

Spring 2006 Assessment of the Undergraduate Majors in Chinese and Japanese

Department of East Asian Languages and Literature

Abstract

The Department of East Asian Languages and Literature (EALL) has an assessment plan that is reasonably active, and the following is a report on recent assessment activities. In truth, EALL is somewhere between having a current plan and needing an action plan to get back on track, and having an active assessment plan. Recognizing this, we are submitting this report and appending what we think are the two measures needed to bring us fully into compliance with our existing assessment plan.

There are three components to this report. The first is a compilation of majors and degrees granted, as well as enrollment information on courses. This information was compiled by Terry Nealon. The second is a pair of digests of information deriving from exit interviews of majors, which were compiled by Charo D'Etcheverry (Japanese majors) and Zhu Yongping (Chinese majors). Finally, the assessment plan calls for evaluation of language proficiency of fourth year students based on embedded questions and oral assessments, and these were compiled by Junko Mori (8th semester Japanese) and Xiang Yu (8th semester Chinese). We also append the most recent version of the departmental assessment program.

Narrative

As the chart “Chinese Language Enrollments, Fall 2001-Spring 2006” shows, over the past three years enrollments have significantly increased at most levels of Chinese and Japanese language training. Specifically, AY 2005-06 enrollments in beginning Chinese (101 and 121) have increased by 8 and 24 students, respectively, since AY 2003-04. As a percentage, the increase from 96 to 130 students is an increase of 35%. Gains were seen at every level of Chinese offered, most notably at fourth year level. Prior to AY 2005-06, the most students enrolled in eighth semester Chinese was 14 students. This past year, 23 students were enrolled, which signals that the increase in first year Chinese enrollments has now translated into more students completing four years of Chinese.

The popular Japanese language program continues to increase its enrollment each year, as demonstrated by the chart “Japanese Language Enrollments, Fall 2001-Spring 2006.” Already drawing 158 students in first year in AY 2003-04, enrollments in beginning Japanese courses (103 and 123) rose to 173 students in AY 2005-06, a 12% increase. Second year (i.e., third semester) rose by 25%, third year (fifth semester) by 11% and fourth year (seventh semester) by 44%.

This year, we have requested increased staffing from Associate Dean Hauner in both Chinese and Japanese. Recognizing the current atmosphere of financial constraints, we have limited this request to our top priority in the past self-study, the addition of

permanent lecturers in Chinese and Japanese. We seek to improve pedagogy by dividing the Japanese 103 lecture and teach some of the specialized language courses that we have not been able to teach with our current three FTE in Japanese language and linguistics. In Chinese, we need to address the problem of the different needs of heritage learners and true beginners by establishing a heritage track for the first two years of Chinese language instruction.

Our undergraduate assessment is comprised of two components: the assessment of the language programs using embedded questions and exit interviews of fourth year students, and the assessment of literature and culture programs through exit interviews of graduating seniors. While I have not been able to find complete reports from previous years in all these areas, we have tried to fully carry this out in spring of 2006, and the following narrative combines this spring's results with the partial information available from previous years. This is my first year as chair, and in future years more care will be taken to maintain the integrity of the assessment process.

Chinese major exit interviews were conducted by Nicole Huang (AY 2003-04, AY 2004-05) and Zhu Yongping (AY 2005-06). The strongest sentiment expressed in these interviews was the need to separate "native and non-native learners". One student wrote: "it's difficult and intimidating for non-natives to be in a class with people so far advanced. That could have been helpful in the beginning of my Chinese education, and it would have been helpful at the end." Other suggestions include more classes in specialized Chinese (e.g., newspaper reading and business Chinese), more study abroad options, and eliminating the Classical Chinese requirement. As we noted in our 1998 assessment report, "in every instance, the proposal involved increas [sic] funding for additional staff." The exception here is the Classical Chinese requirement, which is a suggestion we feel would be better addressed by adding a component to the Classical Chinese course that shows the students the continued reliance on classical language in scholarly and literary writing in the present day. Students appreciated the literature and culture component of the major.

