

2013

## Towards Internationalising the Curriculum: A Case Study of Chinese Language Teacher Education Programs in China and Australia

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### Recommended Citation

Wang, D., Moloney, R., & Li, Z. (2013). Towards Internationalising the Curriculum: A Case Study of Chinese Language Teacher Education Programs in China and Australia. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, 38(9).  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.14221/ajte.2013v38n9.8>

This Journal Article is posted at Research Online.  
<http://ro.ecu.edu.au/ajte/vol38/iss9/8>

## **Towards Internationalising the Curriculum: A Case Study of Chinese Language Teacher Education Programs in China and Australia**

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*Abstract: This paper presents a comparative curricular inquiry of teacher education programs of Chinese as a foreign language in China and Australia. While there is an increasing demand for qualified Chinese language teachers both within China and Western countries, pre-service teacher training is regarded as one of the major factors in impeding success in effective student learning. Using an interpretative approach, this paper captures voices from teacher educators and pre-service teachers through in-depth interviews to supplement curriculum document reviews. The results identify curriculum differences in educational aims and objectives, learning content, methods of delivery and assessment. The study suggests aspects of curriculum which must be negotiated, in moving towards the internationalisation of the curriculum, to facilitate the mobility and adaptation required in overseas teaching contexts. The study ends with a discussion for urgent development of an internationalised curriculum of Chinese language teacher education and situated teacher education programs.*

Mandarin Chinese emerged as the new must-have language from kindergarten to university within and beyond the Asia-Pacific region. The Chinese Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China estimated that more than 100 million people globally were learning Chinese as a second, foreign or additional language in 2011 (Chinese Ministry of Education, 2006). It has been estimated that there is demand for four million Chinese language teachers (Wang, in press). To accommodate the rapidly increasing number of learners of Chinese as a Foreign Language (CFL), many CFL teacher education programs were quickly developed both within and outside China in the last few years. However, many CFL teachers trained in these programs have found it difficult to teach in a way that Western learners can relate to well. The lack of suitably qualified teachers has become the major issue in CFL education globally (Orton, 2011). In an Australian report, "teacher factor" was identified as one of the major causes of a very high attrition rate in students – 94% students who begin Chinese as a classroom-taught language quit before the senior years of secondary (Orton, 2008, p. 24). Pre-service teacher training and professional development of in-service Chinese language teachers have also been prioritized on the research agenda due to teachers' unsatisfactory performance within China (Zhang, 2006; Li, 2012). Learners of Chinese were prevented from becoming functional users of Chinese due to the barriers that are "unconsciously created by Chinese language teachers" (McDonald, 2011, p. 1). CFL teaching has to deal with the varied quality of the language teaching profession both in and outside China. This has resulted in urgent demands to examine

the existing curriculum for CFL teachers, for this is what determines the quality of Chinese teaching methodologies (Cruikshank & Tsung, 2011, p. 221; Moloney, 2013; Wang & Kirkpatrick, 2012) and understanding of language teachers. However, without a coherent examination of the curriculum of Chinese teacher education program, little profound change can take place in qualified teacher supply. Therefore, the primary goal of this project is, through a comparative curriculum enquiry, to identify differences and similarities in beliefs and practice, to point to negotiation of the most important common elements of effective curriculum for CFL teacher education. The project asks whether the internationalisation of CFL teacher education programs may be possible in a global context.

### **An Emerging Market: Chinese Teacher Education Programs in China and Australia**

The project focuses on Beijing as a typical Chinese city in the East, Hong Kong a hybrid of the East and the West, and Sydney a complete Western city. The three cosmopolitan cities were chosen for their specific sociolinguistic contexts, where Mandarin Chinese is spoken as the first language in Beijing, as the second language in Hong Kong and as a foreign language in Sydney.

Despite the diversity of dialects spoken in China (State Language Commission, 1995, p. 159), modern CFL teaching only focuses on “Beijing speech as its standard pronunciation” (National Linguistics Work Committee, 1996; Rohsenow, 2004, p. 41). CFL programs in various universities in China have been faring well, particularly in Beijing, the cultural, political, and educational centre of the country. As one of the most popular places to learn Chinese, Beijing attracted more than 80,000 college-age international students in 2010 from 183 countries, ranking first among all cities in China. The earliest CFL course in the People’s Republic of China was set up for 33 diplomats from Eastern Europe in Beijing in 1951. However, CFL teaching remained a subordinate subject to Chinese and foreign language studies until the late 20<sup>th</sup> century when academics started to pay attention to teaching Chinese as a foreign language to foreigners as an independent discipline (Xing, 2006, p. 9; Li, 2008). Until now, many in-service teachers in universities in Beijing were educated and trained as Chinese majors in the Chinese departments which teach Chinese as the first language to local native Chinese students.

The first professional CFL teacher development program at postgraduate level, the Master of Teaching Chinese to Speakers of Other Languages (MTCSOL) was set up in 2007, and soon became one of the most popular postgraduate programs in China’s higher education system. Nine universities in Beijing own MTCSOL. As a newly-developed discipline, the MTCSOL in Beijing requires high academic performance and also high English proficiency level in the candidates. Including MTCSOL programs, by 2012, 285 universities in China were officially recognized for preparing qualified CFL teachers. Many young Chinese have been attracted to becoming teachers who teach their mother tongue to foreigners in China, or preferably abroad, as a means to increase their professional recognition and international mobility. As China’s economy and exchanges with the rest of the world have seen rapid growth in recent years, there has also been a sharp increase in international demands for learning Chinese. However, the overheated promotion of such “Chinese craze” has resulted in growing unrealistic expectations of CFL education at home and abroad and, consequently, unemployment issues amongst graduates. Hu and Feng (2012) found only a small number of graduates from these teacher development programs were able to find a full-time teaching job in China’s universities. Every year there will be a total of 15,000 of these graduates from 285 universities but only 10% of them actually get a job teaching Chinese, and a mere 1% of them have a chance to work overseas for a Confucius Institute. Ironically,

given the urgent demand for CFL teachers in overseas countries, the majority of young CFL teachers are not able to successfully gain employment in overseas countries (Wang, 2013), and are therefore regarded as difficult to “go out”.

