the teachers’ thinking and practice.

Using the learning process to reflect on current practices. Overall, the responses from the teachers’ interviews demonstrated that learning about standards-based, learner-centered instruction had significantly changed their instructional practices. Interestingly, all the teachers demonstrated a strong dissatisfaction with their previous classroom reality when they reflected on their previous teaching experiences. Posner et al. (1982) used the word dissatisfaction for describing what motivates individuals to change their ideas. For example, one teacher expressed her dissatisfaction about her teaching ability, saying, “I feel keenly that my ability falls short of my wishes. I always feel that I didn’t teach all that I want to teach in one class, and the students didn’t grasp everything I taught in the class” (Jia interview, May 4, 2015). Another teacher also questioned the format of CHS and said, “In CHS classroom, everyone still confined to unified textbook. The teacher is also limited to teaching materials accompanied with the textbook. If the teacher’s
creativity and initiative cannot fully be motivated, then how can we motivate the students?” (Qia interview, May 27, 2015).

CHS teachers challenging the teaching reality is consistent with what Posner et al. (1982) argued – that individuals must experience something like cognitive conflict or dissonance to consider change.

The data from the interviews showed that CHS teachers doubted for some time whether and why the traditional teaching practices as mentioned in the literature review, were ineffective. They had strived to find what they could do to solve this problem. The dissatisfaction with the current teaching reality in CHS became the critical motivating element to pursue the new teaching method in order to solve the problem. After the CHS teacher had had a chance to interact with research-based and plausible standards-based, learner-centered instruction, “It [standards-based, learner-centered instruction] immediately clicked” (Jin interview, May 27, 2015). In addition, the recognition of the significance of the learned content was based on teachers’ self-reflection and feedback from students.

The results in the interviews indicated that the reflection did play a positive role in helping the teachers to bring their consciousness to a better understanding of teaching, a richer idea of students’ learning and a deeper comprehension of themselves. The cross-cases comparison showed that the contextualized language instruction was the trigger to make them reflect and compare their previous and present teaching.

After [I] attended that program, every time before I prepare my lesson, I always think that what I’m going to teach will really help the students to use those language in real life, or I will think that if it will help the Chinese culture inherited
by those kids. But before I attended that program, I never thought about questions like that. I think that’s one of the most important questions the Chinese teachers should think about, which [is] how to let the next generation to inherit the Chinese language and culture. (Qin, interview, May 21, 2015)

Another teacher talked about the uncertainty of the effectiveness of his students’ learning, but after he had attended the online and onsite teacher training program, he reflected on what he did in his class, and he closely reflected what learner-centered principles propose:

Nobody told me before teaching should be like student-centered. I felt interacting with the students is very effective. We are pleased after we finish each class. We felt that time passes too fast, and later after learning I discovered that my teaching is practice teaching which emphasizes the student-centered classroom. I also got to prove my own teaching practice and get more knowledge about the teaching theories. (Peter, interview, June 4, 2015)

These statements show the interrelationship between practice and reflection.

**Using students’ evidence to reflect on teaching.** The development of the knowledge of students also served as a linking role to connect the content of the reflection into a coherent understanding. Knowing about the students helped the teachers to reflect on different aspects of teaching through one lens—the students’ needs perspective. It helped to integrate all of the elements of teachers’ knowledge, such as knowledge of subject matter, knowledge of pedagogy and knowledge of students. One teacher expressed, “I will observe the students’ responses during the process of my teaching. When I see my students had good responses, I strengthened this aspect. Also, in
the process of attending different trainings, they all give a theoretical support. I feel the way I [am] teaching is right.” The teachers started to develop more student-concerned reflections and learning outcome-oriented teaching.

**Learning community.** In the literature review chapter, the teacher learning community model (Harmmerness et al., 2005) provided a good model to develop the teachers’ knowledge together and form a discourse context to articulate their experience and share resources. Harmmerness et al. (2005) suggested in detail that “teachers learn to teach in a community that enables them to develop a vision for their practice; develop a set of understandings about teaching, learning and students; form dispositions about how to use this knowledge; practices that allow them to act on their intentions and beliefs; create tools that support their efforts” (p. 234). From the online and onsite data in the first two stages, a vision of the possible understanding and learning (Shulman& Shulman, 2004) of CHS teaching Chinese as a heritage language started to develop, even though the challenges were expressed as part of their thinking. The CHS classroom reality and cognitive conflicts between the teaching practices and students’ learning outcomes were a strong motivation to initiate their learning. The students’ positive feedback and learning products and attitude toward learning Chinese as heritage language increased their determination to persist in the development process. Through the online and onsite teacher training workshop activities and post-workshop community, the participating teachers started to develop understandings and practices in a unified discourse that was exemplified in the contextualized language instruction framework explained above. The teachers began to develop the knowledge of content, pedagogy, students and social context. The abilities and investment in developing, practicing and enacting the
instructional activities based on learned theories and practices were also formed during this process. The habits of thinking and acting regarding teaching and students were gradually developed collectively, such as reflection upon practices, recognizing the routine situation could use improvement, and so on. During this process, the teachers started to develop their language and vocabulary to rename and explain their teaching practices, as Freeman (1993) suggested.

**Summary**

As Sato & Kleinsasser (1999) and Mangubhai et al. (2004) suggested, the indicators for examining a developing understanding of a methodology included internal consistency of the teachers’ self-reported beliefs about teaching and learning. In the discussion about the emerging theory of CHS teachers’ understanding of contextualized language instruction, there was prominent consistency among the learning experiences the teachers provided and the role of the teachers to provide the learning experience for CHS learners. There were still some existing challenges for which CHS teachers strived to find the solutions. Through professional development and the ongoing learning community, CHS teachers will continuously inquire and innovate.

