

Honestly, I had never dreamed that one day I would be speaking English. Back in my home country, Taiwan, English class was mandatory since 7th grade. Let's just say it was definitely not my favorite subject. They would teach grammar, verb tenses, determiners, vocabularies, and many other things that I simply couldn't understand or didn't care about. By the time I graduated from college, I was not even able to conduct basic conversations in English. I vividly remember when I first came to the states in 2000, I could only point at the picture on the menu to order lunch at McDonald's.

Things have gone (a little) better, luckily, over the years with my English. I've had the privilege to work with young children (grades K-6) and teach Mandarin as a 2nd language. What I have found is that the process of teaching has also helped me refine my own language learning. Moreover, I take great satisfaction in introducing the language that is the most widely-spoken language in the world by billions of people, as well as the cultural aspect. I believe that studying foreign language creates more positive attitudes and less prejudice toward people who are different, which enables kids to gain a more profound understanding of their own culture. It also opens their views of the world, liberates their experiences, and leads to an appreciation of cultural diversity.

Is learning Mandarin difficult and boring? Simply ask the kids in my classes and you may get surprising answers. When you take learning away from blackboards and copybooks, into dances, games, activities, competitions, and interesting assignments, kids are more likely to participate simply because it's more fun.

As Mandela once said "If you talk to a man in a language he understands, that goes to his head; if you talk to him in his own language, that goes to his heart". Try to compliment the food in Mandarin at your favorite Chinese restaurant and see what happens!

Socioeconomic status is one of the key factors to determine the academic performance of the students. Less household wealth often translates into fewer educational resources, such as books, games and interactive learning materials in the home. In addition to a lack of resources, students from low Socioeconomic status often have distracting factors that affect their ability to focus on school, such as hunger, neighborhood violence, and additional home responsibilities. From the beginning, parents of higher socio-economic status are more likely to provide their children with the financial support and home resources for individual learning.

because middle-class families have a higher disposable income than working-class families. The academic performance and learning outcomes also determine the career opportunities available to the students in the future.