Operating with strong autonomy within the People’s Republic of China, Hong Kong is a valuable inclusion in this project, for its special role in mixing pedagogic discourses and practices in both Chinese and Western style (Bray & Koo, 2004). The linguistic situation of Hong Kong is complex (Gao, Leung & Trent, 2010). According to the 2011 Population Census 89.5% of the Hong Kong population spoke Cantonese as their daily language and only 1.39% of the population spoke Mandarin Chinese. However, recent years have seen a radical upgrade for the status of Mandarin Chinese in Hong Kong, especially in education and business sector. CFL learning gains the most popularity in international schools in Hong Kong. A growing number of international schools in Hong Kong have begun to teach Mandarin Chinese on a daily basis and use it as medium of instruction (Ryan & Slethaug, 2010). Most international schools promote their bilingual programs of English and Mandarin Chinese, which aim to equip students with strong bilingual skills to ensure better career prospects. There are also increasing demands for Mandarin Chinese tutoring in transnational companies, law firms and offices in the central business area in Hong Kong. Private language centres and university language centres emerge quickly, offering service from door-to-door, one-on-one tutorials or short-term Chinese language courses to adult learners of Chinese.

In accordance with the increasing demand of CFL learning, the number of CFL teacher education programs at postgraduate level has been also increasing in Hong Kong. Following the first CFL teacher program offered by Hong Kong Polytechnic University (PolyU) in 2008, three more similar programs at Postgraduate level were opened at Hong Kong Institute of Education (HKIEd) in 2008, University of Hong Kong (HKU) in 2010 and Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK) in 2011. These programs took over two hundred students every year, where the majority are from Mainland China. However, different from the selection system in Mainland China where the Graduate Student Entrance Examination is nationwide and compulsory, pre-service teachers in Hong Kong do not have to pass competitive tests to meet basic levels on Chinese language studies. The less strict selection system in Hong Kong offers pre-service teachers from non-language disciplines a wider avenue of access to the field of CFL. Unlike pre-service teacher who were mostly majored in Chinese language and literature in Beijing CFL postgraduate programs, pre-service teachers in Hong Kong are from a wider range of undergraduate disciplines including Chinese, English, journalism, tourism and so on.

The study of Asia is a cross-curriculum priority in new Australian school curriculum (ACARA, 2011), and within that, the learning of Chinese in Australian schools has strong political support (Australia in the Asia Century, 2012, p. 16). *The National Asian Languages and Studies in Australian Schools Strategy* (NALSAS) achieved an increased participation rate in the study of Asian languages and Asian studies across all States and Territories. The Australian Government proposed the target that by 2020, at least 12 per cent of students could exit Year 12 fluent in one of the target languages (Mandarin, Japanese, Indonesian and Korean). The number of schools offering Chinese study has increased. Although it is difficult to ascertain accurate national data for languages study in Australia (Slaughter, 2009), students of Chinese in Australian schools were estimated in 2008 to number approximately 84,000 in 319 schools (Orton, 2008). This compares with some 300,000 students learning Japanese and Italian, 200,000 learning Indonesian and French.

Over 90% of teachers of Chinese in Australia are ethnic Chinese, most born in mainland China, about half of whom took up residence as the result of a special immigration waiver passed in late 1989. Sydney has attracted many native speakers of Chinese from Mainland China who

became Chinese teachers with diverse levels of teaching skills. Rather than a lack of teachers, it is the shortage of well-trained teachers that is hindering development. There has been only very limited success in achieving NALSAS outcomes, to produce significant numbers of students exiting secondary school with competence in Chinese (Orton, 2008). While there has been only limited analysis of the reasons for this lack of success, studies have examined the “teacher factor” as one of the major reasons in particular (Moloney & Xu, 2012; Orton, 2011).

We examine Chinese teacher education programs in Australia not only as a third CFL context, but also for Australia’s active engagement in discussion of internationalisation of the higher education curriculum. As Bell (2004) argued, “the increasing presence of fee paying international students, the proximity of the Asian educational market and the growth of offshore teaching on the Asian-Pacific rim are arguably the most significant influences moving the internationalisation agenda forward in Australia” (p. 51). There have been increasing collaborative programs established between universities in China and Australia. In particular, Han and Yao (2013) studied a group of Chinese teachers undertaking a research Masters degree in an Australian university and conducted teaching practicum in a local school. As an emerging educational market, Chinese language teacher education programs can offer rich research agenda for both China and Australia.

## **The Study**

As a newly emerging field, the empirical research on CFL teacher development programs in higher education is very limited. However, with an increasing number of studies calling for improving quality of CFL teachers, this study hopes to initiate a research agenda and inform a comparative way of thinking for curriculum development. While there was no intention to generalize the discussions about similarities and differences of curricular, this study is used as a signpost to set up a conceptual framework on curriculum development of CFL teacher education, pedagogic innovation and internationalisation of CFL teaching.