On the Chinese language side, Xiang Yu assessed three volunteers among the eight students in eighth semester Chinese. Her evaluations are attached. Through oral interviews, she established that their written vocabulary ranged from 1500 to 2000 characters, and their oral proficiency was no more than 2500 words. This places them between the advanced intermediate and advanced levels. By the March 1st deadline, they had not yet taken their final examinations, and so information from embedded questions was not yet available.

Over the last three years, Charo D'Etcheverry has conducted exit interviews of the Japanese majors. She notes that overall, the students seem very happy with their experience in the major. Constructive suggestions include: arranging for some of class offerings to fulfill general education requirements, instructing students in the radical-based approach to *kanji* acquisition, and offering more advanced offerings in Japanese. The last option would require increased staffing, but the other suggestions will be forwarded to the curriculum committee. Based on her assessment, D'Etcheverry notes

that “this year’s majors were much better grounded in the basics of Japanese history and literature than their predecessors, an improvement that seems directly related to their training in these areas within our department.” She argues that the department should continue to encourage students to complete the majority of their training in history and literature here rather than on the exchange programs. She also recommends listing some of our literature and culture courses as Comm-B classes as a means to recruit more students to the major and assisting majors with completing their general graduation requirements.

In the Japanese language, Junko Mori compiled a descriptive assessment of the students in eighth semester Japanese. As with Chinese, students had not yet taken their final examinations by the March 1st deadline, and so information from embedded questions was not yet available. However, Mori notes that “two of these students passed Level 1 Japanese Language Proficiency Test administered by the Japanese government and were allowed to take regular courses taught in Japanese for their degree candidates at Keio University when they studied abroad.” She also notes that “Two students took the unofficial ACTFL oral proficiency test and received the ratings of Advanced-High and Advanced-Mid.” JLPT and ACTFL are among the national proficiency exams that we are trying to integrate into our assessment regimen.

EALL also is coordinating with the Center for East Asian Studies (CEAS) in its development of its own assessment plan. One of the problems with language assessment that we have encountered is the cost of having students take national proficiency testing. In the latest Title VI proposal, CEAS has included funding for both teacher training and testing costs in order to assist EALL with this important goal. We anticipate, should CEAS receive Title VI funds in the next cycle, being able to increase our ability to incorporate these metrics into future assessments.

We think that more attention to annual reviews and better implementation of national proficiency tests (in cooperation with CEAS) are the two measures needed to bring us fully into compliance with our existing assessment plan.

Respectfully submitted,

Mark Csikszentmihalyi,
Associate Professor and Chair, EALL

Enrollments, majors and degrees granted

Chinese Language Enrollments
Fall 2001-Spring 2006

Course No./Title	2-06	1-05	2-05	1-04	2-04	1-03	2-03	1-02	2-02	1-01
EA 101: 1 st Sem. Chinese		80		79		70		72		74
EA 102: 2 nd Sem. Chinese	77		63		51		57		43	
EA 121: Elementary Chinese	50		39		26		26		41	
EA 122: Elementary Chinese		27		11		7		19		8
EA 201: 3 rd Sem. Chinese		26		31		34		27		26
EA 202: 4 th Sem. Chinese	24		21		20		18		20	
EA 301: 5 th Sem. Chinese		32		13		19		17		24
EA 302: 6 th Sem. Chinese	36		20		18		11		20	
EA 401: 7 th Sem. Chinese		32		7		9		12		7
EA 402: 8 th Sem. Chinese	23		N/A		N/A		5		14	

Japanese Language Enrollments
Fall 2001-Spring 2006

Course No./Title	2-06	1-05	2-05	1-04	2-04	1-03	2-03	1-02	2-02	1-01
EA 103: 1 st Sem. Japanese		132		158		134		115		110
EA 104: 2 nd Sem. Japanese	117		107		83		85		77	
EA 123: Elementary Japanese	41		50		24		25		47	
EA 124: Elementary Japanese		45		18		19		19		17
EA 203: 3 rd Sem. Japanese		60		65		48		42		31
EA 204: 4 th Sem. Japanese	42		46		37		32		27	
EA 303: 5 th Sem. Japanese		30		19		27		25		18
EA 304: 6 th Sem. Japanese	22		9		17		18		10	
EA 403: 7 th Sem. Japanese		13		10		9		15		15
EA 404: 8 th Sem. Japanese	7		11		7		9		14	

