



孔子学院

CONFUCIUS INSTITUTE
AT ALFRED UNIVERSITY

MARCH-APRIL 2017

Gates-Chili School District

March 6th was the last day for the after-school Mandarin Club led by CIAU faculty Juan (Rita) Xu at Neil Armstrong Elementary School. Twelve students from 2nd and 3rd grades joined this club. They learned about the culture of China and did some traditional Chinese activities such as singing songs, kicking shuttlecocks, making lanterns, modeling with dough, doing ornamental paper cutting, and making other Chinese crafts.



Ms. Xu and Mandarin Club members

On March 21st, Ms. Xu started another Mandarin club at Walt Disney Elementary School. The children came to the club every Tuesday and Thursday. Mrs. Xu taught them some Chinese words and

phrases, and also introduced some interesting Chinese culture. The children were eager to learn. One girl told Mrs. Xu she loves learning Chinese.



Students doing paper-cutting

Northstar Christian Academy

In March and April at Northstar Christian Academy in the Rochester School District, Ms. Wu and Ms. Chen offered effective Chinese learning activities.

Ms. Wu was responsible for the high school and middle school classes. She covered two topics, school life and shopping. Through the study of these two

topics, students learned the names of different courses, the names of school sports, and some sentence patterns, such as “What classes do you have today?” “How much homework do you have today?” or “We don't play football.” Students also learned Chinese phrases used while shopping, for example, “How much is the apple?” or “I want a chicken; how much is it?”

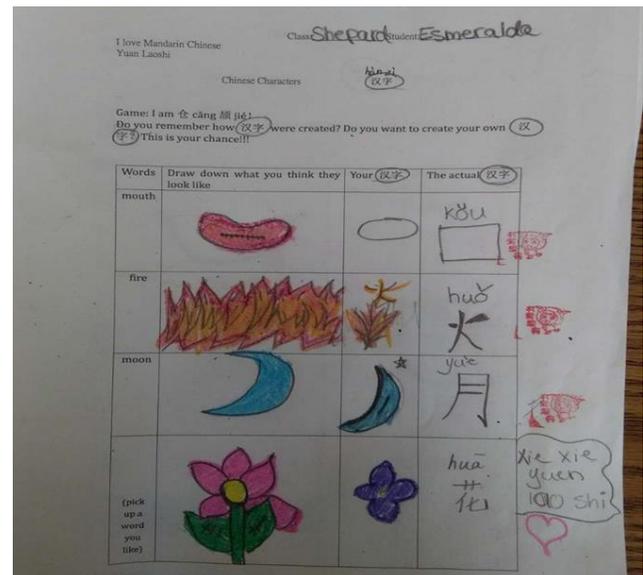
Ms. Chen was responsible for the primary school, where students learned about parts of the body and orientation. The body parts included head, shoulders, knees, toes, nose, arms, hands, and fingers. The children could use the question and answer pattern: “What is this?” “This is the (body part).” Orientation words included up, down, left, right, middle, before, and behind. They were used in sentence patterns such as “Where is the table?” “The table is on the left.” Ms. Chen composed some children’s songs with these new words. The children liked the songs and learned them quickly.



