

nr 9

October/November 2012



CHINESE  
FOR EUROPEANS  
欧洲人学中文

www.chinese4.eu

# Bulletin

Chinese is been said to be the most spoken language in the world and China is more and more increasing its power in the economic world balance. Its political weight is becoming crucial as well, especially in sensitive issues such as about Darfur crisis or Chinese soft power strategy in Africa.

## 欧洲人学中文

Children of the present years will face a world where China will even be more present in everybody's lives, that is why the phenomenon of parents who intend to give Chinese lessons to their children is becoming common practice.



This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. The contents of this brochure reflect the views only of the Chinese for Europeans Project Partners, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.



Try to digit in Google web page “Chinese for children”, “Chinese for kids”, “mandarin for young learners” or any other possible combination which has to do with Chinese language and children learning Mandarin Chinese.

**You will discover a world:  
at least 633.000.000 hits!**



The web is full of websites, links, e-learning courses, Chinese courses in streaming and any kind of material about Chinese language.

The real question how can we be sure that that particular course is much more efficient than others, and is it a correct method? Will children learn or simply listen without understanding?

Questions are really a lot, and actually there is not a real method to evaluate the value and effectiveness of an online course, except from the users' recommendations on specific blogs and posts. In many online courses there is a page to leave personal messages about users personal experience

about the course, their own opinion about the worth of the lessons and any possible feedback. Sometimes there is a slight doubt about the 'honesty' of some posts and comments, but most of them are certainly valid. Surely, this represent a clue to considerate when choosing an online course.

Moreover, most of the – good and complete – online courses for children (but for adults as well) are not free: It is hard to create a free complete online course (a multimedia one, or using e- and micro-learning methodologies): web hosting, graphic design, creating contents, uploading material and creating the structure for the kind of methodology requested, implicate a very high budget, and if not for a sponsorship or any other kind of financial support, it is normally hard to get good results.

Luckily, Chinese4European  
**[www.chinese4.eu](http://www.chinese4.eu)**

project has not only EU endorsement, but also its financial support. This solution was the best one to create a real valuable course for children (and also for students, businessman and anyone else who intend to study Chinese) totally for free, using images, videos, games, music and sounds.

The beta version of children module was already tested on September 2012 on small groups of Italian children with different ages, as well as differences in levels.

There was a group who was already at its second year of Chinese and children module represented a good opportunity to refresh and test their level.

The outcomes were particularly satisfactory to this kind of users especially in games sections, where the cartoon of a panda or of

grandpa Wang calligrapher praised or scolded them during the exercise.

The general results demonstrated that children learn easily and reach results while having fun and without too much pressure about getting outcomes. The realization of scenarios with cartoons and images of characters close to their reality allows the users to feel very close to the lessons and dialogues. Identification is therefore a correct way to impress users and involve more deeply in the course: this remark is valid especially for children who have much more mental flexibility respect to adults.

According to the test on the very beginners group, the first lesson was tested entirely and the general outcomes, in only one hour lesson, were anyway relevant, considering that the target was purely beginner. After their first hour lesson the students were able to say hallo and goodbye – even if with problems in pronunciation of tones: that is indeed pardonable for young children at their very first lesson of mandarin Chinese, considering also that tones are one of the biggest problems for Europeans.

The results were tested through the exercises that held good achievements with not so many mistakes, while it was difficult to use, at a very first glance, grandpa Wang calligraphy workshop: once children understood that it was necessary to fill in the inkpots of the given *hanzi*, the exercise was completed smoothly.

Yin Yang game as well was quite difficult as it requires different skills (memorizing words and dialogues contents) but thanks to the support of the teacher it was possible to reach a satisfying result.

Generally speaking, the outcomes for this kind of target are positive as the lesson was

presented by a teacher who introduced Chinese language and allowed the users to exploit all the parts of lesson 1.

Chinese4Europeans is a nice method to approach Chinese language and culture in a funny way and achieving gradually good results, stimulating the target to continue in studying Chinese.

The problem of going on with the study of Mandarin Chinese for this kind of target (children) after the enthusiasm of the first lessons has also to be taken into consideration when choosing your online Chinese course.

Children do not need to be exposed totally to games, sounds and images, but don't forget your didactical goals and expected outcomes, otherwise the course represents only a pure pastime.

Therefore it is fundamental to remember that children are learning a new language and the didactical goals have not to be forgotten. That is why it would be better to stitch to the program the teacher intend to follow in his/her classes or to check the program before beginning your course.

To sum up, an ideal online Chinese course for children need to have scenarios close to the target's everyday life to recreate a very personal involvement and optimize the memorization of words and structures. Of course, the didactical structure has to be coherent to A0 level allowing the user to study basic and simple words he can use in his/her everyday situation.

Actually, experiencing personally the achievements of language learning in everyday life and than enjoy the fruits of one's own labours, is stimulating for going on with lessons, and try to learn even more words, structures, sentences and grammatical concepts.

Moreover and ideal good Chinese on line course should have nice images and sounds to impress the users and should also have a part dedicated to exercise to check the real knowledge and comprehension of new vocabulary, grammar and contents.

Also a part dedicated to culture would be welcome: sometimes some explanations about habits and manner, behavior, common situations can be helpful to approach such a different world.

Moreover, a blog page where you can post your doubts, impressions and maybe exchange opinions about China is a valuable plus.

*Last but not least, if it is also for free,  
it would be even better!*



## PARTNERS



### Mescomp Technologies SA

Aleje Jerozolimskie 47  
00-697 Warszawa  
Poland  
[www.tech.mescomp.pl](http://www.tech.mescomp.pl)



### University of Antwerp Management School

Sint-Jacobsmarkt 9-13  
2000 Antwerp  
Belgium  
[www.uams.be](http://www.uams.be)



### International Certificate Conference e.V.

Berner Heerweg 183  
22159 Hamburg  
Germany  
[www.icc-languages.eu](http://www.icc-languages.eu)



### Fondazione Italia Cina

Palazzo Clerici – Via Clerici 5  
20121 MILANO  
Italy  
[www.italychina.org](http://www.italychina.org)



**Soros International House**  
A MEMBER OF INTERNATIONAL HOUSE WORLD ORGANISATION

### Soros International House

Konstitucijos ave 23A  
08105 Vilnius  
Lithuania  
[www.sih.lt](http://www.sih.lt)



### EduActive

Pileckiego 104/149  
02-781 Warsaw  
Poland  
[www.eduactive.pl](http://www.eduactive.pl)