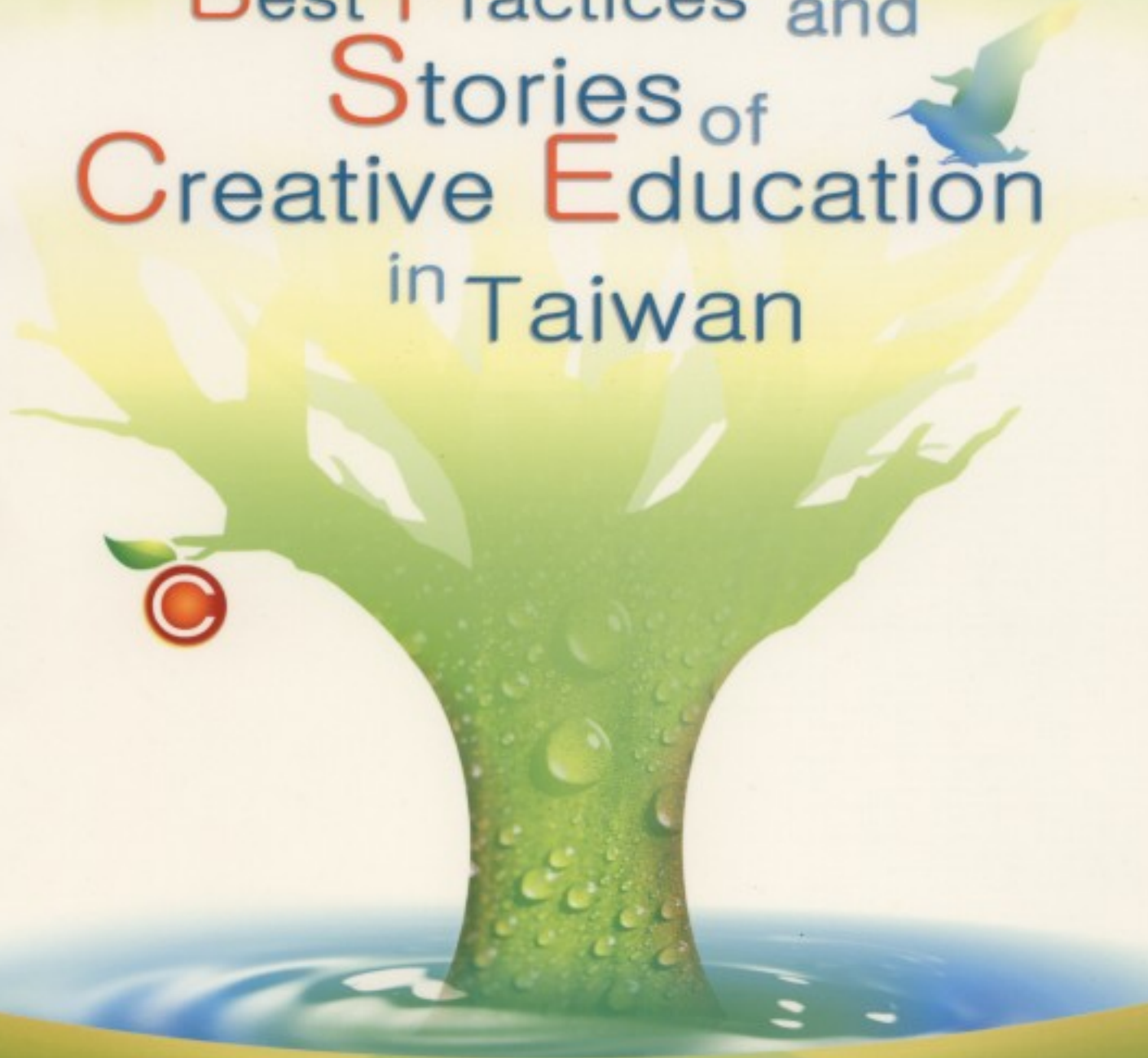


# Best Practices and Stories of Creative Education in Taiwan



The Advisory office of the Ministry of Education  
Planning and Implementation office Subsidized by Ministry of Education  
Taiwan, Republic of China (R.O.C)



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## Volume 1

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# Best Practices and Stories of Creative Education in Taiwan

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# PREFACE

Chih-Yu Chan\*



In January of the year 2002, the Ministry of Education had announced a document entitled, the "White Paper of Creative Education Policy." At that time, the Advisory Office of the Ministry of Education had planned for the "Mid-Term Project of Creative Education," and had begun to promote some active projects, with themes such as: Creative Students, Creative Teachers, Creative Campus, Creative Upbringing, Creative Database, Creative Promotion, Local Creativity, and others. Within four years, hundreds of people were involved in these projects. More than 100,000 people have participated in creativity-related activities or courses. In order to encourage these promoters and participants with regards to creativity, to receive feedback and capture meaning from these projects, to create a collegial atmosphere through sharing stories, and moreover, to pass down experiences and develop a creative culture, in the second half of 2005, the Advisory Office offered a grant to call for stories related to the projects mentioned above. A team of judges were formed to critique the work of the participants, and the public, from a reader's point-of-view, was invited to vote for the best submissions on a website. This book is a collection of the winning stories that were selected both by the judges and the public. However, the works in this book are arranged by different categories, not their rankings.

Several criteria were chosen for selecting these works:

1. The topic of the story had to be directly related to "Creative Education." For example, the theme could be about individual breakthroughs during the learning process, the successes and failures while implementing the creative procedure, the interaction between creative communities, the process of helping others to grow in creativity, and so forth. However, the terms "Innovation," "Creativity," and "Education," could be broadly interpreted.
2. On a cognitive level, the story had to reflect reality to a certain degree: The story encompasses self-observations or life experiences from the author; it may not necessarily be the objective truth, but must at least be the constructed truth, or has the intention of seeking the truth in the story. The submission cannot be a fantasy or fabricated story.
3. The story has to touch, echo, and inspire the readers on an emotional level.
4. Regarding writing techniques, the story has to have some literate or aesthetic techniques of expression, including techniques in the structure of the entire story.
5. The story as a whole has to be able to draw the readers' attention, pique curiosity, provoke thoughts, and inspire people to reach a different level of creativity.

During the selection process, the judges certainly had their own professional criteria in which to judge the works, and the readers were not bound by these criteria. These selected works outperformed many other submissions, and are indeed a great





proof of the success of the first run of the "Mid-term Project of Creative Education." When you read these projects, you would find that the universal spirit of these works is creativity and passion throughout the implementation of these courses and activities. The spirit is what best drives creative education in Taiwan.

\*Chih-Yu Chan received his Ph.D. in educational psychology from the University of Texas, at Austin. He is the Director, Planning and Implementation Office, subsidized by the Ministry of Education, Taiwan, Republic of China (R.O.C.) and Chairman of the Department of Education at National ChengChi University.





## PREFACE TO THE ENGLISH EDITION

Jing-Jyi Wu\*

In 2002, the Ministry of Education commissioned a pilot project on creative education. The research project was a collaborative effort that incorporated six research teams composed of graduate students and professors, to gather available data in efforts to paint a clearer picture of Taiwan's past and present efforts on creative education.

Specifically, each team observed and studied creative education programs at the kindergarten, elementary, junior high, senior high, and university levels, both in Taiwan and abroad over a period of ten months.

The project's results were the basis for "White Paper on Creative Education," in which six initial action programs were outlined and implemented.

Program 1: Nurturing Tips for Creative Learners

Program 2: Professional Development for Creative Teachers

Program 3: Comprehensive Management for Creative Schools

Program 4: Creative Life in Action

Program 5: Online Learning via a Creative Resource Bank

Program 6: Ongoing Consolidation of Creativity Cultivation

This book, edited by Dr. Jason Chih-Yu Chan, is a collection of some of the best practices and stories that have emerged from the past three years' implementation of the above six action programs. We believe that they should be shared, not only with the Chinese, but with English readers as well.

We welcome feedback from all promoters of creative education.

As the English Translation Project Coordinator, I would like to thank the translators, Ms. Patricia Chang, the English editor, and all the participants for their work on this project.

\*Jing-Jyi Wu received his Ph.D in educational psychology from the University of Minnesota in 1967. He is the Executive Director of the Foundation for Scholarly Exchange (Fulbright Foundation, Taiwan), an Adjunct Professor of the Department of Education and Graduate Institute of Technology and Innovation Management, and the Chief Consultant for the Center for Creativity and Innovation Studies at National ChengChi University.



## Voice Fantasia

Author<sup>1</sup>: Jia-Ci Zeng

Translator: Ting-Wei Chang (Sarah)



<sup>1</sup>Jia-Ci Zeng is a teacher that joined the Creative Teacher Action-Based Research Project.

## Abstract

Modern readers are silent readers. When they read, their eyes scan the words but their tongues hold still; they fail to beckon the spirits of words, the sound of word. In this creative short story, the writer makes these spirits of words tangible, and names them "the voice squad". The play between the leading role and the voice squad is the process of discovering the joy of intoning. The chapters describe the procedure of poem-intoning training. The prologue addresses the necessity of pronouncing the words aloud. Chapter one focuses on the art of reading and introduces variable sounds as a reflection of variable emotional states. Chapter two focuses on reciting—the further exploration of the relationship between voice and emotion. Chapter three introduces the art of chanting, the art of melodic intonation. Chapter four introduces the art of singing and the method of combining intonation with melody. Finally in the postlude, the writer shares his experience in the poem intoning project and acknowledges the assistance of his group members.



## Voice Fantasia

### Prologue

When reading, full comprehension demands not only your eyes but also your tongue and mind. And the tongue's part is most overlooked by modern people.

Yet it was this very part that Mr. Zeng emphasized in his class. What the tongue must do is to help one's voice embody the words of some given article, and to make the voice convey the word's sentiment. In another words, when you read, you must listen to the sentiments that are carried by your voice-- the audible sentiments.



However, Aci thought that this exercise was pointless and wearying. He reluctantly performed the simplest action -- opening his mouth and pronouncing words aloud. "This will not be scored. Besides, familiarizing myself with the text will do, it doesn't matter whether I read it aloud or not," thought Aci.

He was not the only student that hesitated. The whole class thought it was awkward.

"Now! Let's read Li Bai's poem Thoughts in a Tranquil Night. Come on! Read aloud, don't withdraw. Words are written to be read!"

"Chuang...Cian...Ming...Yue...Guang...(On the foot of my bed, the moonlight is so bright.)" This time, the class raised their volume, but flattened each vowel.

"Good, but perhaps you could pour more feelings inside it?" Mr. Zeng encouraged his class, but his prompting was in vain. The students still flattened the vowels, especially Aci, who looked impatient and nearly yawned.

"More! More! Well, let me show you the way." Then he read with a ringing and vibrant sound, his intonation was clear, his voice carried over the entire class. Aci lent his ears to Mr. Zeng and found that the poem reading was actually not bad. But still he remained unenthusiastic. "I don't have his good voice. Besides, he is the teacher; he is supposed to do it better," thought Aci.

Mr. Zeng gave Aci a smile, as if he could read his mind, and then he addressed the class. "Having a good voice is not decisive. People who don't have good voices can still sound expressive. The point is that you have to be passionate and willing to pour out your feelings. In everyday conversation, your voice can float, sink, dash, or stroll along the ups and downs of your feelings. How come your voice became so monotonous when you read?"



Aci unintentionally gave a yawn. He quickly covered his mouth and lowered his blushing face.

## Reading

On the very same night, something appeared in Aci's dream.

He dreamt that the words in Li Bai's poem transformed into many small dwarves--some plump, some thin, some tall, some short, some agile, some blunt. They were all dancing strangely, hand-in-hand, to a bizarre song. Aci noted that their movements and music seemed gloomy, as if they were haunted by some old memory. Some old memory from a familiar place, like one's hometown. The dwarves sang:

"Chuang Cian Ming Yue Guang,  
(On the foot of my bed, the moonlight is so bright,)  
Yi Sih Di Shang Shuang.  
(Glittering like a hoar-frost to my eyes.)  
Jyu Tou Wang Ming Yue,  
(I raise my head to the splendid moonlight,)  
Di Tou Sih Gu Siang.  
(I sink back and the thoughts of home arise.)"

As soon as the song was over, one of the dwarves walked to Aci. "The reason why you didn't understand the art of reading was because you ignored our facial expressions. Well, let us brighten your eyes," the dwarf spoke as it pulled out something behind its back and presented it to Aci.

Aci wanted to gaze at what the dwarf held in hand, but a bright light beam struck him, and he was so shocked that he closed his eyes.

"Ding! Ding!" Aci shut off the alarm clock and rubbed his eyes. "So that was just a dream!"

"Breakfast time!" Downstairs, Mom was calling.

He slowly packed his school bag and went to the dining room.

"What took you so long?" asked Mom. Instead of responding to her, Aci just stared at Mom's mouth. "What's the matter?" asked Mom. But still he didn't reply.

He left home right after finishing breakfast. On his way to school, he recollected what he just saw. "I did see those dwarves. But why did they fly out of Mom's mouth?" On the road, more and more people left home for work or school. Whenever people opened their mouths to speak, those same dwarves would soar out of their mouths.



Aci walked away from these disorienting scenes and turned into an empty alley. Then an idea struck him. Would those dwarves fly out of his mouth as well? Then spoke tentatively, "Hello?"

A chubby dwarf fluttered out. Aci extended his hand but failed to catch it.

"Hey, don't you have any courtesy?" Surprisingly, the dwarf could speak.

"Who...who are you?" asked Aci, frightened.

"Me? I am the captain of the voice squad," it replied proudly. "We met last night, didn't we?"

"Oh! Indeed...But, no!" Aci stopped nod, "That was just a dream!"

"Just a dream?," the captain laughed. "Then consider this as a dream."

"Uh...why...you...what are you?" Aci was entirely too confused to speak correctly.

"Didn't I just tell you? I am the captain," it said. "Oh! You want to know why we are here," Aci again knocked his head.

"There are some many things that you don't know. You only need to know that we are here to help you. As I remember, you had problems reading aloud some poem, didn't you? Well, just follow us."

The captain led Aci to the road and said, "See, the voice squad out of Madam Wang is versatile in figure, be it tall, short, fat or thin." "So is human voice; it's sometimes high, sometimes low, sometimes strong, and sometimes light. The voice squad represents human voice and therefore varies in figure."

It pointed at Mr. Li. "He must be in a good mood this morning. See, his pitch is high, and his tempo is fast."

"And here! Mr. Chen's voice is low and his tempo is slow. He must be in a bad mood." Aci agreed with the captain, and thought Mr. Chen looked grave, as if something disturbed his mind.

The captain then explained that the voice squad is consisted of members that were adaptable in their body figures and in their jobs to perform human voice. The members were required to tie the voice line with the curve of emotion.

"You can always see us if you try hard enough," the captain responded confidently. "Let me show you the trick of reading in your class today." The third class today was Chinese. As soon as the class had settled down, Mr. Zeng



asked Aci to read the text.

Aci picked up his book and read the text word for word, as the squad marched out in a tight team. After awhile, one dwarf in the front row yelled, "Stop!" "You are killing us! Can you stop calling the same group out and instead let us take turns?"

"What are you talking about?" asked Aci, bewildered.

Then the captain said, "Shame on you!" "Didn't I just tell you that every squad member represents different tone, volume, and tempo? If you always read in the same way, you are always assigning the same group to work for you."

"What should I do then?" Aci asked.

"Try to be diverse. Try to differentiate your tones, forces, and tempos," replied the captain.

Aci accepted this suggestion and discovered a huge variety among his voice squad.

"Well done!" Mr. Zeng's voice suddenly drew Aci back to the class. Would others think he was nuts as he talked to the dwarves in class? But it seemed that none of his classmates found anything extraordinary, and neither did Mr. Zeng. Instead, Mr. Zeng appreciated what Aci's performance. "Aci, you can express diversity in your reading now! This suggests that you are stepping onto a higher level. But maybe you should try to bind your voice and feelings closer. This is a joyful article, so you should read it with a higher pitch and a faster tempo."

Somehow Mr. Zeng's words sounded like an echo of the dwarf's words.

### Reciting

At home, Aci continually practiced reading. He finally found the trick and knew exactly which dwarves to assign when performing his speech. After constantly pondering, exploring, and noting his observations, he also knew how to express his sentiments through words. He actually fell in love with reading, which more resembled a game than an assignment to him.

Sometimes Aci raised his pitch high, and sometimes he pressed it low; sometimes he sped up the lines, and sometimes he dragged them out slowly. He finally understood that one's voice could be very flexible, making the voice squad's performance very enjoyable. With the squad, he even discussed the subtext of the articles to better their performance.

After a series of practicing and playing, he also learnt more about the article itself.



Besides, he also began to heed others' voice squads – others' manners of speech. He found that his classmates were the most boring ones. Whenever they read, the dwarves flew out two by two, and they flew so slowly that he couldn't help dozing off when he observed them. Aci wondered if he would also fall in the same bog.

Fortunately, Mr. Zeng gave the class a suggestion.

"Don't always tie two words together. Although a sentence unit usually consists of two words<sup>1</sup>, it is just a convention, not a law. Give your rhythm more variations and try to locate the pauses in different places. Let us recite the modern poem Summer Night, and you might understand my point. Aci, can you recite for us?"

"Recite?" thought Aci, "Is reciting different from reading?"

"Reciting and reading are different. When reciting you must intentionally drag your speech, and slow down the tempo a bit to let your feelings catch up your speed." answered Mr. Zeng.

"Butterflies...and...bees...bring...the...honey...home..." Aci was not satisfied with his performance. The voice squad's movement was too stiff. Unlike in his reading, the squad's movement became awkward when he intentionally slowed down the tempo.

"Just imagine that you are drumming," said the squad captain. "Good drummers are able to shift smoothly between fast beat and slow beat, aren't they?"

Aci knocked his head. He began again, sometimes letting the squad members to tightly hold hands, and sometimes setting them apart.

"Butterflies and bees/ bring/ the honey/ home,  
Sheep and bulls/ leave/ the pasture/ for home,  
The blazing sun/ also/ rides his carriage/ home,  
As the lamps/ light up/ the road/ and bid/ the village/ goodnight,  
The summer night/ silently/ creeps inside."

"Well done! Go on!" Mr. Zeng was thrilled. "You are stepping onto the 'reciting' level. But you need to familiarize yourself with the poem to recite it without the written text."

Aci used to hate memorizing a text. But since reviewing the poem made it familiar, it was no longer a hard task for him.

Before the break, Mr. Zeng announced to the class, "After you learn how to recite, I'll teach you how to chant."

<sup>1</sup>In Chinese, the smallest unit of a sentence is usually composed of two words instead of one word.



## Chanting

Back home, a huge group of dwarves jumped out and filled Aci's room.

"Hey! I didn't call you out. Why are you all here?" Aci demanded.

The dwarves paid no attention to Aci. Instead, they were discussing fiercely, "It's time for him to learn about chanting. This is no easy task and we will have to work harder."

The captain saw Aci's puzzled look and then explained the concept to him, "When you speak, you require intonation. When you speak in a high pitch, the tone stays in level 5. When you speak with your voice rising, it goes from 3 to 5. When you speak with your voice lowering, it goes from 2 to 1 to 4. When you speak in a falling manner, it goes from 5 to 1. Here, 5 mean the highest pitch and 1 means the lowest. From 1 to 5 you have your range of intonation. And in chanting, you will use these five pitches as musical notes. That's to say, you will transform the intonation to melody."

"But I'm not a good singer. What if I chant out of tune?" Aci asked, concerned.

"Don't worry! You don't have to locate these five pitches on certain chosen notes.

A poem's tune is not regulated like a song's tune. So people who always sing out of tune can still chant. Ok, let's start."

Aci still didn't have a clue. Then the captain said, "Lengthen a vowel, and it will sound like a musical note. Let's chant using some everyday conversation. Chant "how is the weather today? "

Aci tried and found that each word did sound like a musical note. But still his chanting wasn't melodic.

"That's fine," said the captain, and it began directing its squad, "You have to act smoother, and you, distinguish the pauses and the change of tempo. Yes! That's right!" Then it said to Aci, "Let's chant one of Wang Jhih Huan's poems, *On The Heron Tower*."

"Bai Rih Yi Shan Jin,  
(The midday sun slips behind the mountain,)  
Huang He Ru Hai Liu.  
(The Yellow River flows into the ocean.)  
Yu Cyong Cian Li Mu,  
(To view thousand miles beyond,)  
Geng Shang Yi Ceng Lou.  
(One level higher, I must mount.)"





As Aci chanted the poem, the captain enhanced the squad's performance. "It 'flows into the ocean,' not 'rushes into the ocean.'" "Slow down a bit! And you! Mount higher. Loftier!"

After a period of hard work, the captain said to Aci, "Let's see the outcome."

As soon as Aci finished his chanting, the whole squad celebrated. "Good job, Aci! Good job, us!"

Then the captain taught Aci many other chanting techniques, such as the ornament of the grace note. Aci sensed his improvement, and was excited. On the next day, Aci also earned the entire class' applause.

### Singing

"Hello?" The captain flew out. "What's the matter?"

"What is next?" Aci yearned for the answer.

"What is what?" the captain asked.

"What follows learning reading, reciting, and chanting?"

"Oh yeah!" the captain was reminded what he should have told Aci. "It's singing! But you had better learn it from Mr. Zeng."

"Can't I learn it now?" Aci was too eager to wait.

"All right, I can give you some basic idea first. First of all, can you sing the children's song, Little Maiden Has A Little Doll?" the captain inquired.

"Of course!" replied Aci.

"Ok, then you can apply every seven-word-four-line poem on this song," said the captain.

"Seven-word-four-line poem?" asked Aci.

"Yes, this style of poem is composed of four lines, and each line is composed of seven words. This children's song is written that way as well. Open your book and you'll find Li Bai's poem, *Farewell to Meng Hao Ran*. Replace the song's lyrics with this poem."

Gu Reng Si Cih Huang He Lou,  
(On the Yellow Crane Tower, my old friend bids farewell to the west earth,)

Yan Hua San Yue Sia Yang Jhou.

(In the cloud of March blossoms, he cruises down the Yang Tzi River.)

Gu Fan Yuan Ying Bi Shan Jin,

(The distant shade of a lone sail fades into an emerald mountain,)

Wei Jian Chang Jiang Tian Ji Liu.

(What's left to my sight is the Yang Tzi River, flowing to the edge of heaven.)

Aci tried this method, and found that although he could place every word of the poem on every musical note just right, somehow the combination sounded conflicting.

"Yes, good," the captain nodded, "But it sounded wrong, right?" "That's because this farewell poem doesn't match that joyful melody. If you slow down the tempo, it might sound better."

Aci prolonged the length of the song, until it sounded more melancholy and less like a children's song.

The captain continued to speak, "That's all you need to learn today. It's just a start. Tomorrow you'll learn more from Mr. Zeng and...." Aci interrupted, "You know my teacher?"

"Don't interrupt my speech. That's very rude! It's very late now. First, take a rest. My squad is very exhausted." The captain suddenly vanished.

Next day, waiting for the break became torturous to Aci. He ran to Mr. Zeng right after the Chinese class finished, but then hesitated to utter his question. Mr. Zeng gave him a smile and said, "You are facing a more complicated task now. Why don't you stop by my office after school?"

"Why? How could he possibly know what I was going to ask?" thought Aci.

After school, Aci visited his office. Mr. Zeng said, "First of all, let me remind you that if you want to sing a poem, you should not only equalize the number of musical notes to the number of words, but also harmonize the song's style with the poem's style. Besides, the ascending and descending of melody must match the shift of tone in the poem. A descending melody doesn't go with a high rising intonation because that will reverse the shift of tone. If you reverse the shift, you'll confuse the four crucial intonations in Chinese<sup>2</sup>, and you will confuse the message. Thus, the choice of melody is important. You can adjust the melody if you find it doesn't match. Well, literal explanation is not an easy approach. Let's start singing right away!"

Mr. Zeng taught Aci many melodies, such as Tian Lai Melody, Ge Zai Melody, Huang Mai Melody, Jiang Si Melody, and Jiu Ling Melody. Aci thought these melodies were very "poetic".

<sup>2</sup>That is, high level, high rising, low rising, and falling.





But a question still lingered in his mind.

Mr. Zeng complimented Aci, "Well done! You are a quick learner! All you need now is to practice more. Do you have any other problems?"

"Well...uh....how...uh..." Aci just couldn't utter that question.

At the same moment, the captain of the voice squad appeared. "You are choked by the question, right?"

"Thank you very much for your help in the past few days, captain," said Mr. Zeng.

"Uh...how do you know...?" Aci was stunned.

"How do I know the voice squad? Well, that's because I have asked them to help you." Mr. Zeng said, nodding.

"But..." Aci stuttered.

"Well, let's just keep it as a secret between us, ok?" Mr. Zeng and the captain were both smiling at Aci's puzzled face.

Even so, they were confident about the truth--that Aci had learnt more than he himself could ever imagine.

### Postlude

I am Mr. Zeng, as well as Aci. Aci might be the role that most reflects the real me. In researching creative poem education, I was more a student than a teacher. I have learnt a lot from the group leader, Ms. Li Jhu Pan, and from my group members. I have even redefined my experience and knowledge. During this experience, I taught myself as if I was a student and tried to recall what it was like being a student. In the process of learning poem intoning — reading, reciting, chanting, and singing — I experienced the same journey as Aci — from being skeptical, to acknowledging the process of learning, then finally enjoying it. I have never known that the act of reading aloud could be so intriguing. Human voice does have magic and can inspire people. You may ask, does the voice squad really exist? You bet it does! Invisibly, they were performing hard, when you read this article!

Jia Ci Zeng







## Drama Apocalypse



Authors<sup>1</sup>: Xiang-Mei Guo ; Huei-Fen Chen

This is a story about  
Passion and creativity in education...

---

<sup>1</sup>Xiang-Mei Guo and Huei-Fen Chen are members of the Tainan County Drama Teachers' Workshop  
Supervisors: Prof. Ying-Yao Jheng and Prof. Yi-Heng Chen

## Abstract

"What matters the most is determination and energy. Whatever the educational reforms might be, trends will be our guides. Wisdom will give us chances only if we can hold out to the chances." Driven by this strong belief, Xiang-Mei Guo, a dean with foresight and vision at Yung Shin Elementary School, took the initiative and founded the Drama Teachers' Workshop during the summer of 2001. At a time when the future of performing art classes was still unknown and the curriculum itself was in chaos, the Drama Teachers' Workshop began to work for the performing arts in Tainan. During a three-level, ten-month professional workshop in cooperation with SONG SONG SONG Children's & Puppet Theatre, Ms. Guo discovered a group of teachers that shared a common interest for drama. The seven key members came from three new schools in Tainan--Yung Shin Elementary School, Wen Hua Elementary School, and Nan Kou Elementary School.

Long-term plans and funds are necessary to manage a cross-school team. Ms. Guo envisioned a three-year plan, in which everything was taken care of and a fine future for the Workshop was foreseeable. This project included striving for professional development; finding parallels between teaching and research; using an Internet communication forum; engaging in further study to improve personal abilities; exploring opportunities to share, swap, and pass down knowledge; and creating publications, etc. Ms. Guo also combined their plan with the Creativity Plan of Creativity Education Project Office of the Ministry of Education for available funds. With this full executive support, workshop partners dedicated themselves to teaching and research, free from financial concerns.

The management of the workshop was divided into two parts, the non-virtual society and the virtual society. In the non-virtual society, members held a weekly meeting to share their teaching experiences and to establish a closer relationship. Every meeting was dynamic. In an era of the "Net," the virtual society replaced traditional communication. In a forum entitled "Topic Discussion and Messages from the Heart," members all shared their deepest feelings.

The Bureau of Education, Tainan County, attracted by Drama Teachers' Workshop for its excellence in drama teaching, invited the Workshop on a experience-sharing tour. Their presentations, in cooperation with other related activities of the bureau, created a wonderful sensation and helped performing art to take deeper root within the county. To reveal these beautiful experiences, they visited other counties and cities on invitation and shared their experiences without reservation. They also helped numerous other to teams succeed in applying for funds, in the hope of forming an alliance for the performing arts.

The Drama Teachers' Workshop members collected their teaching experiences into "Creative Drama 120," a collection of creative drama classes including 120 classes from Grades 1 through 6. Demonstrations, feedback, revisions, and proper guidance for professors, were also available in this collection. This was a perfect culmination of all the efforts they had made in the past three years, serving as one of the most precious and beautiful memories of the group. This was also the best present that the Drama Teachers' Workshop could bring to all the teachers around



the county. They made an announcement, "We made it!"

Throughout this tie, there was bitterness, laughter, and tears that marked this experience. The Workshop members could hardly express their gratitude. The Drama Teachers' Workshop may be nothing but a tiny seed of Creativity Education Project Office, but they tried their best to grow up and worked hard to become a big tree. Three years do not represent an end, but simply serve as another beautiful beginning.





## Drama Apocalypse

To understand the value of a thousandth second: ask an Olympic runner who came in second

To understand the value of a second: ask the survivors of a car crash

To understand the value of a minute: ask a person who was bound for an important date but missed his train/bus/flight

To understand the value of an hour: ask a man waiting for his lover

To understand the value of a day: ask a worker who is paid on a daily basis, but has ten kids to feed

To understand the value of a week: ask an editor of a weekly magazine

To understand the value of a month: ask a mother of a premature baby

To understand the value of a year: ask a student who failed to pass the finals at the end of a semester

Then, how can one understand the value of **THREE YEARS**?

Come and ask the **Drama Teachers' Workshop!**

A dream, a seed.

The seeds of dreams, nourished and combined together, can make a deep forest.

**Drama Teachers' Workshop** quietly threaded three schools together through drama--transforming little dreams into great hopes, and making what seemed to be impossible, possible.

Were dreams sweet? No. Hot tears trickled and sweat oozed out.

Were dreams bitter? No. Our laughter rang out.

Were dreamers lonely? No. Help was never absent. Encouragement was everywhere.

Were dreamers happy? Yes. "Happy" was the perfect word to describe our feelings.

We have had no regrets about remaining devoted to our dreams; in fact, happiness tasted even sweeter for us when working collectively, than it would be for simply one person who rose to the challenge alone.

I believe that this is because our group of seven worked together.

Have you ever heard the story, *The Stone Soup*?

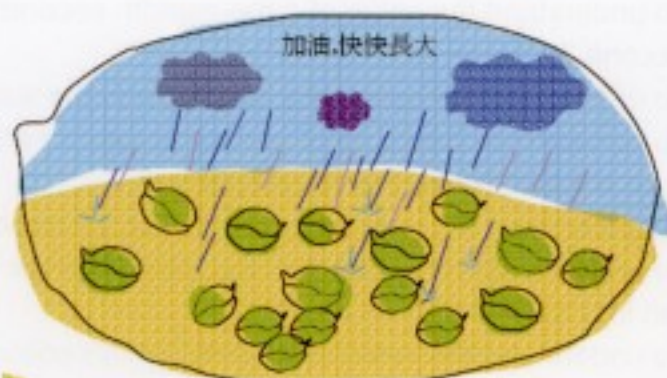
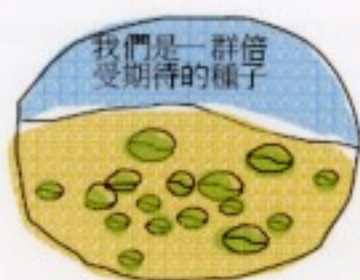
**Three soldiers used a pot of soup to teach the villagers a lesson.**

**The morale of the story was that by sharing, one could secure true happiness.**

*Drama Teachers' Workshop* is ready to make a pot of dream soup. Lend us your ears to hear a story about passion and creativity in education.

We are a sprinkle of seeds living up to others' expectations.

Go! Go! Grow up!



One, two, three, up!  
One, two, three, up!  
We begin to sprout.



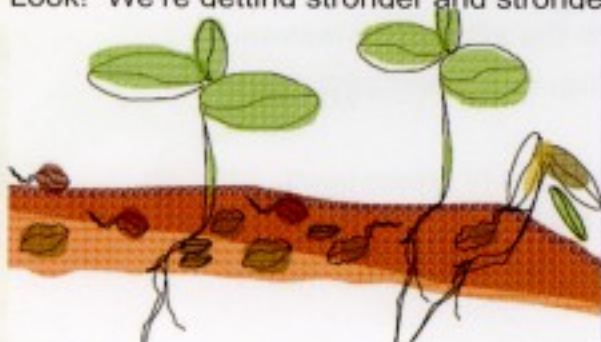
We can't sprout.

Green leaves are coming out.



Alas! Our roots are rotten.

Look! We're getting stronger and stronger.



Sigh! We have withered away.





Behind every dream, there is an navigator. For the navigator to guide effectively, a distinguished personality is needed. To understand the Drama Teachers' Workshop, you need to know a tough and creative leader who was simultaneously loved and hated by her followers.

### *Creativity unlimited*

"Xiang-Mei Guo, the dean of the counselors' office at Yung Shin Elementary School, is the key to the success of Drama Teachers' Workshop. She looks for planner and resources, makes arrangements, and cares for her partners' welfare. Jokingly, her partners call her a "strongwoman"—a director who wants "helping hands" in five minutes and money in ten minutes." (Adopted from an Internet interview by Creativity Education Project Office.)

Creativity is her middle name. "She is mentally quick. Whereas, she mentally completed the original project and has already drafted a blueprint for the next plan, we are still half-way completed in the original case," says Guo-Zhan Hong, one of the workshop members. "Most of the time, she plans and we execute the orders."

Xiang-Mei Guo, however, offers each and every member a sense of accomplishment and "elbowroom." For example, on a school tours, she encourages veteran teachers to give guidance to the novice leaders. To set an example for novice teachers, veteran teachers speak about their own experiences in public. This helps novice teachers, by demonstrating how to make a good presentation.

Most people, when they first meet this woman of forty, say, "She is young for her age." Then they give her a hostile look.

As a matter of fact, distrust of innovative direction is too common to mention. The way she worked, has been the center of attention for a long time. In today's educational society, pseudo-equality is celebrated, but heroism is seldom welcomed. That said, if you try something different and unusual, people will tell you not to waste your efforts. It is concern full of "sour grapes."

### *Chances are for those well prepared*

In her autobiography, Xiang-Mei Guo wrote, "Do you really want to be a person without a passion or a dream? Are you sure that you are still alive? A person's commitment to her goals will help her exercise her full powers. She will be entirely devoted. She will take vigorous action. She will regard each and every failure as a stimulus to further efforts. She will work to the last minute. You can't find words like "I can't," "I don't," or "I don't want to," in my philosophy." That strong belief in life's potential helps her to push herself forward. We realize this in what promises she has made, and understand why she can guide us so well with her calm presence whenever we are exhausted or torn between sorrow and joy.



### *Looking for self-fulfillment---wear a badge for yourself*

Xiang-Mei Guo is not only a romantic Pisces, but a leader of determination. She says, "You must be able to tell right from wrong, yourself. Leave others to decide whether you succeeded or not. Hence, it's hard to tell how much you have earned or

lost." She also believes in the power of personal preparation, saying, "Do your best. Make the most efforts. Prepare for the worst." A danger foreseen, she believes, is one that is already half-avoided. What's important is not whether you succeed or not, but whether you are well-prepared for the outcome. Someone once asked her how she kept her unflagging energy during a time when the principal failed to support her, and the colleagues questioned her philosophy. Cupping her chin in her hands, she answers clearly and determinedly, "I believe in my professionalism as a teacher, and I have made a commitment to it. Applause, fame, and gain are not my priorities. What matters the most is determination and energy. Whatever the educational reforms might be, trends will be our guides. Wisdom will give us chances, only if we can hold out to the chances."

*Yes! I do! This is for you, my partners!*

*Drama is life. Life is drama.*

*Every single scene or character is like  
an unpredictable kaleidoscope, full of changes.*

*This is creativity, isn't it?*

*A teacher's life can be dramatic.*





## Prologue

### *A scene from a body exploration workshop*

Guided by elves, a group of angels walked to a secret garden to look for dreams. Beautiful and tiny flowers blossomed from irregularly-shaped rocks. A breeze entered, casting dandelion seeds off to a meadow. Magic Happy Trees offered swings, slides, and hammocks for fun. On the tip of a branch, newly-hatched chicks basked in their nest. Wow! The Angels spotted some caves. Big caves. Small caves. As they threaded their way between the maze of caves, they realized how excited they were! Suddenly, a giant caterpillar popped up in front of them, wriggling. After a flash of lightning, the caterpillar transformed into a magic dragon, soared in the sky, and finally disappeared beyond the horizon.

After a peaceful and great calm, a storm raged riotously. Waves howled in the distance, rolling with tremendous force and becoming tsunamis. Pounding waves relentlessly tortured the secret garden. The angels, in a panic, fled for refuge. Elves showed up, and the angels soon calmed down.

Does this story sound familiar? Is this a scene from some classic movie? No. These beautiful scenes came from the rich imagination and the body language of a group of teachers. This story was derived from a workshop about how to be creative through the body and body exploration.

### *Dialogues among lovers of performing art*

"The presentation is marvelous! Everyone's imagination just runs wild."

"Kids must be more imaginative."

"This is an interesting class. I really want my students to try this. They will have a good time."

"Then, how can we use it in class?"

During the lunch break, much discussion had been provoked among teachers. Sitting on the wood floor of Da Wan Elementary School, teachers feverishly discussed role-play, impromptu exercises, extensive classes on body exploration, puppets, theater, and stage lights. What to do? How to do it? How to teach? These are the issues of which they were concerned.

### *An idea flashed in her mind*


An easy afternoon. Tea time. At Da Wan Elementary School, a school noted for its scenic grounds, clouds were breaking over, and a pleasant breeze was blowing. It seemed as though the trees, clouds, winds, and the blue sky, itself were relaxing. Ms. Guo shouted, "Look! The trees, the leaves, and the sand are playing hide-and-seek." She was really excited, hardly caring whether bystanders would laugh at her childishness. At that moment, she was feeling the joy of imagination in life.

Returning back to the workshop during the break, Ms. Guo made a suggestion, "Don't let this good opportunity pass. Our efforts will help sow the seeds of drama in children. Roots of drama will be struck down into their hearts and stimulate their



imagination. Let's promise them a future filled with truth, virtue, and beauty."

So the teachers set up Taiwan County Drama Teachers' Workshop.



