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The Difficulties Faced by Non-Background Learners of Chinese
汉语非背景学习者面临的困难
And How to Tackle Them
如何解决

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- Studied Chinese at secondary school, University of Melbourne, Nanjing University
- Bachelor of Arts & Bachelor of Laws at University of Melbourne
- Actor and performance coach at *DramaByDesign* (2000-present)
- Graduate Diploma in Education (2005)
- Teacher of Chinese at Camberwell Grammar School (2008-present)
- Ian was to play a small part in the Marvel movie *Shang-Chi and the Legend of the Ten Rings,* but could not travel to Sydney to film it because of lockdown. 封城真麻烦！

Language Challenges
语言挑战

Listening Opportunities

Tones

Inaccuracies with Pinyin

Characters

The Initial Hurdle

Other Challenges
其他挑战

- Perception that Chinese is Too Hard
- Competition from Background Speakers
- Fear of Oral Examinations
- Interruptions
- Differentiation
- Technical Issues
- Institutional Issues
- Misinformation

Listening Opportunities 听力机会

- start with listening – conscious & subconscious

- more allowance for listening support materials
  - repeated use of listening tracks
  - tailored listening quizzes
  - songs
  - EP & Duolingo

Inaccuracies with Pinyin 拼音问题

For example:

zh/j = the same hard 'j'

四 sì、七 qī、十 shí: Each 'i' is different

学 xué = schwear

岁 suì = sway

Pronunciation Guide for Pinyin

Tones 声调

- physical connection

- exaggeration

- write them or visualise them

Characters 汉字

- ## focus on the radicals and components

  e.g 女 Female Radical
  https://youtu.be/_a_D86MioWs

- ## make a story or personal connection

  e.g. Family Member Characters
  https://youtu.be/NZZIm26Pnko

The Initial Hurdle 开始的障碍

- understanding the basics (pinyin, tones, character components) takes longer – compared to European languages which have a familiar alphabet for speakers of English

- don't feel like they are progressing

- conundrum - make it easy or get them learning?

Perception that Chinese is too hard 感觉中文太难

- tricks to simplify it
  - pinyin (modified pronunciation guide)
  - characters (focus on components & take time to make a personal connection)

- emphasise the simplicities of Chinese grammar
  - fewer conjugations of verbs
  - very few plurals (们)
  - no matching genders

Competition from Background Speakers
来自中国背景的竞争

- fear of speaking in front of them

- encourage them to use the chance to practise

- treat it as a game

- VCE Chinese Language Culture & Society

- don't have to study to VCE level to gain benefits

Fear of Oral Examinations
对口语考试的恐惧

- practice

- use it in the community

Interruptions 学习的中断

- absences, music lessons, school events etc.

- topic movies of core sentence structures & vocabulary – good for absentees and for support & extension

买东西 Shopping Movie

Differentiation 因材施教

- one of the toughest challenges

- needed for support & extension

- topic movies, self-marking quizzes, EP, are very helpful for both support & extension but take time to make and adjust

Technical Challenges 技术性挑战

- basic technical challenges, such as adding keyboards & variation in software between students

- on-line translators create an obstacle

How to Look Up Chinese Characters
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h3wz9VBA9h8

Institutional Issues 学校的问题

- emphasis on the importance of core subjects (neglect of elective subjects by weaker students)

- availability of new electives

- teacher movement

- technological change

Misinformation 错误信息

- about the markup

- the usefulness of other languages

- the usefulness of Chinese

Promoting the Learning of Chinese 促进汉语学习

- address the challenges

- make it interesting & fun - diverse learning activities: games, songs, trivia, bingo, carousel activities, Duolingo, Education Perfect etc.

- exposure to the culture

- useful for jobs – don't have to complete to VCE

- many opportunities to practise

- VCE Chinese Language Culture & Society