

**Engaged Practices Innovation (EPI) Program  
Grant Report  
June 1, 2017**

**Asian Languages: Engaged teaching for engaged learning**

Faculty: Emily Manetta (Anthropology)  
Kazuko Suzuki Carlson (Asian Languages and Literatures)  
Ying Hu (Asian Languages and Literatures)

## **1. Goals of the project**

This EPI grant funded our project to develop a crosslisted service-learning course (CHIN 196/JAPN 196/ANTH 196 Asian Languages Teaching Practicum) which sent intermediate and advanced students of Chinese and Japanese language, consulting with native Chinese/Japanese-speaking students interested in language education, into local schools to teach basic Chinese and Japanese language/culture skills to young children. The primary goals of this service-learning course were to: (a) allow UVM students studying Asian languages to increase their own confidence and proficiency through the challenge of teaching; (b) allow native Chinese/Japanese-speaking students to improve intercultural communication competence through a new perspective on their native languages; (c) provide an opportunity for all students to gain marketable skills in language teaching that they can use following graduation; and (d) create a context for serving the community in a way that increases awareness and appreciation of the value of education in Asian language/culture offered at UVM and the importance of early language instruction.

## **2. Description of project outcomes**

The project resulted in a semester-long service learning course with two teams: the Chinese Team and the Japanese Team. The Chinese Team taught 8 weeks of elementary Chinese language and culture to students at the Sustainability Academy. in Burlington, VT while the Japanese team taught 8 weeks of Japanese language and culture to students at Trinity Children's Center in Burlington. The outcomes can be divided into outcomes for the university students enrolled in the course and outcomes for the children at the two service-learning sites.

### **A. Outcomes for university students**

- Students deepened their own knowledge of Chinese/Japanese language, special Chinese/Japanese cultural knowledge (e.g. word games, songs) and child-directed speech and interaction practices in the target language.
- Students learned to develop, evaluate, and revise curricula based on widely-used foreign-language teaching techniques and learned to be responsive to student engagement and needs
- Students evaluated their own interests in teaching following their undergraduate education and gained valuable work experience (which resulted in documented successes in the job market)

### **B. Outcomes for children in partner schools**

- Chinese/Japanese cultural knowledge/awareness was significantly improved (survey/questionnaire results) (for many children this went from not knowing where China/Japan was to being able to identify a number of features of the target culture)
- Language learning took place despite relatively low number of total contact hours spread over a semester (lessons were weekly)
  - Basic exchanges/greeting routines were mastered and used outside the classroom environment (by parent and teacher report)

- Language games taught were spread to children not enrolled in the class
- Children developed increased appreciation for their own language knowledge and linguistic diversity (see especially results from SA)

### **3. Broader impacts of the project**

Our broader set of goals for this project were twofold: (a) to deepen connections between university and the wider community through service-learning, and (b) to increase awareness for educators and students of all ages the incredible importance of Asian language/culture education (and foreign language/culture education quite generally) in an increasingly globalized world. We feel that we accomplished both of these goals during the course of the grant period. The impact on the wider community was clear in our conversations with teachers, parents, and administrators in the school sites who were incredibly supportive and enthusiastic about additional programming or future opportunities. The impact on the UVM students who participated in the program was also clear at their semester-end presentations when they demonstrated the depth of their knowledge of the teaching process and their improved understanding of community engagement through language.

### **4. Additional outcomes and ongoing activities**

This model of teaching-as-learning proved quite successful, and the course is being taught again as a summer course by Ying Hu to test additional methods and practice. Both instructors Carlson and Yu were met with frequent requests for additional course offerings/space.

Beyond this, our group reported on our research at the Global Education Forum teacher swap shop in Philadelphia, PA last October. The report included specific child-based outcomes, teaching/learning techniques/methods, and an overview of the model. The plan is to expand this report into a larger, article-length publication that highlights service-learning as a vehicle for the learner-as-teacher model, benefitting both university student and child tutee simultaneously.

We would love to see other language programs attempt to use the model we are developing to deepen the connection between the university and the wider community through the incredibly valuable practice of language teaching/learning.