What's the greatest accomplishment in life?  
Transcend the goals you want to achieve.  
Win the respect of those you want to respect.  
Find enjoyment in your goals.  
Succeed, in your own way.

Performing art has been included as a part of the Arts and Humanities Learning Area in the Grade 1-9 Curriculum. Ms. Guo, an art lover, decided to found Drama Teachers' Workshop and devote herself to performing art. Although there is a saying that warns us to, "Look before you leap," sometimes it is a good idea to make up one's mind first and to worry about the blueprint later. Hesitation, for example, might take the fight out of oneself, leaking away one's courage. For the next few days, Ms. Guo asked herself.

"How would I start?"

"Where are resources that I can use?"

"Should I find partners?"

Questions, questions, and still more questions.

#### *Find a way out from tradition*

*Matsushita Konosuke, a Japanese entrepreneur, once said, "Someone asked me about the key to a successful business. My answer is 'manpower, manpower, and manpower.'"*

On a warm afternoon, the atmosphere was so relaxing that our brains seemed to slow, but these thought-provoking questions were just starting to clear up. The quotation above deeply stirred Ms. Guo, helping her to find answers to her bothersome questions. Yes! She needed partners who understood and approved of drama. They had to be willing to work with her and to make firm and continuous commitments. Furthermore, they should be selected through a systematic training program. She thought about the workshop in original ways, planning to transcend traditional training practices, and discovered that only when a change was introduced into an old system, could real manpower be made available. Hence, she analyzed former training programs and found that they had something in common. The workshops were all provided "for free," were short-termed, independent, and unrelated. Moreover, the participants were usually assigned by schools and no effects of workshop were required. No one seemed to care what effect a workshop might have, the reasons for why people attended the workshop, and what ideas participants could take home. Also, what about the establishment of manpower information, the training of prospective drama teachers, and training systems? Little





attention was paid to these issues, but Ms. Guo cared about them the most. She took her first step towards innovative direction by presenting a different kind of workshop.

The training program of prospective drama teachers from Drama Teachers' Workshop

Date: 20 days, from February to August, 2002

Fare: NT\$1,500 for each person, and another NT\$1,000 as "earnest money" (money that refunded for regular attendance)

Contents: basic, intermediate, and advanced levels; assignments for each level are as follows.

1. one copy of your lesson plan
2. record of demonstration (written or visual)
3. discussion, reflection, and revision on your lesson plan (recorded on an internet forum)
4. reading reports (two books for each level)
5. workshop report (one copy for each level)

Note:

1. Fill in every questionnaire
2. Those failing to hand in their assignments in time, or whose endeavors fail of their effect of workshop, can't move up to a higher level.
3. Professors and scholars will be invited to evaluate your lesson plans.

Although people thought she was crazy, and wondered whether anybody would join the drama workshop, Ms. Guo herself never worried about that. She firmly believed that people with fixed determination, like her, would boldly confront any difficulties to walk towards the future with a firm step. She was looking for partners who shared similar personality traits as her, that is, her counterparts.

### *Ten minutes are critical*

Among all of the unexpected problems that can arise in planning a workshop, being short of funds must be the most embarrassing and troublesome. When Ms. Guo's request for funding was curtly refused, she answered without hesitation. "Please give me ten minutes. Let's find a solution that we can both accept." Out of curiosity and appreciation, her supervisors helped solve the problem of funding. The result seemed incredible, but not entirely unpredictable, because it met with her expectations. At the critical moments of life, different attitudes can yield different outcomes. Those "ten minutes" made her plan work exceptionally well. She was pleased, touched, and grateful. Moreover, she finally found her partners, which included:

Guo-Zhan Hong and Jun-Xian Chen from Yung Shin Elementary School



Hui-Fen Chen and Feng-Gui Chen from Wen Hua Elementary School

Xu-Li Zhang and Ying-Lun Kang from Nan Kou Elementary School

Although they were from different schools, they were united in their beliefs and passion for this team.

### *Approval followed by hard work*

The Creative Teachers' Action Research Plan, conducted by Creativity Education Project Office of the Ministry of Education, was a magic key for Drama Teachers' Workshop. Because of the plan, the teachers were able to gain access to plentiful resources. Their first plan, in cooperation with SONG SONG SONG Children's & Puppet Theatre, turned a new page with respect to collaborative workshops. This creative drama workshop, was divided into three levels, and lasted for 20 consecutive days. Hui-Fen confessed she would never ever join another workshop like this, because it was like a nightmare. However, she felt lucky to have had such unusual experience once in her life. She survived through these awful challenges: intensive classes, assignments, internet forum, reading reports, lesson plans, and demonstration record. As a result, she became a versatile teacher.

Since its' beginning, the Drama Teachers' Workshop has never been absent from Creative Teachers' Action Research Presentation, between the years 2001 and 2005. In 2003 and 2004, Central Office of the Ministry of Education and National Culture & Arts Foundation sponsored their plans, and they later received a Teaching Excellence Award. With luck on their side, Drama Teachers' Workshop has raised funds totaling more than one million NT dollars a year, inciting the envy of many struggling school teams. Sometimes a lack of resources could be a blessing, because more ideas are able to come to one's mind. Plentiful resources, however can be a greater blessing, but anticipation and pleasure usually arrives in proportion to the resources received.

### *An unforgettable and mysterious evening in Penghu*

#### *Ideas interchanged*

#### *Brainstorming*

#### *Showing your creativity under hypnosis*

This is a vivid report regarding the superb performance of Drama Teachers' Workshop from the "Creativity E-Paper."

"Come on. Let's shake to the beat!" This was a very different summer night in Penghu. Teachers broke off their lengthy discussion, shaking their bodies to the music. These passionate teachers were full of ideas, and they could even act and





dance better than the youngsters. This was an evening without ornate neon lights; instead the designers, Zong-Quin Li and Xiang-Mei Guo, invited all the participants to feel the passion of creativity.

From the very beginning of the evening, there was an air of mystery. Even the stage itself was merely decoration. The conventional design, in which the stage serves as a focus of attention, was replaced by a brand new concept. The stage's location, was 'moved' down to the audience area, so the spotlight was on each and every participant. As the team returned, the evening no longer belonged to the performers. Participants were welcome to exchange ideas with the performers.

Casting aside the mask of seriousness, teachers were frolicking. One of the teachers played a hypnotist, asking some teachers to volunteer to be hypnotized. 'When I signal to you, you will be free from hypnosis. Please walk in the most unusual way.' The hypnotist shook her magic stick and gave directions. Even Professor Zhi-Yu Zhan, the VIP of this summer camp, joined in the hypnosis. Professor Jing-Ji Wu, a.k.a. the Master of Creativity, was greatly enjoying the activities. During this electric moment, teachers of creativity filled the summer with as much humor as they could."

At the invitation of the Creativity Education Project Office, the Drama Teachers' Workshop drafted a midterm report in Penhu in August 2003. They also took up an important mission, that is, to take the lead in front of 80 people, including numerous professors and principals, for the last evening. For the first time, they traveled to Penghu and expected a blue sky to be waiting for them. What welcomed them instead, was a typhoon and they quickly came to realize how terrible it was when Penhu threw her tantrums. Worse luck befell Feng-Gui, who fell into a ditch. (No blame attached to her. How could one differentiate a ditch from the road during a tempest?) Despite these setbacks, nothing could restrain the Drama Teachers' excitement to prepare for the last evening. Even though they were going to face experienced teachers and professors, they still had a lot of fun during the preparations. "Work hard, and have fun!" became their motto. They would rather quit if they couldn't enjoy themselves. The hypnotist, played by Hu-Fen, helped all the professors to rid themselves of restraint, and produced much excitement amongst the workshop participants. When Ms. Guo led the dance, Professor Wu enjoyed himself to the full. Under Guo-Zhan and Ying-Lun's improvisation, teachers let their guard down and stretched their bodies to relax. With the cooperation of all the members in Drama Teachers' Workshop, magic was created.

*Dance your senses off.*

*Engrave this evening into your memory.*

*The tempest has gone.*

*Unforgettable blue skies will arch in Penghu again.*


*Everybody gets old, but not everyone will "grow up".*

*Becoming old doesn't stop us from having fun.*

*We get old when we stop having fun.*

Creative people can hardly tolerate boredom in life. Bored people age quickly. To escape daily boredom, you have to imagine a flower in your mind, and make it diffuse its sweets on your breath. Most people think that attending a meeting is an





irksome task, but Drama Teachers' Workshop felt differently. Feng-Gui's comment was classic. "I can't help getting excited every Friday evening. What's waiting for me is not a thankless task. I would rather take it as a chance to relax. It's just like going on a picnic with old friends." As soon as they stepped into Ms. Guo's office, she would always say, "Here comes the gorgeous! What do you like to eat today?" (The meeting always began around dinner.) Her greeting tickled their ears. Then they would have their hunger satisfied with pizzas, fried noodles, fried dumplings, bread, fruit tea, and sandwiches—often included in one single meal. Ms. Guo often treated them to dinners, insisting that all the food be eaten up. Poor Juan-Xian always took care of what had been left because he didn't have to worry about his weight. He dubbed the workshop, the "Pigs-Raising Team," and Ms. Guo was naturally the Captain. Their workshop rules provided that dieting, fasting, and hunger were never accepted on Friday evenings.

The working load of the Drama Teachers' Workshop was in proportion to their funds, so they might have two cases simultaneously. The Bureau of Education, to whom Drama Teachers' Workshop had become synonymous for dramatic performance, sometimes required support from the workshop. Often, the Workshop would try their best to collect and organize their ideas into a play in a short period of time. However, a process full of fun, was what the members always worked for. In 2001, the Workshop for the first time, was engaged in the opening ceremony of the Reading Carnival. A crowd marched to Ms. Guo's apartment to put on make-up and eat breakfast. She said that her apartment had never before, been so crowded with that many guests. On the way from her apartment to the ceremony, workshop members walked, dressed up like carnival dancers. Juan-Xian dressed up as Fred Flintstone. Ms. Guo was an elf. Guo-Zhan was a giant, a role that matched with his height. Feng-Gui was a little princess. While at the carnival, "show time" lasted for only ten minutes. Hui-Fen even threw her cup too far during the performance, and changed some of her lines to cover up the mistake. The climax, nevertheless, arrived after the show as the audience clamored to take pictures with these "unusual teachers." In "Let's Talk about Tainan in Drama," 2004, the Workshop presented the show as memoirs, taking the audience back to the '50s in a series of flashbacks. Melodies and rhythms created wonderful sensations. Earlier in the beauty salon, the make-up lady remarked that these energetic persons didn't look like teachers at all.

*To carry the backpack of sharing*

*To create something hopeful that will touch your heart*

In a Kung Fu story, the apprentice, once adequately trained, would bid farewell to his/her master. He/she traveled down the mountain, returning back to the mundane world, ready to accept its challenges and to advance knowledge. As gratitude and sharing were two ideals that the workshop members strongly believed in, they decided to go on a lecture tour organized by the Tainan County government. To thank the Bureau of Education for its' funding support, they were willing to share and swap experiences with teachers from other schools. On their first stop, however, Jun-Xian





made some mistakes because of an equipment failure, which threw him into a sweat. Feng-Gui drove hours alone to reach a remote school, just to share her experiences with six teachers. Hui-Fen conscientiously finished her presentation in the presence of her principal. Assembly rooms. Lecture rooms. Classrooms. Auditoriums. Six people. 20 people. 50 people. 100 people. Every presentation was like a thrilling adventure--full of uncertainty. What they counted on to survive all these trials was unwavering passion and courage.

The feedback from the audience was just as amazing as the presentation itself.

"I was a nervous wreck. But when I saw the audience was so concentrated on the performance, I felt more confident to carry on."

"One guy even asked me whether he could join our workshop. I can see he had a great interest."

"That principal said that next time he would spare more time for me. He invited me to visit his school again."

"It would have been better if we had had some music."

"I should have read more theoretical books. I must build up a secure foundation."

Blah, blah, blah.


After a series of severe trials, Drama Teachers' Workshop was getting stronger and stronger.

### *Drama Teachers' Workshop---the horn of hope from the south*

Prof. Ying-Yao Zheng and Prof. Yi-Heng Chen had been silent but strong supports of the Drama Teachers' Workshop, but Ms. Guo was the only one that had immediate contact with them. One day, with much anticipation, the workshop partners drove all the way to Sun Yat-Sen University to meet these two professors, but Prof. Zheng happened to be busy. Long waits in the office were tiresome, so their "drama cells" were activated again. They took out a camera and took multiple pictures. Posing, after all, was their specialty. They had such a great time that they forgot as to why they were waiting. When Prof. Zheng came in apologizing for keeping them waiting, they shook their heads with big smiles. Prof. Zheng approved of the team's efforts and perseverance. Then he encouraged everyone not to lose any chance of doing something in an era when team spirit was too important to be ignored. The Drama Teachers' Workshop had blown the horn of hope in the south. The sound would fly to each and every corner in the future.

It wasn't too difficult to find the banner of "Drama Teachers' Workshop, Yung Shin Elementary School" in Creative Education Exposition, 2004. Although, it didn't occupy a good place--surrounded though it was by a bunch of college banners, virtual gardens, balloons, robots, and high-tech gimmicks--it easily caught kids' eyes. Through action plays, puppet shows, modeling games, and face-to-face interaction, the workshop members showed their true colors, using their bodies and facial expressions. What they received in return was usually the truest reactions. Some children were reluctant to go. Others, interested in drama education, were highly





attracted to the stand, passionately raising many questions. Drama lovers seemed to draw colored balloons in their minds, and waited patiently for the moment when their balloons were inflated and ready to soar up in the sky. SONG SONG SONG Children's & Puppet Theatre, which had once cooperated with Drama Teachers' Workshop, lent a helping hand. At the closing ceremony, the Drama Teachers' Workshop unexpectedly won second place for "The Best Action Research Reward." Jumping and shouting in excitement, they grasped Prof. Zhi-Yu Zhan, the emcee, to take a picture. Genial warmth spread in the cool air of February and quietly settled down in the hearts of the workshop partners.

### *Insist and succeed.*

Strong-minded individuals working together could make a brilliant team, but friction between them was hardly avoidable. Ms. Guo was a director full of creative ideas, but her quick wit, wild imagination, and short temper sometimes caused misunderstandings. Not every partner could follow her thinking. In one meeting, as members aired their opinions emotionally, the discussion grew hotter and hotter. All of a sudden, Ms. Guo made a comment, and Xu-Li's face fell. Ms. Guo's tone was unpleasant to her ears. "Are you blaming me?" said Xu-Li. Before Ms. Guo knew what had happened, others tried to smooth over the quarrel. Yin-Lun, who had the least seniority, was too embarrassed to say a word. Also, Feng-Gui, the artist in the workshop, sometimes differed in opinion from Ms. Guo, regarding the impression of a finished work. Feng-Gui was once responsible of a specific report to the National Culture & Arts Foundation. In Ms. Guo's opinion, Feng-Gui's production failed to meet the requirements, so Ms. Guo "returned the merchandise." Whenever an argument arose, someone would always try to ease the embarrassment. This was the tacit agreement in the Workshop. Ms. Guo's tantrums came and went quickly, and moreover, she always confined herself to the matter at issue. Hui-Fen agreed that no one could have monitored their work as effectively, if Ms. Guo had not been so "dominant." As a matter of fact, any team free from systematic restraints needed someone to be insistent in order to move ahead.

Energy would sometimes give out, especially for those torn between family and the workshop. Jun-Xian once left Drama Teachers' Workshop, and his partners fully understood why he made such a decision. Ms. Guo was most reluctant to let him go. After attempts to persuade him to stay, however, what she could do in the end, but to quietly watch him leave temporarily? Metaphorically, when would the weary bird return to its' nest? Ms. Guo gave him a free choice, because she knew very well that everyone had his/her own life. It was easy to quit. It took, however, insistence and determination to succeed.

Work responsibilities also conflicted with those of the workshop. For instance, Guo-Zhan was promoted to dean of the academic affairs. As he undertook grave





and new responsibilities, he felt dispirited with his duties for the workshop. The workshop partners had been cooperating together for a long time, so they understood his difficulties in juggling the demands of his new position with the needs of the Workshop. The situation, however, was getting worse.

"Guo-Zhan, our web page needs updating."

"Oh."

"Guo-Zhan, how is your documentary film?"

"Almost done." (Not much had been done, actually.)

"Gho-Zhan, Prof. Zhou will be here next week for Hui-Fen's and your demonstrations. Be fully prepared!"

"Oh."

Guo-Zhan's failure to take care of both needs of work and the workshop was only to be expected. When Workshop partners were busy on Saturdays and Sundays, he would pop in and out, making it so the members couldn't go home until 9 pm. Under the mixed emotions of misunderstanding, anger, and grievance, everyone, though busy with his/her own work, made feeble and constant complaints. What needed to be done had to be done. Nevertheless, what was needed was a solution on how to strike a balance between competing priorities and how to make good use of one's time. Drama Teachers' Workshop, though staggering along, learned from each situation and experience.

### *Bonding is great because of connection and sharing*

How many people would be willing to drive for five hours just for an interview? It is hard to know other people's answers, but for members of the Drama Teachers' Workshop, the answer would be, "Yes." To support the 2004 Creative Teachers' Action Research, the Drama Teachers' Workshop had to interview some excellent school teams to understand how they ran their teams. Red Fone Elementary School, the most remote school in Tainan County, was on their list. As quick as a flash, the members gathered in the car of Guo-Zhan, the Drama Teachers' Workshop's No. 1 race car driver, as he sped up the mountain. (Everyone had to return back to teach the next morning at seven.) Indeed, Guo-Zhan deserved to be called by such a name because everyone was about to throw-up when they saw the gate of Red Fone Elementary School.

The workshop members were exhausted, but in high spirits during the interview. Someone once said, "Passion is a necessity for everything one does. Without passion, even the most wonderful experience will become boring." At the interview, they combined work with interest and matched them up nicely, just like preserved plums and green tea. "This was an unusual experience," said Feng-Gui light-



heartedly. It was especially pleasing to chat with so many passionate “fools.” At night, the principal invited them to search for fireflies, despite the fact that it was not the reproductive season for fireflies. Not many were found, but discovering an occasional dim light, was enough to surprise them for a long while. Lying on the ground and watching stars in the sky, they enjoyed their hard-earned peace and leisure. How many chances could one have to do something crazy with people sharing a common interest? “No matter how long we can stay together, this will be one of the most delightful memories in my life,” thought Hui-Feng. A partner from Red Fone said, “You guys are really fantastic. You spare time to do something like this. What impresses me even more is that you come from different schools. You must have had more difficulties to overcome.” Ms. Guo smiled knowingly. Undoubtedly, his comment was not flattery.

