

PANDA TIME

Lexington Chinese School Newsletter

August 2015

Ma Li Ping vs Zhong Wen by William Ding

Last school year, my classmates and I started using a new Chinese textbook, the Ma Li Ping (MLP) series instead of the old Zhong Wen (ZW) textbook used by the other Chinese classes. After learning from the first two books of the MLP series, I found some differences between the two series in content, homework, and structure.

One significant difference between them is that Pinyin is not introduced in the MLP series while it is allowed in the ZW books until book six. (Pinyin is the method of transcribing the pronunciation of Chinese characters into the Latin alphabet.) Although this may seem harder for students to learn from the beginning, it allows students to learn new words without being dependent on Pinyin, and it encourages students to grasp both the pronunciation and meaning of new words at the same time.

In order to help students learn new words, the MLP series provides a virtual lesson on a CD, flash cards with lesson words imprinted, and a homework book to practice writing. The virtual lessons include reading texts, practicing writing words, and placing lesson words in the correct places. At the end of the practices, a video featuring a kid's show pronounces each lesson word so students can compare to the correct pronunciation. (Though the video is more fitting for a younger audience.) The ZW textbook, in contrast, consists of many writing assignments to do in a homework book, all of which are tedious and boring for many students.

Furthermore, the structure in the MLP series is based on learning the very basics first, and then moving on to harder information. In the first book, the texts were very compact and short, at maximum a couple of sentences long. Words were also very simple, such as counting numbers or basic nouns and verbs. On the other hand, ZW textbooks contain texts that are one page in length minimum. The words were also very difficult to learn and remember.

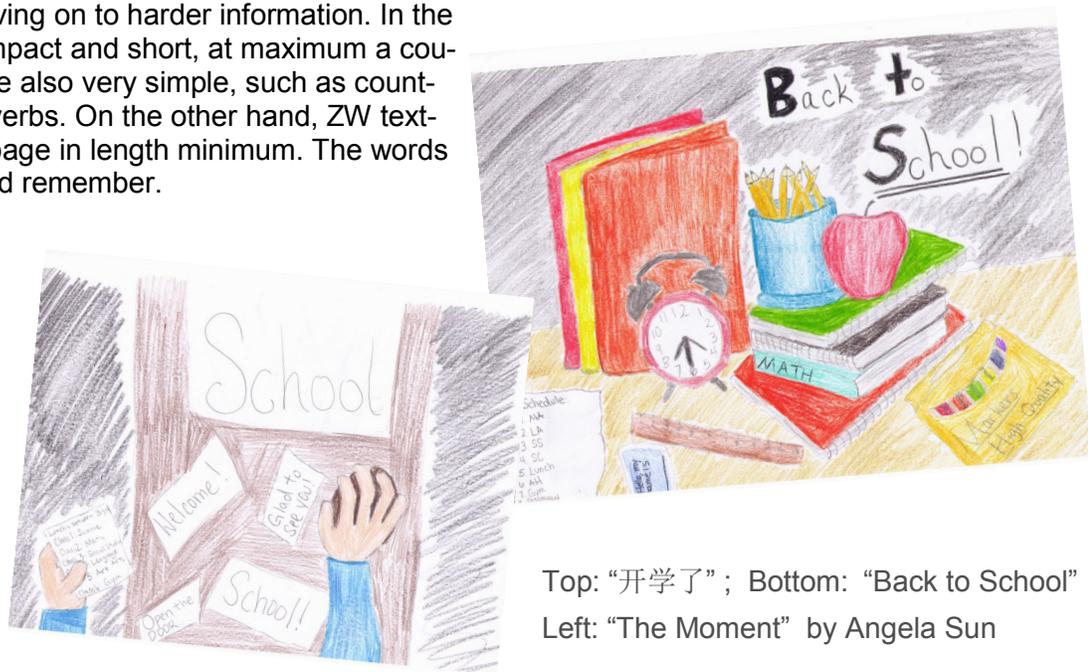
In general, the MLP series is better textbook compared to the ZW textbook. The Ma Li Ping issue trains students from a young age to read without Pinyin. Moreover, the MLP series homework is much more productive and interactive. Finally, the MLP series structure is more logical and simpler. Therefore, it would be worthwhile to trial the Ma Li Ping series.



