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How a school truly fosters student growth

by Sebastian Chen, Grade 11

What goals should a school strive for in order to be successful? This question is frequently asked by teachers and school directors. Educating students on knowledge should only be seen as the basics of a school. However, having the capacity to cultivate attitude, manners, and new perspectives is what truly makes an accomplished school.

In late-March, we journeyed to a youth training and recreation center in Taoyuan. After stepping off our buses all sleepy-eyed, we walked onto an encircled campus with lush, towering trees. This adventureland featured high-altitude challenges such as rock climbing, complex cables, and wooden fortresses of obstacles built 5-10 meters high. There were over 75 different facilities, each presenting a different level of difficulty.

Our first challenge was table soccer, but not in the traditional sense. The game formation was identical, albeit enlarged, and we were instructed to play as the mini-mannequins in table soccer: our hands must be attached to the bars in front of us, leaving our legs the only limbs available for movements. Players had to communicate and collaborate to move the balls past the guarded goal posts to score. By the time a victor between the two rivals was ascertained, everyone was already gasping for air with sweat dripping like mad.

For our next activity, we had to walk on a narrow boardwalk positioned at the summit and bridged between two poles. There was also a swing built into that 10-meter-high installation using strong cables. As we were standing on the boardwalk and looking downwards, we could feel chills down our spines. Some students took a prolonged time to reach for the swing, while others waited patiently. I believe compassion played a vital role, and that was how we supported our friends.

Our afternoon task was definitely not for the faint-hearted. We had to first climb up a tall, thin, and vertical log, and then take a leap from its peak with safety cables tied firmly to our torsos. The climb exhausted our legs, and balancing ourselves on the narrow plateau at the top weakened our knees. A rather large, red ball was dangling about 4 meters ahead of us. We were instructed to leap forward and off the pole, hit the ball with our hands, and complete a steep yet gradual descent to the ground. Whenever we saw our friends struggling, we cheered for them. With all the love and support we had for each other, most of us eventually made that daring leap. These were truly proud moments to remember.

After each field trip at HWIS, our students become more united because of the many joys as well as hardships we collectively experienced. Inarguably, this is what sets us apart from schools that only focus on driving academic excellence. Rather than just teaching us knowledge from textbooks, HWIS continues to succeed in educating us on teamwork, communication skills, and unity. This is such an arduous task to achieve, yet HWIS never failed to do so. We are proud to be HWIS. 🌟





Why HWIS is an ideal school

by Koshi Lu, Grade 10

Why is HWIS my ideal school? In short, HWIS is an exemplary school because it cares. However, to answer the question convincingly, we need to ask ourselves, what makes an ideal school? Ralph Waldo Emerson once said, "The secret in education lies in respecting the students." We can therefore agree that a school needs to show respect towards its students. Hence, as you may be wondering, how does HWIS show respect to its students?

At HWIS, our counsellor customises a study plan for every single student depending on our career interests. Teachers here are also on a constant quest to improve the quality of education at HWIS by implementing new methods and ideas. This can be seen from the introduction of our "Speak English at All Times" policy, in which our efforts to abide by have been rewarded with drastic improvements in our English proficiency and fluency. Furthermore, HWIS offers a wide variety of courses to better prepare us with the critical thinking and analysis skills required to proceed to higher education. This year, we see the establishment of the HWIS Business School, introducing new courses such as Accounting and Marketing Communications. Students also have the option of taking on rigorous AP courses to challenge themselves by experiencing college-level materials. Besides, HWIS will be conducting the AP Capstone™ program next year, which is known for developing academic skills useful for college and even beyond.

Aside from books and pens, HWIS knows the importance of developing students' soft skills, therefore offering a wide range of cross-curricular activities for students to engage in to discover and develop their passions. At HWIS, we have a wide selection of clubs, ranging from sports to arts and music. As a member of the HWIS Basketball Team, I was able to participate in various tournaments and competitions frequently, which allowed me to pick up new skills and values such as resilience, teamwork, and most importantly, leadership. Semesterly, HWIS schedules events such as sports days, field trips, and

many more. These events allow us to gain exposure to new activities and learn to step out of our comfort zone. This past semester, we participated in the Taoyuan Youth Adventure Camps. Most of us engaged in high elements, along with facilities like zipline. In this camp, we managed to display teamwork as we encouraged and assisted each other in completing the ropes course. These experiences, in my opinion, teach us lessons that are way more helpful than those in our textbooks.