*When you find something beautiful,  
the first thing you need to do is to share it with everyone you meet.  
Beauty can thus be spread abroad in this world.*

The Drama Teachers' Workshop was predestined to visit Penghu again. Principal Zhong-Fu Ke, the assembler of the Arts and Humanities Learning Area in Penhu, invited the Workshop to share their experiences with the arts teams. He had heard about the workshop's dedication to teaching drama. It was a beautiful experience to share one's dreams with others. A crowd surrounded the Workshop partners to listen as Ms. Guo related the Workshop's story. For four hours, no one became impatient, or left abruptly, or even complained. “Gee.” “Gosh!” “Sigh!” “Oh, my god.” These were the words that you could hear. The head of the Penghu Peanut Teachers' Theater said that having a good director was the key to success. Others could carry forth without worries, as long as they had someone take the lead, offer executive support, and administer the funds. He also remarked that the Drama Teachers' Workshop was a lucky, diligent, and excellent team. Ms. Guo replied with a smile, “Take every opportunity that's in front of you. Every project stands for an opportunity. Do the right things. Enjoy yourself. Don't regret.” She encouraged the friends in Penghu to search beyond the strait for more opportunities and survival/development spaces. More importantly, she assured them that the Drama Teachers' Workshop would be their friend for life. Hearts of mutual admiration and support could diminish



the distance between Tainan and Penhu.

As opposed to the stormy night that greeting them during their last visit to Penghu, this time, the glaring sunlight offended their eyes. The Workshop partners rode



rented scooters on the wide roads. Breezes, mixed in with laughter that was rising and falling, tasted salty. They wrote down five big letters, DRAMA, on the sands, and although waves washed away the word, they were not sorry. The word had long been engraved on their hearts.

Two more brilliant teams were founded after this tour of sharing and collaboration. "Hotshots" throughout the country convened for the National Culture & Arts Foundation for Fun in Drama Teaching Program. Good friends greeted one another with smiles. At the moment, they had a new story of Penghu to tell.

*In this minute, you find something beautiful.  
In this minute, you can't find something that's not beautiful*

"Sleep in a tropical hammock and sway lightly in the wind. The sound of quivering leaves becomes the natural background music. The rays of sunshine filtering through the leaves will cover your body like a golden sari." This was the charming vision the Workshop members had before they headed straight for Pindong for a once-in-a-lifetime vacation. Unfortunately, cold fronts followed their steps to Pindong, drizzling for two days. Everyone must have felt sorry for themselves, correct? No. "Creativity is not a slogan but an attitude toward life." Even stuck in a farm, the Drama Teachers' Workshop could make what could easily have been a boring experience, interesting.

Can you imagine a giant like Guo-Zhan, 180 cm tall and weighing 90 kg, lifting one leg of a table and mimicking a dog going for a pee? This was not a scene from Arabian Nights, but a happening in real life. Ms. Guo suggested they try an interesting card game. The person who got the ace must leave the table immediately, pose, and freeze so others can imitate him/her. The slowest one would be the loser. Poses were as strange as could be and shouting, laughing, and panting naturally ensued. Other tourists mistook the workshop members for frolicking college students. How could they believe that these guys were elementary school teachers who used to be serious and well-behaved?

"The Drama Teachers' Workshop challenged the wind and the rain with laughter and creativity."

*After transformation, be affected and have joy.*

*If a life is to be divided into two parts,  
The philosophy for the first part is "No hesitation."  
The second is, "No regrets".*

In the summer of 2004, Drama Teachers' Workshop hosted a drama workshop that was immersed in teaching. Every member was required to do either a half-day or a day-long teaching demonstration. Moving scenes appeared frequently. Whoever stood on the platform and whenever help was needed, other partners,





without hesitation, were willing to give a helping hand. The workshop members even enjoyed themselves more than other participants. No one cared about his/her workload because they knew one another so well. During the workshop, Ying-Lung happily combined famous paintings and drama. Xu-Li put her focus on the relations between the language of drama. Hui-Fen used little objects found in life for "creativity extension activities" to arouse the kids' interest. After the workshop, one participant said, "I am envious that you can work together as a team. It reminds me of my college club. You are so energetic, and you cooperate in harmony. Opportunities like this are getting fewer after college." In an envious and melancholy tone, she looked at Ms. Guo with eyes blurred with tears. Compared to her helplessness, the Drama Teachers' Workshop should have been more satisfied with what they had accomplished.

### *Energy in developing teaching material*

*Only when you show an interest in art, can art be valuable and alive.  
Otherwise, it is dead.*

Creative drama was the starting point for the Drama Teachers' Workshop. They had been working happily in this area, but there were certain matters that they regretted. They wished that other teachers could have better understood the benefits of creative drama. If teachers were less afraid, and more willing to apply creative drama in classroom, it would be easier to excite children's creativity, imagination, sympathy, positive values, and attitudes. Textbooks that are currently available were not suitable for creative drama, and self-development, especially with respect to a child, was more difficult than it seemed. The Drama Teachers' Workshop had discovered similar problems on the tour. Responding to Ms. Guo's proposal, all the members approved the plan "Creative Drama 120" without objection. That is, they had to produce 120 creative drama classes in six years. They discussed the details over a hot pot meal.

"It would be better to classify the lesson plans according to drama elements."

"But what about the connection between grades?"

"We can set ability objectives first ....."

At the end of the heated discussion, their faces burned with excitement, and their eyes glinted with eagerness to begin.

Under the guidance and revision of numerous professors, the lesson plans were classified in order of the date they were completed. The workshop members developed a "kid's edition" for drafts, a "youngster's edition" for the revised edition, and finally, a "mature edition" for revisions after demonstrations and reflections. Because not everyone had demonstrated the specific lesson plan that he/she had designed, interpretations of the lesson would vary from person to person. In one meeting, Hui-Feng suggested everyone show his/her lessons plans to others. Fortunately, an opportunity was accidentally available.

Before we start this interesting activity, let's have a game of "stress." The order



is "I can't dance." We have to practice three times. First, put your stress on "I" to emphasize it's "I" that can't dance. Then your stress on the word, "can't," and then "dance," etc. .... Not enough? Want more? OK. Let's have some more sentences. Are you ready? .... Fine. That's it. I can see you are quite willing to join our activity of performing major roles today. Go! Go! Go!

Everyone laughed loudly over Jun-Xin's lesson plan, written in the kid's edition. It absolutely reflected his style--easy, but a little "dry." The person who had to demonstrate this lesson plan would most likely laugh wryly. From February to June 2005, all of the workshop members raced with time, not to rush his/her job, but to finish the lessons as soon as possible for the benefit of all those interested in teaching drama.

*Sometimes kids' feelings are like sand. You need water to mix sand, otherwise the grains will be dry and will lie scattered. The Drama Teachers' Workshop promises to be that glass of water.*

Six kids raised their hands to make a circle. Some kids waited quietly while others spoke in whispers. They were eager to know what the six kids were up to. "My guess is it's a fountain." "No. It should be a flower." "A mountain." "Stop it! Let's wait and see."

All of a sudden, those six kids knelt down, put up their hands, and made "Shooting" sounds continuously. Bang! Twelve hands spread in all directions. Some fell slowly. Some fell in curves. Others fell down, forming various shapes.

"Boys and girls, please give a name to this beautiful scene," said Hui-Feng.

"Fairies spreading flowers." "A fountain." "Firecrackers on Chinese New Year's Day." "Fireworks on Double Tenth Day." "Fireworks that love to dance." Kids announced their opinions one by one.

"It's cool! When can we have more difficult challenges?"

"Jack and I made a fire-emitting dragon. We will try something difficult the next time. You can guess!"

"I hope we will have more performance classes, so I can play."

Looking at those passionate, thrilled, and expectant faces, Hui-Feng fully understood that this was more than a performance class. It served as multiple classes, which combined training in self-assertion, teamwork, communication, and creative evaluation. Although kids didn't receive any report cards in this class, many seeds had been sown in their minds--seeds that could fruitfully sprout one day.

The Workshop partners regarded drama as a time capsule. In the beginning, kids might not make rapid and brilliant progress, but drama would exercise a strong influence over them and become a good companion for the rest of their lives.

The Drama Teachers' Workshop decided to host a drama camp in Nan Kou Elementary School. All of them members were required to take the lead while others observed, assisted, and offered opinions.

"How should I begin?"



"That depends on what abilities we expect our kids to develop after camp ends."

"Drama should be more than just training certain skills. We should cover cooperation, expression, creativity, sympathy, respect, and listening."

"Then we need multiple roles."

Brisk discussions like these were common in the Drama Teachers' Workshop. Everyone was free to express his/her ideas, and ideas could be discussed and revised freely. The twelve-week camp ended with a beautiful sunset, and the kids left with reluctance. Maybe the workshop partners' eyes betrayed them, but as they walked away, they seemed to see those kids shining.

*I used to think that I fulfilled a dream,*

*Then I came to realize that it was my dream that made me what I am today.*

At midnight, an e-mail arrived.

"The Drama Teachers' Workshop has been awarded again. I'd like to share my happiness with you. Thanks for your strong support and help during all these years. For the second time, the Drama Teachers' Workshop is on the 'Role Model 100' list and has again won the award. This time I experienced a very different feeling. The day before yesterday I got some 'thank-you' phone calls' from our partners. I was deeply touched. Many thanks to our supervisors in the Bureau of Education, professors, and teachers, and my dearest partners for their constant support and help. We worked extremely hard, and we did the right things. Thanks again for your efforts. May peace and happiness be with you! Love, Xiang-Mei"

This was the e-mail that Ms. Guo sent to all her partners immediately upon receiving the news that Drama Teachers' Workshop was awarded the honor of being on the Role Model 100 list again. (Role Model 100 was a yearly selection, comprised of excellent teams found across the country.) The Drama Teachers' Workshop had been nominated twice as a cross-school team. Hui-Feng said jokingly that the Drama Teachers' Workshop should have been called "Role Model 200 Teachers' Workshop." The cross-school combination had the edge over the other teams, and its' untiring efforts and continued progress in drama teaching had brought about the desired result. How much does a "Thank you" weigh? An e-mail could hardly express even one-hundredth of gratitude.

*What's the scariest thing in life?*

*When you are lying on the bed dying, you view your life retrospectively. All of a sudden, you realize that you didn't make anyone's life better.*

*What a waste of life! (Lan Hong)*

What the Drama Teachers' Workshop could be sure was that, with plentiful memories and boundless gratitude, they had used their lives well.

*Transformation will be a never-ending song*





Another busy night that lasted until 9 pm. No one was conscious of anything outside of the office. Time seemed to freeze in this space full of laughter, thoughts, discussions, occasional conflicts, and silence. Outside the door, people were misunderstood, questioned, and were even jealous of one another. Different viewpoints came and went. The Drama Teachers' Workshop partners, however, immersed themselves in their world where they held true to their promises and moved forward.

In the darkness of night, Ms. Guo had to crouch very close to the door to find the keyhole. Hui-Feng suggested that Ms. Guo use the mini flashlight she gave Ms. Guo the last time. Otherwise, everyone had to turn on his/her cell phone to shed light on the keyhole as they had done numerous times before. This was, of course, to compare which cell phone offered the best fluorescent light, they said jokingly. They found that it was still a long way to walk to the school gate, especially without any light. Feng-Gui fell down as she walked and talked. Xu-Li was busy giving her boyfriend a call and apologized for keeping him waiting. Finally the electric gate opened, and cars left one-by-one like a thin thread. The running engines sounded awkward in the quiet of the night, but this was the warmest memory of the Drama Teachers' Workshop.

*The accomplishments you achieve from your regular workload will usually be those that are the most valuable and meaningful to you. Tiny twinkling stars will lead other lights to their destinations and will keep on shining.*

*The curtain falls.*

Notes:

These acknowledgements are made in sincerity of Drama Teachers' Workshop.

Xiang-Mei:

After all, we make our own history, and we are getting on well in our own stages. As a director, I have to be extremely familiar with our goals and direction, evaluate the environment, and take on every challenge and opportunity. I dare not say that I have taken good care of everything, but I was as careful as I could be.

"Thanks!" is what I want to say to my supervisors, professors, and partners.

Because I expect great things of you, I brought pressure to bear upon you. I hope that you will be excellent teachers and future leaders. Sometimes I felt that I was overly harsh. If only I had relaxed more, or slowed a little down... If only I had complained less, no blame would have been attached to me. However, we really didn't have time to waste. The only thing I could do was to move forward and to

make further progress.

For years, your only pressure came from me, but the accumulated pressure I had received was far beyond your imagination. I have confidence in my expertise, and I had to be true to all the promises that I have made. When I am exhausted, I tell myself not to give up, so that I can move ahead.

Remember this. Thanks again for all your efforts. This precious memory will always be in my mind.

Hui-Feng:

My passion for drama was not planned in advance, especially for the last three years. When it's time to go, I will leave. In the Drama Teachers' Workshop, I have learned much more than I ever had at school. The Drama Teachers' Workshop has made me a teacher of broad vision and has helped me find a stage of my own. Ms. Guo means a lot to me. To run a cross-school team is no easy job. She is sometimes dominant, but I know that everything she does is for our good. It's a pity to be misunderstood. Fortunately, she has learnt to make light of all attacks. She knows what she is up to. Just do your best, my dear partners. I will always remember the time we worked together.

Feng-Gui:

I used to quarrel with Ms. Guo over deadlines. When it comes to the workshop produce a publication cover, our different opinions over beauty often led to arguments. The work had to be revised again and again, sometimes driving me crazy. I really care about this team, but I am not good at apportioning my time. So I often screwed up. However, I really enjoyed our meetings. Although I am always in a hurry, I feel like I'm coming to see my good old friends. We always have some extra work, but I am extremely happy to work with them.

Guo-Zhon:

I was the first to work with Ms. Guo, so I am in continual contact with her. In my opinion, she is really dominant, but she is also a woman of thoughts. To be honest, I have learned a lot from her. But there are some criticisms of her at school, and I am sometimes torn between two sides. Gradually, I came to realize that our relationship has undergone some changes. When I became the dean of academic affairs, I really couldn't handle so many things simultaneously. I wanted to do something for the workshop, but not much has been done. As I have slowed, I find myself left behind. All I can do is to watch their backs with a blank stare.





Jun-Xian:

I left once because the load of work was far too heavy for my physical condition, and it took too much time. I thought it would be better if I left, but I ended up with a life bereft of any goals. On Friday evenings, I tried not to get close to Ms. Guo's office. I was afraid of their longing eyes and "terrible" laughter. It was like a magic power, and I was afraid to be swallowed. Ms. Guo noticed my dilemma and made some arrangements so I could return. It's precious to regain what you have once lost. Now I am absolutely sure about what I really want.

Xu-Li:

My school is much further, so I can only see Ms. Guo on Fridays. To be frank, I respect her very much. It's not easy to run a cross-school team out of the regular system. She often poses some deeper problems. In this team, I have the chance to share my own experiences. It's a one-in-a-life-time opportunity to learn something. But I also care about my private life. It bothered me a lot to work on weekends.

Ying-Lung:

It never occurred to me that one day, I could give a lecture on the platform to other teachers. My first appearance was nervous-wracking, but Ms. Guo's encouragement inspired confidence in me. I feel that she is an interesting person, but sometimes I was scared of her whenever I failed to finish my work. Maybe I felt guilty. The other partners are wonderful, too. I really admire them. I wish I could be like them one day.

*Future belongs to those who have creativity.  
As creativity comes from thoughts,  
So the future also belongs to those who can "think."  
Collective wisdom brings unlimited potential into full play,  
So the future also belongs to those who can take part in a "team."  
(Wen-Ji Luo, 2001)*





## A story of love and dream— A perfect PBL team



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## A Story about Love and Dreams— A Perfect Problem-Based Learning Team

To you, the reader



### ©The composition of the story:

We are going to tell you a story, a story about a team that used "Love" as a metaphor. The story is based on the true process of interaction amongst the team. A fictitious relationship became the imagery for the interactions that provided a space for observation, integration, and reconstruction; in other words, she (the woman in the fictitious relationship) allowed us to extricate ourselves from the subjectivity of love, in order to calmly observe. Following the tacit consensus, we wrote a story about love and dreams.

*There is no standard answer in love, only a collective definition.*

We are chasing an educational idea that began as a dream, but offers unlimited possibilities. Because of Professor Lu, Chin-Hsieh's invitation, we gathered to begin a process with "Problem-Based Learning," or PBL, to explore the infinite possibility of "creativity," to challenge ourselves, and to inspire students. The uncertain characteristic of love undoubtedly was the proper metaphor for the confusion and ambiguity in our story describing "Problem-Based Learning." In the process, each member of the team gradually came up with an explanation for such a teaching ideal, and a collective definition of love.

*Affection is the pioneer of love, and love draws affection out of patterns to show the true appearance of life.*

Falling madly in love with PBL, let us swing between current gifted curriculum and innovative teaching. "Affection" allows people forget themselves without returning. Similar to the process of the curriculum practice, we had to persistently break down all the rules that had been taken for granted, and to deconstruct the line between "teaching and learning," often used in the past. However, as time went by, love made people see clearly within themselves, allowing them to naturally deconstruct, construct, and reconstruct. We, in turn, developed a "community subculture." We learned to tolerate, show understanding, endure, and defend; to draw unprofessional tacit consensus from professional interaction, and to make "growing" a major concern of our lives.

Therefore, to show our relationship and development with PBL, we took our team members' experiences, adapted the process of team interaction, and attempted to compose a chapter about love that is based on true imagination, and awaits you, our reader...to read about our brilliant ideas, and our anxieties as well.

Perhaps, creativity is a rediscovering of life!





## Our Story



We would like to dedicate this moving love story  
To all the teachers that work so hard in the gifted education field!  
We hope that through this story of love and dreams,  
it can clearly reflect PBL, the Problem Based Learning Team's characteristics,  
Presented in front of all the people.

### ©Character Introduction:

On September 9, a group of people participated in the "Year 2004 Seminar of the Ministry of Education: Awarding Ceremony for Special Education Research," which was hosted by Hualien University. After the seminar, we went to Cisingtan (Seven Star Sea), to let the sea wind blow through our hair, and to throw stones at the sea where a typhoon was oncoming. Everybody bought sausages, sat in the pavilion, and talked about the story of our team....

Before we begin the story, let's introduce the characters first!

**Ms. Yio:** An Actress in the love story, who uses the first person narrative. (Ms. Yio is a gifted teacher, who was the concentration of the team members, and also symbolized the thoughts and desires of our team members.)

**Relationship Support Group:** Ms. Yio's relationship back-up team (the PBL team, which has eleven members).

**Mr. G:** Ms. Yio's ex-boyfriend (Current Gifted Curriculum)

**Mr. P:** Ms. Yio's present boyfriend (PBL, Problem-Based Curriculum)

**Madame CoCo:** A love consultant, teacher, and a friend (National Taipei University of Education's professor, Dr. Lu, Chin-Hsieh.)



While waiting at the seashore before the typhoon came, there was a certain silence and disturbance that could not be expressed by words....

Sitting on the shores of Cisingtan with Mr. P, watching the waves loll, I tasted the delicacy from the sausage vendor. With each bite, there was a strong sense of satisfaction that arose. I was indeed familiar with this kind of ambrosia on earth. The oily taste and elasticity of meat was like music playing on the tip of my tongue. The taste of smoke and burning flames, reminded me of past love. But at the spot where the treat was actually going through my throat, the flame became less warm. I could feel it fading away to become the source of nutrition our bodies needed.

There was a voice trilling in my ear, Oh! No! Of course it wasn't the sausage vendor who asked with his native accent: "Next, do you still need garlic?" Instead, it





was something entirely unexpected:

"Ms. Yio, in this next moment, will you still be in love with me?"

Yes, "In this next moment, will you still be in love with me?" This was the question that Mr. P asked me.