The research method of this study includes interviews with CFL teacher educators and pre-service teachers in the three settings on the basis of a comprehensive document review. Within the critique of curriculum documents, we weave a narrative enquiry approach (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) using teachers’ commentary on the intended and experienced curriculum. In an experimental-innovative perspective (Stenhouse, 1975; Elliott, 1996), opinions from pre-service teachers are encouraged in this study to initiate discussions to improve the quality and effectiveness of the implemented curriculum. Individual teacher’s voice is largely absent in current research on CFL teacher education programs in both China and in the West. To empower their role as self-reflective and innovative language teachers, this paper also includes excerpts of narratives about their experience of teaching and studying in the three places. The main focus is on the differences between what the intended curriculum states, and how they evaluate the effectiveness of the curriculum in light of their current teaching experience. The teachers’ narratives, as first-hand encounters of the CFL teacher programs, can help to identify what qualities should be prioritized in CFL teacher development, to maximize effectiveness, in this era of global demand for CFL teachers.

## **Data Collection**

We began collecting data by reviewing the curriculum and related documents of the three

programs, in Beijing, Hong Kong and Sydney. Beijing and Hong Kong contexts focus primarily on CFL teacher education programs at postgraduate level (degrees of Master of Arts and degrees of Master of Education). Pre-service teachers graduating from these programs are expected to be able to teach regardless of whether they choose to do a research master or professional master in Beijing, or through research or taught course in Hong Kong. In Sydney, though postgraduate options also exist, training of Chinese language teachers sits more typically within a comprehensive four-year undergraduate Bachelors degree. Students complete units in their content ‘majors’ and either concurrently or subsequently complete units of teacher education. In languages, this is most often designed generically for all foreign language pre-service teachers. Within the three individual contexts, curriculum for CFL teacher education program shares some similarities in terms of their aims, contents, pedagogies and assessments. This study will focus less on in-group comparisons and more on the overall differences of the three types of curriculum across the three places.

Overall, this study reviewed the nature of curriculum documents from nine CFL postgraduate teacher development programs in Beijing, four in Hong Kong and five in Sydney. Following a comparative curriculum analysis, narratives of the teachers were collected through in-depth interviews. Before interviewing participants, the three authors of this project have reflected themselves on their experience of either studying or working in the programs. Having analysed each other’s self-reflective stories of experience, we developed a number of open questions for interview with participants. Interviews conducted in Mandarin Chinese were translated into English for data analysis.

## Participants

The study included six experienced teacher educators and six pre-service teachers. Specifically, three program coordinators and three teacher educators were selected for interviews, with one program coordinator and one teacher educator from each place respectively. They are expected to provide some insights and rationale of the intended curriculum. In the meantime, six pre-service teachers also participated in interviews, with two candidates from each program. Their reflections related to the experienced curriculum from a critical perspective, their evaluation of the curriculum through their learning and practicum experience in the three places. All of the student participants are native Chinese, who were born and received their first degree in universities in Mainland China.

This study included individuals who can provide rich and varied insights into the phenomenon under investigation, so as to maximize what we can learn (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 126). Based on this purposive sampling (Silverman, 2005), participants were not chosen in order to produce a sample representative of the larger population, but rather, were chosen to represent a range of teachers with different backgrounds and experience, allowing this study to gain a comprehensive understanding of the issues of concern. Such sampling method helps reflect a synthesized view of the teacher education curriculum in the three places. For the sake of protecting the identity of participants, their affiliations will be kept anonymous. A limitation of our study was that only female pre-service teachers were interviewed in this study. This is due to the fact that the majority of the CFL teachers in the teacher education programs in this study were female teachers thus making it difficult to source as many male teachers. Table 1 illustrates some of participant’s demographic characteristics in this study.

	Teacher educators	Pre-service teachers
Beijing	T1: Program coordinator.	S1: Female. First degree in English,

	Male. PhD in Chinese.	China
	T2: Teacher educator. Female. PhD in Chinese.	S2: Female. First degree in Chinese, China
Hong Kong	T3: Program coordinator. Male. PhD in Chinese	S3: Female. First degree in English, China
	T4: Teacher educator. Female. PhD in Educational Technology	S4: Female. First degree in Tourism, China
Sydney	T5: Teacher Education Program coordinator. Male. PhD in Education	S5: Female First degree in English Studies, China
	T6: Teacher educator. Female. Ed.D.	S6: Female. First degree in China

**Table 1: Demographic information of participants**

## Data Analysis

The primary focus of a curriculum is its rationale (aims and objectives), what is to be taught (content), how this is to be done (pedagogy) and how to evaluate the overall learning outcome of the course of study (assessment). Using this framework of the above-mentioned four fundamental components of curriculum studies (Morris & Adamson, 2010), this study presents some preliminary findings of curriculum comparison in Beijing, Hong Kong and Sydney contexts. Opinions from teacher educators and pre-service teachers in the three different contexts will be used to supplement the document review. Interview transcripts were transcribed and translated from Chinese to English. To ensure a better flow of discussion, excerpts from interview transcripts were not restricted to a verbatim translation.

## Curriculum Aims and Objectives

Educational aims of the curriculum and the other curriculum components designed to achieve those aims “reflect a set of images, orientations, conceptions, characterizations or value systems which involve beliefs and assumptions about the learner, knowledge, schooling and society” (Morris & Adamson, 2010, p. 46). Different stakeholders often have different epistemological, ethical and axiological viewpoints of images. The aims of the three curricular clearly show different images of what the CFL teacher education programs are expected to achieve.