In terms of the outcome of reflection proposed by Williams (1999), the result of this research seems to match “a deeper understanding of classroom process,” “an increased self-awareness,” (p. 13) and “a mapping of public theory onto personal theory” (p. 13), as demonstrated in the teachers’ understanding of contextualized language instruction. The action research model and mentor support might serve as a model to help these CHS teachers to reach what Williams (1999) described as “an engagement with and reformulation of personal theory” (p. 14).
According to Freeman (1993), “To influence the reconstruction of practice, a teacher education program needs a unified Discourse, a professional language which is in constant use among members of its community” (p. 495). Through the contextualized language instruction and the STARTALK learning process as a learning community online and onsite, CHS teachers started to “share, articulate and make explicit a coherent approach to instruction, in both philosophy and in practice” (Freeman, 1993, p. 498). The essential intent of this research was for the teachers and teacher educators work together to make sense of the learned principles and to work toward advancing their shared understanding in their teaching context (CHS classrooms) and reconstructing their teaching practices. As Feinman-Nemster (2001) suggested, support for teachers should be framed within a purposefully planned and longer continuum that recognizes, facilitates, and provides a professional network of colleagues and integrated in-service experiences to meet the changing needs of the teachers.

**Implications**

The following section will discuss the implications and make recommendations for practice, policy considerations and future studies.

**Implications for teachers.** Based on the discussion and interpretations of the results above, this study provided the following three implications for heritage language teachers.

First, from the perspective of teaching and learning in CHSs, teachers improved their understanding and practices of contextualized language instruction in CHS settings. The teachers from this program are expected to become agents to construct their knowledge and modify or create the pedagogical models for CHSs to enhance the
students’ learning in CHSs. The specific pedagogical implications for CHS teachers can be drawn from the present study, especially from the data presented. In addition, CHS teachers should adopt the community-based pedagogy based on the learners’ needs, which means an age-appropriate, critical, and participatory approach to learning about and investigating issues that are important to the communities (Wang, 2004). This pedagogy emphasizes the involvement of different generations and communities.

Second, this study provides theoretical implications for teachers because it is based on various theoretical perspectives such as contextualized language instruction and standards-based, learner-centered instruction. Both of these theories help us to focus on contextualized language learning and learner-centeredness. By investigating CHS teachers’ understanding, practice and development (e.g., via interviews, teaching videos, and also online engagement among themselves), the results of this study have shown that contextualization and learner-centeredness played a critical role in CHS students’ learning. The social-cultural context cannot be ignored during this learning process. The results of this study help provide a more specific understanding and guidance for a contextualized language instruction framework with regard to pedagogy, content, and engagement with students.

Third, from the perspective of teacher learning, an understanding of the CHS teachers’ learning outcomes, the contributing factors and the strategies for dealing with the challenges and tension in the learning process is important, especially if the different language education parties wish to develop the activities and supporting system to help CHS teachers refine their knowledge and understanding. The approaches used in this
study provided an alternate way to help the teachers to transform their practice to one based in contextualized language instruction.

Last, the grounded theory and case study method used in this study provide a bottom-up way of examining the crucial components of teacher learning. It allows researchers to understand the teachers’ learning in a specific context – the lived experience of CHS teachers – rather than relying on the needs and crucial components of teacher education as expert-perceived. This study adds another dimension to the big picture of studies in foreign language teacher education.

**Implications for policy.** From the perspective of building the language capacity in the U.S., the CHS teachers could become a potential pool for recruiting qualified world language teachers for the K-12 public and private education systems. The improvement of language teaching in CHSs would help heritage learners to maintain and develop their heritage language proficiency, as a way to contribute multiculturalism in the U.S. This study research showed that an online and onsite teacher training program helped CHS teachers and that reforms to world language teacher preparation programs are needed. Based on different types of teacher learners’ needs, alternatives to the traditional teacher certification program should be explored in terms of learning content and ways of learning.

**Implications for future research.** A future study should seek to identify the learning process and outcomes from the online collective learning community. The online supports and the platform that was used for this research, along with the data collection from this platform, are part of ongoing research. Understanding the online collective learning process would inform the field about how best to design professional
development programs that address the diverse needs of Chinese language teachers. Additionally, this study represents a snapshot of the pedagogical beliefs and practices of CHS teachers, as the data were collected simultaneously. Other areas worthy of investigation in a longitudinal study include teacher agency and teacher personal practical knowledge, as findings from such research might further support the expansion of teacher cognition theory and teacher learning community theory.

**Final Comments**

“Inside every great teacher, there is an even better one waiting to come out.” (Wong & Wong, 2009, p. 9) The discontent inside of every teacher drives teachers to continue learning and growing. It also provides the potential for optimizing the competence of teachers. This research was motivated by witnessing CHS teachers’ commitment to Chinese teaching and their willingness to improve their teaching competency. The purpose of this study was to gain a better understanding of CHS teachers’ pedagogical beliefs and instructional practices in order to inform the field of the complex issues that heritage language teachers encounter in U.S. heritage language schools. Not only has this research led to a deeper understanding of the participants’ pedagogical beliefs and instructional practices, it has also resulted in an understanding of teacher agency and the development of language teachers’ personal practical knowledge. The readers of this research should value the unique knowledge and pedagogical experiences the teachers bring to language classrooms. Their experience has the potential to bring global perspectives of teaching and learning to the educational community.
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Appendix A

STARTALK-Endorsed Principles for Effective Teaching & Learning and Characteristics of Effective Language Lessons

Principle 1: Implementing a Standards-Based and Thematically Organized Curriculum

- Every lesson derives from a standards-based unit that culminates in students developing the ability to engage in spontaneous, unrehearsed communication for real-world purposes.
- Each lesson has clearly stated cultural objectives that indicate what students will be able to do and what they need to know by lesson’s end.
- Research and theory determine the instructional experiences and the order in which they take place to ensure that students can meet the lesson’s cultural and language performance objectives.
- Grammar is not the focus of the course, unit, or lesson. The teacher teaches grammar as a tool for communication, avoiding meaningless rote drills and ensuring that all practice requires attention to meaning.