I stared out into the ocean. The spray caused by the waves was not mere collision of the sea and the rocky coast, but more like the ripples being made by a pebble while thrown into the heart of the lake. Pulling back my thoughts to the many scenes of our relationship, I recalled more and more....

*One hope, the complex meaning of the past three years....*

*---The three-year contact with the Problem Based Learning Curriculum*

It's been three years. I had gotten into a sticky situation with my boyfriend Mr. G, whom I went out with for years. To be honest, he didn't do anything wrong. It's just that he had a conservative and traditional personality. But he was a good person who always followed the rules and did everything in a clear and straight-forward way, and was capable of giving others a stable life. However, for me, who always expected a wonderful vision of the future, this kind of life, was lacking something. Because of the problems that I faced with Mr. G, I wrote a letter to love consultant Madame CoCo, and described my feelings in the letter. The always restrained but still idealistic Madame CoCo, listened to my problems and confusion, and after discussing my real needs, suggested that she introduce a new, western-style lover to me. While I was envisioning many possibilities, and my mood was trembling, she replied to me in a letter. This letter could be said to have given me the courage to face a new relationship!

My orientation is silent revolution,

Because I need time to reflect.

Now, thinking of what we can do,

After stepping out one step at a time, the pace afterwards could change.

However, what challenges us if we can insist long enough,

We can insist on finding direction, let our actions ferment,

Not trying to change context of this whole gifted education immediately.

Perhaps there are situations of swinging back and forth,

However, it was between swinging back and forth that combined the old force and produced new strength.

Therefore, because of Madame CoCo, I met Mr. P, who had just come back from a foreign country. That's right! Mr. P's personality defied tradition. Compared with my past lover, he seemed to be equivocating; sometimes he seemed close to me and sometimes he seemed distant. This actually let me fall into a dilemma.

The first year of dating Mr. P, could be called the adaptation period (of two periods). The differences in our ways of thinking did fill our lives with freshness at first, and satisfied my adventurous heart as well. Even though he always looked at me lovingly, wearing a smile on his face, and encouraged me, he couldn't give me an instant



response to what I did, not even showing me positive light from his eyes. During this period of time, I wasn't always sure of what he wanted me to do or say; therefore this kind of pattern of getting along with Mr. P also tested me with uncertainty and ambiguity. In the past, when I was with Mr. G, it seemed that I didn't need to think of doing anything extra. I'll simply do whatever he said. Although it was boring from time to time, this kind of tranquility and stability made me feel relieved.

Therefore, I asked myself more than once: "Is Mr. P really okay?" but soon, the question from my heart was silenced by the excitement and freshness in the process of dating him, and I finally accepted this relationship. The poem of Shia Yu was definitely the perfect portrait of my new relationship:

We are all in the dream  
Through the heaven  
Wake up with a bouquet of flowers  
As the evidence

However, even if there was merely one person who didn't wake up  
Then we all lived in his dream

The second year of dating, Mr. P and I gradually learned to get along really well. You can practically say that we entered into the honeymoon period! Because of we thought alike, particularly with regards towards our future, we not only solved our conflict, but the more precious thing was that we now knew how to negotiate and communicate to cooperate completely! However, this relationship with Mr. P, along with sweetness, still brought me a bit of bitterness. The reason was that Mr. P's style of living excessively, overturned tradition, and this made every friend who knew the both of us express more doubt than approval and more curiosity than caring towards our relationship. This filled our relationship with many challenges....

However, it's been three years; this relationship, which was doomed to end eventually, went through the hesitation and uncertainty at the very beginning, to harmony, and also survived lots of challenges. After making a turn at the corner, it made my heart drunk, and the peak of the relationship came along. At this moment, Mr. P and I needed to have some time to digest everything we went through, including all the ups and downs in the relationship. After the peak, we returned back to tranquility, and we no longer contacted each other as frequently as we used to, we still preserved the rest of the lovely memories of this relationship. We could walk gently and enjoy the happiness and sweetness of life going back to normal.

*A group of women, two men struggled to live between cracks  
---The forming process of the team of the Problem-Based Curriculum*

Chisingtan's stones were arrayed in high density, after repeatedly being washed by the waves, there was beauty to the stones that defied description. This occurred to me that to maintain this relationship, besides Mr. P and my own efforts, the "perfect" relationship support group helped a lot! The gathering once a month that gave me





new strength to face all the details in the relationship.

The relationship support group was declared to be a 「P(problem) B(based) L(earning) Team」, but actually was a bunch of 「P(lay) B(ad) L(adies)」, who loved to play very much. It included Da-Ling, who came from a beautiful county in Taiwan, Nantou. She's married and gave me lots of advice; Six, who day-dreamed a lot, was idealistic, and always dreamed of unlimited possibilities with involuntary enthusiasm; Marychi, who liked to stray from the topic of our discussions, and who always loved to stab people in the back during our meetings, but unexpectedly turned our discussion to reach a higher level; Double Yellow, who was often a "pioneer" in the road of relationships. But her contributions to the discussion didn't pitch us in a battle. On the contrary, they offered a transition even closer to the truth; Lyn was very quiet. Although she didn't talk much, and held herself aloof from the world, sometimes she was more conscious than any of us who were in love! Then, why were there two men who struggled for life between the cracks? I thought it was a special arrangement of Madame CoCo!

In order to preserve our discussions about love and passion and not to let them pass away with time; David, who likes to write, became our notetaker so that we could share our love story. Wei, on the other hand, is a knowledgeable person who has a good foundation in theory and is very talkative. He became the thinker of our team.

We called our eight-person team, "eight ferries crossing over the sea." and if we included Madam CoCo's help in over-seeing the whole team and Fen as the fire chief who always came to put out the fires from time-to-time, this makes ten fine members of a relationship support group! We also had a newcomer this year, Wen, who is always very thoughtful, and has much to offer our team.

One day, David sent us an email. We didn't know whether he was under pressure when he wrote it, or if the idea just came to him and he had to share it with the rest of us, but what he wrote had given a tentative mission to our team. In the email he wrote:

"I think what was interesting about our team was that while Marychi was trying to name our group, and the process was hilarious, it somewhat came out of the blue and strayed from our topic of discussion. However, the process was significant in terms of our interaction within the team. Because of our progress, what was impossible, was made possible. Our interaction in an unprofessional manner, had become the way we interact when discussing professional matters. We are like lovers in this PBL experience, and we have developed a community sub-culture to prolong our thoughts.





*Playfully, Brain Waves Toasting with Wine*  
*The Philosophy of the Problem-Based Learning Team*

Now that I had a relationship support group, I opened my heart towards Mr. P. Although I had some hesitations, I knew that our relationship offers endless possibilities. I spoke into the air and what had come out of my mouth had intertwined and became conscious love. This conscious love had given me more pressure. I kept on talking to myself and thinking. Rollo May once said,

"Those who are in love have closed their eyes and cannot see through the truth, However, those who have courage to believe and to admit that they had doubts Can come and go as they want with new findings."

While I was in search for myself, these words had given my feeling of conscious love a new tentative direction. It all started during one lunch meeting from the moment I said "let our stomachs guide our mouths":

The development of my relationship with Mr. P and the sweet and bitter moments I spent with him all started because of one lunch meeting. There were soft diffused lights and music, however, everything that had nothing to do with the food, happened at the table.

"Sorry, I'm late. This conference room looks nice! " (I was trying to say something quickly, because I was late.)

"Yes. It's very convenient to take notes. "

"Well, where were we? " (Another unintended question.)

"We were just talking about the possibility of a new relationship. "

"Oh, really? Any conclusions? " (I just had a quick bite of my delicious cheese cake; My stomach had never felt better.)

"How about an exotic relationship? " (Who came up with this idea??)

"Good...good... (but what I meant was that piece of cheesecake tasted so good.)

"Really? Then we should give it a try. Any other suggestions? " (There's no need to review the surveillance tape of the restaurant. I am very positive that this was Madame CoCo.)

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I kept a diary. In my diary, I wrote down the places Mr. P and I visited and as I read through my diary, it was just like experiencing them all over again. One day, Mr. P took me to Danshui to have fresh clams. We rode the ferry on that windy day. I can still remember the way he ran. We also went to a small town in Nantou to visit a teacher whom we haven't seen for years. There, we came across a rose garden, and walked through the garden. The smell of the roses on that day became something unforgettable. On valentine's day, we tried to look for a nice restaurant but every place was packed with couples. We had no choice but to have a simple meal; still, it was very romantic--spending time with Mr. P—just the two of us. We enjoyed National Taipei University of Arts' free, open academic atmosphere. We talked about our dreams, listened to music, and enjoyed the beauty of Guandu.



### Three Awards,

#### *The Challenges and Affirmations of Problem-Based Curriculum*

Our romantic relationship wasn't blessed by everyone but we sure attracted attention.

My relationship support group carried on with their mission to introduce our relationship to people. Not only did they want to introduce Mr. P to everyone, but they also wanted to share our experience with people who have always dreamed of a cross-cultural romance. One time, our group came to Yilan. It was the first time we shared our love story with people at an AAR workshop.

During the workshop, under most people's curiosity and heavy questioning, I had to admit that I started to have doubts about my relationship with Mr. P. My faith towards this relationship plummeted. I felt much hesitation.

My relationship support group found out about my situation and all tried to comfort me. Madame CoCo kept on giving Mr. P and I heartfilled care and support and on the other hand, Dave and Six went to PengHu trying to seek for help.

Because of what had happened in YiLan, David was beginning to worry about being challenged by professor Sy-Feng, Wang, the host of the conference. He knew that he'd have to be ready for some tough unexpected questions about our relationship. However, things went pretty well. David and Six thought Wang was a good host.

After Dave and Six came back from Peng Hu, they shared what they gained from this trip. "Professor Wang thought that our presentation was, in and of itself, a weak structure of our experience of Problem-Based Learning. It had given people an opportunity to think and question, so that our structure may be more complete. What Professor Wang had brought up was in fact our weakness. We had been too excited about Problem-Based Learning that when we were faced with some situations, we thought that our methods were the ways that things should be, and we didn't question it enough. This had created a gap between the audience and our team, the listener, and the story-teller."

"Can you be more specific? Does Professor Wang approve of Mr. P and me?" I asked David desperately, however, deep inside I don't know whether I wanted to know the answer.

"Calm down." David responded calmly, and continued: "He let us share your experience, your relationship with Mr. P, and later on invited an audience on stage for a question and answer session. During this session, what had been hidden deep in our subconscious minds had been brought to the surface, without any disguise, and thus we were ready for questioning and clarification."

"In the end, Professor Wang asked us questions." said Six very excitedly. "He asked whether your relationship with Mr. P would continue and I answered him with a confidence 'yYs!' Professor Wang then smiled and said: 'Alright! Then you have succeeded!' But then, Ms. Yio, what is your own answer to this question?"

"Me?" Looking at all the smiling faces, I honestly examined my own feelings of happiness, and I thought, "Yes, I do want to keep this precious relationship with Mr. P."

After this successful communication/discussion, little by little I found that my romance with Mr. P, was no longer kept discreet. Maybe I was too suspicious, or



maybe women tend to be more sensitive when they are in love. I felt that people around me became more and more curious and interested in our romance. To tell the truth, Mr. P and I have been trying to keep our relationship quiet. People's curiosity, in fact, made me uneasy, and it was stressful on our relationship. I was also uncomfortable about this problem and had been thinking about it continually. One day, I still remember the sky was grey and it was raining a bit, the annoying noise of the raindrops against the roof made me want to call someone for help. I picked up the phone and called my relationship support group.

Well, my support group gave me an answer. They suggested that Mr. P and I go out for a walk. They were aware that our special romance would arouse people's curiosity, and they suggested that I should no longer hide our relationship but should share it with people without hesitation. This suggestion was very shocking to me, and quite a challenge as well. Was my romance really so special? Does it really attract people's attention? Under my support team's encouragement, I agreed to participate in the Creativity Education Exposition.

That day was one of the most special days in my life. Under the burning bright sunlight, I could hardly open my eyes. I tried to use an umbrella so people wouldn't notice how shy I was, but the umbrella wasn't big enough to hide both my nervousness and excitement. Looking at the couples (other participating teams), made me feel that the walk up the stairs to the stage was a long journey. As I stepped up on-stage, everyone became quiet, and the eye-catching stage lights lit up the spot where I was standing. I cleared my throat a bit, and began to share my love story, just the way I did with my support team. To my surprise, the audience loved it and I received several love awards. I couldn't wait to tell my relationship support group about this, so I called them up immediately to share the exciting news over dinner.

During dinner, everyone talked about the curriculum  
As time passes by,  
The honors of this afternoon seemed to have happened long ago.  
Only when I see the pictures taken that day, do I know what happened was real.  
Let us give ourselves a round of applause and continue our hard work.

To be continued....



These were lovers' notes. These words came out like girls blowing bubbles into the air in the shape of hearts, one bubble after another, and one sentence after another...our journey goes on....

When in the rain,  
We face the ups and downs of incorporating Problem-Based Learning in our teaching. We have to listen to a dialogue between students' thoughts and our own. It is only when we're back with our support group that can we temporarily open up our





umbrella and enjoy a moment of comfort.

Like standing under the moonlight,  
We face a twilight zone when implementing Problem-Based Learning. We can't avoid it, but we must be aware that we weren't good enough. However, at the same time, we are also aware of the possibility of students' progress. Through the support group, we continuously help one another out, gladly accepting the challenges of not knowing what lies ahead.

Like walking on a river of ice,  
At times the river is warm, but sometimes it's freezing, especially when it comes to implementing Problem-Based Learning. We learned from our own experiences and realized the reason for our students' achievements. Together with our PBL support team, we can foresee that it's getting warmer and spring is not too far ahead.





## Creative Experience: Rainbow's Story

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## Abstract

The author is a teacher of a preschool inclusive class. The full text describes the her participation in the Creative Language and Literacy Teaching Team assembled by Professor Cao, Chun Qiong of Fooyin University. The author was responsible for designing a teaching plan, trial teaching, and editing the instruction handbook. For teachers, researching behavior is often an avenue to professional growth, but the process is a difficult and arduous challenge. The following story describes the author's own experience (successes, expectations, hesitations, fears and worries) with her research and also explains the feasibility of carrying out Scaffolding Instruction in preschool inclusive classes.

In the end, the author writes, "As a preschool teacher, you must be creative and energetic. Learn how to be creative and energetic from children, and the way to do it lies within the teacher's heart--a heart full of love" to encourage readers.



## A Creative Experience: Rainbow's Story

In Kaohsiung, during one evening in early September, it is still hot. In the old corridor of the British consulate at Takao, the inviting smell of coffee permeates through the gentle breeze. Rainbow's (Bi-yue) heart melted, surrounded by the unique scent of both sea and coffee. Sitting opposite of her at the table is her dear partner and colleague, Ms. Fairy (Yi-lin). The nickname was given by children, because Ms. Fairy always surprised them, making the children think she had mysterious power.

At this moment, Fairy has a free moment and expects nobody to bother her. Her research paper hasn't been finished yet, but after days of "burning the midnight oil," she decides to enjoy the idleness and to let the breeze blow away her tiredness.

This is the place where Professor Cao, Chun Qiong from Fooyin University assembled the "Creative Language and Literacy Teaching Team" and held the first meeting. Then, Rainbow felt confident, expectant, nervous, and anxious, but not anymore because yesterday, the team has finished its primary stage of creating a teaching plan, developing trial teaching, revising, and writing a paper. It will be incredibly wasteful if she does not relax!

At this time, the process of participating in the Creative Language and Literacy Teaching Team flashed through her mind. Children showed infinite creativity and achievements during the teaching process, and sometimes inspiration came to her unexpectedly when she was working on her teaching plans. Although she sometimes tricked Fairy to persuade Fairy to join her, she cannot help but feeling delighted when she thinks of the ingenuity of combining the team's work with Fairy's research and other events that happened in the process.

During the middle of September in 1994

It has become a routine of Rainbow's to turn on the computer and check e-mail box when returning home after work. There is a message from May, a familiar acquaintance, in Rainbow's e-mail inbox, asking her if she is willing to participate in Professor Cao's research team on a project entitled, the Young Autistic Children's Scaffolding Instruction.

For Rainbow, conducting research on teaching is a yearly routine that she uses as a way to settle down and set new goals, since she started teaching kindergarten. Regarding autism, there were a few works already published by the Education Bureau and other teachers that observed this behavior during the past two years. In considering this invitation and topic, Rainbow felt a bit curious and doubtful, but she finally replied yes after a short period of hesitation.

Time flies when you teach in kindergarten. Around two months later, Rainbow received a note from Professor Cao, saying that this research program had been permitted by Education Ministry, and inviting her to the first meeting.

"I almost forgot about this project!" Suddenly, Rainbow remembered her project. She was short on time these days because of balancing routine teaching work, the Education Bureau assigned her unexpected tasks with respect to special education in preschool, and her upcoming graduate school examinations. These were heavy burdens Rainbow could barely bear, making her think that she shouldn't have agreed





to join this research team.

"But how can I back out of a commitment?" Rainbow murmured as she walked to the living room and sank onto the couch like a flat balloon.

"Creative Team? Scaffolding Instruction? Autistic children? Professional growth?" Questions filled Rainbow's head.

But then she thought, "Chian-chian, Yang-yang and A-hao are going to elementary school soon, I had better stick with it in order to help them and also not to be an irresponsible person.." Rainbow sat upright at the thought of it, and went to make herself a cup of tea. Staring at the teacup, with her hands holding her chin, she wished the rich fragrance of tea could give her magical powers to figure out what she should do next.

After dinner, Rainbow printed a research paper, containing relevant information, which was sent by Professor Cao and brought out the books she borrowed from the library in order to read them carefully.

The first meeting was on a Sunday afternoon at the British consulate at Takao.

Rainbow thought to herself, "Alright, I'll just take this meeting as an opportunity to broaden my mind and enjoy a beautiful place, no matter what happens." Rainbow felt uncertain after receiving this information. The team members have never met before, which meant that she going to be in the project with a group of strangers. How would they communicate, build a tacit understanding, and conduct the research well? Rainbow always felt timid and burdened when faced with these kinds of problems.. Besides, although she is now a preschool special education teacher, what she is most familiar with is formal education in preschool. Rainbow has her own thoughts based on her experiences during the past few years of being a part of the school's administration and through counseling in preschool. Therefore, even though she is a special education teacher in preschool, she still has her own set of views regarding special education, including the counseling of autistic children. She has read the information on her team members and they are all experienced teachers of autistic children. They are from education institutions except May, who is a freshman teacher transferred from an education institution to preschool this year. Rainbow felt another kind of pressure because she feared that these members would question her way of conducting a class and teaching. She suspected that there would be some aspects of her teaching experience that they would not be able to appreciate without hands-on experience. In addition, compared with others, she had less experience teaching autistic children, and she knows nothing about Scaffolding Instruction. There might be some communication difficulties in the process, and she asked herself, how would she resolve the embarrassment then?

Rainbow got insomnia due to anxiety before the meeting.

On the afternoon on June 12th, there is the unique combination of the strong smell of coffee with the salty offensive smell of seawater filling the air. There are many people in the British consulate at Takao, which is located in the Hsitzewan bay. Ms. Liang Zhen-jing, who is in charge of gathering team members, helps everyone find a proper place to start today's conference.