The Beijing curriculum develops an “academic rationalism” (Morris & Adamson, 2010, p. 48), focusing on the need to equip pre-service teachers with subject knowledge and skills that are derived from closely related areas of studies (such as linguistics, literature, language theories, etc.) and also nurture good attitudes and passions to promote Chinese language as an international language. For example, the “*peiyang mubiao*” (curriculum objective) of MTC SOL in Peking University is to “develop adequate skills of teaching Chinese as a foreign language and good intercultural communication skills to promote Chinese culture, capable of promoting Chinese as a global language, and able to handle various teaching tasks professionally” (School of Chinese as a Second Language, Peking University). That is to say, as an emerging academic discipline, the aim of the CFL teacher education programs in Beijing is to achieve independence from traditional Chinese studies with its particular missions and vision.

The primary task is to develop an independent discipline. It is an interdisciplinary subject which will take a long time to set up desirable models and unified standards for the substance of teaching and learning. It is yet not fully recognized

or supported as an independent discipline in China's educational system. We emphasize fundamental studies of language theories, linguistics, teaching theory, textbook design, assessment and so on because we hope those who have studied in our programs will be fully prepared to be responsible of language programs wherever they go. Chinese language teaching is not only a popular profession but also a national cause. (T1)

Unlike Beijing, Hong Kong curriculum aim stresses career related benefits, highlighting the role of the CFL program in preparing pre-service teachers to fit into immediate teaching practices in local CFL educational settings. This shows a very clear "economic efficiency" image of the curriculum, largely because Hong Kong is heavily involved in providing service in global economy, so its education should ensure that pre-service teachers could provide the most effective teaching to learners of Chinese. This reflects an entrepreneurial characteristic of all Hong Kong universities, in which education is increasingly treated as a business (Mok, 2005). Global perspective and intercultural skills are also selling points, displaying strong attraction to students who are based in the Mainland China. Examples of such aims are from HKU's program, which says its program "caters for educators in the teaching of Chinese as a second language curriculum in Hong Kong, making reference to the teaching of other curriculum, such as IB, GCSE, AP etc." (Faculty of Education, the University of Hong Kong, 2013). Similar understanding was heard from a program coordinator in Hong Kong:

Our program has been increasingly competitive. Only about 10% of the applicants were admitted last year. The job perspective for our students is very promising. The employment rate of our graduates reached 100% last year. We are the only one TCSL programme that offers IB certificate in teaching and learning research for our graduates in Hong Kong, which has equipped our students with a strong qualification in teaching CFL in international schools in both Hong Kong and the other parts of the world. (S4)

In addition, Hong Kong CFL curriculum strongly stresses not only "local" but also "global" adaptability of their programs, which indicate the global transferability of the future career of the pre-service teachers. For instance, such kind of statements can be found in the CUHK program aims "Graduates of the programme will develop a global perspective on teaching Chinese as an international language" (Faculty of Education, the Chinese University of Hong Kong, 2013). It can be seen that Hong Kong CFL postgraduate programs heavily emphasize on potential career benefits, such as PolyU's program emphasizes its mission on "To assist participants to develop their careers by providing them with professional skills in teaching Chinese as a foreign language marketable all over the world" (Department of Chinese and Bilingual Studies, the Hong Kong Polytechnic University, 2013).

In Sydney, all undergraduate teacher training programs have commonality, in that they must comply with the standards imposed by the Australian Institute Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL), and they must prepare teachers to teach to the prescribed New South Wales language syllabus (for example, BOS, 2003). It is thus possible to speak of common practice across, for example, five Sydney programs. The aims of pre-service teacher curriculum reflect a "student-centred" image of education. Aligned with the aims of school curriculum, teacher education is grounded in a social constructivist learning model, which posits that learning occurs when a student constructs knowledge him/herself through being personally engaged in experiential learning with peers. The teacher is a facilitator of learning, and the role of the learner is to be active and questioning. In language learning this means focus on language in sociocultural context, performance opportunities, and critical thinking about language and culture.



The Macquarie University Teacher Education Program, in general, of which CFL training is a part, promotes the concept of the scholar-teacher, the value of reflective classroom practice, and integrated growth in its school-based, professional experience (practicum) program. The pre-service teachers can apply the knowledge and skills they develop in campus workshops in a classroom setting. Students complete total 60 days of practicum teaching in schools, integrated with their university workshops. (T6)

All pre-service language teachers must have previously completed a 'major' in their chosen teaching language(s). Native speakers, regardless of overseas tertiary qualifications, also complete undergraduate study of units of Chinese language. There is no explicit or compulsory attention to the linguistics of Chinese language at this level.

### **Curriculum Content**

A holistic teacher education curriculum is constructed of three core categories of knowledge (Shulman, 1987): content knowledge (CK), pedagogical knowledge (PK) and pedagogical content knowledge (PCK). For Chinese language teacher education, in the view of China and Hong Kong contexts, CK denotes both general linguistics knowledge and Chinese linguistics knowledge. PK refers to foreign language teaching methodology in general. As an integrated knowledge of both CK and PK, PCK is seen as a comprehensive standard for qualified Chinese language teacher – knowledge about how to use theoretically sound teaching pedagogies to teach the Chinese language as a foreign language. However, a comparison of curriculum content in the three places reveals different focus. Table 2 shows a detailed credit point distribution of learning content including both mandatory and elective modules for the program. For this purpose, specifically, we have chosen to compare one CFL teacher education program in Beijing Language University, Hong Kong Institute of Education and Macquarie University in Sydney.

	Beijing* cps	Hong Kong** cps	Sydney*** cps
CK (General language theory and Chinese linguistics)	28	12	24 (language study)
PK (Learning theory and Teaching methodologies)	4	12	12
PCK (pedagogical knowledge about teaching the Chinese language)	4	27	9
Teaching Practice	6 optional	6 optional	18 compulsory
Other Compulsory Courses	6	0	42 (undergraduate degree)
Total	48	57	93

\*Beijing: Beijing Language University (MTC SOL); \*\*Hong Kong: Hong Kong Institute of Education (MEd); \*\*\*Sydney: Macquarie University.