Undergraduate Majors in Chinese and in Japanese

	Chinese Majors	Japanese Majors
May 2006	43	21
Graduating 2005-06	9	7
May 2005	23	18
Graduating 2004-05	11	6
May 2004	21	17
Graduating 2003-04	10	5

Graduate Majors in Chinese and in Japanese

	MA Chinese	PhD Chinese	MA Japanese	PhD Japanese
May 2006	13	15	8	5
Graduating 2005- 2006	2	2	5	0
May 2005	10	16	7	5
Graduating 2004- 05	7	2	4	0
May 2004	13	14	6	4
Graduating 2003-04	5	3	3	1

Report of Chinese Program Assessment (April 30, 2006)

The annual assessment of graduating seniors of Chinese program has been conducted between April 25 to April 30, 2006 by email. There are totally 5 questions in the assessment and 9 Chinese majors. Two of them have responded the questions. The following points from their response probably need our program to pay attention:

1. Students like the summer program of studying Chinese, but it would be better if there is a Chinese-only language requirement, and are more studying in China programs.
2. Lecture class is better to be taught by a professor. A student complains that EA 102 was taught by TAs and very disorganized about 3 years ago.
3. One student doesn't like Classical Chinese class.
4. One student feels that there is a gap between 3rd-year and 4th-year Chinese. It is necessary to divide the heritage and non-heritage students into different classes.

Followings are the questions and students' responses (because the assessment is confidential, there are not students' names appear in the report, rather senior 1 and senior 2).

(1) What are some of the best experiences of being a Chinese major at UW-Madison?

Senior 1: I think the best experience was getting to go to China for a summer and study. This program should be marketed differently though. It is more like a 12 week tour with classes where you can get your feet wet in Chinese culture. It was not the intensive Chinese-only language experience I thought it might be before I went. A lot of English is spoken among students. You should make it clear to students that you will return with a loose understanding of Chinese culture but probably not language proficiency.

Senior 2: Tianjin was really spectacular, it was kind of like the culmination of the education and the social connections I had made in Chinese class over the period before I went to Tianjin. So many good memories! I also appreciate the people I got to know in the Chinese department, both students and teachers.

(2) What about some of the worst experiences?

Senior 1: Probably 2nd semester of the first year, Chinese 102. We did not have a professor, only a TA and the class was very disorganized.

Senior 2: Classical Chinese!!! Ahhghhgg!!! I really, really like Cheng laoshi (as a person!) but I find that class ... really ... boring ... and useless! Song laoshi did a pretty good job teaching it, she paced it well.

(3) Overall, how would you describe your learning experiences in the Chinese program in the last four or five years? (Do you feel you have learned a lot? Do you feel there is a gap in your education? Do you feel well prepared for the work life beyond college? Would you recommend our program to other students?)

Senior 1: Going to Tianjin definitely helped my proficiency, particularly when it comes to making sentences and saying them quickly. The language flowed more naturally after I returned. However, I feel very lacking in vocabulary. I seem to know a lot of "street" talk but not enough intellectual words. There is definitely a gap between 6th semester and 7th and 8th. I am in 8th right now and feel totally unprepared for the class. I simply don't know enough vocab to stumble through the intellectual writings.

Senior 2: I do feel that there is a gap in my education, mostly because I had to take a year off of school and when I came back to UW there wasn't an appropriate Chinese course I could take--I'd already had 3rd year so I didn't want to take it again but 4th year was populated with too many native Chinese speakers and it moved too fast.

Non-native and native Chinese learners REALLY need separate classes. It's difficult and intimidating for non-natives to be in a class with people so far advanced. That would have been helpful in the beginning of my Chinese education, and it would have been helpful at the end.

