

# Attitudes To Learning : Chinese

## 3-LEVEL GUIDE | A

### Da Hal

*(This description is based on traditional attitudes and is very much ageneralisation. It should not be taken as true for all students.)*

For many students of Chinese background it is natural to begin to learn to read at the age of 4. Most students will have basic understanding of characters in Chinese before they come to school. In Chinese communities reading and writing have a very high value. Literacy is the key to success at school and in life. The status of the family depends on what individual children achieve. Individual talents and abilities are important more for what they mean for the family.

The main function of reading is to gain information. The reading of newspapers is extremely high in the Chinese community. Children are expected to study for long hours. The main purpose of reading is study. Traditionally, reading stories is okay but is seen often as a waste of precious time or something only for young children. Handwriting is very important because of the Chinese tradition of calligraphy. Someone **'writes'** well if they have a beautiful script. The look of the work is a key factor. The notion of **'creativity'** is very Western. In traditional learning, students should show respect for the masters and learn their work.

The most normal way for study is first to get the information individually from a text or from a teacher. Both written text and teachers have a very high status - they must not be questioned, until perhaps all the materials has been learned. Teachers are placed at the top of the respect hierarchy: to question for understanding or to give an opinion is the height of disrespect. Students often study in groups after class. They will talk over work as this helps memorisation.

Texts have a high status and learning and repeating a text is a mark of respect. For an assignment you would normally repeat what the teacher said and wrote or what the book (singular) from which you got your notes, said. Success in school comes from hard work and learning. There is no real Chinese translation for **learning difficulties** : you just have **lazy or hard-working**. In writing in Chinese it is rude to put a request or an idea at the beginning. Well-written sentences have the subordinate before the main clause. Well written paragraphs have the topic sentence at the end. Well written essays have the thesis in the last paragraph.

Text by Ken Cruikshank



# Attitudes To Learning : Chinese

## 3-LEVEL GUIDE | B

FACTUAL, DEDUCTIVE or HYPERTHETICAL

Answer whether the following statements are **true** or **false**.

- Reading and Writing are highly valued in Chinese communities.
- Literacy is the key to success at school and in life.
- The status of the family depends on what individual children achieve.
- Individual talents and abilities are important for what they mean for the family.
- The main purpose of reading in China is for entertainment.
- Reading stories is sometimes seen as something only for young children.
- Handwriting is very important because of the Chinese tradition of calligraphy.
- In China it is not important to write beautifully.
- In China both written text and teachers have a very high status and must not be questioned.
- Copying texts, either spoken by a teacher or from a book is seen as a mark of respect and is o.k. to use in an assignment.
- In China if you have difficulty learning you are seen as being lazy



# Attitudes To Learning : Arabic



## 3-LEVEL GUIDE 2 A

### Maha

*(This description is based on traditional attitudes and is very much a generalisation. It should not be taken as true for all students. For example, most Arabic speaking students in Australia belong to Christian demoninations.)*

Literacy has a very high status in the Arabic communities - especially with Muslims because of the **Our'an**. It is the duty of all Muslims to read the Our'an in Arabic and parents are proud of their children when they can do this. Spoken Arabic is almost a different language from written Arabic and levels of literacy in Arabic countries (especially in the countryside) have been low. Not being literate, however, was not a problem. There were few uses for literacy in the village - communication was oral, entertainment was oral ... when reading and writing needed to be done a scribe would be called upon. Teaching reading and writing was the responsibility of the school. This was done through rote learning and reading aloud. Children repeated letters and then words and finally sentences. Once they had memorised a sentences they would read and write it.

When reading did occur it was a group or social activity. Individual silent reading was often seen as being antisocial. One person would decode the text and others would discuss and interpret the meaning. Books have incredible value - they must be treasured. Writing means handwriting: it must be good calligraphy. Most study is often done in a social setting. Children should only be by themselves when they are praying or studying for an important exam. Again---the most important skill is rote memorisation. The mark of an educated person is one who knows the Qur'an off by heart and can read it without looking at it.

Stories are told not written. The mark of a good teacher is one who can demand respect and instil respect. Textbooks are important - children must learn these by heart and repeat them to the teacher. Once you know something by heart you understand it. Correctness is important : all mistakes must be corrected in writing and in reading. The value in books is that they contain truths. This might mean, for example, that in doing projects, the key is finding one book which will contain the information that is needed. Most reading is done out aloud and in school choral reading is common .

