Local access to a broad range of contemporary Chinese language instructional materials, including books and videos, is now available at Western Michigan University’s Waldo Library through a new Chinese Instruction and Research Collection established by the Confucius Institute.

The new collection, which resides on the library’s lower level, includes more than 1,000 titles donated to WMU by Beijing Language and Culture University Press and Hanban, a unit of China’s ministry of education.
A book exhibition and opening ceremony hosted by the Confucius Institute at WMU April 8 to 10 to showcase the new collection welcomed more than 100 educators and community members from across southwest Michigan to peruse the more than 300 books on display and to attend informational sessions on implementing the materials in the classroom.

Designed to serve as a resource for WMU faculty and students interested in China or studying Chinese, as well as a resource for the local community schools and teachers, the collection greatly expanded Waldo Library’s catalog of materials about China and the Chinese language.

Confucius said, “I hear, I know. I see, I remember. I do, I understand,” said Scott Garrison, associate dean, University Libraries, at the opening ceremony April 8. “The audio, video, and textual materials that our Chinese partners have graciously donated to our library will help WMU and local students chart a course for their own futures as global citizens. The collection offers our entire community within WMU and Kalamazoo-at-large a new and very valuable opportunity to learn a great deal.”

Other speakers during the opening ceremony included Bill Woods, associate dean of the Diether H. Haenicke Institute for Global Education; Dr. Xiaojun Wang, director of the Confucius Institute at WMU and professor of Chinese; Dr. Timothy Light, former WMU provost and professor of Chinese; Professor Dexiang Qi, president of the BLCU Press, Rick Perry, assistant
superintendent of instruction for Portage Public Schools; and Denise Bresson, director of curriculum and professional development for Portage Public Schools.

"The late President Diether Haenicke often said that the center of any university is its library; and, the heart of the library is its book collection," said Associate Dean Woods, a 27-year veteran of international education at WMU, at the opening ceremony. "This gift of books is from the heart of the Chinese people given to the heart of our University and it represents an investment in the people of our region, particularly the children. In a time when library acquisitions are cut back, this generous donation will provide substance and encouragement to those seeking to learn and to teach Chinese."

Confucius Institute Director Dr. Wang echoed Wood's remarks on the significance of WMU having such a collection by explaining that the books represented more than just an opportunity to learn Chinese language. "Not only will the books and reading materials help teachers expand knowledge and skills, but the books will also lend to better understanding and increased"
friendship between Americans and Chinese, Wang said.

BLCU Press representatives hosted informational break-out sessions on April 9 and 10, which were well attended by local teachers, school administrators and students interested in teaching or studying Chinese. Designed to provide information according to language-learning level, each session offered attendees the chance to review level-appropriate textbooks, to receive suggestions for implementing the curriculum, as well as the opportunity to ask questions of the press representatives. Participants were able to purchase books and other teaching materials directly from the publisher.

This event was sponsored by the Confucius Institute at WMU, Chinese Language International Council (Hanban), the BLCU Press, Waldo Library and the Diether H. Haenicke Institute for Global Education.

Event news on Hanban.org[5]

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Links: