

Mandarin Curriculum
Arcadia High School

Chinese Writing:
Simplified vs. Traditional

Summary of Parent Concerns
and Suggestions to Address
those Concerns

Chinese Parent Booster
Meeting
April 29, 2009

Question #1 – Interests and Concerns:

- Mandarin is not its own language, only Chinese.
- All new curriculum textbooks contain both; students are taught both. ☆
- New updated curriculum should include software.
- As a tool most people use Simplified, so curriculum should include both.
- UN uses Simplified. ☆☆☆
- Language is also an art form, but should also be able to read Simplified.
☆☆☆☆
- Let's look at the future language usage. ☆☆☆☆
- Kids should have equal opportunity to choose. ☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆
- We should open both. ☆☆
- With computer and textbook this is easily solved by teaching both side-by-side.
- All students (not just Chinese) should have opportunity to learn the language. ☆
- More important than either is teacher and text ability to teach both.
- If learn Traditional, can automatically know Simplified - easy to transfer.
- Simplified is easy to learn.
- Simplified contains 1000 of 3000 Chinese words.
- When students use Simplified character, please do not mark it wrong! It costs nothing since you have good teachers or not?

Question #2 – How Can AHS Address Concerns

- Offer both as separate courses
- Using technology, teach both side-by-side. ☆
- Offer both at enrollment and see how many students request Simplified vs. Traditional; then reallocate resources to meet demand. ☆☆☆
- Ask teachers to accept answers written in Simplified as correct. ☆☆☆
- First year: root words. Second year: Traditional. Third year: Simplified.
☆
- If students come knowing Traditional, they should be able to take Simplified.
- Teach Simplified only. ☆

Question #1 – Interests and Concerns:

- Make sure my child can communicate with 97% of Chinese community with Simplified. ☆☆☆☆☆
- Simplified is easier to learn. ☆☆☆☆☆
- Pronunciation symbols for Simplified Chinese are Latin-based (alphabet). ☆
- Teaching writing in Traditional speaking in Simplified.
- Would like both. Options to choose. ☆☆
- Would prefer Simplified. ☆☆☆☆☆
- Most other high schools offer Simplified. AHS is exception. ☆☆
- Students not Chinese will find Simplified easier to learn. ☆☆☆☆☆
- Simplified is easier to type using a computer. ☆☆☆
- United Nations uses Simplified (40 years almost). ☆☆☆
- Make immediate step to stop marking Simplified Chinese as wrong answer in current curriculum!!!! ☆☆☆☆☆
- Accept both writing Simplified and Traditional with Pin Yin.

Question #2 – How Can AHS Address Concerns

- Adopt Simplified sooner the better. Otherwise students in 10th grade will not benefit. ☆☆☆☆☆
- Even if we cannot fully adopt, partial will do, early on (Level 1). ☆☆
- Consider revising the curriculum to Simplified in 2011. ☆☆☆☆
- Teach Simplified in Mandarin I, II, III. ☆☆☆
- Parents willing to pay for Simplified textbooks. ☆☆☆☆

Question #1 – Interests and Concerns:

- There is no option to learn Simplified Chinese at AHS. ☆☆☆☆☆☆☆
- Children with background in Simplified are at disadvantage. ☆☆☆☆☆
- We want our students to know Simplified because we want them to be able to communicate with people in China. This is both economic and personal interest. Future opportunities expand. ☆☆☆☆☆
- Parents with knowledge of Simplified want to support their children as they learn the language to mastery. ☆☆☆☆☆
- Simplified really is easier to learn. ☆☆☆☆☆
- Other students may be more willing to learn Simplified, which will benefit them and future relationship and opportunities. ☆☆☆☆☆
- Students who have been taught Simplified get frustrated or discouraged because their knowledge is considered wrong. ☆☆☆☆☆
- AHS graduates will be at a disadvantage to compete in a world/global economy. Re: China is very important factor. ☆☆☆☆☆

Question #2 – How Can AHS Address Concerns

- Add Simplified to curriculum. ☆☆☆☆☆☆☆
- Partner with other schools to offer. ☆☆☆
- Pilot Simplified to determine interest/support for this instruction. ☆☆☆
- Both Simplified and Traditional can co-exist if funding is available. ☆☆☆
- Students who use Simplified should not be marked wrong. ☆☆☆☆☆☆☆
- We really want this change now, not to wait to 2011.
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- A teacher who knows Traditional should be able to easily master Simplified. ☆☆☆☆☆☆☆
- Could supplementary materials address need to support instruction? ☆☆☆
- Identify the biggest obstacle to transitioning/offering Simplified? Can parents/club help? ☆☆☆
- What is the biggest obstacle to adopting Simplified now??
- Were any surveys or other data gathered when switch was made?

Question #1 – Interests and Concerns:

- Mother from mainland China learned Simplified – unable to help student with homework. Point: UN currently uses Simplified – would like teacher to accept both written formats. ☆
- Daughter learned Simplified from childhood. In order to be successful in AP, must take Traditional. ☆☆
- Would like HS to teach both Traditional and Simplified. ☆
- Market place change – would like school to teach both. ☆☆☆
- Simplified easier to learn. ☆☆☆☆
- Accept Simplified as same as Traditional. ☆☆☆☆
- Would like to keep Traditional too (meaning, culture education, foreign students).
- Equal opportunity for those who already know Simplified. ☆☆
- Accept both Simplified and Traditional. ☆☆☆☆☆

Question #2 – How Can AHS Address Concerns

- Accept both written work Traditional and Simplified. ☆☆☆
- Offer both Traditional and Simplified as (separate) class. ☆☆☆☆☆☆
- Opportunity to choose. ☆☆
- Survey students. ☆