In the home reading is often a social event in groups. There is little reading for instrumental purposes: messages, recipes, information are all conveyed orally. You learn by watching and by doing. Oral and personal contact is most important. Teachers have high status but you will only really work if that person gains your respect. Extended writing in Arabic has been described as a flower unfolding. The aim is to achieve perfection through sentence co-ordination and balance. Therefore the use of connectives such as **'and'** is very frequent. The writing has the sound of formal speech with ornaments such as exemplification and accumulation very important.

Text by Ken Cruikshank



# Attitudes To Learning : Arabic

## 3-LEVEL GUIDE 2 B



FACTUAL, DEDUCTIVE or HYPERTHETICAL

Answer whether the following statements are **true** or **false**.

- Most Arabic speaking students in Australia are Muslim.
- Literacy has a very high status in the Arabic communities.
- It is the duty of all Muslims to read the Qur'an in Arabic.
- In Arabic countries (especially in the countryside), writing is not so important as most communication is oral.
- Reading and writing was the responsibility of the schools and was done through rote learning and reading aloud.
- Reading occurred as a group or social activity and individual silent reading was often seen as being antisocial.
- The mark of an educated person is one who knows the Qur'an off by heart and can read it without looking at it.
- Writing means handwriting and it must be good calligraphy.
- In Arabic countries books are treasured.
- Most reading is done out aloud and in school.
- Oral and personal contact is most important.



# Attitudes To Learning : Pacific Islands

## 3-LEVEL GUIDE 3 A

### **Okalani**

*(This description is based on traditional attitudes and is very much a generalisation. It should not be taken as true for all students)*

Literacy came to the Pacific Islands via the missionaries and is still very much connected with religion. Reading the Bible is very important in the church. Often children will sit around in a group - the adult will have the Bible and will read a passage from it. Children will repeat and learn the passage. Once they have memorised it properly they will be given the text to read. Being a good student means being able to learn the most text off by heart.

Missionaries introduced scripts for Pacific Island languages. Even today many of these scripts are read aloud not silently. Students from most Pacific Islands will not read silently because you can only understand the text if you can hear it. Reading comes via memorisation.

Story telling is oral. Stories are often constructed by a group. The story teller only has status (or the floor) if he or she can gain status because of the calibre of the story. Usually one person will start and others will chime in with personal stories and anecdotes and the story is built up orally. Stories can seem very circuitous with anecdotes woven together.

School is the place for reading. Choral reading is common - reading is very ritualised. Comprehension is not the main aim. Written stories are Bible stories with morals. The group is very important. Children do not want to stand out by being asked questions individually - to do this would show that you consider yourself better than others. Reading is done without intonation.

Outside church and school reading has little purpose or value. Communication is oral. Learning is done by watching and memorising.

Creativity is important as is humour. A good storyteller is one who can amuse and interest the audience. Good speakers are much admired. There is a role for formal oratory. Children are not taught this but they learn by watching. In the presence of adults children must not talk - conversation or discussion is not done. Again the text is 'gospel'. There is one right answer. You should not question what is written.

Sharing is important - the concept of stealing and cheating is different. If one student has a book it is for everyone. It is okay to copy answers because you should help each other get the right answer. Knowledge held in a group is knowledge for everyone. Competition is not done.

Text by Ken Cruikshank



# Attitudes To Learning : Pacific Islands

## 3-LEVEL GUIDE 3 B

FACTUAL, DEDUCTIVE or HYPERTHETICAL

Answer whether the following statements are **true** or **false**.

- In the Pacific Islands literacy is still very much connected with religion.
- Being a good student means being able to learn the most text from the Bible off by heart.
- Most Pacific Island students will not read silently because you can only understand the text if you can hear it.
- Children do not want to stand out by being asked questions individually. To do this would show that you consider yourself better than others.
- Outside church and school reading has little purpose or value.
- Learning is done by watching and memorising..
- You should always question what is written.
- In the presence of adults children must not talk - conversation or discussion is not done.
- Sharing is important - the concept of stealing and cheating is different. If one student has a book it is for everyone. It is okay to copy answers because you should help each other get the right answer.
- Competition is the most important thing.