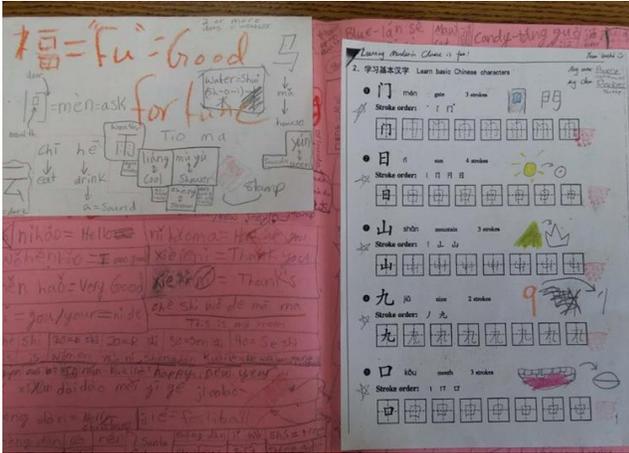
Ms. Wu help student’s reading

Geneva North Street School District

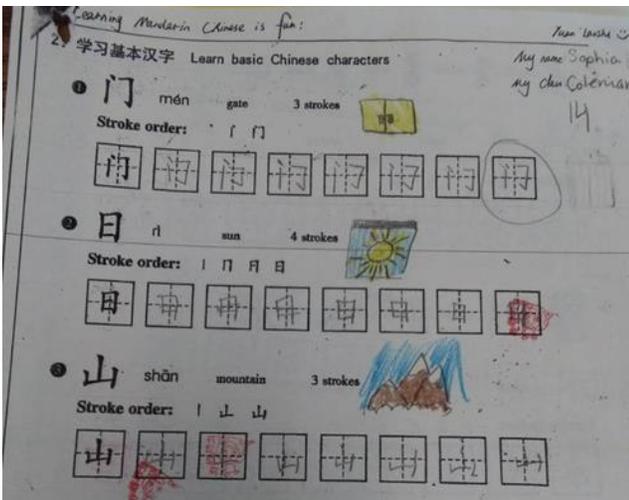
Ms. Yuan helped students at Geneva North Street School to appreciate the glamour of Chinese culture and writing by introducing the origin and development of the written characters. Students imagined that they were the ancestors from ancient China and designed Chinese characters with pictures by themselves. They told Ms. Yuan that they were thrilled to write with Chinese characters. Also, Ms. Yuan was glad to introduce the culture regarding Chinese food to all the students at North Street School. The children were excited to express all the food items of their breakfast in Mandarin Chinese and to learn more about the differences between the foods of China and America. They felt curious about words borrowed from English used in Mandarin Chinese, which was a fun discovery in learning Mandarin.



Students’ work in designing Chinese characters



Students' work in designing Chinese characters



Students' work in designing Chinese characters

With more students taking Mandarin classes, all the teachers from the Confucius Institute of Alfred University donated books about Chinese culture to the Geneva Public Library in order to give parents in the community more opportunities to learn about China. Wendy Freier, the Library Assistant for Collections, said, "Thanks so much for all your efforts to provide a more convenient platform to all our citizens in our community to know more about Chinese culture."



Book donation with Wendy Freier at Geneva Public Library

Geneva West Street School District

After the cold winter, West Street School began to meet the spring. Ms. Zhu taught about a variety of small animals and helped her students to make handmade rabbits for Easter.



Ms. Zhu with her student

First grade student Victoria Madera likes Chinese class very much; she is diligent and good at thinking, and she made her own hand-made Chinese kite and paper firecrackers, which incorporated her knowledge of Chinese culture. She painted "China" on her firecrackers and drew her own zodiac tiger on her kite.



Hand-made fire crackers by students



Hand-made kite by a student

On April 12th, Teacher Zhu and Victoria Madera were interviewed by Heather Swanson, who works as Public Relations Officer for the Geneva City School District Office. She wrote the news and a post for *The Geneva City School District Newsletter* in May.

North Syracuse Central School District

In March and April, students at Gillette Road and Roxboro Road Middle Schools learned *Happy Birthday*, *Family Members* and *Time* during their language classes. The CIAU teachers went to students' social studies classes and introduced to them the Qin Dynasty, which was popular among students. Also, three Chinese activities were successfully held in Syracuse schools and the community college.

On March 16th, invited by Ms. Wheeler, the ESL teacher, Emma Wang told the story of *Brown Bear, Brown Bear* in Chinese at the Allen Road Elementary School Literacy Night. Students and parents were thrilled to feel the charisma of another language from around the world.



