**Antidote to Rote**

An enquiry-based Putonghua course created in Hong Kong is taking the world by storm, writes Annemarie Evans.

When I went to school on the mainland, the teacher had a piece of chalk to write on the blackboard and any dictation was done via a large reel-to-reel tape recorder.”

“... teachers and parents to monitor students' work, says P3’s CEO, David Tait. As well to exchange for other ‘goods’.” Children are given an allotted time to get through the readers and tasks, so the teacher can pinpoint those children in need of extra help, she adds.

Tests are designed to resemble puzzles and games, while reading is encouraged through an online rewards system. When students complete a reader online, they receive virtual gold coins, which can be exchanged at an online shop for a variety of computer games.

Mandarin Matrix is taking the world by storm, writes Annemarie Evans.

In what is something of a publishing coup, P3 has teamed up with leading international education publisher Cambridge University Press to drive the expansion of Mandarin Matrix. Cambridge will collaborate on the writing and production of future texts, and all products will carry its logo.

Another piece in the jigsaw puzzle was added last year, when P3 signed a deal with the Confucius Institutes, China’s agency for teaching Chinese language and culture abroad, to incorporate Mandarin Matrix in its centres worldwide. The Confucius Institute in New Zealand is now preparing to roll out the course, which is aligned with the institute’s Youth Chinese Test Levels 1 to 4, across its classrooms nationwide.

In the US, the Confucius Institute at the University of Utah is developing a Chinese language immersion programme based on Mandarin Matrix that will be used in its classrooms across the state. With several other states watching with interest, the little course that was made in Hong Kong may soon become very big indeed.

**LOVE OF LANGUAGE**

From left: South Island School student Kabelan Arrumugam and Remi Lever learn Chinese through Mandarin Matrix; the interactive language learning programme is iPad-friendly.

**“The cartoons are gimmicky and funny, and help me to learn... online I can practise my calligraphy and improve my skills” — Remi Lever, 13, student**