**Table 2: Credit Points of Learning Content of CFL Teacher Education Curriculum (cps)**

It can be seen in Table 2 that more than half of the core elements of CFL teacher education programs in Beijing are heavily theory-based, focusing closely on general linguistics, Chinese linguistics and second language acquisition theory. In a recent survey in ten universities that offer CFL teacher education programs (degree of research Master) in China, Zhu Zhiping (2010) found that over 95% of the core curriculum for the CFL teacher education programs focuses on CK knowledge development – language theory and linguistics knowledge, leaving only 5% for second language acquisition, Chinese culture and teaching practice. Four of the ten universities even leave no space at all for field experience or teaching practice. In particular, curriculum of MTC SOL program (degree of professional Master) in Beijing Language University, Peking University and Beijing Normal University includes less than 10% of teaching practice, leaving 45% for language theory and Chinese linguistics, 22% on literature and culture and 23% on teaching theories. Participants from one of the research masters programs in Beijing argued

The two-year postgraduate program focused primarily on linguistics theories and Chinese grammar, which was extremely challenging as my first degree was not in Chinese. There was only one course on second language teaching pedagogy that I thought would be interesting. But I found it focused on teaching the history of development of language teaching methods. Little time was left for practical discussion, let alone real teaching practice. We hoped we could learn some detailed and practical teaching techniques but it was considered as a personal effort. We were told to figure out our own methods. I know I am studying for a research degree, but I also have to begin my career as a teacher rather than a researcher. Sadly, it is not likely to find proper position in China's universities. I am considering getting a PhD outside China. (S1)

It is so difficult to find a teaching position in Beijing, particularly difficult for someone whose spoken English is not good. I want to further my studies in the United States but I have to pass TOEFL and GRE, which is nearly an impossible mission for a Chinese major. (S2)

The over supply of CFL pre-service teachers within China has resulted in unemployment issues in China. Having limited working opportunities, some graduates from CFL teacher education programs have to seek to further their studies in Hong Kong and overseas countries. Confucius Institutes recruit only very limited number of candidates to teach overseas every year,

offering short temporary contracts, low salary, and basic living conditions comparing with employment benefit of local teachers. But to win this chance to teach abroad, candidates have to demonstrate very high level of English. CFL pre-service teachers who are not able to pass IELTS or TOEFL have little opportunity to further their studies outside China.

In Hong Kong, CFL teacher education programs offer opportunities for pre-service teachers to travel overseas for teaching practice for an extended period and also prepare them for working in local Hong Kong international schools, language centres in universities as well as private Chinese language tutorial centres. Curriculum of CFL teacher programs in Hong Kong usually involves a considerable amount of time on PK knowledge building – focusing more closely on teaching pedagogy training through multimedia resources and digital technologies, so as to equip pre-service teachers with hands-on teaching techniques.

The most pressing task for me is to get over with my “zero teaching experience” embarrassment. That is the reason why I chose this program in Hong Kong. As far as I know, other programs are also making teaching practicum a compulsory module. For example, HKIED guarantees a six-week to ten-week teaching practice in local international schools or schools overseas. HKU offers about two-month teaching practice for each of its full-time students. (S3)

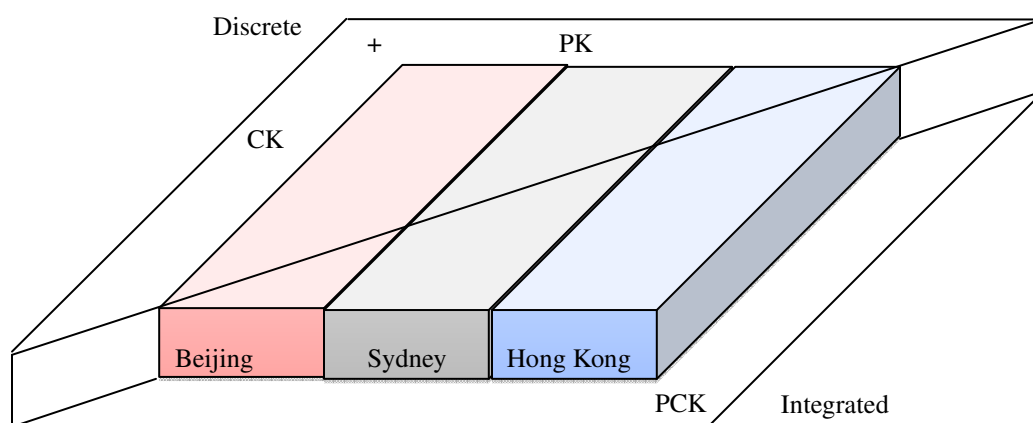
However, the job prospect in Hong Kong may not continue to be promising. The increase in international schools’ demand for experienced teachers is difficult for most of the students studying CFL teacher education programs in Hong Kong, as they obtained their Bachelor degrees in Mainland China where little formal classroom CFL teaching experience is available. Furthermore, most of the international schools in Hong Kong have made PGDE (Postgraduate Diploma in Education) a compulsory qualification. The current PGDE courses offered in all universities in Hong Kong are tailored for teaching Chinese to local school students, and no PGDE courses are specifically designed for teaching Chinese as a foreign language. This represents a contradictory dilemma for postgraduate students who have specialized in CFL teaching but are not able to find full-time jobs in schools due to the lack of PGDE certificates.

