Assessment of Elementary Chinese I at Queensborough Community College, City University of New York

XXX, one of seventeen colleges comprising the XXX, is located in the borough of XXX, the most racially diverse among counties nationwide. Since it was established in Spring 2004, the Chinese program at XXX has offered beginning and intermediate-level language courses for students of diverse origins. It also offers Chinese literature courses to Chinese native speakers from China and Taiwan.

The main purpose of this paper is to discuss the assessment of Elementary Chinese I for non-Chinese heritage students. It will first offer a description of the curriculum design and pedagogy of the Chinese program, including an account of the establishment of the program, its development, its course offerings, the students it serves, placement procedures, the recruitment of the faculty members, and prospects for future development.

In Fall 2009, the program began to offer two tracks of elementary Chinese classes: one for Chinese heritage students and the other for non-Chinese heritage students. As the students of Chinese heritage already possess certain listening and speaking skills, the focus of these classes is on reading and writing. For students of non-Chinese heritage, the focus is on listening and speaking, with an emphasis on paired work and group work.

This paper will focus on the assessment project performed in Fall 2009 to evaluate the elementary non-heritage students’ speaking abilities at a novice-mid proficiency level as described in ACTFL 2006 guidelines. Their conversational abilities were assessed by role-play activities in which both students and their instructor played a specific role. This paper will describe the topics of the role-play activities, the rubrics, and the procedure of the assessment. In addition, it will offer an analysis and interpretation of the assessment results and describe the actions to be taken as a result of the assessment.