A conversational class, or a newspaper-reading class, or a business Chinese class would have been VERY welcome. Or a creative-writing class, or SOMETHING to bridge the gaps that exist between years.

And don't require classical Chinese!

(4) Without looking reference books, can you list two authors, e.g. Zhuangzi, or two Chinese literature books, e.g. *Hong Lou Meng (The Dream of the Red Chamber)* you like the most? Why? 1 sentence or 2 is fine.

Senior 1: Hong Lou Meng was certainly a good read, at least the volumes I read. Just recently I heard from a Taiwanese TA that there is a conspiracy theory surrounding Cao xueqin and that perhaps he was a spy for the court to make sure the wealthier families were following the wishes of the emperor? I also enjoyed reading a lot of Lu Xun's writing because he seems to do a balancing act with falling into oblivion and the chance of hope.

Senior 2: I really liked "3-Inch Golden Lotus" by Feng Jikai. It was a really great book, great style and great premise. I also really appreciated Xiao Hong, not as enjoyable as Feng Jikai but definitely worth reading and understanding. It was

an interesting snapshot into a facet of Chinese society I would have never considered.

(5) Please state any other comments on the program and any recommendations for future changes.

Senior 1: I'd like to see a semester or year-long study program drawn up at a college in Beijing. I myself plan to take courses independently there after I graduate but if the UW offered something I would definitely take it into consideration. I also feel like you should give consideration to move the summer program from Tianjin to Beijing. Tianjin does not have a lot things to do outside of going to the bar. Beijing has museums, the zoo, lots of other colleges in close proximity and really a university feel to it, especially in wudaokou.?

Senior 2: Separate Natives and Non-Natives (especially at the beginning of the Chinese language education, at least 1st and 2nd years.)
No classical Chinese. More "practical" Chinese. More CLACC-like activities for people in the major to make friends and mentor each other.

That's an idea: a mentor program for Seniors to help Freshmen and Sophomores?? Maybe there aren't enough seniors.

Anyway, thanks for the great education!

The Evaluation for the Graduating Students in Chinese Major

Name: <NAME DELETED>

Major: Chinese, East Asian study

Study Chinese from 2002 to the present.

Study Aboard experience: Summer/2004, 8weeks UW-Madison summer program in
Tianjing;
Summer/2005, three months in Beijing

Other classes interrelated to Chinese: Classic Chinese
Chinese modern History from 1800 to
PRC period
Introduction to Chinese Linguistics

Chinese Proficiency Test (like HSK): None.

Spoken Chinese: Tones--good
Vocabulary—no more than 2500 characters.
Fluency—fine

Chinese listening comprehension: Can understand daily conversations

Reading comprehension: with the help of dictionary (electronic dictionary), can
Understand the academic articles or literary works.

Writing Chinese: Vocabulary—around 1500.
The student can write a decent essay and uses some conventional
Idioms appropriately

Classroom Observation: Sometimes the student is too shy to express his ideas.

The Evaluation for the Graduating Students in Chinese Major 2

Name: <NAME DELETED>

Major: Chinese, East Asian study

Study Chinese from 2002 to the present.

Study Aboard experience: Summer/2004, 8weeks UW-Madison summer program in Tianjing;

Other classes interrelated to Chinese: Classic Chinese
Survey of Chinese Literature (first semester)
Introduction to Chinese Linguistics

Chinese Proficiency Test (like HSK): None.

Spoken Chinese: Tones—close to native speakers, if pay attention to every Pronunciation.

Vocabulary—no more than 2500 characters.

Fluency—better than “fine”, but the student tends to use the The simple patterns, even though she has perfectly Mastered some advanced words and patterns.

Chinese listening comprehension: no difficulties to communicate with a Native Chinese speaker.

Reading comprehension: with the help of dictionary, can Understand the academic articles or literary works.

Writing Chinese: Vocabulary—around 2000.