In Australia, while some universities give explicit attention to CFL (for example Melbourne University’s Chinese Teacher Training Centre) it is common for CFL pre-service teachers to be studying methodology with peers in other language groups. At Macquarie University students complete three semester courses (9cps) of methodology training, alongside simultaneous completion of practicum requirements (60 days). Methodology units focus on effectively teaching the outcomes of the New South Wales language Syllabuses, produced by the Board of Studies, NSW. The syllabuses promote three dimensions in language learning: Using Language, Making Linguistic Connections and Moving Between Cultures (BOS NSW, 2003). These are demonstrated in explicit learning outcomes. CFL teacher training at Macquarie University, Sydney, develops practice which delivers these syllabus outcomes, within a group of mixed language pre-service teachers. Course content includes lesson planning, active communicative strategies, use of new technologies, differentiation for ability groups, assessment practice, supported by relevant academic literature. The generic teaching of the mixed group means there is limited explicit instruction in Chinese pedagogy. The lecturer notes benefits however to pre-service teachers:

The mixed group however, affords intercultural experience: students can make linguistic connections, and move between cultures. They see that, for example, compared to European inflected languages, Chinese is of relatively simple grammatical construction, but they realize the difficulty for the Australian child, of character memorization. (T6)

Thus, Sydney curriculum, with CK language competence as entry prerequisite, is rich in PK and PCK. Orton (2011) argues however that Australian CFL teacher training needs to address the English speaker's engagement with tones, particles and verb complements, homophones, and character acquisition. Orton (2011) confirms the lack of research into effective pedagogy for the teaching of Chinese to English speaking school children (p. 263).

In overview, content knowledge in curriculum of CFL teacher education in Beijing is more CK focused, text-based, linguistics theory/language knowledge-centred. This has to some extent explained the reason why native Chinese language teachers educated in China are professionally strong in teaching sophisticated Chinese linguistics, but are rather weak at initiating pedagogical development due to the lack of prior knowledge. However, Hong Kong's CFL teacher education is less CK based, more PCK based, and focuses primarily on practical teaching skills. Similar to Hong Kong, curriculum of CFL teacher education in Sydney attaches great importance to developing generic PK, introducing the most up-to-date foreign language teaching pedagogies. Figure 1 helps to visualise the primary focus of these three curricular.



**Figure 1. Primary focus of the curriculum in Beijing, Sydney and Hong Kong**

To integrate CK and PK, it is important to increase the weighting of PCK modules and allow enough teaching practice for CFL teachers to combine CK with PK. Collaborative teaching with experienced foreign language educators should also be encouraged as it is perhaps a good way to transmit PCK to the next generation of Chinese teachers.

### Curriculum Pedagogy

Pedagogy is a broad term, defined and shaped differently within diverse cultural contexts, but which in general refers to the techniques and choices teachers make, to effectively deliver the prescribed learning content in curriculum documents (Morris and Adamson, 2010, p. 88). Personal pedagogy, referring to individual beliefs of teaching, in particular, is highly context-based and influential on the implemented curriculum. Teachers develop, whether consciously or unconsciously, a schema of beliefs about 'good' practice, impressions of what constitutes a successful second language (L2) learning class, established models of 'good' L2 teachers, and perhaps even assumptions about the value of language learning. Teachers in the three contexts of this study often juggle conflicting priorities in structural and communicative considerations. Studies of most effective pedagogical innovations for CFL are urgently needed. There is a

relationship between the pedagogy displayed in the tertiary teaching institution, and the eventual pedagogy which a young teacher will use in his/her classroom. In Beijing, curriculum of CFL teacher education program is delivered mainly through lectures, and pre-service teachers will be required to give presentations, and attend micro-teaching occasionally. One of the teacher educators in Beijing said:

I realised there are some problems with how CFL teachers teach. Although teachers claim they are not teaching in a grammar-translation approach, they in fact do in the classroom. Some teachers are not aware of the differences between teaching Chinese as L1 and foreign language. Due to inadequate content knowledge of learning theories and pedagogical training, teachers' assumptions about classroom teaching remain robust. Teachers use textbook as the primary source of teaching. They emphasize the wholeness of grammar system and accuracy of pronunciations. Some teachers have a very difficult time understanding their students in English so their classes are more lecture-based and teacher-centred. (T2)

In the absence of clear direction and modelling about new approaches, teachers' natural inclination seems to be to teach the way they themselves were taught in the past (Richards, Gallo & Renandya, 2001). It is known that teachers' beliefs directly affect their approaches to teaching and pedagogy (An, Kulm & Wu, 2004; Chiang, 2010; Wu, Palmer & Field, 2011). This may mean that their pedagogical choices may be dated, ineffective, or inconsistent with current "best practice" and priorities in 21st century language education. Current Chinese pedagogy in Beijing is school-based, grammar and theory-focused, teacher and textbook-centred and suffers from a lack of research-informed teaching techniques or understanding of international foreign language teaching and learning standards. However, CFL pedagogy in Hong Kong seems to be influenced by EFL teaching pedagogy because a number of pre-service teachers are from English language education, who have already had some proper pedagogical knowledge of foreign language education. For example,

My pedagogic model was largely based on my EFL training and teaching experience in Guangzhou, where communicative teaching approach was largely emphasized. My undergraduate university was the pioneer of ESL communicative-based curriculum innovation throughout China, with over twenty years of implementation of communicative teaching approach to ESL courses for English majors. In my own CFL teaching, I adopted dynamic communicative teaching strategies that I used in my previous ESL teaching such as group work, presentations, debates, discussions, social activities, role-plays, games, etc, in which students' confidence in speaking Chinese is greatly enhanced. (T4)

Many CFL teachers in Australia have a difficult time in adapting to the expectations of Western pedagogy (Orton, 2008; Moloney & Xu, 2012). Criticisms have been made of native speaker teachers' pedagogy, and their reliance on character teaching at the expense of communicative oral work. At Macquarie University, CFL teacher training is delivered in workshop style, three hours per week, with approximately 20-30 students in workshops. The workshop may include a presentation by the lecturer, but always includes group work tasks, topic-based discussion and creative tasks, often using technology. There is strong emphasis on practical classroom needs, and student demonstrations of useful games and teaching strategies.