Joke of the Month:

Q: Did you hear about the party at the Chinese zoo?

A: It was Panda-monium.



Top: “开学了” ; Bottom: “Back to School”
Left: “The Moment” by Angela Sun

PANDA by Jeffrey Shen

PANDA is a youth orchestra consisting of middle and high school students. Members of Panda attend the Lexington Chinese School and play Chinese music every Saturday. PANDA preforms at various places, including nursery homes, hospitals, and the LCS. It is a self-run organization with little adult help. The last music director of PANDA was Eric Xiong, who will be a freshman at Yale University this fall. I interviewed him on 7/29/15 about the youth orchestra.

What is PANDA?

PANDA is a student run chamber ensemble that focuses around volunteering to play for nursing homes and hospitals. We get together every Saturday during the school year to prepare for these shows.

Who can join?

For the most part, anyone can join. However, there are some requirements with the skill level of your instrument. We typically prefer if you are at least a middle school age and have somewhere around three years of experience with your instrument.

Where has PANDA preformed?

We go to the nursing homes and hospitals, but we also preform at Chinese school events such and Chinese New Year, etc.

How did PANDA start?

PANDA started when students from LCS got together and played music about ten years ago. They named it PANDA because of the cultural reference to the Chinese music they play.

What music do you play?

We play much Chinese music, including Horse Racing, Under the Silver Moonlight, Beauty of Jasmine, etc.

PANDA has been running successfully for ten years. With several members leaving for college, it needs new musicians. If you are interested in joining a group of young musicians for Chinese music and volunteering work, please contact **Angeline He (407)505-8437** for more information.



Star Student Interview: Olivia Ford

By: Angela Zhang

Every student is special. Maybe they're kind. Maybe they're a math wiz. Maybe they're a pro in sports. One student has been recognized, a student who teachers and parents think deserves to be nominated. Nine year old Olivia Ford is an amazing student, and I have written an article to prove it.

Although she is a great student at school, Olivia reports she finds learning Chinese challenging. She says, "You can not understand what the teacher is saying. It's like a game of charades for ten hours." (She meant two hours. I'm sure she knows her math.) Still, even though learning Chinese is no picnic for Olivia, she still looks forward to going there to meet friends and attend Chinese Fan Dancing before lessons and homework tutoring as an after school activity. Olivia's teacher next year for LCS is Ms. Luo, teaching the class CSL 5. Olivia has been learning Mandarin for a total of five years, three here at Lexington Chinese School. While it seems like Olivia attends Chinese School because of her mom, if given a choice, she would still attend it because of her willpower to learn and master the language.

Attending LCS is just one of the varieties of things Olivia does. Her hobby is art, specifically drawing pictures. Though she did not place in the art competition, Olivia doesn't give up and keeps on improving. Olivia is a good student and loves to read. Her favorite book series are Dead Time Stories. Her favorite subjects are art and music.

Even though learning Chinese isn't number one on Olivia's to-do list, she still has a growing interest in China. "If I could pick one place to go, it would be Shanghai," Olivia reports. She explains that she would go to Shanghai because she has relatives living there and would like to pay them a visit. She is not content in staying in Kentucky, and has the passion to explore.

Olivia is an extraordinary student, gifted in many places. Her name will not be forgotten as she continues her life. This is her first time being recognized as an amazing student, but probably not the last. (to the right is a picture of Olivia with her dog)



From the Editors:

Dear LCS students,

Welcome back to school! I hope you had a wonderful summer vacation. You may have some exciting experiences to share, and the perfect place to announce them is on our newly formed newsletter.

We are proud to announce our newly formed newsletter. Through this newsletter, we hope to develop your English and Chinese reading and writing skills, while providing an overview of news from Lexington Chinese School.

We hope many students will soon get involved with this development of the newsletter by submitting their original work, such as drawings or articles. While Chinese is preferred in your works, English is also welcome.

If you would like to submit a work or help our newsletter, please email to rebawang@hotmail.com . We would soon like to see your work in our quarterly newsletter!

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