The student can write a decent essay and uses some conventional Idioms and conventional expressions appropriately. However, She will unconsciously avoid using the advanced patterns such As “ba” (disposal structure).

Class observation: She likes to participate the discussion.

The Evaluation for the Graduating Students in Chinese Major 3

Name: <NAME DELETED>

Major: Chinese, East Asian study

Study Chinese from 2002 to the present.

Study Aboard experience: Summer/2004, 8weeks UW-Madison summer program in Tianjing;
Summer/2005, three months, working for Chinese-American Adopting Association in Beijing

Other classes interrelated to Chinese: Classic Chinese
Survey of Chinese Literature (first semester)
Introduction to Chinese Linguistics

Chinese Proficiency Test (like HSK): None.

Spoken Chinese: Tones—close to native speaker
Vocabulary—no more than 2500 characters.
Fluency—good. But less accurately when discussing some academic Topic.

Chinese listening comprehension: no difficulties to communicate with native speakers.

Reading comprehension: with the help of dictionary, can Understand the academic articles or literary works. But her Reading speed is not so quick.

Writing Chinese: Vocabulary—around 2000.
The usage of grammars and vocabulary is precise. However, she Forgets many basic knowledge that she acquired in the elementary Level.

Class Observation: she is active and willing to express her opinions.

EXIT INTERVIEWS—JAPANESE LIT & CULTURE (2006)

INTERVIEWER: Charo D'Etcheverry, Assistant Professor of Japanese

MAJORS: <NAMES DELETED>

<NAMES DELETED>

PROCEDURE: I sent a six question e-mail to each of the majors (reproduced below). The first five questions survey student knowledge about authors, eras, and major literary forms, while the final one solicits suggestions for improving the major. Since only three majors responded (despite prodding), these conclusions about student learning and suggestions for improving the student experience of the major should be considered tentative.

SURVEY:

1. Name three (3) authors in premodern Japanese literature (712-1868). Which do you think is the most important and why? (a sentence or two is fine).
2. Same questions, modern Japanese literature (1868-present).
3. What's a waka? Its favorite era and themes?
4. Same questions for shishosetsu (also known as the watakushi shosetsu).
5. What do you consider the two most significant eras in Japanese history? Why? (again,

a

sentence or two on each is fine).

And finally (the bonus round): what's one thing you think we could do to improve the program for our majors? suggestions about classes/requirements/etc... are fine.

ASSESSMENT SUMMARY: All three of the students who responded were able to characterize Japan's important historical eras as well as name and discuss major authors. They also did well with the genre questions. Perhaps unsurprisingly, all three had completed the majority of their literature/culture coursework on campus rather than through an exchange program.

STUDENT COMMENTS: These students seem very happy with their experience in the major. They like the existing coursework (and faculty) and are especially proud of their language training. Two of them also mentioned being positively surprised by the level of faculty commitment to undergraduate education as compared to other majors. However, they raised several possibilities for improving the undergraduate experience of the program. Two requested that the department arrange for some of its class offerings to fulfill general education requirements. Other suggestions included instructing students in the radical-based approach to kanji acquisition and offering more advanced offerings in Japanese. My favorite request was that students be alerted earlier in their careers at UW-Madison to the non-language offerings in Japanese studies, both in this and other departments, as well as a related suggestion that we promote the classical Japanese class more forcefully to returning seniors.

RECOMMENDATIONS: Based on this (limited) data, the department might wish to consider two revisions to or reinforcements of existing practices:

(1) Continued emphasis on fulfilling literature/culture requirements for the major on campus. This

year's majors were much better grounded in the basics of Japanese history and literature than their predecessors, an improvement that seems directly related to their training in these areas within our department. We should continue to encourage (if not require) that students complete the majority of this training here rather than on the exchange programs.

