

2014 International Conference on China-US Open and Distance Education

This conference, in planning since 2007 when the first ADEC/USDA delegation visited the Central Agricultural Broadcasting and Television School (CABTS,) a part of the China Ministry of Agriculture, in Beijing, was by all accounts a success. The primary goal of the conference was to debut the six prototype bilingual learning modules developed cooperatively by ADEC, Oregon State University and CABTS. However, a secondary and for some as critical a goal was to provide the opportunity for new relationships between the Chinese and ADEC delegations. In international collaborative programs, some say, "It's all about relationships." And that is proving true with the on-going collaboration and partnership between ADEC members and CABTS.

The ADEC/CABTS partnership is led by Oregon State University, along with support from ADEC members, New Mexico State University, West Virginia University, University of Florida, and Alcorn State University, among others.

We opened the conference with keynote addresses from Mr. Liu Tianjin, executive vice president of CABTS, and Dr. Scott Reed, Vice Provost and Director of Cooperative Extension, USDA/Oregon State University. Both addresses focused on the history and value of farmer training. The similarity in overall goals of both CABTS and the US Extension Service were highlighted. Although CABTS is a subset of the Ministry of Agriculture and governmental agency, it was clear during the conference discussion and the tour of the CABTS facility, that they most reflect our educational efforts that are based in the US Extension Service. CABTS is a Chinese version of our Cooperative Extension.

The debut of the bilingual learning modules was well received; however, working through the translation process for the 20-minute demonstration meant that many of the participants will need to have access to the modules to work with themselves in order to actually see how the process will work for them. I left a DVD and jump-drive with CABTS for their on-going review. I also left a DVD with the director of a vocational college from the Jiangsu province. Vocational colleges are the secondary target audience for these modules after the use that CABTS will make with their primary audience – 900 million Chinese farmers. I will continue to follow up with contacts from the conference to gather on-going input and product reviews.

Example bilingual learning modules can be seen at the Open Oregon State site.

- [Seed Germination](#)
- [Seed Dispersion](#)
- [Herbicides](#)
- [Soil Erosion and Prevention](#)
- [Irrigation](#)
- [Plant Sexual Reproduction](#)

Many of the Chinese presenters reinforced the need for direct training of farmers in rural communities. The average farm size in china is 0.7 hectares. One of the most well received presentations from the US delegation came from Sam Angima of Oregon State, who spoke about the Oregon small farm program. A concern of the Chinese partners at CABTS is how to actually motivate small farm producers (virtually all the producers/rural residents in China) to learn online. As small farm training programs across the US move to more online training, we will have useful information to share with international collaborators.

Another area of significant interest arose when Cindy Hart from West Virginia University explained the Quality Matters rubric used to validate quality online course development. Many of the Chinese developers at the conference indicated they continue to face issues that we have had in the US in the past about true effectiveness of online learning. Finding ways of certifying quality course development seemed of significant interest. Upon returning to the US, conference participant Jonan Donaldson from Oregon State found a Chinese language web site that explains the QM approach, which we will send to CABTS soon.

As you look through the mixture of presentations in the conference agenda below, you'll see the similarity of topics and ideas opened doors for continued engagement with the various participants across the US and China.

After the conference, Scott Reed from Oregon State, John Everett from Apollidon and I met with Mr. Liu Tianjin, executive vice president of CABTS, and Ms. Li Fanghong, our primary contact from the CABTS International programs office to discuss possible on-going collaboration. In an engaging "brainstorming" session (their description) we agreed in concept to discuss two parallel pathways: 1) continue to organize professional development workshops in the US and in China that focus on fundamentals of online learning including leadership and management of online learning programs, and 2)

explore the possibility of a meeting/workshop that would assemble Chinese and US subject matter specialists in small landholder and farmer training programs.

The online learning workshops would focus more on teaching skills and techniques and less on software use. The small landholder and farmer training opportunities will also include onsite field visits in the US.

Ms. Li and I will prioritize next steps and develop a first draft of an on-going collaboration that can be validated by leadership groups in both organizations. This conference is the final expectation in the current and second MOU between ADEC and CABTS.

Dave King
Associate Provost
Outreach and Engagement
Oregon State University