Principle 2: Facilitating a Learner-Centered Classroom

- Students learn vocabulary from input (hearing or reading) and from using it in language-rich contexts such as stories, hands-on experiences, picture descriptions, or subject-matter content. Examples
- The teacher provides frequent, varied classroom opportunities for students to interpret and express meaning for real-world purposes. Examples
In every class session, the teacher provides paired or small group activities that engage students in using the language for meaningful communication.

Principle 3: Using the Target Language and Providing Comprehensible Input for Instruction

- The teacher uses the target language at least 90 percent of the time. Examples
- The teacher uses a variety of strategies to make language comprehensible, monitors student comprehension, and makes adjustments as necessary. Examples
- The teacher avoids the use of translation by using verbal and non-verbal strategies and also avoids eliciting translation from students.

Principle 4: Integrating Culture, Content, and Language in a World Language Classroom

- Cultural instruction focuses on perspectives—not just products and practices.

Principle 5: Adapting and Using Age-Appropriate Authentic Materials

- The teacher uses authentic materials and designs tasks appropriate to the language proficiency and age level of the learners.
- The teacher uses a range of authentic print and non-print materials in a variety of technological formats.

Principle 6: Conducting Performance-Based Assessment

- The teacher uses formative assessment of student performance during the course of the lesson to adjust instruction as needed.
- The teacher and students use feedback about the quality of student performance relative to the lesson’s and unit’s instructional targets.
### Appendix B

**Six-Component Synthesized Framework of Pedagogical Content Knowledge**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PCK categories</th>
<th>Component of each category</th>
<th>Manifestation in practice</th>
<th>Interview questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conceptions of teaching purposes</td>
<td>Goals of instruction</td>
<td>Transmissive or constructivist Form-/meaning-/function-focused</td>
<td>What are you most concerned with in planning this lesson? Why? What do you intend to focus most during this lesson? Why?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Objects of learning</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curricular knowledge</td>
<td>Chinese heritage school teaching and examination syllabuses</td>
<td>Setting/achieving objectives (use of resources, tailoring) Making informed judgment</td>
<td>What do you expect students’ learning results during this lesson? What is your perceptions of the Chinese heritage school syllabus, textbooks and examinations at represent?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Critical understanding of textbooks</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject matter knowledge</td>
<td>Declarative knowledge of Chinese (competence)</td>
<td>Engagement with language-related aspects in planning/reflection Actual use of the target langue in the classroom practice</td>
<td>What do you think are the important/difficult aspects in learning Chinese as a subject matter? What do you think Chinese language learning mean to your students in Chinese school (s)?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Procedural knowledge (performance)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge of learners</td>
<td>Empirical knowledge</td>
<td>Knowing students’ interests, relationship between T/S Knowing prior learning/potential difficulties of particular topics</td>
<td>What do you think should be regarded as the typical features of a good language learner? In what ways do you think your students learning Chinese now? What are the major difficulties they encounter before and now? How can they learn better in your opinion? How can you help them learn better?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cognitive knowledge</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge of pedagogy</td>
<td>Learning and teaching models or approaches</td>
<td>Possession of technique repertoires Ability to select appropriately</td>
<td>What are the usual teaching strategies you use in your daily Chinese heritage school class teaching? What is your philosophy to use these strategies?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rationale for choosing strategies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge of self</td>
<td>Personal values/professional identity</td>
<td>Investment of self in teaching Their self-motivated</td>
<td>What made you decide to become and Chinese teacher? How did you learn to teach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional learning attitudes</td>
<td>learning Chinese? What do you think should be regarded as the typical features of a good language teacher?</td>
<td>PCK development</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Are you satisfied with this lesson? Why or why not? What needs maintaining and improving later? Why and how? What are the new language content you have learned from your have taught?</td>
<td>Representation Integration</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Enactive, iconic &amp; symbolic mode Relating to other elements</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Appendix C