Ultimately, our goal as students is to receive a good education, along with support. In my opinion, we can attain both at HWIS, for its main motive is to help students improve, making it my ideal school. 🌟





Establishing Perspective – History in Education

by Zachary Diers, Social Studies, Technology

History and the Social Science across educational institutions have been one of the oldest forms of education known to human kind. Beginning as far back at the Lyceum in Ancient Greece, teaching people about where we come from, why things happen, and how we'll progress into the future, has been a center of education. By focusing on comprehension, discussion and application, students can grow to be more than just adults, but participating citizens in the global community.

Studying World History gives our students the foundational understanding of "Where do we come from," as we look around the world for the origins and accomplishments of our ancestors. By widening their scope from only Asian History to World History, our program aims to help students understand not only how Taiwan came to be, but also the many countries their teachers come from grew and developed, as well as where their goals and universities may bring them to in the future. As many of our students have set their sights on traveling the world, learning the history of these locations helps make them responsible travelers, instead of cultural tourists or casual observers.¹

By studying education, we also learn the important events of history, and of course why they took place. As the Department of History at the University of Wisconsin-Madison states, *(H)istory gives us the tools to analyze and explain problems in the past, it positions us to see patterns that might otherwise be invisible in the present – thus providing a crucial perspective for understanding (and solving!) current and future problems.*²

With the tools of understanding historical events in their grasp, the issues and events of the present, and future, are easier to not only comprehend, but also solve. As we all move into the 21st Century, it is imperative to understand the events of the past, to know why so many things happen presently. With global communications easier and more rapid now than ever before, this exquisite capability will enhance the choices and improve the decisions of our students in the future.

This major hurdle, being able to deal with issues in the future, is one of the main purposes of education at its core. To give students the tools and knowledge to deal with things like

Global Warming, Middle Eastern Conflict, Chinese and Korean expansionist policies and current political and religious feuds around the world, it will help all of our children to establish a cooperative and sustainable future for everyone. As Kirsten Weir explains in her article, published through the American Psychological Association, *Environmental-behavior change comes up against some daunting obstacles. Most humans in modern society are disconnected from the natural world. Climate change happens on a global scale and over a long time, making it difficult for people to connect their personal behavior of today to the ecological consequences of tomorrow.*³

To comprehend the slow changes over the course of time, to come to grips with the changes we can actively observe, and to have the compassion to want to face issues like this, students need an education that goes beyond the sciences: they need education of History and Society.

The future belongs to our students and children, and the world has not only been shaped by the actions of those in the past, but is also being daily changed by our own decisions, to create the world for subsequent generations. We all have history, in our names and homes, families and communities, states and countries, and as a singular human race. By studying history and working to better understand the implications of historical events, our students will be better prepared to create a brighter, kinder, sustainable world. The goal of making the world better for each subsequent generation can only be realized through studying our past, understanding the events of history, preparing for the future, and developing the compassion to want to do so. This, is why we study and teach History. 🌐



¹ Morrison, Veronica. "What Is Responsible Travel? | HuffPost Life." 20 Apr. 2016, https://www.huffpost.com/entry/what-is-responsible-travel_b_9730434



² "Why should you study history? – Department of History – UW–Madison." <https://history.wisc.edu/undergraduate-program/history-careers/why-history/>



³ Weir, Kirsten. "Building a sustainable future - American Psychological Association." May 2018, <https://www.apa.org/monitor/2018/05/cover-sustainable-future>



2020 International Education E-Pal Classroom Interaction with Punahou School in Hawaii

by **Jamie Chuang**, HWHS Curriculum Supervisor

Constantly promoting international education, Hong Wen High School (HWHS) has devoted to creating online interaction with foreign students. Despite the hindrance of COVID-19, our students had started a three-month E-pal interaction with those in Hawaii, which allowed both sides of students to exchange culture, issues and the protective measures for COVID-19.

As the alma mater of the "Father of the Nation" Mr. Sun and the former American President Barack Obama, Punahou School is regarded as the most significant private school in the USA. Seriously affected by COVID-19, the course in Punahou School had shortened to less than four months. However, via E-pal classroom project, both sides of students are allowed to reflect on their own culture and share opinions with people from different cultural backgrounds.

In the end of the project, a presentation among three schools were held for students to share their reflection. Either in group presentation or in individual poster presentation, students had shown their progress in expressing their viewpoints in English and cooperating with peers. Though students in Punahou School cannot make it to the presentation due to COVID-19, we are still looking forward to more opportunities to have close interaction in the near future. 🌸