My Chinese pre-service teachers sometimes grapple with the communicative and intercultural language pedagogy. I have come to understand the need to provide scaffolding, so they can construct intercultural skills from their own

experience. (T6)

Assessment tasks include an intercultural autobiography, lesson and unit plans, and written critical reflection on practicum experience. The CFL students often make reference to their own education, and understandings which they have achieved through their own learning experience:

When I suffered from the culture shock, I tried to understand the differences between Chinese and Australian teaching cultures and try to be involved.... I usually tell students some differences in culture knowledge based on my own experiences... I will always find interesting materials to stimulate students to learn languages... My own secondary school in China just asked students to do plenty of paperwork and keep practising grammars which let students lose their interest in English. (S6)

S5 and S6 both noted that they intend to “adapt teaching methods that will combine linguistic and communicative skills with intercultural skills, which will allow students to learn language in and from the cultural context. I would also tell my students my own intercultural experiences” (S5).

Under the Australian Government initiatives, increased teaching places were made available for native speaker CFL teachers, who need training not only in CFL, but also in Australian curriculum content (Kleinhenz, Wilkinson, Gearon, Fernandez & Ingvarson, 2007, p. 4). Moloney and Xu (2012) have identified that amongst experienced CFL teachers in the New South Wales region, three approaches to pedagogy exist. The first group, typically who have emigrated 1980s-1990s, educated in China, adhere to a traditional Chinese language education schema, and expect an authoritative teacher role and a passive student role. The second group, younger and educated in Australia, reject Chinese schema and teach within a Western constructivist approach. The third group is caught in a tense transition between the two schema. There is dispute as to the most ‘culturally correct’ way to teach CFL. There are as yet few resources which bridge Chinese and Western language pedagogy. Conflicting values in pedagogy, and difficulty in adaptation to overseas teaching contexts, are recognised as the dominant issues in Chinese language education in Australia today (Orton, 2011). Teacher education itself can be criticized across cultures, for its slowness to respond to the changing international goals and needs of students in contemporary, globalized societies. Although cultural traditions and local contexts must be respected, it is clear that alternative approaches to CFL teaching and teacher education are emerging. Pedagogies that are used widely in North America, Europe, Australia, New Zealand, and other contexts have a lot to offer to the Chinese context.

### Curriculum Assessment

At this point, even within China, there is no proper Chinese language teacher certification system that meets international standards. Hanban (Chinese National Office for Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language) used to have such a system but it has been suspended since 2005. The examination was halted for many reasons. To our understanding, one of them was probably due to its nature as an academic assessment rather than a professional evaluation process. There are also many experienced foreign language teachers and enthusiastic students who wish to join the CFL teaching profession, but find it difficult to do so without an official professional certification system. China needs to provide the necessary policy guidance and set up overseas cooperation platforms and rectify the CFL teacher certification system as quickly as possible, for people who wish to become qualified and situated CFL teachers in a global context. As a new discipline and a new market, it will take some time for the CFL certificate to establish itself in a similar fashion to TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) accreditation globally. Hanban (2012) has released the second edition of “Standards for Teachers of Chinese to Speakers of Other languages”, which are intended to reflect a “comprehensive description of knowledge, capacity and qualities that Chinese language teachers possess” (Orton, 2011, p. 155). However, written in a very general and high-end method, the Standards mentioned little of how to manage a classroom through modern second language teaching approaches. In addition, there is no direct intention to associate CFL Standards with the current assessment criteria of Masters degree programs in Beijing.

The final assessment of CFL pre-service teachers in Beijing is through thesis, including those who are studying for professional degrees. Pre-service teachers are asked to conduct research on linguistics, literature or education and write an academic report in Chinese. Some programs require a compulsory teaching practice in their own universities and students are required to submit a teaching reflection report about their teaching experience.

In Hong Kong, CFL pre-service teachers are assessed mainly based upon course work and program assignments. Candidates usually have to complete eight to ten courses, including teaching practice required by some programs. Some programs such as HKU offer two ways of assessment: course-based and thesis-based. Student can choose to complete a dissertation, which can be counted as two course credits. Teaching practice is a compulsory part for pre-service teachers studying at HKU and HKIEd. The candidates are sent to international primary or secondary schools in Hong Kong, some are sent to schools in overseas countries such as the US, France, Belgium, and Korea. Candidates are usually required to sit in classrooms to observe in-service teachers’ teaching for two to three weeks and then conduct teaching with guidance provided by in-service teachers. Their teaching practice is evaluated by university teacher educators based upon pre-service teachers’ ability in planning and delivering the lesson.

In Sydney, CFL pre-service teachers are assessed academically, on tasks in their Languages Methodology units, and through formal assessment of their Practicum teaching competencies, against AITSL Standards. They must pass both to graduate, and get accreditation. The Australian Federation of Modern Language Teacher Associations (AFMLTA) has designed the Professional Standards for Accomplished Teaching of Languages and Cultures (DEST, 2005), as a formative description of ideal professional development. The AFMLTA standards particularly express the need for on-going learning in a supportive context. For teachers of CFL this is found in the activities, resources and collaboration with peers, through the Chinese Language Teachers’ Association. Such organisations are the immediate support network of urban and rural teachers.