Story-telling at Allen Road Elementary School

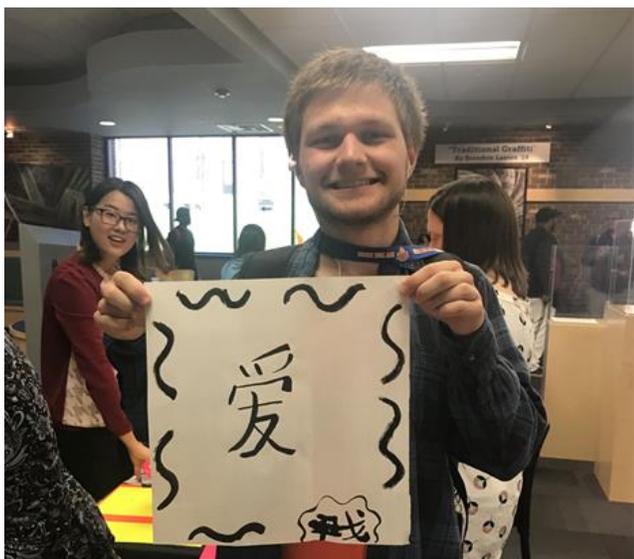
On March 28th, Lucy Zhang and Emma Wang went to Smith Road Elementary School and taught Grade 1 students about the Chinese New Year, the twelve-year zodiac cycle, and greeting words. All the

students did a great job in learning. At the end of the lesson, students were deeply involved in making bookmarks with their own zodiac animal.



Students' bookmarks with their own zodiac animal

On April 26th, Onondaga Community College held an Asian Celebration Event. Lucy Zhang taught students calligraphy. For most college students, it was their first time to write Chinese characters with ink and brush. They wrote “爱” and “福”, which mean love and blessing. Some college students learned to write their Chinese names!



Calligraphy with “Love”

At the same time, Beverly He helped students make paper lanterns. Besides students, several teachers even took part in the activity. They made wonderful handcrafts!

Thy A. Bui, the Associate Professor in charge of the event, spoke highly of the Chinese activities.



Lantern making on the way

Pine Plains Central School District

Professor Huang and Daisy Wu visited Pine Plains Central School District on April 26 and held a meeting with the superintendent, Dr. Handler. Dr. Handler expressed great appreciation to the Confucius Institute at Alfred University and hopes to expand cooperation in organizing a summer camp for American students in China and offering the Chinese Proficiency Test (HSK) in Pine Plains. The Pine Plains Central School District is the first school district to offer a Mandarin program in Dutchess County.

AU Professors from the Division of Performing Arts visit China

On March 6th, AU Prof. of Theatre Steve Crosby and Prof. of Voice and Chorus Luanne Crosby traveled to the China University of Geosciences (CUG) in Wuhan for a one-month teaching exchange visit.



Prof. Luanne Crosby with a chorus



Prof. Steve Crosby introduced the skills of dramatic performance

Yuhui Gui, Director of CUG Arts and Media Division, gave the AU professors a warm welcome and set up their schedules. During their visit, Prof. Luanne Crosby gave students a series of lectures on chorus and vocalization practice, while Prof. Steve Crosby taught on drama performance. They also shared with

teachers of the CUG Arts and Media Division. Their professional insights and knowledge impressed both the teachers and the students.



Professor Crosby exchanged opinions with CUG teachers

The First AU “Confucius Institute Cup” Ping-Pong Tournament

On April 1st, the First AU “Confucius Institute Cup” Ping-Pong Tournament was held by CIAU in the Joyce and Walton Family Center for Health and Wellness. More than forty people participated in this event and together enjoyed pizza, drinks, friendly but energetic competition, and making new friends.



Women's Singles Competition



Men's Singles Competition

The “best of three games” system was adopted for the singles event, with each game played to 11 points for both the Men's Group and the Women's Group.



AU Provost Rick Stephens with the winners

After several rounds of competition, Xiaomin Li, Jacob Nordin and Madison Maley of the Men's Group and Sola Prince, Jiaofeng Yang and Theresa Brown of the Women's Group won the first, second, and third prizes, respectively. AU Provost Rick Stephens awarded the winners with the specially-designed trophies and congratulated them.

“Learning Chinese through Song” Workshop

On April 3rd, a workshop on “Learning Chinese through Song” was held at AU's Powell Campus Center by CIAU. Prof. Hong Zhang from Binghamton University was invited as the guest speaker.



