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HWIS Christmas Activity Day

by Johnson Su, Marketing and Events Coordinator

I really like what Erma Bombeck, a famous writer and humorist, said, "When I stand before God at the end of my life, I would hope that I would not have a single bit of talent left, and could say, I used everything you gave me." This is why we always hold talent show on Christmas, to celebrate and give thanks to the talents we obtain from above. This year, we have a great talent show, including top-class musical instrument performances and dances. We indeed have groups of talented students at HWIS. We encourage our students to go on the stage and shine, for the future is theirs. As teachers and educators, our job is to get students curious about discovering knowledge for themselves and focus on their interests and inherent skills and natural talents.

In the afternoon of our Christmas special activities, each student were given a piece of paper and an envelope to write a letter to their future selves. This letter will be given back to them next Christmas. Students who were at HWIS a

year ago has got their letter back, written by themselves a year ago. Students really enjoyed this because they can see how much they have grown for a year and they can reflect on whether they have reached the goal they set a year ago or not.

The following event is the exciting HWIS Inter House Trivia Competition. Students are separated into houses and answer questions one by one to earn house points. The questions are prepared by all subject teachers, including literature, language arts, social studies, math, sciences, technology, business, psychology, etc. This intellectual challenge got their brains working overtime.

The best thing for HWIS students during Christmas aside from these wonderful activities is: A whole day off from school on Christmas Day! Merry Christmas! 🎄





Why You Should Reconsider the Humanities

by Erik Binder-Vásquez, Art, Spanish, Social Studies Instructor

We all took the core subjects: Literature, Science, Maths, and Social Studies. However, not all core classes are being treated equally. At the start of the 21st century STEM, or Sciences, Technology, Engineering, & Mathematics, burst onto the scene. Schools, Parents, Test Makers, Politicians, etc. flocked to this new pedagogy. Yet, two of our 'core subjects' are missing from STEM's list: Literature and Social Studies. The exclusion of humanities in this new curricular mindset is not only bad for your students, but bad for society as a whole; and I would like you to reconsider the humanities.

That's fake news! We have alternative facts! Are phrases that any English speaker is inured to in 2020. Yet, why does it matter? We can all spot fact from fiction or opinion, right? A survey conducted on March 29th, 2019 found that 52% of adults (of 6000+ respondents) have shared fake news¹. The ability to analyse a source and recognise key factors, such as origin, purpose, value, and limitation and crucial skills that appear in only one place in our curriculum. In fact, it is the key tenet taught by all history teachers in their classes. In Taiwan's 2018 election cycle this skill-set would've proved incredibly useful as "Findings confirmed that false news affected Taiwanese voters' judgment of the news and their voting decisions. More than 50 percent of the voters cast their votes without knowing the correct campaign news."² Education, rich in exposure to documents, both historical and contemporary, and with purposeful intent of recognising misinformation could have prevented this, and would prevent our students from repeating history; that education is not found in STEM.

What could my student do with a degree in Anthropology? Is a concern many parents express when finding out their students might have some interest in humanities. With the rising price of education, and four in every ten recent college graduates unemployed or underemployed, that is definitely a legitimate concern. Nonetheless, CEOs like Andrew Benett, (CEO of Harte Hanks global Marketing, and ex Bloomberg Media Global Ad Chief) have this to say about the issue: *"I surveyed more than 100 senior business leaders to get their views on the current state of talent and talent management. Eighty-four percent of them agreed that they would rather hire a person who is smart and passionate, even if the person does not yet possess the specific skills they need. One point of which we can all be certain is that the skills in use today won't be sufficient to meet the needs of tomorrow. What matters is knowing how to accumulate knowledge and put it to smart use... The humanities and social sciences provide a context that helps us to understand not only what is happening in the world, but what is likely to happen—and why."*³ Providing your student an education that teaches them to grasp the big picture and anticipate coming trends provides a bit of insurance in the rapidly changing job market of today. These are skills that are the focus of literature and social sciences.

Lastly, the late Sir Kenneth Robinson, a British educationalist and New York Times bestselling author, said *"Imagination is the source of every form of human achievement. And it's the one thing that I believe we are systematically jeopardising in the way we educate our children and ourselves."* Imagination and creative interpretation are ingredients of every literature and language course. The ability to predict the full consequences of our actions comes from instilling the importance of imagination. Should we clone dinosaurs? Jurassic Park provides us an easy answer to what might go wrong there.

STEM-based education alone is building a foundation and walls without building a roof. It can't protect us from the constantly changing climate of an increasingly hostile job market or virulent socio-political machinations, and with its strong focus on divergent thinking it has the potential to stifle creativity and innovation. Without a broad and complete education, including humanities, STEM, the arts, and even personal-well-being, we will leave our children roofless. Reconsider the humanities, and you'll find them just as important as STEM to your student's education, and more importantly, their future. 🌍

¹ Watson, Amy. "Share of Adults Who Have Ever Shared Fake News or Information Online in the United States as of March 2019." Statista. October 12, 2020. Accessed December 30th, 2020. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/657111/fake-news-sharing-online/>.