### CHS Teachers’ Beliefs of Chinese Heritage Language Instruction in Online Phase

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concerns</th>
<th>CHS teachers’ Vision</th>
<th>CHS teachers’ Challenge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Differentiation instructions</td>
<td>• Differentiate the tasks,</td>
<td>Hard to practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Different teaching strategies based on students developmental needs,</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Different management strategies,</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Differentiate the assessment</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Immersion experience in the early age</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parent involvement</td>
<td>• Communicate with and educate the parents</td>
<td>• Hard to balance the parents’ expectation and the instructional goal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Sharing successful stories and experiences and encourage them to try it at home</td>
<td>• Parent do not consider the heritage language learning is priority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Promote speaking Chinese at home through school publications</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom interaction</td>
<td>• interaction between classmates with native speakers</td>
<td>• Time is limited, interaction take more time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• express opinions and ask questions</td>
<td>• Less motivated students affect the classroom dynamic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learner’s motivation</td>
<td>• Makes language meaningful beyond the classroom,</td>
<td>• Heritage language learning has lower priority than domain language,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• inspire students with the role model,</td>
<td>• compete with other extra-curriculum activities,</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• making the lesson/activities engaged,</td>
<td>• rewarding system—extrinsic motivation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• persist the interest for older learners-adapt the learning material which challenge their cognitive ability,</td>
<td>• classroom management for student learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• build student confidence and risk taking ability,</td>
<td>• help the students to see the benefit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• create an supportive learning environment,</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>• encourage students by seeing their own learning outcomes</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• school as a learning environment to encourage students to use language,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• teacher’s self-development</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heritage learner’s needs</td>
<td>• Use learning content which relate to heritage learner’s life</td>
<td>• Pronunciation precedes acquisition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(social/linguistic/diverse)</td>
<td>• Use the oracy to develop their literacy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Peer pressure and student identity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructional goal for</td>
<td>• Maintain in the target languages when giving directions and explanations</td>
<td>• Children group up in the U.S. seldom keep the polite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>daily class</td>
<td>Cultural practices as an instructional goal</td>
<td>customs</td>
</tr>
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<td>-------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Integrate 5 C into the curriculum</td>
<td>Not using five C by designing a lesson plan</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Confused with interpersonal and interpretive communication</td>
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<tr>
<td>Communication and grammar</td>
<td>Home environment is not supportive</td>
<td>Use English when classroom management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Communicate in a real place</td>
<td>Accuracy of grammar help their comprehension</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TPR is a good teach methods to engage and keep the communication in target language</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stress communication over accuracy in teaching</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Do not learn grammar alone</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content based learning/skill-based learning</td>
<td>Development of instruction is time consuming, but make your plan clear and well-structured,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum design by adopting UbD model</td>
<td>Start from the things you familiar with</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizing the concept by theme/thematic planning</td>
<td>Not reliant on textbooks</td>
<td>Essential questions is not easy to write</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Use the languages to convey the theme, not teach the knowledge of the language</td>
<td>Difficulties in pacing and scaffolding for the students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Flexibly use the material to reach the goal</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Plan and assess for performance &amp; how to</td>
<td>Assess the unit concept, instead of forms of languages</td>
<td>Use authentic material and appropriate assessment is not easy</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Can do in a manner you can observe</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teachers’ role is important, set up the goal and guide student to learn-learning-centered instead of learner-centered</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feedbacks</td>
<td></td>
<td>Hard to design a task to help students self-correct their error</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Balance teacher-student relationship and effective feedback</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix D

Semi-structured Interview Protocols 采访提纲

1. What made you decide to become a Chinese teacher?
   成为中文教师的原因和动力是什么？

2. How did you learn to teach Chinese? (e.g. Through a pre-service training course? Or Receiving no training at all, but learning at work? What did you learn in the training, or at work? And how?)
   您是如何学习教中文的？（如：通过职前培训，还是没有接受过任何培训，从工作中学习。您从职前培训或工作中学到了什么呢？如何学到的？）

3. Is there any change in your teaching? What are the differences between your teaching now and in the past, maybe, 3, 5, 8 or 10… years ago? Why did you change? Did the change(s) make your teaching better or worse?
   您的教学是否有改变呢？您现在的教学和一年、五年或十年前相比是否有所改变？为什么改变，改变的原因是什么？

4. What do you think Chinese language learning mean to your students in Chinese school(s)?
   您认为“学习中文”对您所教的中文学校的学生来说意味着什么？

5. What is the most challenging part of teaching this language? What is the easiest?
   对您来说，在中文学校的教学最有挑战的是什么？最容易的是什么？

6. What do you think you teach your class in this specific way?
   您觉得您为什么会采用您目前课堂上所实践的方式教中文呢？

7. What is the most rewarding aspect of teaching Chinese to heritage school students for you?
   您觉得在中文学校教书，那一方面让您觉得最有成就感？

8. What do you think are the important/difficult aspects in learning Chinese as a subject matter?
   你认为学中文哪一部分最难或最重要？

9. What abilities do you think you have been prepared your students to use and continue learning the language later in life? 您为学生将来使用或学习继成语的能力做了什么准备？

Reflect your teaching video, please answer the following questions in details.
回顾您的教学录像，回答问题 (10-14):

10. Can you describe who your students are in this lesson?
请您描述一下您所教班级的学生的基本信息。

11. What do you expect students’ learning results during this lesson? 在这节课上，您期望看到学生学习成果是什么?

12. What are the usual teaching strategies you use in your daily Chinese heritage school class teaching? What is your philosophy to use these strategies? 您在中文学校的课堂上常常使用的教学策略有哪些？使用这些策略的教学理念是什么？

13. After teaching, in what ways do you think your students learning Chinese now? 在课堂教学后，从哪些方面您觉得您的学生学会了呢？

14. How can they learn better in your opinion? How can you help them learn better? 您觉得学生怎样能学得更好呢？您觉得您能怎样帮助他们学得更好呢？

15. Do you think the textbooks or teaching materials meet your teaching needs, how do you adapt the teaching material into your instruction? 目前您使用的教学材料是否满足您教学的需要呢？如何调整教学材料来适应您的教学理念呢？

16. What do you think the role of context in the language instructions? 您觉得语境在语言教学中的作用是什么呢？

17. What do you think the role of technology in providing a richer context for language learning? 您觉得科技在提供语言学习丰富的语境中的作用是什么呢？

18. How do you think students’ performance is assessed in a real world situation? 您觉得学生的语言能力表现应该如何在现实生活中评量呢？

19. Is there any change in you have made in your teaching as a result of participation in the STARTALK program, if any, please describe. 您觉得你参加过星谈中文教师培训后，教学上有什么改变吗？如果有，请详述。

20. What parts of the STARTALK program have been most beneficial to you and your students? Please explain. 您觉得星谈项目的哪一（几）部分对您的教学和您的学生最有帮助？

21. What should I have asked that I did not ask? 有什么您要补充的吗？
Appendix E

Teaching Video Explanation Form

Guideline for Video Content

- Select one of your best lesson plan
- Submit a video of a lesson you teach
  1. Select either one or two segments from the lesson to illustrate your teaching activities and skills
  2. Each segment must be at least 2 minutes in length, the segments taken together cannot be more than 15 minutes in length.
  3. Voices of the students as they are working should be audible as much as possible.