- (2) Better advertisement of non-language offerings, perhaps as Comm-B and similar “breadth” and “general education” classes. Majors like our classes and seem to be learning well what we teach. By listing some of our basic literature and culture courses as Comm-B classes, we might be able to recruit more students to the major while assisting existing majors to complete their general graduation requirements. This seems especially important given the increasing number of students interested in double-majoring in Japanese, a notoriously time- and credit- intensive effort. *Note:* We already offer several writing-intensive courses in Japanese literature in translation, so adding a Comm-B course would be a natural extension of existing offerings.

Respectfully submitted on April 27, 2006—

Charo B. D'Etcheverry,
Asst. Professor of Japanese & Undergraduate Major Advisor

Japanese Language Proficiency of Graduating Japanese Majors

The listening, speaking, reading and writing proficiency of three undergraduate Japanese majors who took the course EA 404 “Eighth Semester Japanese” in the Spring 2006 were evaluated as it follows:

Listening

The class was conducted only in Japanese. The students were able to understand not only classroom instructions but also grammar and vocabulary explanations and arguments concerning various materials. The students’ understanding of these instructions and discussions was demonstrated in their homework assignments and written exams.

An authentic television documentary program on ups and downs of SONY around the time of the development of AIBO (robotic pet dog), and another on Japanese orphans’ survival stories in the post-WWII era were used as audio-visual materials. The students were able to understand the gist of these programs and summarize the historical facts and different perspectives and issues presented in the show.

Speaking

Since the number of students in the class was rather small (seven), the students had ample opportunity to demonstrate their oral skills in the classroom, answering questions and participating in discussions.

Twice a semester, each student gave a five-minute speech: for the first speech, they were asked to select one individual who they think Japanese majors should know and introduce the profile of the person; in the second speech, they were asked to select a Japanese film or a film about Japan and introduce the story line and critiques’ review of the film. Each presentation was followed by a question and answer period.

During the last two weeks of the semester, the students took turns to serve as a discussion leader, who is responsible for presenting a reading material of their choice, answering other students’ questions, and raising some issues to be discussed.

Students were also asked to deliver a 10 minutes presentation of their final projects orally at the end of the semester.

Although the students made occasional errors, they were able to convey their thoughts in a stretch of coherent speech. They were also able to enjoy humors and ironies in an appropriate manner, which also indicates their proficiency in conversational skills.

In addition, a UW-Milwaukee faculty who is pursuing the tester certification for the ACTFL Oral Proficiency Interview test conducted interviews with the three students. Although the results are unofficial, she rated one of them as Superior, and other two as Intermediate-high.

Reading

The class emphasized both speed-reading and intensive reading. All of the materials used for both speed and intensive reading were authentic, e.g., newspaper articles, essays, short stories, and research papers, etc. In classroom discussions and written exams, the students demonstrated adequate comprehension, by summarizing their contents in Japanese or translating portions of the texts from Japanese to English.

The final written exam included questions about a previously unknown newspaper article, as well. The students were able to get main ideas of simple newspaper articles (tested by multiple choice or true-false questions) without the help of dictionaries.

The final projects discussed in more detail below also involved reading of newspaper or research articles or literary work.

Writing

For each unit, the students had to submit a reflection essay, summarizing what they read and their reaction to the readings.

In addition to bi-weekly Kanji quizzes, there were 4 written exams including the final. Each exam contained at least two essay type questions, in which they were asked to summarize points raised by the author or express their own opinions and interpretations.

The students had the chance to demonstrate their integrative writing competence in a final project assignment. The content of the final project varied from research papers based on the review of several articles and documentaries, to translations of literary work or popular culture and the reflection of their translation processes.

Through several revision processes, the students were able to write 8-10 page (double space) essays presenting coherent arguments.

There are four other students who are graduating in May 2006 and another who is graduating in August 2006. These students successfully completed EA 404 (or a comparable course at a Japanese university during their study abroad) prior to this academic year.

Two of these students passed Level 1 Japanese Language Proficiency Test administered by the Japanese government and were allowed to take regular courses taught in Japanese for their degree candidates at Keio University when they studied abroad. Two students (including the one who passed Level 1 JLPT) took the unofficial ACTFL oral proficiency test received the ratings of Advanced-High and Advanced-Mid.