Participants learning vocal techniques

This workshop introduced the groundbreaking approach of teaching Chinese through song. Ms. Zhang covered the why of singing as well as the how, noting that singing makes a person a better communicator, more confident, poised, and attractive. Participants, including AU students from Chinese language classes and local residents, went through a step-by-step learning progression to grasp the basics of vocal techniques, including posture, breathing, voice projection, and singing expression.



Participants singing Chinese songs

Under the guidance of Prof. Hong Zhang, they sang popular Chinese songs together and even danced. Through singing, they learned how to improve their Chinese pronunciation, diction and language expression.



Professor Hong Zhang with participants

Professor Hong Zhang is a faculty member of the Department of Asian and Asian-American Studies and the Department of Music at Binghamton University. She holds a Master of Music in Voice Performance. She has given concerts, lectures, and workshops at dozens of universities nationwide and internationally.

“Sound of China” in Buffalo

Daisy Wu, Associate Director of the Confucius Institute at Alfred University (CIAU), was invited to give a musical program entitled “Sound of China” for the Twentieth Century Club in Buffalo.



Daisy Wu played the guzheng (Chinese zither)

Over 100 club members attended this lecture on April 5. Along with performing on the traditional Chinese musical instrument, guzheng, Daisy Wu elaborated on the history and development of Chinese music, which was well-received by the audience.

Jean M. Jain, head of the Music Committee of the Twentieth Century Club, praised Wu’s performance and presentation as “very informative and educational about this unique instrument and its history.” “This was a unique opportunity for all of us to learn more about the music and culture of China,” she wrote in her letter of thanks to Ms. Wu.

Tea Party at Powell Campus Center

On April 11th, CIAU faculty was invited by the Asians in America Association at Alfred University to give a lecture on Chinese tea at the Powell Campus Center.



Tea party at Powell Campus Center

CIAU faculty member Yonghuan Zong introduced the history of Chinese tea and the basics of brewing tea. She demonstrated making some famous Chinese teas like green tea, black tea and dark tea, and invited all the participants to have a taste.

All who attended were interested in the benefits of Chinese tea, and they took home a sample of their preferred kind of tea after the tea party.

2017 Tai Chi and Health Week in Alfred

To introduce the Chinese Duanwei ranking system to martial arts practitioners in the United States, with support from the Confucius Institute at Alfred University, Confucius Institute Headquarters (Hanban) in Beijing, and the Chinese Wushu Association, the First

International Wushu Duanwei Ranking Evaluation took place during the Chinese Tai Chi and Health Week from April 12 to 14.



Fist-wrapping salute

A special delegation from the Chinese Wushu Association also attended this year's Tai Chi and Health Week event and provided the overseas clinics and evaluations for Duanwei ranking.



Practicing Chen-Style Tai Chi

They introduced the clinics, evaluation, and certificates which are available for Chinese Wushu lovers. This opportunity is open to people of all ages and with all levels of Chinese martial arts proficiency.



Wushu Duanwei Ranking Evaluation

Over twenty CIAU Tai Chi group members participated in the Wushu Duanwei Ranking Evaluation and the workshop training for it. For their diligence and years of practicing, almost everyone passed the test and acquired the first level of Wushu Duanwei.

“Melody of the Spring” in Webutuck

On April 21st, CIAU faculty visited Webutuck School District and brought a traditional music and Tai Chi performance entitled, “Melody of the Spring”.



Erhu performance by Chenchen Lin

Over two hundred students and teachers attended this event. The beautiful guzheng and erhu music won prolonged applause from the audience.

HSK Test Held at AU

On April 22, the HSK Chinese Language Proficiency Test was offered at AU’s Perlman Hall, home of the Division of Modern Languages. Ten students from Chinese language classes participated in this test.



The HSK is an international standardized test of Chinese language proficiency which assesses non-native Chinese speakers’ abilities in using the Chinese language in their daily, academic and professional lives.

Dumpling Making at Chinese Corner

On April 28, CIAU held a dumpling-making activity for Chinese Corner at the Confucius House. This attracted many students to participant and experience Chinese culture.



Students making dough for dumplings

The activity started with the introduction of some Chinese cultural knowledge, and then the CIAU faculty demonstrated the six steps of the whole process, including making the dough, making fillings, forming wrappers, wrapping the dumplings, cooking the dumplings, and serving the dumplings.