Video Overview

This section is an opportunity for you to explain the rationale for your instructional decisions and demonstrate your ability to analyze and reflect upon your teaching practice and instructional decision-making.

Instructional decision includes you make about the content, standards, and elements of your teaching practice that you identify as central to student learning, as well as the criteria you use to evaluate the effectiveness of your teaching.

Please cite specific details or examples from the evidence you provided that supports your analysis.

1. Describe anything that happened in your classroom just prior to the videotaped segment that you believe will provide the context of your activities or tasks.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Context of your activities and tasks</th>
<th>Your explanation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Please describe in detail</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


2. What aspect of the content focus of this lesson is illustrated in the video segment(s)?
   Why is this segment important?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Examples</th>
<th>Your explanation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>● Students will learn the vocabulary for family names and some common sentences.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please describe in detail

3. Think about what actually took place when you taught this lesson. What, specifically, demonstrates a method of formative assessment you used in this lesson? Briefly and specifically articulate what you learned from this formative assessment and how you used this information in this lesson or in subsequent lessons.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practice examples:</th>
<th>Your explanation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>____ Individual</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>____ Pre-lesson assessment (KWL)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>____ Group</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>____ Progress-assessment(Exit/“Aha!”cards)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>____ Written</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>____ Post-lesson evaluation (Summative)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>____ Oral</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please describe in detail
Appendix F

STELLA Self-Assessment Tool

介绍 Introduction

各位参与星谈中文学校培训的老师，

以下是一份对您从 2014 秋季到 2015 春季学年，在中文学校的教学情况的自我评估问卷。请根据您真实的情况，回答以下问题，您的回答不会被打分或测评，答案也没有绝对的正确和错误之分。这份问卷仅有两个目的：一、提供一个教师自我评鉴工具，帮助您了解自己的教学现状，为进一步地为您职业发展的学习设定目标；二、通过您的反馈信息，STARTALK 课题组可以进一步改进培训的各环节（网上、实地和受训后）以满足参与培训的教师的需要。

此问卷结果仅用于相关研究，您的个人信息不会以任何方式泄露。

谢谢合作！

Dear STATARLK teachers:

This is a self-assessment about your teaching experience with community-based Chinese heritage school in 2014 Fall and 2015 Spring. Please respond honestly and accurately to each survey items. You will not be evaluated or judged on your response. There is no right or wrong answers. The objectives of survey is two folds: First, it serves as a self-assessment tools for the STARTALK participant teachers to reflect your teaching practice in order to evaluate your own teaching and help you to set realistic goals of your future professional development; Second, the feedbacks from you help STARTALK-CHLER team adjust the program to the needs throughout the online, onsite workshop, and post-workshop period.

Your input of the survey will be only used for the research purpose. We will not report your answers in any way that could possibly identify you personally in public.

Thank you!

您所教授的中文班的背景信息 Classroom context

您在任职的中文学校所担任的职务 Your role in the Chinese school where you work:
- Chinese language teacher
- Administrator (Please specify): 
- Board member
- Other (please specify): 

Please choose the language you teach:

- Traditional Mandarin Chinese
- Simplified Mandarin Chinese
- Cantonese
- Taiwanese
- Other (please specify): 

Please choose the age group(s) of your current classes:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1st class</th>
<th>2nd class</th>
<th>3rd class</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-K to K (5 years old or less)</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grades 1-3 (6-8 years)</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
您目前班上学生的语言背景的人数: (如果您教一班以上的学生，请分开填写各类的人数。) Please estimate the number of your students' linguistic backgrounds: (If you teach more than one class of students, please calculate the percentage of each category separately.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>第一个班</th>
<th>第二个班</th>
<th>第三个班</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1st class</td>
<td>2nd class</td>
<td>3rd class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-5年级(9-10岁)</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grades 4-5 (9-10 years old)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-8年级(11-13岁)</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grades 6-8 (11-13 years old)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9-12年级(14-17岁)</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 9-12 (14-17 years old)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>成人Adults</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

自中国或台湾至美国的新移民且有些中文基础的有几个人 Born in Chinese speaking areas, came to
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>第一个班</th>
<th>第二个班</th>
<th>第三个班</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>the US by 15 years old or younger</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>出生在美国但在家听或说华语/普通话为主有几个</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U. S. born, speak or listen to mainly Mandarin at home</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>出生在美国但在家听或说广东话为主有几个</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U. S. born, speak or listen to mainly Cantonese at home</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>出生在美国但在家听或说台湾话/闽南语为主有</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>第一个班</td>
<td>第二个班</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>--------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>几个人 U.S. born, speak or listen to mainly Taiwanese at home</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>出生在美国但在家听或说其他中国方言为主有几个人 U.S. born, speak or listen to mainly other dialects in China at home</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>出生在美国但只使用英文有几个人 U.S. born, speak and listen to mainly English at home</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>美籍人士自中国或</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>第一个班</td>
<td>第二个班</td>
<td>第三个班</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>台湾领养的子女,在家只使用英文为主的有几个</td>
<td>Childre</td>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 自我评估

在这个自我评估中，回顾你每一次设计课程和上课的实际情况，以此为依据进行评量。完成自我评估后，和你的学习伙伴、导师以及你的项目负责人一起讨论你的评估结果。以坦诚地态度与他们分享你的表现和分数，向他们提供你所选答案的清晰合理的解释，这样做可以帮助你在下一步的自我发展中设定一个准确的目标。

*During this self-assessment, be sure to use evidence to support your reflections. Once you have completed the self-assessment, review the outcomes with a critical friend, mentor, or supervisor. An open and honest conversation about your performance vs. rating helps to clarify rationale for levels selected and will help you to set realistic goals.*

### 课程设计的自我评估

有效教学是通过学生参与一系列教师精心设计的课程、单元和单课来完成的。这一系列的课程、单元以及单课是由教师以外语学习者能力标准为目标，融入有效的教
Planning Self-Assessment

Effective language learning experiences are carefully planned by a teacher through standards-based course, units and lessons that embed high-yield strategies allowing students to reach identified course, unit, or lesson performance objectives. How does your planning of learning experiences prepare for student learning?