Question #1 – Interests and Concerns:

- Continuity, consistency based on the previous learning experience. ☆☆
- Provide choices (multiple). ☆☆☆
- Increase career opportunity with multiple choices, i.e. overseas business joint venture. ☆☆☆☆
- Have the program meet the needs for the students. ☆☆☆
- Equal opportunity for all. ☆☆☆☆☆☆☆

Question #2 – How Can AHS Address Concerns

- Address through survey of both students/parents/community.
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- Address through fund-raising for insufficient fund or difficult economic time. ☆☆☆☆☆
- Address through teacher's experience/qualification, proper training in both; ideally could teach both. ☆☆☆☆☆
- Providing materials for teachers' reference. ☆☆☆

Question #1 – Interests and Concerns:

- (No separate sheet for this table)

Question #2 – How Can AHS Address Concerns

- Offer choices of both forms for students. ☆☆☆☆☆
- Conduct survey from all students, including non-Chinese students. The survey should be certifiable. ☆☆☆
- Year 2011 is too late for the changes. The budget can come from other sources. Chinese booster club raise money for school every year. ☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆
- Politics should not play a role in the decision-making process. ☆☆☆
- In the history of AHS Chinese teaching, 1998-1999 should add Traditional, not replace Simplified. ☆
- Add Simplified form right away. ☆☆☆☆
- Please have school Board speed up the process to accept both forms. We are not asking to change. We are asking to accept Simplified as option as correct answer. Instead of making them wrong, it should not cost anything. It shouldn't wait till 2011.

- Question #1 – Interests and Concerns:
- Teaching Chinese in high school is fine, just like we teach kids French, German, etc.

Question #2 – How Can AHS Address Concerns

- Teaching Chinese should be in Simplified Chinese format. The Traditional writing is owned only by people in Hong Kong and Taiwan and it is dying. Why teach our kids a writing format that is outdated?
- The kids should be taught to input Chinese via Pin Yin. Currently they are teaching a phonetic system that has been a proven failure since 1911. This phonetic system is more complicated than the Chinese language itself. Why waste our time? Pin Yin is gaining popularity and is relatively easy to learn. We don't need any special keyboard. The kids only have to remember 100 or so unique English alphabet combinations and they should be able to type most Chinese documents.
- Don't make the teaching Chinese such a big deal in public high schools. Heaven forbid if these parents will push to have other classes taught in Chinese. Kids should be encouraged to talk in English in public.

Question #1 – Interests and Concerns:

- Simplified Chinese characters are the most popular written version of Chinese in the world.
 - More than 97% of the Chinese-speaking population uses Simplified Chinese characters (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Simplified_Chinese_characters).
 - Areas (population) using Simplified Chinese: Mainland China (1.3 billion) since 1956; Singapore 4.4 million) since 1969; Malaysia (26.6 million) since 1981.
 - Areas (population) using Traditional Chinese: Taiwan (22 million); Hong Kong 7 million); Macau (0.5 million).
 - 97% is a real world market which our world language program has no reason to ignore.
- Simplified Chinese characters are much easier to learn.
 - More and more scholars believe that studying Simplified Chinese is the best way to begin learning the language.
 - Given the rigorous curriculum and time restraints in high school, students are easily discouraged if they start with a complicated version of the language.
 - See the following examples:
 - English: “Chinese Parents Booster Club Forum.”
 - Traditional Chinese: 75 strikes.
 - Simplified Chinese: 42 strikes.
 - Strikes (time) saving by using the Simplified: $(75 \text{ strikes} - 42 \text{ strikes}) / 75 \text{ strikes} = 44\%$.
 - From the examples above, we did not find any clue to the conclusion that transferring the reading skills of Simplified Chinese into that of Traditional Chinese will be more difficult than the transferring in reverse.
- Simplified Chinese characters have been world-wide recognized as a standard or official written version of Chinese.
 - United Nations used to use both Traditional and Simplified Chinese characters, but since 2008 only the Simplified Chinese characters have been officially recognized and used by this world organization (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Simplified_Chinese_characters).
 - The largest Mandarin Chinese program in North America, at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, switched to Simplified characters at least a decade ago.

- In places where a particular set is not locally entrenched, e.g., Europe and the United States, instruction is in or is swinging towards Simplified characters as the economic importance of mainland China increases.
- In the United Kingdom, universities mainly teach Simplified characters at undergraduate level. However, they will require the students to learn and be able to recognize the Traditional forms the last year of the course.
- In Australia and New Zealand, schools and universities use predominantly Simplified characters.
- Russia and most East European nations use Simplified characters but expose the learners to both systems.
- In South Korea, universities have used predominantly Simplified characters in 1990's. In high school, Simplified characters have been used to pupils who enter the school in 1996 or later.
- In Japan, Simplified Chinese is taught instead of Traditional Chinese in pro-mainland China schools. However, the Taiwan-oriented schools are starting to teach Simplified Chinese to offer a more well-rounded education.
- In United States:
 - In SAT II Chinese test, Simplified Chinese characters have been one of the written version options.
 - UCLA has started teaching Simplified Chinese since 15 years ago.
 - Most Chinese-teaching high schools on the east coast offer both Simplified and Traditional Chinese courses, and some even only teach Simplified Chinese.
 - Several neighbor city high schools (Temple City High, South Pasadena High, San Gabriel High and Diamond Bar High, etc.) teach both Traditional and Simplified Chinese.
 - Many after-school programs in Arcadia offer Simplified Chinese course.

Question #2 – How Can AHS Address Concerns

- Simplified Chinese has come to dominate the written form of the language nearly all over the world. For the best long-term interests of our children, we should make right decision to adjust the current curriculum of AHS and let the students have the choice to learn the Simplified Chinese.