Tasting dumplings with chopsticks

After the event, all the participants tasted their hand-made dumplings with chopsticks.

Learn Chinese Word and Know Its Culture:

Mahjong also spelled **majiang** (麻将: **Májiàng**), is a card-based game that originated in China. It is commonly played by four players. Similar to the Western card game rummy, Mahjong is a game of skill, strategy, and calculation and involves a degree of chance. In Chinese, the game was originally called **麻雀 (Máquè)**—meaning sparrow.



Chinese Mahjong

Many people identify mahjong with Chinese culture, because the game replicates and honors some of China's traditional cultural ideals.

Confucian Ideals

Confucius was one of the most famous Chinese philosophers, and his principles formed the foundation for much of traditional Chinese culture. Some Chinese mythology states that Confucius himself invented the game of mahjong, although it more likely originated in the 19th century.

However, mahjong does reflect several Confucian influences, such as the

frequent appearance of sparrows in the tile designs (Confucius loved birds – the name mahjong in Chinese can also mean “sparrow”) and some of the other tile designs also are based on Confucian ideas. For example, the Dragon tiles represent the Confucian values of benevolence, sincerity and filial piety.

Harmony

One of the Chinese cultural ideals is **harmony** (和谐: Héxié) – for many centuries, China was ruled by Emperors who were viewed as uniting the nation and creating harmony, order and balance in the world. Part of the harmony of the game of mahjong is in its symmetry – 144 tiles that can be matched in pairs in an orderly fashion.

Aesthetics

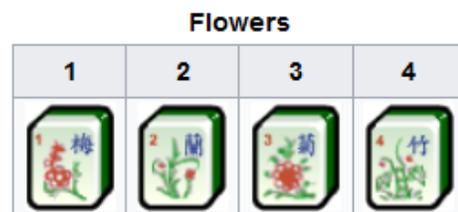
Traditional Chinese culture had its own unique sense of aesthetic values, such as beautiful paintings of natural landscapes, poetry, sculptures and calligraphy. Part of the fun of playing mahjong is enjoying the beautiful Chinese characters embedded on each of the mahjong tiles.



Honors tiles

The mahjong tiles offer a variety of meanings, showing respect for nature: the four winds – **East** (东: Dōng), **South** (南: Nán), **West** (西: Xī) and **North** (北: Běi), and the seasons: **spring** (春: Chūn), **summer** (夏: Xià), **fall** (秋: Qiū) and **winter** (冬: Dōng).

Mahjong tiles also tend to have a lot of red color on them – for example, the number tiles all have a red character beneath the number; the color red is significant in Chinese culture because red is thought to be a sign of good luck. In addition to red, the colors of green, white and black are also prominent on mahjong tiles – these are part of the five elemental colors that were used in traditional Chinese artwork and in representations of the natural world.



Bonus tiles

Prosperity

Three of the suits in mahjong are related to money – the circles, bamboos, and number suits all have their origin in Chinese currency and counting of money.

So it's no surprise that a game of luck and skill like mahjong (which is also often used for gambling) would have close ties to traditional Chinese symbols of wealth and prosperity.

		Numbers								
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Simples	Dots									
	Bamboo									
	Characters									

Simples tiles

The circle suits are meant to illustrate circular coins, and the bamboo suits are a symbol of traditional rope strings that were used to tie 100 Chinese copper coins together – traditional Chinese coins had holes in the center that made them easier to bundle together.

Even if you don't know how to speak Chinese or read all of the Chinese characters, playing mahjong and understanding the meanings behind the tiles can be a good way to learn more about China's unique and fascinating cultural history.

(Reference:

[1] <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahjong>

[2] <http://www.mahjong.com/what-can-mahjong-teach-us-about-chinese-culture/>)

Upcoming Events

July 14th: MostArts Festival, Holmes Auditorium, Harder Hall, 12 Noon, Friday. Guzheng Fantasy: *The Eternal Sorrow of Lin' An* presented by Daisey Wu

July 24 – 27: Summer Camp at Geneva City School District

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