"Integrating Effective Testing and Assessment in Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language"

Jianhua Bai, Kenyon College

Testing is part of evaluation to collect information for making pedagogical decisions. This talk starts with a general introduction to various tests and their uses: 1) aptitude tests, 2) proficiency tests, 3) placement tests, and 4) achievement tests. The major part of the talk deals with approaches and methods to construct and implement tests to reflect program goals and provide feedback to improve learning and teaching. Specific examples from both standardized tests such as AP Chinese and OPI and achievement tests constructed for various Chinese courses will be utilized to illustrate the principles of effective testing and assessment in a foreign language curriculum.

About the speaker

Jianhua Bai, professor of Chinese, teaches linguistics and Chinese at all levels as well as training and supervising teaching assistants in the Department of Modern Languages and Literatures. He also served as chair of the department and as chair of the Asian Studies Program.

Beyond Kenyon, he has served on the executive board of the Chinese Language Teachers Association (CLTA) for two terms (1995-98) (2001-2004) and as president of the CLTA. He also served chair of the Committee of Curriculum and Articulation of the Ohio Foreign Language Association. He also directed two study-abroad programs in China: the Associated Colleges in China (ACC) Program in Beijing and the Hopkins/ Nanjing/CET Summer Program at Nanjing University.

During the summer, he directs the Chinese School at Middlebury College. He is also actively engaged in other professional activities such as organizing international conferences, evaluating conference papers and journal articles in his field, serving as a reviewer for program assessment and faculty reappointment and promotion at other institutions, serving as Senior Advisor (flagship curriculum) for American Council of International Education, chairing (2004-2010) the AP Chinese Language and Culture Exam Development Committee, and maintaining a discussion list that promotes communication among teachers, researchers, and students of Chinese.

His recent research projects include developing proficiency-based materials for advanced Chinese; schema theory and reading instruction; how web-based and distance learning technology can be used to enhance Chinese language pedagogy; the implications of pragmatics to Chinese pedagogical practice; and action research, documenting excellence in teaching Chinese as a foreign language.