1. I plan learning experiences based on local curriculum and state and national standards.

   - I do not do this. I do not do this.
   - I sometime do this. I sometime do this.
   - I do this most of the time. I do this most of the time.
   - I do this with confidence. I do this with confidence.

2a. I plan learning experiences that are interesting to my students.

   - I do not do this. I do not do this.
   - I sometime do this. I sometime do this.
   - I do this most of the time. I do this most of the time.
   - I do this with confidence. I do this with confidence.

2b. I plan learning experiences that students will perceive as relevant.
2c. 我设计的课程会在学生语言能力可掌控的范围之内。

I plan learning experiences within the students’ range of abilities.

○ I do not do this. 不会这样做。

○ I sometime do this. 有时候会这样做。

○ I do this most of the time. 多数时候会这样做。

○ I do this with confidence. 总是这样做，做得很自信。

2d. 我设计的课程会提供学生自己做选择的机会。

I plan learning experiences that include student choice.

○ I do not do this. 不会这样做。

○ I sometime do this. 有时候会这样做。

○ I do this most of the time. 多数时候会这样做。

○ I do this with confidence. 总是这样做，做得很自信。

3a. 我所设定的单元目标是基于有意义的语境的，并强调语言流利程度。

Unit performance objectives are focused on proficiency targets and are based on...
meaningful contexts.

○ I do not do this. 不会这样做。

○ I sometime do this. 有时候会这样做。

○ I do this most of the time. 多数时候会这样做。

○ I do this with confidence. 总是这样做，做得很自信。

3b. 我所设计的每个单元，学生都有在不同情景中使用所学语言和内容的机会。

Units incorporate opportunities to use previously acquired language and content in a variety of contexts.

○ I do not do this. 不会这样做。

○ I sometime do this. 有时候会这样做。

○ I do this most of the time. 多数时候会这样做。

○ I do this with confidence. 总是这样做，做得很自信。

3c. 我所设计的每个单元，学生有机会提高语言在三种模式中的能力。

Units provide opportunities for students to gain competence in the three competitive modes.

○ I do not do this. 不会这样做。

○ I sometime do this. 有时候会这样做。

○ I do this most of the time. 多数时候会这样做。

○ I do this with confidence. 总是这样做，做得很自信。
3d. 我所设计的每个单元，学生有机会了解目标文化的三个基本要素-文化产物、文化习俗和文化观-之间的关系。Units provide opportunities for students to understand the relationships among products, practices, and perspectives of the target culture(s).

- I do not do this. 不会这样做。
- I sometime do this. 有时候会这样做。
- I do this most of the time. 多数时候会这样做。
- I do this with confidence. 总是这样做，做得很自信。

4. 我能确保我的课程设计照顾到不同学生的需求，如：继承语、外语、特殊群体学习者以及未被正式识别的低水平和高水平的学习者。I ensure that my planning accommodates the needs of heritage/native speakers and identified exceptional learners, as well as struggling or accelerated learners not officially identified.

- I do not do this. 不会这样做。
- I sometime do this. 有时候会这样做。
- I do this most of the time. 多数时候会这样做。
- I do this with confidence. 总是这样做，做得很自信。

5a. 我每天设定的学习者能力目标是基于有意义的语境的，并强调语言流利程度。I set daily performance objectives that are focused on proficiency targets and are based on meaningful contexts.

- I do not do this. 不会这样做。
5b. In my course design, I can assess whether students have reached the expected learning objectives.
I plan opportunities that enable students to assess their attainment of the lesson’s language objectives.

- I do not do this. 我不会这样做。
- I sometime do this. 有时候会这样做。
- I do this most of the time. 多数时候会这样做。
- I do this with confidence. 总是这样做，做得很自信。

5c. 我设计的课堂活动有助于学生达到既定的学习目标。
I plan activities that enable students to meet the daily performance objectives.

- I do not do this. 我不会这样做。
- I sometime do this. 有时候会这样做。
- I do this most of the time. 多数时候会这样做。
- I do this with confidence. 总是这样做，做得很自信。

6a. 在单课设计时，我会计划如何百分之百的使用目的语来解释/介绍课堂活动以及新概念。
I plan how I will explain/introduce activities and concepts using only the target language.

- I do not do this.  不会这样做。
- I sometime do this.  有时候会这样做。
- I do this most of the time.  多数时候会这样做。
- I do this with confidence.  总是这样做，做得很自信。

6b. 我会精心地且有意识地计划在课堂上什么时候，以及是否有必要使用英语

I plan to minimize my use of English by carefully and deliberately determining when and if I use English in the classroom.

- I do not do this.  不会这样做。
- I sometime do this.  有时候会这样做。
- I do this most of the time.  多数时候会这样做。
- I do this with confidence.  总是这样做，做得很自信。

6c. 在设计课堂活动时，我会为学生提供可理解性语言输入。

I plan activities that provide students with comprehensible input.

- I do not do this.  不会这样做。
- I sometime do this.  有时候会这样做。
- I do this most of the time.  多数时候会这样做。
- I do this with confidence.  总是这样做，做得很自信。
6d. In single lessons, I plan to check for understanding in a variety of ways throughout the lesson.

- I do not do this.  
- I sometime do this.  
- I do this most of the time.  
- I do this with confidence.

6e. In designing lessons, I plan adequate opportunities for students to process spoken and written language before being expected to produce it.