"Looks like I am the only stranger here today." Rainbow contemplates how to get through this meeting after introducing herself. Unlike her, she is sure that some of



the team members had already worked with Professor Cao before, while others are recommended by colleagues. The only member she knows is May, and she will be lonely if nobody in the team makes an effort to be friendly.

Professor Cao began the meeting, saying, "Thank you all for making time to join this project; the purpose of today's meeting is to introduce this research project." After a brief introduction, Professor Cao starts to explain that teaching and communicating with autistic children is the biggest challenge. She also illustrates the theoretical structure of Scaffolding Instruction and application, the goal of this research project, as well as its content and schedule. Professor Cao particularly emphasized the research result of Scaffolding Instruction since 1990, explaining that it has been proved that the method effectively induces and promotes the communication ability and spontaneous language of autistic children of different ages and levels. Professor Cao explains her intention for the project—to offer a normal and appropriate environment for language and literature learning so that teachers and parents can apply some daily activities to autistic children earlier. She continued, describing how in successful cases, people would not be challenged by the peculiarities of communication with autistic children. Otherwise it would probably restrain the high potential of language. Professor Cao expressed her hopes that through the team members' varied professional specialties and rich experiences, the team would be able to generate creative sparks of language and literature. They will challenge themselves as well as make good use of their individual strengths, and extend Scaffolding Instruction to build a full language leaning environment for inclusive classes and groups. Professor Cao concluded by emphasizing how their creative project must go through consistent trial teaching, discussion and revision, with the final result to be compiled to a complete and interesting set of "A Teaching Program of Language Teaching of Autistic Children's Scaffolding Instruction." The final step would be to hold research and study activities that train additional teachers to popularize this program.

After listening to Professor Cao's copious and complete speech, the meeting opened for discussion.

"Sounds like we can do something." Rainbow thought, her spirit rising.

"Maybe I will learn something. Since I have come, I should stay and enjoy it with other members." She forgot the anxiety and embarrassment that she felt at first, then joined the discussion, responding to some questions earnestly.

After the clarifying the details of the project in the first meeting, Rainbow learned she would be responsible for writing the part about a teaching plan for preschool inclusive classes about Scaffolding Instruction. She would need to put the content into practice in class, take survey results, document the entire process, and give feedback on the project's progress.

Rainbow is a teacher in an affiliated preschool inclusive class at a public elementary school, which is known for special education in southern Taiwan. Rainbow has been proud of it, because she worked to establish the special education class in preschool. She came up with a breakthrough idea—consolidating a special class and an ordinary class to form a fully inclusive class. What makes her the most proud is the fact that via efforts made by several teachers, they made a brilliant sample module.





In the aspects of teaching, administration, and cooperation between teachers, their experience proves that this kind of scheme could be a reference model for every preschool inclusive class.

Due to her past experiences and the confidence gained therein, this research project should not be a problem to Rainbow. But as time passes by and the next meeting looms, Rainbows starts to feel pressured and she cannot figure out how to start.

A few days after the Lantern Festival, most children and teachers are still enjoying the merry atmosphere of the New Year.

"Hey, why the sad face? Anything wrong?" Fairy asked Rainbow when she sees her depressed expression.

"I'm scratching my head over Professor Cao's research project. I should have never agreed to join the project." It is obvious that Rainbow seems pretty annoyed. "Maybe I shouldn't have said I'd be a part of it, now I just don't know what to do!" Rainbow sighs and continues, "It interested me when I heard about Scaffolding and teaching autistic children language skills; but now I find it overly structural and methodical. I really don't know how to apply it to my own class."

"Tell me something about the method, maybe there is something I can do to help." Fairy suggests, with an "it's no big deal" expression to comfort Rainbow. Seeing Fairy being so sincere, an idea flashes into Rainbow's mind.

"Listen, I need to have a partner when I do things, why don't we form a creative team? Then we can write the teaching plan, and do trial teaching together. We can discuss and revise anytime during the process. Besides, the reason I said yes to work on this project is because I think this way of teaching would be helpful to ordinary and special preschool students." Rainbow rapidly rattles off her ideas, hoping Fairy would say yes immediately.

"But we planned to carry out the practicing part of my master's thesis this semester, wouldn't it be too burdensome, to do an additional project?" Fairy hesitates for awhile.

"In fact, I did think that you will be busy writing your research paper, so I didn't discuss the plan with you. But there shouldn't be any conflict between these two projects because what you write is about execution of IEP (Individualized Education Program), and the content of my teaching plan is about special preschool students' language teaching. We can think about it more; I think both sides should unite." Rainbow tries to persuade Fairy with her many ideas. She thinks that the possibility of combining two sides has much potential. Most importantly, they can write the teaching plan together, making the content much more detailed and objective. Therefore, they can take a deeper and more impersonal look at trial teaching.

Rainbow starts to feel excited when she thinks of it, "I've always felt that I was both lucky and creative, and this time is no exception. Ha! If I have Fairy join, we can combine these two works, and wouldn't it be creative and beneficial? I'm so smart!"

"Thanks to your idea, your team is a bit too creative." Fairy laughs.

"Don't laugh at me! I will go back and think about how we can do collaborative projects. I might have solution tomorrow. You go back and think over if what I said makes sense. Remember, I'm the one who suggested you use IEP strategy in your



research paper, so I played a role in providing a language teaching strategy in your paper and writing the teaching plan in Professor Cao's project. Our two sides don't collide. If you're willing to join this project, you have to write a teaching plan, do trial teaching, and have discussions with me. It'll be two sides working at the same time! Ha! Don't you think it's a wonderful plan?" Rainbow barely gives Fairy a chance to hesitate because she hopes Ms. Fairy will agree right away.

"Alright, I will think about it." As Fairy is a cautious person, this answer is pretty close to a tacit agreement. Of course, the major reason why she is thinking about joining the project is because they are good friends and have nice mutual understanding. It's hard to say no.

Fairy is a graduate student in the kindergarten department of a teacher's college. She is about to write her Master's thesis on how standard preschool teachers of carry out special preschool children's attainment of IEP in an integrated class. Now Rainbow is bringing up a collaborative project, and although the idea is a sudden inspiration, making the idea work cannot come out of nowhere. Rainbow agreed to allow Fairy to use her class as a research subject, and they have roughly discussed the project's direction and contents. It just so happened that the direction and content of the teaching plan brought up by Professor Cao for Rainbow's part of the project, could partially combine with Fairy's research. This conversation allowed Rainbow and Fairy have a much closer relationship. They do not simply greet each other now, but stop to have professional discussions and to share their thoughts and critiques.

A week after teaching discussion, Rainbow prepared information written by Professor Cao about Scaffolding Instruction as well as information about her assigned topic to discuss with Fairy. Both Rainbow and Fairy believed that they needed to know these theories and methods well before they wrote the teaching plan, so they decided to look over some of Professor Cao's works and other relevant documents. Fairy begins the conversation, "According to the information, this kind of teaching seems highly structural. In our classes, we give primary consideration to thematic teaching; wouldn't our project conflict with way our courses are taught?"

Rainbow agrees, "This is also the part that I think it's difficult and also the reason I don't know how to take action."

Fairy replies: We know the special preschool children's IEP language goal, is to "be able to say longer and more complicated sentences." The strategy that you mentioned before is to ask the children as they go to class every morning, to draw an attendance list, then have them describe what they have drawn to the teachers, and then ask the teachers to write down what students say in the attendance list. We can guide the students to use the narrative terms outlined in Scaffolding Instruction like "people, time, place, movement, objects, and feelings" when teacher helps them write what they say. If we put these narrative terms into daily life, will it work?"

Rainbow exclaims, "You're so smart! I think it's a good idea. Looks like we can kill two birds with one stone. Great! So we have to familiarize Jenny with this teaching method." (Jenny is a standard preschool teacher in their integrated class, so she presents the class teaching discussion.)

Rainbow says to Fairy: "There's no conflict with these projects, because even







though Jenny is doing the IEP, and we are writing the teaching plan, I have to provide Jenny with a strategy to execute her IEP project. This means I would make sure that the two projects are consistent." Rainbow draws up her plan and thinks hard, and then she claps her hands and laughs.

"Is this okay with you, Jenny?" Fairy asks Jenny, looking at her.

Jenny replies, "No problem, as long as I don't have to write!" Although Jenny is Rainbow's teaching partner, her homework load in night school is heavy. That's why Fairy didn't invite Jenny to join Prof. Cao's team, because she was afraid that it would be too stressful for Jenny.

Rainbow: I think that in order to IEP this teaching method, we can put Professor Cao's teaching plan aside temporarily. We can take advantage of the occasion that New Year and Lantern Festival are big events for the children, and devise slogans for the two festivals. Then we can use afternoon to do individual teaching of Scaffolding Instruction, aimed at Yang-Yang and Chian-Chian. I can take charge of conducting a class, Fairy can take charge of recording, and Jenny can care for the other children.

Jenny: Sure. How many times and when?

Fairy: Can we use Tuesday afternoon and Thursday afternoon?

Rainbow: Okay! Two times a week is fine. Let's start next Thursday. Afterward, we three can watch the tape and discuss it; as for how many times we'll continue the method, let's see how our schedule goes after discussing it twice.

In discussing our project, we were highly efficient.

Preschool teachers need to take care of some administrative affairs besides teaching. Rainbow is responsible for special education affairs for her preschool. Because the Appraisal and Arrangement meeting is advanced to April 1st; parents' education and new students' orientation are also advanced to early March. For this reason, the writing of creative teaching plan and the trail teaching were delayed by these related special education administrative affairs. From March to April all three women have practiced individual and group Scaffolding Instruction except in the preschool inclusive class.

Since Fairy agreed to join the project, they have been to two meetings together. The teaching team and May, who is from another affiliated preschool, are in the Inclusive group, due to some special education administrative affairs, they haven't made much progress.

During this time, the children in Rainbow's class have enjoyed the theme "Ocean World" under Jenny's leadership. From the moment that children voted for this theme (they had selected this theme out of many), to early May, children have learned about benthos (aquatic creatures that live on the ocean floor), marine life, marine transportation, and now even took a trip to the National Museum of Marine Biology and Aquarium.

The teaching team is making slow progress. Even the teaching plan for the Scaffolding Instruction is not finished yet. However, from the last part of February, in coordination with Fairy's research, Rainbow and Jenny have been involved in activities such as "signing the attendance list", "making your own book", and "being storyteller.". They also make use of the teaching skills and narrative terms of



scaffolding instruction with the students in daily conversation.

Fairy goes to Rainbow's class every Monday and Thursday to observe, record, tape, and then write down her impressions immediately for discussion. As the result of the discreet execution, reflection, and discussion, they all have a surprising discovery. "Ahhh! That's the way I talk! How come I never realized that I have so many pet phrases?" Jenny is filled with disbelief as she reads the transcript word by word.

"Nah, I use way too many redundant words. Look at these drafts carefully; see how sloppy our language is? Perhaps it wouldn't be a problem for normal kids because they can filter, adapt, and transform our sentences naturally, but it may affect special preschool children's comprehension and abilities to imitate when we use so many redundant words. I think we need to be much more self-disciplined." Rainbow frowns as she explains her observation. Frowning seems to be a habit when she faces difficulties.

Fairy says "Right! Rainbow makes a good point. Are we going to continue to carry out these strategies? We must be aware of our verbal content and structure when leading children or conversing with them."

"Good, we should be aware." Rainbow and Jenny agreed with her.

"Do you have something special you wanted to share about the process?" Fairy asks them as a researcher.

Rainbow begins by saying: "I think that even though Jenny uses some pet phrases when she is teaching, she is a cautious person especially when it comes to special preschool children. She also led other children. For example, when Hui-hui tells Jenny that she caught some fish this morning; Jenny uses the necessary narrative terms into the conversation in response to it. During today's sharing time, Hui-hui was able to say "Mom brought my sister and me to the night market last night. My sister and I both netted fish and brought them home. I feel happy." Fairy, from your point of view, do you think our children have improved a lot?

Fairy: "I think so. I find that they all like drawing story books. For the past two times when I recorded their sharing activity, I found that it's obvious their communication skills and the content of storytelling have greatly improved. At first, what they said were almost fragments and their language structure was not complete enough to convey what they were thinking. Now even Xiao-yu can say a bunch of long sentences. Yesterday it was my turn to teach Deer class, and I compared the conversation in their class with yours. In fact you have higher conversational quality, because your children's language structures are more complete. It's a fantastic result. Jenny: Really? I really need to make some time to see what the difference between our children and others is after all.

It's an unexpected gain success for the team to see there are some distinguishing changes in Rainbow's class.

Professor Cao and her assistant Ms. Liang introduce a proposal during this meeting, "It's already May and we are behind our schedule, so we think we had better go to May's and Rainbow's classes to film the trial teaching of their inclusive class." Rainbow and Fairy stared at each other and smiled. They both think there is no way







they can excuse themselves from the filming.

The next day, Rainbow and Fairy analyze their current activities and children's skill foundation in Rainbow's class. They set the teaching goal of Scaffolding Instruction, and spend some time preparing words, phrase cards, and situation pictures for their teaching aids. They also have a discussion about the content they will demonstrate during trial teaching. They agree that the most important is that children are used to a lively and interactive teaching situation. Rainbow and Fairy believe that achieving their goals while engaging the children, will be a huge challenge to them in the process.

Finally, the day of assessment came. One Friday morning in the middle of May, Professor Cao and Ms. Liang showed up on time in Rainbow's classroom at eight twenty in the morning.

The professor and Ms. Liang remain in the classroom, witnessing children signing attendance list and watching the children's activity in the corner. Many children present their attendance lists with a story plot which interested the professor and his assistant.

#### Then the Activity Starts.

The content of the activity is for children to recall what happened in the activity of "Ocean World". It started with the game of "Brainstorming" to guide the children to express their experiences and what they did in "Ocean World." The children were instructed to take a situation picture from the teacher's "wonderful pocket" in turns --pictures were taken in the activity. The child who raised his hand first, had to explain the content of the picture. Once the child gave correct answer, the teacher would revise the content to target words derived from the Scaffolding Instruction teaching goal. At the same time, the teacher introduced words and phrases cards to the children and put a morpheme to the meaning diagram.

Maybe as a result of children having prior experience with the content, the period of giving descriptions to situation pictures went quite smoothly. Afterward students wrote down words and phrase cards from the meaning diagram. Then the students matched the words and phrase cards to sentence cards in order to pair situation pictures with words to form a complete target sentence.

Children like to make displays for guests, so both the ordinary preschool children and the special ones acted eagerly. However, in the activity, the children were sitting still longer than usual, which caused several kids to start vigorously yelling that they are hungry.

"Children, you're great! Your displays shared many marine animals that you created by yourselves. Now please stand up." Rainbow took out a magic wand to gesture to Jenny to play music.

"Children, my magic wand will do a spell when the music begins. When I point the magic wand at you, you will become the marine animal that you just described." The music from "The Little Mermaid" played gently. The children became many different kinds of marine animals, under Rainbow's magic wand.

Yang-yang says her wriggly body is a beaver; You-you dances like an octopus



which makes all the people erupt into sidesplitting laughter. Turtles, mermaids, crabs, elephant seals, and clams, all show up. The children's movements stretch and sway flexibly with the music. Although the activity's a bit noisy, it is still a pretty picture. Then, as the music gradually fades out, the children get quiet.

At the first trial teaching, Rainbow, Fairy, and Jenny find that their primary worries were unnecessary. Although presenting language structure with words is an abstract concept to children, it's can still be accepted by the students. Teaching wouldn't be a problem, as long as they could use the children's concrete experiences to lead them step by step.

The final compilation of teaching plan makes favorable progress because of this successful experience. After the final compilation, any changes to the content of the teaching plan are based on their individual trial teaching, taping, analysis, and revision.

Marvelous! Rainbow finally fulfills her duties in the Creative Team, as scheduled, just before summer vacation.

Summer vacation is the best time for teachers to take a rest, self-reflect, reconsolidate, and prepare their teaching plans for the upcoming term. The Creative Team also uses summer vacation to organize and edit everyone's teaching plan. In the final stage, Professor Cao asks Jean, Yen, Rainbow, and Fairy to revise and finalize the teaching plan for a few days. All of them work very late into the night at Rainbow's house for several days to finish the final draft. Every writer needs to read the draft over to see if there are any problems, and then the preliminary final draft is done.

A new semester is coming. Facing a bright start, Rainbow and Fairy will be partners in the same class for the new academic year. They have already established a good common understanding because of the shared history that they had. They will make plans for the next two years. The design and trial teaching papers of the creative teaching plan have become a pile of pages, which means a lot to Rainbow and Fairy because these pages document the children's joy and growth. Now they know they should keep applying and probing into the spirit and method of Scaffolding Instruction. The two discuss their plans.

Fairy suggests: "I think we can use this teaching method to operate a full language schoolroom."

Rainbow replies: "There are so many possibilities that arise with special preschool children's writing and reading. Hey, maybe the next time, we can research the potential of special preschool children's reading and writing!"

Fairy laughs and says: "Ha! Stop joking, let's take a sip of cappuccino and enjoy the coolness of the sea breeze first."

As a preschool teacher, you must be creative and energetic. Learn how to be creative and energetic from children, and the way to do it lies within the teacher's heart--a heart full of love





## Model of Home-School-Cooperation Say good-bye to fates of unfortunate women

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## Model of Home-School-Cooperation

### Saying good-bye to the fates of unfortunate women

#### 1.Prologue

Shan's mother is a volunteer who, in two years, has turned from doleful to smiling, but it was only until very recently that we got to know her story:

"Six years ago, my husband moved his investments to Mainland China because businesses in Taiwan were failing. He came home only once-a-year or once-every-half-year and for years, seldom gave money to our family. There were once or twice, a large sum of money that he would earn, but always went into the pocket of my mother-in-law, I only received a small portion of what was left. The only way to raise my children was to take different part-time jobs. I always feared that one day I would lose my job and have no money to pay for school for my two children. For several times, we sat in McDonalds only ordering one meal; I would just watch my boy eat with joy, telling him that mother was not hungry yet."

"Three years ago, we lived with our mother and sister-in-law, while I worked in the market. I tried hard to manage the housework everyday after returning home, but they still weren't content with my efforts. The only thing we could do was to move out to our own house."

"Shan has been growing up all these years; she learned to share my burden and is willing to help me work on weekends. I believe it's been very hard for her growing up, facing the tension between my mother-in-law and me."

"Fortunately, I came to Shan's school to be a volunteer, I learned how to open my heart to see the world. At school, I met someone that led a harder life than mine but who still chose to face it lightly. Suddenly, I felt my hardships were more endurable." Shan's mother represents is a typical story of a "woman in a dilemma," and represents a long-existing problem of females, that is: what is the proper place for wives in her husband's family? How should women act themselves? Notably, with the increasing number of educated females and the awaking of the female consciousness, how should a wife act to find the balance between a husband and his family?

The dilemma regarding "the fates of unfortunate women." is actually a contest among women living under one roof, wherein husbands and children become victims. I believe the only way to get through this problem is through the caring, understanding, and loving hearts of the women, who believe that the seemingly endless fate of misfortune can one day, be reconciled.





