



CAREER TALK

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**Interviews conducted
by “Careers, Cultures,
& Languages” students**



SUE-MEI WU

Sue-mei Wu is a Teaching Professor of Chinese Studies at Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh. As a graduate from both Ohio State University and National Tsing Hua University, Wu has devoted a large portion of her life to promoting the learning of Chinese language and culture. As such, she has been the lead author of countless textbooks and course curricula focused on highlighting numerous aspects of Chinese culture and everyday life. In addition to her accomplishments in education, Wu is also the Executive Director of the Chinese Language Teachers Association (CLTA).

1) What is your favorite part about working as a modern language professor?

I enjoy teaching language and culture to students and I am happy to interact with students and see their growth and achievement.

2) What experience(s) did you have that helped start your career?

When I was in high school and college I was a math and English tutor for kids. This experience made me feel that teaching is fun, meaningful and fulfilling.

3) What is the most difficult part about learning a new language?

The most difficult part is to open your mouth to speak the language and feel comfortable to interact with people. It takes some courage, practice and confidence.

4) What is the most difficult part about learning a new culture?

To understand a culture and to be able to navigate cultural differences is not an easy task. How to act appropriately in a foreign culture takes knowledge, constant observation and personal experience to get the “feel” of the culture.

5) What have you seen those with a degree in Chinese go on to do professionally?

My former students work in business, as teachers, data science professionals, technical programmers, journalists, translators or in politics.

6) Is there anything you wish you knew in college before getting a job?

I wish I had the chance to do some internships or some collaborations with companies to see what activities/tasks people who work in those companies do as part of their daily routine.

The interview was conducted by Patrick Costa.