- I do not do this.  
- I sometime do this.  
- I do this most of the time.  
- I do this with confidence.

6f. I plan adequate opportunities for students to collaborate, publish and interact with language learners, experts and other audiences.

- I do not do this.  
- I sometime do this.  
- I do this most of the time.
7a. 我会依照学生注意力的长短以及兴趣的不同需求来设计多样的课堂活动。

I plan a variety of activities that are based on student attention/interest level and time needed for the task.

- I do this with confidence. 总是这样做，做得很自信。
- I do not do this. 不会这样做。
- I sometime do this. 有时候会这样做。
- I do this most of the time. 多数时候会这样做。
- I do this with confidence. 总是这样做，做得很自信。

7b. 在安排教学活动时，我会依据学生记忆的规律来安排课堂活动；即课程开端记忆效果最佳、其次为课程结尾，课程中段的记忆效果最差。

I order activities keeping in mind that students remember best that which comes first, second best that which comes at the end and least that which comes in the middle.

- I do not do this. 不会这样做。
- I sometime do this. 有时候会这样做。
- I do this most of the time. 多数时候会这样做。
- I do this with confidence. 总是这样做，做得很自信。

7c. 我的课堂会让学生的思维在不同层级上得到训练（记忆、理解、应用、分析、评估和创造）

I plan learning experiences that engage my students in different levels of thinking (remembering, understanding, applying, analyzing, evaluating, creating).

- I do not do this. 不会这样做。
7d. 我的课堂会让学生有机会活动他们的肢体。

I plan learning experiences that allow for physical movement.

○ I do not do this. 不会这样做。

○ I sometime do this. 有时候会这样做。

○ I do this most of the time. 多数时候会这样做。

○ I do this with confidence. 总是这样做，做得很自信。

7e. 我会安排不同的任务，让任务之间过渡自然、有效。

I plan for smooth and efficient transitions throughout the class.

○ I do not do this.  不会这样做。

○ I sometime do this. 有时候会这样做。

○ I do this most of the time. 多数时候会这样做。

○ I do this with confidence. 总是这样做，做得很自信。

8. 我能够识别和筛选合适的学习资源，我的学生可以获取这些资源，并且评价和使用这些真实的目的语材料。I identify and select appropriate resources that allow my students to access, evaluate and use authentic materials.

○ I do not do this.  不会这样做。
I sometime do this. 有时候会这样做。

I do this most of the time. 多数时候会这样做。

I do this with confidence. 总是这样做，做得很自信。

学生表现和反馈的自我评估

评估在有效的教学中是不可缺少的组成部分，评估工具的使用能够让学生得以展示他们用所学的语言如何行事，同时获取有效的反馈，这一过程会帮助学生进一步达到预期的目标。你和你的学生是如何利用学生表现以及反馈来促进学生的语言学习的？

Performance & Feedback Self-Assessment

Effective language learning experiences are facilitated by the use of assessment strategies that allow students to demonstrate what they can do with what they know and to receive helpful feedback that advances the attainment of the performance objectives. How do you and your students use performance and feedback to advance student learning?

1a. 我的课堂会让学生语言学习的进步与既定的外语学习目标紧密相关。

My students demonstrate growth relative to the performance objectives.

I do not do this. 不会这样做。

I sometime do this. 有时候会这样做。

I do this most of the time. 多数时候会这样做。

I do this with confidence. 总是这样做，做得很自信。

1b. 我的课堂会让学生语言学习的进步与预期的语言流利级别一致。

My students demonstrate growth relative to the targeted proficiency level.
I do not do this. 不会这样做。

I sometime do this. 有时候会这样做。

I do this most of the time. 数小时会这样做。

I do this with confidence. 总是这样做, 做得很自信。

1c. 我的课堂会让学生语言学习的进步表现在语言沟通的三种模式上。

My students demonstrate growth across the modes.

I do not do this. 不会这样做。

I sometime do this. 有时候会这样做。

I do this most of the time. 数小时会这样做。

I do this with confidence. 总是这样做, 做得很自信。

1d. 在评估中，我会提供给学生不同的选择，去展示他们的语言学习成果是否达到以及超出预期语言流利级别。My students are provided choice in demonstrating their growth toward and beyond targets.

I do not do this. 不会这样做。

I sometime do this. 有时候会这样做。

I do this most of the time. 数小时会这样做。

I do this with confidence. 总是这样做, 做得很自信。

1e. 我会采用不同的评估工具，以满足每个学生提出的需求。

I vary assessment strategies to account for individual student needs, as prescribed.
I do not do this.  

I sometime do this.  

I do this most of the time.  

I do this with confidence.

2a. 我会经常给学生描述性的反馈。

I provide my students frequent descriptive feedback.

2b. 我会在学生展示他们的学习成果后第一时间给他们反馈。

I provide feedback that is close in time to demonstrated performance.

2c. 我以学生表现成果作为依据，来提供我的反馈意见。

I provide feedback that is supported by evidence from the student performance.
2d. 我会提供机会让学生将自己现在的学习成果与过去的学习成果进行比较。I provide students with opportunities to compare their current performance to previous performances.

- I do not do this. 这不会这样做。
- I sometime do this. 有时候会这样做。
- I do this most of the time. 多数时候会这样做。
- I do this with confidence. 总是这样做，做得很自信。

学习工具的自我评估

有策略地选取教学材料是有效教学的必要环节，其有助于实现课程、单元以及单课既定的目标。你和你的学生是如何充分利用各种学习工具，以最大限度的提高学生的学习的？

Learning Tools Self-Assessment

Effective language learning experiences are facilitated by the use of strategically selected resources designed to support course, unit and lesson performance objectives. How do you and your students capitalize on a variety of learning tools to maximize student learning?