² Wang, Tai-Li. "Does Fake News Matter to Election Outcomes?: The Case Study of Taiwan's 2018 Local Elections." Asian Journal for Public Opinion Research. May 31, 2020. Accessed December 30th, 2020. <https://www.ajpor.org/article/12985-does-fake-news-matter-to-election-outcomes-the-case-study-of-taiwan-s-2018-local-elections>.

³ Benett, Andrew. "In Defense Of A Liberal Arts Degree." Fast Company. April 09, 2014. Accessed December 30th, 2020. <https://www.fastcompany.com/3028811/in-defense-of-a-liberal-arts-degree>.



Ecology Field Trip The Purpose of This

by Ryan Ku, Grade 9

Our recent trip down the west coast of Taiwan ended in the sprawling coastal city of Kaohsiung. Although you may have not heard of it before, there are many things to do in Kaohsiung and it is rapidly becoming a tourist hotspot due to its vibrant arts scene, beautiful outlying islands and incredible food. Furthermore, its famous 'Love River' attracts hordes of tourists that wish to experience a romantic walk along its banks. We stayed in the city for three days and I would recommend visiting this indubitably gorgeous city as part of any traveller's Taiwan itinerary.

To begin with, our first itinerary was the Taijiang National Park. The stilt house in Taijiang National Park is a white-based building with a special structure and shape. It was also selected as the first diamond-level green building of the southern administrative agency and was also selected for the 2016 Taiwan Architecture Award. The entire Taijiang Academy covers an area of 6.6 hectares. The design is based on the ancient map of Taijiang. In addition, it also adds elements of humanity, history, aesthetics and green architecture, and retains the texture of the existing settlements in Taijiang to shape the internal lanes and lanes. The design concept of Taiwan's traditional architecture "Cheng" has created a special and beautiful complex of buildings with tall houses over water. Innocent blue, sparkling water, beautiful scenery! Taijiang National Park is close to Anping, crossing the lively Anping Old Street, and you can reach the visitor center after crossing the Si Cao Bridge. There are rich historical introductions and ecological guides here, which is very suitable for families to visit here!

We end the first day by visiting the Kenting main street night market. This short section of Kenting Road, which is less than 2 kilometers long, turns into a bustling Kenting Street every night. It also embellishes Kenting's night into a colorful scene. It is already a must for tourists who visit Kenting in the evening. Attractions. Kenting Main Street is the only night market in the local area. At night, delicious and fun stalls are filled on both sides of Kenting Road. The neon lights of restaurants and bars are shining everywhere and it is very lively. There are even small trucks parked on the side of the

road. Turning the car board down, it turns into a small roadside bar.

The second day we visited a unique Kaohsiung attraction, the Dome of Light, Formosa Boulevard MRT Station. The dome was designed by Italian artist Narcissus Quagliata and is approximately 30 meters in diameter, and is made up of around 4,500 glass pieces. It is also the world's largest domed underground station. It took over four years to complete and install. It is truly a stupendous site to see and not something you'd really expect to find in an underground station. We arrived there at around 2 pm on a weekday, and the viewing area directly below the Dome of Light really wasn't that busy. In fact, most people we saw were commuters seemingly going about their normal working day, not paying much attention to the dome. At certain times throughout the day, there is also a musical light show that takes place there, bringing the intricacies of the Dome of Light to life.

To sum up, although this trip was a few weeks ago I can still vividly picture the sights we had seen in my mind. Going on this field trip offered me a unique cultural learning experience. Furthermore, it allowed me to learn about Taiwan's numerous beautiful places. Most importantly, it was also valuable as an exercise in broadening my understanding of the world and our place in it and it has given me great memories that I will cherish forever. 🌊





Inter-House Sports Competition

by Michelle Huang, Grade 9

Start your day with sports! Sports can make you strong, healthy, and they benefit your cognitive processes, too. If you don't feel right when you wake up, do some stretching. By doing so, you can relax your muscles and, at the same time, your mind will become clearer.

On December 7th we had an inter house sports competition. We played badminton, basketball, soccer, kickball and volleyball. I enjoyed playing soccer the most - though I am not too good at it. I can't even kick the ball properly; however, I managed to kick the ball away from my team's goal, so that the other team won't be able to score.

The most important thing to do before playing sports is stretching. During our sports day, numerous people got injured due to sprained ankles. I saw their terrified, contorted faces that showed clearly how painful that type of injury can be. We played volleyball in the afternoon. Based on my observations,

the best tactic is to keep the ball at your side and then smash it. Make sure not to touch the net or else it will be a foul. More importantly, smash the ball downward therefore you can score more easily.

All in all, it was a memorable day. I enjoyed playing sports with my peers. I could see their passion when they were calling their teammates to pass the ball. Furthermore, when they got the ball their facial expressions changed completely. I could see the passion and the urge to score for their team.

I learned the importance of cooperation when we played sports. My advice to others is to communicate clearly, and call for the ball while you are playing. By doing this, you don't need to run that much, and at the same time you can strengthen the bond between you and your teammates. 🏆