## **Toward Internationalizing the Curriculum**

Through its analysis of curriculum aims, content, pedagogy and assessment, this paper has identified areas of difference across the three CFL contexts that need to be considered. Given the need for mobility of CFL teachers, similar to their TESOL counterparts, and their need to adapt to different teaching contexts, it is essential to open up discussion and research on internationalizing the curriculum of CFL teacher training. We have noted the current criticism of CFL teacher quality, and failure in pedagogical adaptation to overseas contexts. While not wanting to over-generalize the three cases in this comparative study, this study nevertheless signposts pertinent areas for discussion, in internationalizing the curriculum. There has been an increasing number of studies calling for in-depth analysis of the best pedagogical approaches to be used in international CFL language teaching and a standardized international curriculum for CFL education (Orton, 2011; Scrimgeour & Wilson, 2009; Casas-Tost & Rovira-Esteva, 2009; Moloney & Xu, 2012). Without qualified and professionally competent Chinese language teachers, successful CFL teaching in international learning contexts will not be possible.

International curriculum is defined as having an international orientation in content, aimed at preparing students for performing (professionally and socially) in an international and multilingual context (IDP in Australia, 1995, p. 1). The internationalised curriculum must aim at making Chinese language teachers more competent to work in multicultural environments abroad or at home. Through the internationalized curriculum, pre-service teachers will need to have a broad understanding of social, cultural and global issues affecting their professions, in addition to core subject matters that are context-free. However, the core challenge is the disjunction between what the Chinese CFL curriculum teaches teachers, and what the overseas school requires. Before these institutionally trained CFL teachers can develop a full-time teaching position in Western countries, they need to be equipped with pedagogical skills, practical experience, and understanding of social beliefs and values. The potential education market of CFL education is huge, but it is apparently outside China.

“Going out” (moving to a teaching position outside China) is one of the most crucial issues to relieve the employment pressure of CFL teachers in China and insufficient good CFL teacher supply in Australia. This study calls for long-term academic collaboration between China and Australia in encouraging pre-service and in-service Chinese language teacher training and exchange, to support processes of change and negotiation of curriculum. CFL teachers in China have very high expectations of increasing their social and more importantly, international mobility. Obtaining an opportunity to teach in overseas countries is seen as a high recognition of their successful teaching. Stakeholders of CFL teacher education programs should consider “value adding” to curriculum that would enable CFL pre-service teachers to teach effectively in Western educational settings. In addition, the internationalisation of English has resulted in an increasingly mobile student population from developing countries into developed English-speaking countries (Leask, 2009).

We believe that the findings of this study suggest that CFL teacher education needs to consider initiatives which would increase PCK, and employability, in CFL teachers. One element of this may be provision of compulsory in-school practicum experience. This could be negotiated in schools both within and beyond China. Courses need to contain increased focus on teaching pedagogies, such as communicative activities, and the introduction of intercultural elements. Intercultural skills would serve both as an element of Western school curriculum, and to stimulate pre-service CFL teacher capacity to interact with overseas environments. Part of the mobile CFL teacher’s toolkit must also be some introductory knowledge of Western educational



curriculum values.

To internationalize a curriculum, we will need to “challenge both the nature of the curriculum and the paradigms on which it is based” (Mestenhauser, 1998, p. 21). It will require continuous innovative and negotiated effort focused on the critique of content, pedagogy, learning process and achievement of outcomes. It also requires us to think outside the traditional paradigms and manage to ensure that there is a correlation between the needs of the workplace and the skills balance demonstrated by graduates of the program. Although Chinese is an ancient and highly respected language, teaching the language internationally is yet a new field of study. Chinese language teachers are one of those professions that must be prepared to live and work in a globalized society. The purpose of this study is to help improve employability and adaptability of graduates in diverse cultural contexts (Crossman & Clark, 2009) as for CFL teaching this is essential. It is therefore urgent to develop curricula leading to internationally recognised and mobile professional qualifications.

## **Conclusion**

Using interview data of six language educators and six pre-service teachers from three programs in Beijing, Hong Kong and Sydney, this study makes visible the diversity within CFL teaching contexts, and the diverse pedagogic contexts to which it must adapt. Just as the TESOL discourse has greatly expanded its global inclusiveness through research input from many different TESOL contexts, CFL is similarly engaged in a developmental process that will produce a new and multiple identity for CFL, as it negotiates and adapts in different CFL contexts. In common with the growing body of qualitative research, this study uses both curriculum analysis and teachers’ perceptions and accounts of personal learning experience to make visible the diverse CFL perspectives and practice (Kramsch, 1987). Future research should focus both on establishing criteria for effective common practice, and on how to contextualize CFL pedagogy in specific learning contexts, in order to make CFL teaching methodology “compatible with the current internationalisation trends” (Du, 2012, p.10; Wang, forthcoming).

This agenda-setting paper attempts to present some preliminary findings of curriculum studies. The findings point to the need for change in CFL teacher education curriculum, to accommodate the need for teachers who can teach CFL effectively both within China and in overseas settings. CFL curriculum reform must take into account the historical, political, socio-economic and pedagogical context of the teaching site, and also the aims and aspirations for the future. We hope to highlight and initiate investigation of possible approaches toward an internationalized curriculum of Chinese language teacher education program.

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### Acknowledgements

We would like to thank Prof. Yang Rui (University of Hong Kong), Prof. Mark Bray (University of Hong Kong) and Prof. Bob Adamson (Hong Kong Institute of Education) for their insightful suggestions to this paper.