



## **Abacus Education in Canada**

Knowledge and intelligence top the characteristics of human beings. They enable one to maintain a clear mind in his daily life. The increasing development of abacus and mental arithmetic in the whole world has benefited many people. Abacus and mental arithmetic not only helps students focus their attention, have direction and destination, and have responsibility, but also helps them improve their ability and challenge their extremity spiritually and psychologically. Therefore, we may say abacus and mental arithmetic can intensify one's excellent personality.

Practices prove it is of much importance for many students in our "Intelligent Abacus Community" to learn abacus well. It can help children form good mental modes and put them into flexible use. Abacus, especially abacus and mental arithmetic, has gone beyond its original connotation. The subconscious potential of human beings can be awoken. For example, mathematics is not difficult any more for those who avail themselves of abacus and mental arithmetic.

With this idea, we introduced abacus and mental arithmetic into Canada. Gradually, some people began to accept it first and then many people accepted it. It has taken much time to introduce Abacus to Canada. At first, people were not rational enough to realize its functions, but facts prove it is of much importance for them. Abacus is changing people's life in many aspects and bears a developing potential towards a higher phase. Nowadays, Abacus has conquered thousands upon thousands of people.

Canada has a brief history of abacus and abacus and mental arithmetic; it hasn't held its first public contest until 1997 in the Toronto Montreal Science Center. From then on, people began to pay attention to the new trend of mental arithmetic. This contest attracted more than one hundred competitors from all over the world, including Japan, Taiwan Province, Malaysia, and US. Some government officials and Canadian people broadened their horizons and were bewitched by the speed and accuracy of this kind of mental arithmetic.

Most students didn't realize the benefit of abacus at the beginning of their study, but their parents played an important role. At first some students were reluctant to learn abacus and mental Arithmetic for they considered it a waste of time. What's more, abacus is not as famous as that Asia is part of the world; and it is not available in the education courses established by the Canadian government. Students felt dull and learned slowly at the beginning, but they were much interested in Abacus and felt strong challenges behind it when they found Abacus game-like and very helpful. Actually, mathematics is a very difficult course for Canadian students. However, after learning Abacus and mental Arithmetic, they show no fear to mathematics and other courses and have more confidence when they deal with their assignments.

On the other hand, students find Abacus and mental Arithmetic helps them to bear more creativity maybe because imagination in mental arithmetic stimulates their imagination and

creativity. Meanwhile, they don't fear the language, English and writing courses any more. Abacus has proved their attention, memory, confidence and self-respect. The majority of students who have taken the course of Abacus have a better average academic record than those who have not attended the course. The Canadian teachers are shocked when they find their students can solve a difficult mental arithmetic problem quickly and accurately. They are more shocked when hearing the students we seen in Shanghai are well trained and have a higher level of mental arithmetic. In our mind, the Shanghai children are all abacus and mental arithmetic geniuses and have a higher level of mental arithmetic than those in any other parts of the world.

Now Canada has arranged abacus training after school or on remediation classes at weekends in primary schools, and has opened several abacus – training centers. Certainly, some centers are not as normal as those directly established by our abacus association, are yet to be improved and require exchanges with the rest of the world.

For several years, we have been consecutively invited to attend international abacus contests and seminars. Exchanges with other abacus associations have promoted our teaching ability, broaden our horizons, making us further realize the far-reaching meaning of developing mental arithmetic potential. What is more, abacus and mental arithmetic will make our following generation to stride towards a higher goal.

**Courtesy:**

*(The author is president of the Canada International Abacus Association)*