田茂生

1) Back-breaking hard work
2) More back-breaking hard work, and then some.
3) Work hard in making each character so idiosyncratic to your eyes that you won’t confuse it with anything else. This requires proper work.
4) You have to work otherwise you will NOT succeed. No exceptions.

杜安彬

1) Working through the textbooks (the vocabulary practice pages especially)
2) Learn to connect the meaning and the pinyin, practice writing the character, then learn to write the character from the pinyin. I make a mistake, cover it up and try again. Keep doing it again and again until I remember.
3) It takes a while to get used to how different the language is to English and for me learning the vocabulary was the most difficult part, but if you practice learning the characters a lot, the method becomes a second nature. It gets easier the more you work at it.
1. I felt that the weekly vocabulary tests helped me the most with the course. They reminded me of the sheer amount of vocabulary we had to learn for our GCSE and the importance to break it into little pieces and to revise regularly (it would have been silly to cram loads of Mandarin revision in the final weeks). The regular reading practice was also great to work on pronunciation. The NetRoom meetings we did once a week with you in preparation for our speaking exam were brilliant, and really raised my confidence for what I thought would be a very scary exam. I found the writing homeworks that we wrote in our exercise books more useful than the ones on Edublogs, as on the computer it was very easy to use an online dictionary and it was good to get used to writing characters on paper in preparation for the writing exam. What was great about Edublogs, though, was that our tasks could be marked the next day.

2. The way I learnt new characters was through lots of repetition and writing, and by making visual stories of them in my head like Mikey explained that time. Those thick sheets of character repetition that we used in our first year were brilliant for that, but I understand if it would be hard to use those regularly as the amount of paper must be so expensive.

3. I would encourage your new students to revise in small doses weekly, as because there is so much vocab it would be impossible to cram it in a short space of time. I would also encourage them to use the workbook lots and be brave enough to try new sentence patterns and styles to improve their confidence for the writing exam.
Writing Task

A pop star visited the school and spoke about his/her life and career. Write a letter to your Chinese-speaking friend about the visit.

You should mention:
• the pop star’s looks and personal details, including his/her family
• his/her school years
• his/her career
• his/her interests (music, favourite TV programmes, films etc.)
• your opinion of the pop star
• the pop star’s future plans
• whether you will go to his/her next concert and why/why not.

Due date: posted by 24 Sep 2010