1a. 我会让学生通过各种电子和文本媒介来获得可理解性的语言输入。I provide my students with comprehensible input through the use of a variety of digital and print media.
I do not do this. 不会这样做。

I sometime do this. 有时候会这样做。

I do this most of the time. 多数时候会这样做。

I do this with confidence. 总是这样做, 做得很自信。

1b. 我和我的学生会使用教具、道具、组装式教具以及其他的资源来共同制作可理解性的语言输入。My students and I use realia, props, manipulatives and other resources to make input comprehensible.

I do not do this. 不会这样做。

I sometime do this. 有时候会这样做。

I do this most of the time. 多数时候会这样做。

I do this with confidence. 总是这样做, 做得很自信。

1c. 我和我的学生会使用课堂学习辅助工具来辅助学习。

My students and I use classroom learning aids as tools to facilitate learning.

I do not do this. 不会这样做。

I sometime do this. 有时候会这样做。

I do this most of the time. 多数时候会这样做。

I do this with confidence. 总是这样做, 做得很自信。
1d. 我和我的学生会从本地和全球的目标语言社区获取语言和文化的资源。My students and I access local and global target language communities as language and culture resources.

- I do not do this. 不会这样做。
- I sometime do this. 有时候会这样做。
- I do this most of the time. 多数时候会这样做。
- I do this with confidence. 总是这样做，做得很自信。

**Demographic information**

性别 Gender

- 男 Male
- 女 Female

年龄 Age

- 25 岁以下 under 25
- 26-30
- 31-35
- 36-40
- 41-45
- 46-50
- 51-55
在美居住时间 (累计的年数) Length living in the United States (accumulated years)

在该处

母语 Native Language(s):

- 普通话/华语 Mandarin Chinese
- 粤语/广东话 Cantonese
- 闽南话/台湾话 Taiwanese
- 英语 English
- 其他 (请详述) Other (Please specify)

教育背景 (最高学历) Education (Highest degree earned):

- 师范类专科院校 Teacher's College
- 学士学位 B.A./B.S.
- 硕士学位 M.A./M.S.
- 博士学位 Ph.D.

您自何地获得您的最高学历? Where did you earn your highest degree?
您可以从以下地区选择您目前的工作地点：

- 中国大陆 Mainland China
- 台湾 Taiwan
- 香港 Hong Kong
- 美国 United States
- 其他 (请详述) Other (Please specify)

专业背景 Major(s)

- 人文领域（如语言学、哲学、历史、音乐等） Humanities and Arts (e.g., languages, philosophy, history, music etc.)
- 教育学 Education
- 社会科学（如经济学、心理学、社会学等） Social sciences (e.g., economics, psychology, sociology, etc.)
- 工程学或应用科学领域 Engineering or applied sciences
- 基础科学领域（如数学、化学、物理学等） Basic Sciences (e.g., math, chemistry, physics, etc.)
- 商务领域（如金融、会计等） Business (e.g., finance, accounting, etc.)
- 其他 (请详述) Other (Please specify)

您担任中文老师最初主要的动机: (请择一)
Initial motivation to be the Chinese school teacher: (Choose one)

- 发挥原有的教学专长 Put what we learned into practice
- 承传中华语言和文化 Maintain Chinese language and heritage culture
- 学习新的教学能力 Learn new teaching strategies
- 服务华人社区 Serve the Chinese community
- 学校缺老师,暂时支援 I substituted a teacher’s class temporarily or lack of teachers in Chinese school
- 陪小孩上学,同时兼任老师 As a parent at the Chinese school, I teach there so as to encourage my child studying Chinese
- 其他 (请详述) Other (Please specify)

从事中文教学的总年数（不包括与华语教育相关的行政工作以及文化课程的教学，如书法课、舞蹈课和太极课等的教学年数）

Total years of teaching Chinese language classes (Please do not count experiences in administration or in teaching Chinese culture courses, such as calligraphy, dance, Tai chi, etc.):

- 不到一年 less than 1 year
- 1-3年 1-3 years
- 4-6年 4-6 years
- 7-10年 7-10 years
- 11-15年 11-15 years
- 16-20年 16-20 years
○ 20年以上 more than 20 years

除了在中文学校，您目前是否也在主流 K-16 公私立学校教汉语？如果是，在哪些年级？

Do you teach Chinese in the K-16 public/private school? If yes, please select the follow that best describe your situation.

☐ 幼儿园-小学2年级 K-2 grade

☐ 小学3-5年级 3-5 grade

☐ 中学6-8年级 6-8 grade

☐ 中学9-12年级 9-12 grade

☐ 大学 College

☐ 全职 Full-time

☐ 兼职 Part-time

☐ 不在公立或私立学校教中文 Not currently teaching Chinese at a K-16 public or private school

您是否已取得中文教师资格证？

Do you have a certificate to teach Chinese?

○ 是 Yes
如果您已获得中文教师资格证，证照是何处发给？
If you have obtained a teaching certificate in Chinese, where were you granted the certificate?

- 美国政府的教育单位 State Department of Education in the US
- 中国大陆的教育单位 Educational organizations in China
- 台湾的教育单位 Educational organizations in Taiwan
- 其他 (请详述) Other (Please specify)  

您是否拥有教其他科目的教师资格证照？
Do you have a certification in other subject?

- 是 Yes, 科目 Subject: (请详述 Please specify)  
- 否 No

如果您不在主流学校任教，您转往主流学校教中文的意愿如何?
Indicate your attitude toward teaching in the mainstream education system.

- 无任何意愿 Very Unlikely
- 不强烈 Unlikely
- 普通 Undecided
○ 强烈 Likely

○ 非常强烈 Very Likely

We would be glad to share with you your self-assessment result, please leave your e-mail address here below.

Please enter your e-mail

Confirm the e-mail