

启发儿童智慧的奥秘13

In fact, if Wan Ting was already feeling as if there was not enough time in the second grade, then with more homework and longer school hours in the future, wouldn't the child suffer from burn-out? Consequently, Mrs. Su decided to let Wan Ting choose just one after school lesson. But which one? Abacus and mental arithmetic? Or piano?

Abacus and mental arithmetic and piano actually have something in common, especially since Wan Ting had been learning the "two-handed method", which, like playing the piano, is a skill that requires the use of both hands. Mrs. Su sometimes wondered, "Is Wan Ting good at abacus and mental calculation because she plays the piano well? Or does she play the piano well because she is learning abacus and mental calculation?" After numerous mini family meetings, Mrs. Su told the piano teacher that Wan Ting will temporarily quit piano lessons. The piano teacher looked puzzled and said to Mrs. Su, "You are going to regret this!"

To this day, Mrs. Su still remembers clearly the piano teacher's warning. Although Wan Ting is already at the top in Taiwan's abacus and mental arithmetic industry, talking about this "painful choice" still makes Mrs. Su feel doubtful. "I don't know if the decision I made was right or wrong," she says.

The bottleneck: level 9

Su Wan Ting's motto:

Laziness is the root of all evil.

Learning is like rowing a boat against the current. If you don't advance yourself, you will be washed away."

After giving up piano lessons, the time Wan Ting spent on practicing abacus and mental arithmetic increased, and her progress also advanced greatly.

On March 20, 1994, Wan Ting took the test held by the Children's Association of Abacus Calculation, and passed the preliminary level for abacus calculation. It was the second semester of second grade. Two months later, on May 15, Wan Ting took the test held by the Three Joint Society (formed from three organizations: Commercial Abacus Committee of the General Chamber of Commerce of the Republic of China, Abacus Calculation Society of the Republic of China, and the International Abacus Association Taiwan Branch), and skipped several levels, passing level five in abacus calculation.

In the third grade, less than a month after school started, or on September 18, 1994, Wan Ting took the test held by the Children's Association of Abacus Calculation and passed level seven in abacus

calculation. Scores like these at her age had never been seen before by either Master Tai Chiang Ching or Tainan's Fu Cheng district. In the third grade, Wan Ting was heading towards her "call me first place" peak stage. Her name appeared in newspapers, magazines and radio and television shows.

For two entire years from the third semester of third grade to the second semester of fourth grade, Wan Ting's mental calculation level stayed consistently at level ten, even reaching level thirteen in one special national test during the first semester of fourth grade. However, her abacus calculation level fluctuated; sometimes it was level seven, sometimes it dropped to level six or even five for no apparent reason, though most of the time it stayed at level eight or nine.

As Wan Ting spent two years fluctuating between levels eight and nine in abacus calculation, Mrs. Su's heart also went up and down. She wondered why it was so hard to reach level ten.

Mrs. Su carefully examined Wan Ting's training process and physical and mental health conditions to see if a certain aspect was being overlooked. Mrs. Su also frequently discussed Wan Ting's learning progress with Master Tai Chiang Ching. Although Master Tai understood Mrs. Su's anxiety and depression, he also knew how difficult it is to reach the highest level. In Taiwan's distorted environment where advancing to a higher school was of utmost importance, devoting oneself to a talent or skill that has nothing to do with advancing to higher education, and getting top achievement in the talent or skill, is like acquiring phoenix feathers and unicorn horns; very few can accomplish this. Master Tai could only offer this consolation to Mrs. Su: "It all depends on effort. If hard work is put in, dreams will come true. Don't hurry. Take it easy." Mrs. Su hid her hopes deep in her heart because she knew what her child needed was encouragement, not pressure.