## 2. Empowering Parents and Realizing their Potential

### 2-1 Active participation through the parents

We sincerely hope that through activities such as "Parent-Teacher-Cooperation", "Community-Involvement," and "Model of Home-School-Cooperation", parents of Luh-Jiang Junior High School will be able to step out of their houses, and through group interaction, demonstrate their amazing power. After two years of training, the Learning Group of Lu-Chang was formed in October, 2004.

The Learning Group of Luh-Jiang was comprised of volunteer parents in Luh-Jiang Junior High School and The Association for the Support of Single Parent Families, R.O.C. Led by Professor Chung Huo-Mo of Shih-Chien University, the community group was aimed at helping children raised in single families. The Learning Group of Luh-Jiang provides weekend classes for the students; the curriculum includes school work guidance, physical courses, life education and performance courses, and provides students in our community with a healthy learning environment during weekends.

Forming the Learning Group of Luh-Jiang was the result of going deep into community, since Luh-Jiang was established five years ago. We expect residents to treasure their living environment, help students with special needs, promote culture within the community, and reduce crimes committed by teenagers.

Moving from passivity to activity, from individualism to fellowship, from being passive listeners to becoming dynamic administrators, parents have made a huge impact on school teaching. Through years of interaction with parents in the community, I profoundly understand their expectations and needs.

Many years ago, "The Reader's Digest" reported an experiment done in accordance with a high school basketball team:

"All the team members were divided into three groups for a month-long experiment; the first group was not allowed to practice shooting on the court for one month, the second group was given one hour every afternoon to practice, and the third group was also given one hour to practice "image" shooting every afternoon. A test was held after one month, the result showed that the first group regressed as had expected, but the second and third group simultaneously showed 2% increase in progress. Through this experiment, we can find the effectiveness of thinking on human behavior. Forming an active way of thinking, and learning how to self-communicate positively will certainly encourage individual progress and self-confidence."

Therefore, I realized a kind of contentment that a housewife feels when walking outside of her house, and showing a confident smile: "School educators can be the navigators of community culture; our social responsibilities are wide. Taking care of



the community is the most important duty for our school administrators in the future." The following are two examples representative of "Family-school-cooperation."

## **2-2 Examples of "Family-school-cooperation"**

### **2-2-1 Parent Guide To Reading of Luh-Jiang Junior High School**

Teaching and learning in Luh-Jiang Junior High School emphasizes community and participation, working on establishing a harmonious and cooperative relationship between homes and the school; we believe that "good parents lead good students". Therefore, we place greater stress on real "Family-Centered" administrative approaches and teaching programs.

#### **2-2-1-1 Finding leadership among parents**

Knowing that reading ability is key to promoting students' learning, I began the preparatory work for a parent reading program. Aside from talking with parents in details, I tried to introduce these ideas of parent involvement in students' learning, in the "Association of the Class Parents". We called this program "Parent Guide to Reading".

One of the most important tasks was to find a leader to promote reading, which would be quite challenging for any volunteer parent. Finally, we thought of Mrs. Wu, also known as Ms. Shuo-bi Cheng as our best choice; she was a treasure of Luh-Jiang.

When the volunteer assembly was formed, Mrs. Wu really impressed me with her earnest attitude--saying that although she had many choices, she only chose one cause to devote herself. She insisted on leading students with what she learned in the study group for years, and helping students to further explore education.

We were so lucky to find such a wise and experienced mother to volunteer. Mrs. Wu has spent many years dedicated to the community, and has led a local parents' study group, earning much respect from the parents. Moreover, she has insisted on never being affected by political factors, holding true to her service and devotion to local community. This was the reason why I invited her to join to the reading promotion program though the Model of Home-School-Cooperation the first time I met her. Then, I had asked her to coordinate long-term reading activities for students to give students the pleasure of enjoying reading.

#### **2-2-1-2 Arranging excellent reading guidance activities**

It was truly tough work to lead 26 reading guidance classes that required familiarity with reading and teaching skills, from sifting stories out, to training for volunteers, to providing instructions for reading guidance to every class. Nowadays, approximately 28 volunteers come to the group every Tuesday; although each of the volunteers may explain stories slightly differently, they all perform the spirit of





every story very well. What we treasure the most is that parents naturally show their love and concern through reading, and all the children are unconsciously influenced through the caring of their elders.

Each time I found students listening comfortably to the story, no matter if it is a short fictional piece or a true story told by the volunteer mother, every story demonstrates valuable life experience. The facial expressions of all of these parents are unforgettable. We believe that students are moved as we are and we thank every volunteer that has guided our students' lives.

### **2-2-1-3 The fragment of Parent Guide To Reading**

#### **(1)Sifting stories out**

All the stories were chosen by Mrs. Wu two months before the program. She made copies of the stories, discussed the program with the dean of academic affairs and the curriculum officer, reached an agreement, bound the books and then distributed them to every volunteer mother. The curriculum officer was responsible for making copies of the story for students, and distributing them one day before reading guidance was offered in classes.

#### **(2)Leading the way to reading guidance:**

On the day of the reading guidance classes, all of the volunteers met at 7:30 in the conference room. The meeting required full participation, including four stages:

#### **Stage one: 7:30-8:00**

The leader introduced the content, main idea, and pattern of guidance for that day's story, allowed two volunteers to share their teaching plans and what examples they were planning to use. At the same time, it was an opportunity for volunteers to bring up other vital issues for everyone to discuss and share.

#### **Stage two: 8:00-8:20**

Volunteers went to each class to conduct reading guidance. Sometimes they were accompanied by soft music to enhance the spirit of the story, or disguised themselves as rabbits or fairies according to the plot. They also led students to write down what they felt about the story. The principal and the dean of the academic affairs were responsible for experiencing the atmosphere and making notes to share with volunteer parents.

Every story was a warm and touching one that directly expressed the mind of the author; these stories often encouraged students to dig deep within their own spirits and to show their gratitude. Many teachers gave life education lessons after the reading guidance classes. Whenever I found both teachers and parents listening to the students with smiling faces and exchanging friendly glances, I felt so lucky for these students who have people that love and care for them. It was a most memorable moment for students, while teachers and parents both learned and grew together.



### **Stage three: 8:25-9:00**

Volunteers returned to the conference room after the reading guidance class, sharing what they did and how the students replied. Many of them even made review materials for the students so as to encourage them during the end of the term. Also, volunteers would prepare the story for next week, invite two volunteers to specify points in the story, and show any supplemental information they now had in hand.

#### **2-2-1-4 Sowing with true hearts filled with joy**

Those volunteers insisted on "loving all the students as their parents do." This meant that even if they were sometimes assigned to classes that did not belong to their children, the love that they showed to all students was not one bit less. Children felt 100% of their caring love, even if the reading guidance was held once each week for only 20 minutes. Some parents who were more active in class affairs became such good friends with the students that they were willing to reveal inner parts of themselves. Mr. Cheng was a good example; he was an enthusiastic person who always wore delightful smile on his face, ensured traffic safety for students after school, held extracurricular activities for classes, and lead the reading guidance. He was also a wonderful father that brought joy and confidence to the students every time they met.

Mr. Cheng often receives letters or short notes from students in his son's class, that share something unfortunate that has happened to them at home or secrets that they can share with no one else. He always communicates with the teachers first, tries to discover what is wrong with these students, then talks to them directly afterward. He sometimes spends all night discussing those problems with his wife, and then writes replies for the students. Moreover, Mr. Cheng once communicated with the parents of one of those students, and had successfully resolved the problem that had annoyed the child for so long. We are confident when saying that students that receive so much care and love, will form a healthy self-concept and a flexible view regarding life.

#### **2-2-1-5 In giving love, be a self-assertive parent**

"Happiness is being needed.", "Roses and diamonds are no better than a true heart." These slogans have become like "chicken soup for the soul" for parents that devote themselves to school affairs. We often hear volunteers, especially during stage three (sharing responses), expressing their thankfulness for joining this reading guidance group. Especially during that one brief morning, they realize the happiness that reading brings and learn to appreciate good literary works through self-reading, reading guidance, and sharing responses. As Mrs. Liu said: "Thanks to this group, I once again realize how much power I've got." Happy parents, therefore, raise happy children that are willing to learn; parents are definitely capable of passing their love onto their children on the path of growing up.





From timidity to confidence, the volunteers and the Parent Guide to Reading are getting better and better.



Discussion before the reading guidance class was the primary catalyst that inspired parents' personal growth.

## 2-2-2 Example of Lidau Elementary School in Taitung County

### 2-2-2-1 Beautiful scenery is the best resource in Lidau

"Good morning and Happy New Year to everyone! Driver of car license number XX-XXXX, please remove your car from the present place. Students that are responsible of cleaning up the campus, please gather in the hallway and begin your work immediately."

A few minutes later, approximately 20 students with big lovely eyes run from every corner of the village towards the school field, looking at teachers with their twinkling eyes, listening with their hearts, and then following directions to begin cleaning. Who can say that "laziness is the nature of aboriginals" after seeing this peaceful, small village on the morning of first day of Chinese New Year?

Lidau is situated in Taitung County, a small, aboriginal village in the eastern part of Taiwan, near the National Expressway No. 20; its residents are mainly from Bunun Tribe. Lidau has the most beautiful peach and plum blossoms in the entire area. Its wonderful scenery is just like a world of fantasy that has retreated from the rest of world, especially when it comes to visitors like us. For this reason, tourists often pour into this small village on holidays. Today is the first day of the Chinese New Year, and thousands of tourists crowd the small village. The local hotels and hostels are not enough to accommodate all of them, so the playground of Lidau Elementary School becomes the best place for camping; those campers with experiences, have even prepared sleeping bags to use as bedding on the playground.

From evening to the early morning, the entire Lidau Elementary School campus is filled with laughter and roaring voices, while colorful tents and little night-lamps light up the village with a warm and cheerful air. But as soon as the sun comes out,



tourists say good-bye to the village one after another, leaving rubbish everywhere. Then, teachers of the school have to lead all the students to do the cleaning work in order to welcome the next group of visitors.

### **2-2-2-2 The community and the school are an indivisible union**

I was curious as to why, in Lidau's local shops and stalls, where even the little kids have to help their parents' businesses, they were still required to go to school to help clean the campus.

"Why do you still let your child go to school to clean if you have such busy business?" I asked one parent in Lidau.

"The more visitors that come here, the better our business will be! Children must help and the cleaning work is only for a short while. That's the way to bring in more tourists and it is worth it, really!" the parent answers cheerfully.

Apparently, "sharing resources among community and school" is not just a term in Lidau, but a way of living. Here, the community and school form a "community of life"; the local community provides vitality for the local school, so that the school can develop a education tailored for local students that is unique and that links with their daily life. On the other hand, the school, being the provider of knowledge for students and the people in the village, also plays an important role with social and economic development.

We often find that it is very hard to reach the intersection between the aim of school education and community development. The truth is "once student's learning loses connection with their real life, the ultimate goal of learning will disappear." Once education becomes disconnected from community development, the effort of school education will hardly reach an agreement with the community or receive support from the people. Then student's learning will hard to internalize, as the personality character.

Although industrialized and commercialized society contributes to the similarity of every community, and although we try hard to reduce the differences in education between every community (for example between urban and suburban areas), every community has its own particular culture. If the school curriculum can be planned by school administrators, or teachers who are willing to develop the curriculum through a similar cultural pattern, then local cultural characteristics can be mastered more appropriately, and students can feel proud of their community's culture in which they grew up.

Cooperation between homes and the school in Lidau Elementary School is again the best example of a profound Model of Home-School-Collaboration. Only by incorporating aspects of local culture in education, can local culture return to the "good old days." Otherwise the flavor and taste of this particular culture will evaporate.





### 3. Introspection

#### 3-1 Learning to be humble and being yourself through volunteer training

Last year through an opportunity that is hard to come by, my friend and I participated in the "Volunteer Training of Dedicated Women, Line 104." I participated in this training because of my own inexplicable expectations for myself; I always that I should take on some responsibility for education within my own community. Therefore, I expect myself to give more love to children and to take on more missions, leading workshops on community women's education and the establishment of women to upgrade knowledge on parent-child relationships.

Embracing this missionary-like spirit of "sacrifice", I joined study groups from many different places, preparing to "devote myself once again in the field of women's education." Actually, "devoting myself" had always been my ultimate cause of learning for a lifetime. However, after a few lectures, and though sharing experiences with female friends, I discovered that I was like a stranger to knowing the role of housewife. How could I understand all the bitterness and conflict of educating housewives, if I had never been in their shoes? I suddenly felt as though I was entering into a kind of "societal women's university", and I was the new student in this unique university.

I suddenly discovered that there were so many cases that I've never even heard of, so many kinds of life that I've never experienced, and so many impressive stories of women I could have never imagined. Thanks to this new self-awareness, I learned to be humble and to be myself. The most important lesson that I learned was to better understand the similarities and differences between school and family education.

Thanks to the preface of the book "Revolution from Within" by American feminist movement leader Gloria Steinem, her words lit me up; she wrote in the book that what she had prepared to teach others, she first had to learn for herself.

Her words simulated me to ponder of my own goal in life, I kept asking myself: "What is a successful woman?" Was a "successful woman" like that one cloth seller on Di-hua Street in Taiwan, where she and her husband discussed nothing all day, but worked to manage a small store from sunrise to sunset? Or someone like teacher welcoming new students year after year and saying good-bye to graduate students until the day we retire? Or was a "successful woman" one that remained in the house and kitchen all day, waiting for her husband and children to come home, caring after everyone in the family? If I was given one more chance to choose my way of life, which way would I prefer?

#### 3-2 Always have a shimmering face to greet us

About a month ago, a very earnest female high school headmistress retired. She had dedicated herself to high school education for 42 years, but got cancer on the year of her retirement. When the journalist asked what wish she most wanted to come true right now, she answered, "My only hope is that I can travel freely in



Europe, walking slowly on the streets in Paris."

Another case is a friend had retired for 6 months. Although she had worked in public service for 25 years, she was still young and healthy in mind, and she was planning to enjoy a life of her own. But within a few months, she was faced with sarcastic ridicule from her mother-in-law and other relatives. She became extremely depressed, began questioning her stature within the family, and developed a serious melancholia only 5 months after her retirement.

Those examples lead me to think: "In pursuing success, how much pressure do women take on privately? And how much of our abilities do we lose when searching for freedom and happiness? Is it that we, for lack of self-respect and self-awareness, need applause from others in order to approve of ourselves?" If the answers to the last question is positive, then, these ongoing services we devote to others mean violating our own bodies and free will. Therefore, even if we exert ourselves to the utmost, we can never have peace of mind, and can never be the self-satisfied freeman.

Thanks to lectures from the workshop "Women 104," it gave me the chance to rethink and reflect, I hoped that though learning from service work, I could better know myself, relax, and become a happy woman with warm heart. At the same time, I hoped that service work would give me the ability to listen silently to stories of helplessness and sadness of parents who have realized that they have educated their children improperly. Being a housewife really is a task!

One unforgettable experience occurred last year, when I had 9 days of spring vacation. I was planning to enjoy the life of being a "pure housewife", and to get away from work for awhile. But everything turned out to be different; the first 3 days, I strongly felt the pressure that housewives often feel, which made me nervous from the inside-out. Our family didn't make any travel plans; because my daughter was facing the University Entrance Exam, she had to attend class every day during the entire holiday, so my family and me spent most of our time in the house reading or listening to some music. During that vacation, after saying good-bye to my husband who went to work, I felt the pressure of "being a good housewife" in my heart. "Which should I do first? The laundry? The cleaning? The cooking?" I kept doing housework as if it was the only way to equal to what my husband earned at work. At the end of the holiday, I was even burnt out and even unsatisfied with myself. Finally, I discovered how difficult it was to be a "professional" housewife.

Many female friends of mine have become "obligating workaholics." Because we feel ashamed that we can't always take good care of our family, we hope that we can compensate during holidays; it is a time to show maternal love. But instead, the result is often reflected in an "exhausted mother and nervous family" syndrome.

As a result, even a full-time housewife must have a working schedule of her own; taking some time everyday for recreation and reading during the day's housework, and reminding ourselves to follow the schedule. That's the way we might be able to treasure ourselves and to create a harmonious family.





Life is a long road of learning that will never end—only a few people lose at the starting line, but most will fail to progress because of stumbling. Learning in life is like a medley relay; we never know which relay will win, but we sure hope that in each relay, we can devote our full power. The 21st century is the century of Aquarius, which emphasizes mutual help among individuals, but not competition. We hope that with so much caring that comes from the parents, that every student can become better-helping people actively, showing real care and consideration for the people around them, and learning to get along with both family and community members.

Once, by chance, I participated in a community meeting where some friends jokingly referred to me as: "Are you leaving your heart in Lujou." I always felt gratified to receive that name. With parent and community interaction that will devote their full hearts to service but will never ask for repayment, making the smiles on their face shimmer with delight, and ultimately strengthening the community. I learned to cherish some other persons loving kindness, to be humble, and find easiness within my heart. To them, I extend my deepest gratitude!





## Creativity at Lao Wen Feng Village



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## Abstract

The definition of “old” in the saying, “An old dog never learns new tricks,” should be redefined. “Old” in this phrase does not necessarily imply being older in age, it means older in the sense of spiritual and attitude perspectives. The phrase itself is misleading. If one treats life enthusiastically, creative innovation is everywhere, regardless of time. This means that an “old” dog can still learn many new tricks. The author demonstrates this theory by describing through his experience and participation in a research project on “creative teaching” in Wen Feng Village in the Chia Dong township in southern Taiwan. As part of the project, stratum sinking was observed, and both salt and ground water were both investigated to study the linkages. This research team focused primarily on fish ponds as primary subjects, while local village residents were also interviewed. A conceptual approach to teaching was emphasized here to highlight the power of creative innovation.



## Creativity at Lao Wen Feng Village

### 1.How it started...

In the beginning of this year, my long-time mentor in Shu De Science and Technology University, Professor Su, who advised my academic and astronomy research, asked me to join his team for the study of innovative teaching. Then, I had hesitated in joining this group, as I had no conception of innovative teaching. I found myself asking a series of questions, for example, "Can innovation can be taught?" "How can one engage in innovative teaching?" It was a completely new, and intriguing field for me.

### 2.A self-proclaimed innovative teacher

Due to my job, I had the opportunity to assist in the summer or winter camp for elementary school pupils. This project included organizing workshops for teachers, and my administrative tasks taught me how to design curriculum, coordinate activities, condense knowledge of astronomy, as well as complete administrative operations. Most importantly, the project involved the task of how to transform learning about astronomy into an innovative activity; for example, through group activity, we explored how can one transform the ratio of the sizes of nine largest planets and their respective average track radius, which served as a type of constellation jigsaw puzzle. The objective of this project was to allow students to learn in a dynamic and inventive atmosphere. Based on the enrollment records from schools in Kaoshung city and Kaoshung county, and the engagement and satisfaction of pupils, I felt substantial self-achievement. I was happy to organize such new activities, therefore, I proclaimed myself as a very "innovative" primary school teacher.

### 3.On board the wrong boat!!

During a pleasant and sunny morning, we made an appointment to coordinate another innovative workshop geared for teachers, to be held in Kenting. If this meeting was merely a leisure tour to Kenting, it would quite relaxed and easy to coordinate. However, this workshop looked like it would be difficult; our tasks were to organize the logistical details of the workshop, include a roadmap of the Kenting area, and to draft a teaching module for the workshop in a relatively short amount of time. My mood was sour then, since I had never before drafted a teaching module.

It was also very difficult to draft a teaching module during my internship, and I began to regret the assignment already. Originally, I had thought that this was simply a trip to quickly confirm the agenda. I didn't realize there was such a tremendous "construction" waiting in front of me. I told myself, "I was on board the wrong boat!"

### 4.Confronting a Difficult Task – The Beginning of Innovative Growth.

In drafting the roadmap, I was very surprised to have learned that I still have not visited many spots in Kenting kitchen (in Taiwan, we call the frequently visited spots, "a kitchen"). At least I had studied sciences in college and received a masters' degree, which would help this project. Without much alternative, I had to take rushed notes, ask questions, take photos, and think about designing the module.





Fortunately, Professor Su's aided me in the design. From his perspective, the entire Hen Chuen peninsula is full of intellectual stimulation. For innovative teaching,, one can conduct chemical and physical experiments in the fields around the seashore and explore the results. He suggested that an ordinary fishing village could be a rich spot for innovative teaching. According to Professor Su, Jian mountain would be an ideal location to carry out the project. He said, "Jian mountain was on the sea trough beneath the continental slop, and due to crust movement there were a lot of unexpected guests--mostly igneous rocks. Later on, Taiwan was further uplifted by plate compression and then exposed those unexpected guests above the sea level. "Jian mountain" is also the result of long-time erosion by mother nature. Now let's take a closer look at Jian mountain." These statements really made me admire Professor Su from my heart.

Now, please allow me to describe the very first stop of our workshop: "Wen Feng Village" an example of what I describe later as "leaping growth format" (in two days there were more than a dozen teaching stations established)

#### (1) How to Utilize Inductive Reasoning in the Field.

After we passed the high Lin Bien bridge, we turned right, to reach a village, which was under sea level – Wen Feng Village. I never heard of a negative sea altitude before; therefore, we called this first stop: "the lost horizon".

When we arrived at Weng Feng Village, I began sharing what I knew of the area: "Most severely sinking lands were in Yi Lan county, Chang Hwa county, Uen Lin county, Chia Yi county and Ping Tung county. Ping Tun county was represented by Dong Kang township, Lin Bian township, Chia Dong township, and Fung Liao township. The most severe one is Wen Feng Village at Chia Dong township where the sea level outside the embankment is already higher than the ground of the village. The whole village is below sea level, and when the houses sank, most household windows were down to ground level and first floor was turned into a basement. People's heads could touch the ceiling when stood under eaves...",

As I was proudly interpreting, Professor Su nodded and said " Let's take a look of what caused such severe land sinking ?" Obviously my knowledge of the area was relatively general information . When I thought that Wen Feng Village was just a common fishing village, and that my knowledge was more than enough to handle this case, I realized that I was wrong! After Professor Su posed his question, I realized that I was very limited in scope. My horizons were broadened in realizing methods of scientific research, acute consideration to probe new evidences, innovative teaching protocol, and teaching with creative thinking etc. All of the following are what I mean by leaping growth format.

I can see Professor Su's teaching always begins with "asking questions". His method not only enhances interaction with students, but also promote brainstorming with them. I noticed that he would also remind pupils to take notes, to describe this,



photo that, and use interviews to gain more information. I admired his expertise ! As we explored more, the uniqueness of Wen Feng Village proved to be an research subject. For example, the sea level is higher than that of the ground in the village; households were without the first floor because the first floor had already turned into base or was ready to be entirely sunk; the sinking further enhanced the altitude of Lin Bian bridge etc. The observed reports were further categorized to a preliminary result, rather than utilized to format further hypothesis. With these reports, it was very easy for all to conclude the fact of the stratum sinking, since it was too obvious.

Professor Su raised another question, "Why does the road still maintain its altitude, while the households in Wen Feng Village are sinking ?" (Figure 1, 2) " Because underground water pumping was restricted only beneath the household, the area beneath the road was untouched, therefore the households will sink more severely than the road", I replied without hesitation. "Take another guess!", Professor Su seemed to think that I had a better answer. Then I offered another explanation: " Pumping underground water caused the soil to become softer and created an unstable ground foundation; also because of the weight of house, the households will sink more severely than the road. On the other hand, the paved road is less heavy than the houses, so it will sink less." Professor Su asked skeptically, "The 85 building in Kaoshung and 101 building in Taipei have more weight, therefore it will sink more deeply?". Professor Su used this illustration and seemed to knew that I would fall into such a dilemma.

"Well, Ah?" I was very frustrated. Suddenly it came to my mind, "Well, the house sinks with the road, but the road was uplifted every now and then, therefore the house is lower and road is higher";Everything became clear. Professor Su said, "Yes, you are in business, now we can go ahead and identify evidence in the village."



(Fig 1) Where is the door of this house?



(Fig.2) Due to the soft ground, the original two-floor building has currently sunk to simply one-and-a-half floors.

Before we established a hypothesis, we also needed to conduct physical and chemical experiments to serve as a reference base. In this case, if we conducted a physical experiment, measured the resistance of the groundwater sample, and





discovered that the fishpond water was a mixture of both saltwater and freshwater (groundwater), would the case be solved? No wonder fishpond owners pump excess groundwater, otherwise, they would have to pump saltwater for saltwater fish! The question of why should one mix groundwater for saltwater fish, is another interesting subject to be investigated. One biologist has said that fish will grow faster in a mixture of saltwater and freshwater. .

Professor Su asked us another question: How do we demonstrate that the salinization in Wen Feng Village is the result of excess pumping groundwater? When we heard this question, it was clear why earlier Professor Su said that we should, upon entering the village, steal a half-bottle of fishpond water. (Fig 3). I finally was



(Fig 3)

distinguish the variation".

able to link all of his questions and the concepts that he introduced together. I made a suggestion: "Check the density! If water contains salt, and we compare the same volume of groundwater with that of salt, water with salt is heavier than pure water.", I thought this is a good idea! "The density of saltwater is 1.026 times that of freshwater, plus the groundwater pumped for the fish pond is not all saltwater, therefore their density should be fairly close to 1; experimental data error should be controlled under 3%; therefore it is rather difficult to

Professor Su politely suggested that this approach was not feasible. I then tried another method, "How about measuring buoyancy, since saltwater has higher buoyancy, therefore, if groundwater were salinized, then it will have higher buoyancy". Like Do Ra A Meng, Professor Su took 8 different dobber from his bag and let me test them. "This doesn't look good...", I was once again frustrated and did not know how to proceed. Professor Su gave me another hint, saying, "Think about it, the saltwater electrolyte has more  $\text{Na}^+$  (sodium) and  $\text{Cl}^-$  (chlorine) than freshwater".

I replied excitedly "Use the electric meter to distinguish conductivity!". "Good!", replied Professor Su taking a three-way electric meter out of his bag (Fig.4).

The data was as such---saltwater 4.5k., fish pond water 5.5k., groundwater 11.0k., mineral water 52.0k.. From the data, we concluded that the "Fish pond water was a mixture of both saltwater and groundwater". This was miraculous, and I began wondering what else was in Professor Su's bag. "Let



(Fig 4)



me give you another hint, it is a chemical approach that is relevant to the already mentioned  $\text{Na}^+$  or  $\text{Cl}^-$ ," the Professor said mysteriously. Off the top of my head, I still had no clue as to what he was referring to. Then the Professor took a bottle out from his bag, which was labeled  $\text{AgNO}_3$  (silver nitrate).



(Fig 5)



(Fig 6)

Combining " $\text{AgNO}_3 + \text{Cl}^-$ " will generate  $\text{AgCl}$  sedimentation. (Fig. 5) "We can use such physical (e.g., measuring electrical conductivity) and chemical (e.g., finding the presence of  $\text{AgCl}$  sedimentation) methods to solve the question (whether or not the salinization in Wen Feng Village is the result of excess pumping groundwater). As a result, when facing the same question, we often can seek various approaches to solve it while reaching the same conclusion." Professor Su explained. (Fig. 3) Stealing half a bottle of fish pond water. (Fig. 4) Using the physical approach to test the existence of salt. (Fig. 5) Using the chemical approach to test the existence of salt. (Fig. 6) Water pump.

## (2) Seeking Evidence

With data from both the physical and chemical experiments, we are able to establish a hypothesis. How is the confidence? Was the land that was sinking in Wen Feng Village really the result of an excess pumping of groundwater? Our investigation involved the process of seeking the answer of the question, then identifying evidence to support our theories. Aside from the land sink issue, we also observed many unique situations in the village that were related to the parameters of land sink. For example, one can see many large and small scale fish ponds in the village. Perhaps if they used seawater for cultivation, then it would not have caused land sink; nevertheless our experiments yielded important evidence.

There were countless water pumps (and deep water pumps) (Fig. 6), thick and huge water pipes, electrical poles and electrical meters; all of this added to the evidence of excess pumping groundwater. The only application for a cylindrical deepwater pump, for instance, is to pump groundwater, and this provided strong evidence. We also thought there would be some pumps for seawater and were correct. Outside of the embankment, we easily found a whole set of water pumps. These pumps all had long and thick plastic water pipes that extended to the sea.





One may ask, then where does the seawater go? We saw that those water pipes extended all the way back to the fish ponds in the village. Such substantial evidence fortunately does not need any further words to explain itself!

Along the embankment, we saw countless water pumps (and deep water pumps) on the roadside. "That's the evidence for pumping groundwater!", I proudly pointed to Professor Su. While nodding his head, Professor Su raised another question, "What is the size of radius of those water pipes?" Although I answered, "It should have label on it", I was unable to find the measurement. I suggested to the professor that, "Perhaps we can't cut the pipe to measure the radius, however, we can use a roll (or a long string) to measure the surface length of circumference, and then apply the equation:  $\text{length of circumference} = 2 \times \text{radius}$  to obtain the radius of the water pipe". With this suggestion, my ability to think creatively was improved!


### (3) The most innovative approach to learning – Feedback from Village Residents

Throughout this field trip, I considered the most innovative approach to creative learning was to interview the residents in the village. Although we had a scientific approach and methods, most of our information was limited by the environment. We turned to village residents to answer questions such as the following: What kind of fish were cultivated in the fish pond? The price to catch them were relatively high. Where was the record of the land sink? When had it started? What was the extent? What was the impacts? Will the area be flooded? Will seawater flow backward? Why have you not relocated to another place?

For such practical field learning, one could not arrive at a solution without face-to-face interviews. Besides, the interview itself is usually a critical component of research. It will help to the research if students from primary or secondary schools possess some scientific concepts prior to the engagement. Furthermore, education reform emphasizes localized science education? By obtaining residents' feedback and making field observations, students will usually have a stronger interaction and personal connection to the research. For example, we asked these students to imagine that they were the Ping Tong county magistrate or someone who was a decision maker. We asked them what they would do to address the issue of land sinking? Most students replied that they would have put those people in the jail! This answer, depending on one's perspective could be either cute or naïve. Some others answered that they would help residents to fill the gap and uplift the land, others stated that they would help residents relocate, or open a children's marine amusement park. Were these solutions not innovative? I think it is the matter of science!

As to the issue of stratum sinking, we have made many observations (for example, household sinking, water pumps, motors, huge water pipes, embankment, groyne etc.). Yet, without innovation, these observations, left alone, would be meaningless. In order to solve the question, we must categorize the evidence, following a process, including: Focusing on the subject of "stratum sinking and





constructing a set of logic, observing the village first, and allowing teachers to utilize inductive reasoning (examining the high-rising Lin Bian bridge, fish ponds, abnormal sinking households, high embankment, and all kinds of water pumps). After observing these scenarios, we are able to know more about the stratum sinking. Our scientific approach emphasizes measurement, since we have already observed that the land was sinking, can we measure the degree of sinking? Although field observations are generally not completely accurate, in our project, our measurements were adequate, since we have developed an "innovative" measurement method, and can ascertain the severity of land sinking in Wen Feng village.

#### (4) Advance "Investigation" to Promote "Innovation"

The next step in our process is investigation. To view such an unusual example of stratum sinking would be a total waste without further investigation, especially given that we had traveled far to visit Wen Feng Village. During our field research, we developed a series of innovative investigation methods and found interesting results. Our first field research was at pumping station. The administrator, nicknamed "Uncle station chief" was then conducting regular maintenance, but he gave us a tour of the pumping station. Since Wen Feng Village's sewage and rainfall could not be drained out into the sea by itself, mechanical power was used to keep the whole village from flooding, not to mention preventing waste water from flooding! Herein, we had our first evidence of stratum sinking in the village, and with previous observation, we now possessed some evidence. Most importantly, we found this result through innovative methods that were developed by ourselves!

After visiting the station, we then thought that the stratum sinking might be the result of excess pumping of ground water by fish farmers, (which was already supported by published reports). This reminded us the pumping of groundwater near the seashore might break the balance between ground water and sea water. The invasion of sea water, for example, will salinize ground water. With this thought, it was once again, time to be innovative. Could we measure if the ground water was salinized by physical approaches or could we use the chemical approach? These unanswered questions could be solved by our unlimited power of innovation. For example, measuring resistance in the solution will inform what levels of salt are in the water; measuring the level of chorine sedimentation in the solution can also indicate salt concentration. These experiments certainly could be quantified. As a result, we found that the salt concentration in the fish pond fell in-between seawater and groundwater (Fig. 8). We found another astonishing result, the water in fish pond was itself a mixture of seawater and groundwater.

After interviewing local residents, we have verified that local fish pond mainly cultivates saltwater fish, however the ratio of saltwater to groundwater is normally three to one; and sometimes two to one for various species of fish. The next questions to answer were, why do the residents even need groundwater for saltwater fish? and Will excess pumping of groundwater will sink the stratum? Through interviewing local residents, we have learned that fish will grow faster when cultivated





in a mixture of freshwater and saltwater, which has left a significant economic impact. We also received the same conclusion when we consulted with biology experts. It was no wonder that ground water was pumped excessively.



(Fig 7)



(Fig 8)

As to explain the cause for the stratum sinking, we should begin with the formation of the plains located on the western coast of Taiwan. The plate tectonics generated central mountain chains in Taiwan; after years of erosion and movement, the alluvial accumulation of substances from the mountain, proved not only to be rich in natural resources for groundwater, but also meant many unexpected and innovated developments for us. (Fig. 7) Pumping station in Wen Feng Village; (Fig. 8) Fish ponds that were pumped with saltwater and groundwater.

#### 5. What I Learned from this Innovative Project

I was deeply impressed after participating in Professor Su's creative and action-based research. I learned many lessons, including:

First: "Innovation" could be incubated with proper guidance.

Before, I used to pass all my knowledge to students without reservation, which limited the room for a student's self-growth. This campaign, however, changed my teaching style and the way in which I conceptualize teaching. Now, I will emphasize certain activities for "discovery" in order to enhance student interaction and to encourage their participation. Meanwhile, I will withhold the time before releasing the answers, and will emphasize reasoning and finding authentication, to stimulate the students' creativity.

Second: "Creativity" can be Used Comprehensively.

Based on our study of innovation in Wen Feng Village, we discovered that innovation can be combined with education on "local culture" including: community learning through map design; linguistics through interviewing local residents; mathematics through measuring the size and number of fish ponds, and the radius of water pipes; and nature and life sciences. It can also encompass both physical – the application of electrical resistance--and chemical – the sedimentation of silver chlorine etc experiments. Through brainstorming, one can create unlimited

innovation.

### Third: "Creativity" has no Restriction on Age

Scientific study has indicated that : " a new born puppy has more than 1,000 connections for neurons," with very congested cross-overs, like many field paths extending everywhere in the brain. When puppies are trained correctly to perform a few repeated activities, they can often respond to orders immediately. Before long, those small paths that had controlled those repeated activities will transform into a wide superhighway. Meanwhile, those less frequently-exercised field paths will gradually fade away.

When the small puppy matures to become an adult dog, the brain is left with only a few superhighways that can translate to fast reflexes and performing accuracy, however, the price to gaining these benefits is losing creativity and elasticity. This is why, as the saying goes, one cannot "teach an old dog new tricks." However, after participating in Professor Su's research project, I realized that the definition of an "old" dog should be redefined. "Old" in this phrase does not necessarily imply being older in age, it means older in the sense of spiritual and attitude perspectives. If one treats life enthusiastically, creative innovation is everywhere, regardless of time. This means that an "old" dog can still learn many new tricks.





## Weekly Mathematics Diary of the Second Grade in an Elementary School

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## Abstract

**PART I:** My daughter was confused when she wrote her summer vacation homework. She asked for my help because she had, at that time, not yet learned how to solve 'two digits multiplying two digits'. I employed the constructional additive concept to teach her, but she insisted on using her teacher's solution. In the end, this process was like getting to an answer without knowing why.

**PART II:** The research team participated in the '2004 Creative Education Exposition' on 13-15 February, 2004. These three days were full of challenges but also accomplishments. In the exposition, we realized the urban parents' attentiveness to their children's education, and we were also surprised to discover that as children got older, their fear and detestation of mathematics sharply increased. We were thankful for the encouragement that we received from the parents and our colleagues about the weekly mathematics journal and the streaming remedial teaching.

**PART III:** The research team shared their experiences in a workshop hosted in an elementary school of Taiping City in Taichung County in November, 2003. We reached consensus regarding two issues, including:

1. The qualitative research method was decided.

We decided to adopt the qualitative approach to record the research process and to analyze data.

2. The Powerpoint presentation had to be changed according to the audience.

In order to better promote the project, we had to revise the Powerpoint content to suit different audiences.

**PART IV:** In August, 2003, Chi-Feng and I shared our experiences in carrying out the 'Weekly Mathematics Journal' project with the teachers of Ming-Chien Elementary School in Nantou County. We had lively discussions and some of the questions asked, included:

1. When you carried out the streaming remedial teaching, did the parents object? If so, how did you manage it?

2. What are the criteria of streaming? How often is the streaming? How do teachers arrange their lessons?

3. Where did you get the teaching materials?

4. How do we teach students to write the 'weekly mathematics journal' from the beginning?

5. How do we decide the theme of the 'weekly mathematics journal'? How often do we change the theme?

6. What difficulties did you encounter when you carried out the 'Creative Teaching: Weekly Mathematics Journal' project? How did you overcome them?

**PART V:** In a routine meeting in May, 2003, there was a fiery debate on an equation: could ' $85+94+35=179+35=214$ ' be written as ' $85+94=179+35=214$ '? Chi-Fen thought the values in the two sides of the equation should be equal. Nevertheless, I regarded





the equation as a calculation process. The way that the students wrote was identical to the way of using a calculator, so I did not think we should stipulate how students should write the calculation.

**Concluding remarks:** In the beginning, the research team only wanted to improve teaching methods through research. Unexpectedly, from our findings, we learned to be active and brave when attempting new initiatives. We employed the spirit of research to overcome the difficulties we encountered and furthermore, we gained a sense of creative fulfilment.

**Epilogue:** 'The Collection of the Weekly Mathematics Journal of the Second Grade in an Elementary School' was published by the Taichung County government in 2005. There were 48 excellent pieces of the students' work sorted by each sequence of the research stage. The research team made comments on each piece of work so that it helped the readers to understand the second grade students' logic and thoughts. With this feedback, teachers would know how best to guide their students in learning mathematics.

## Weekly Mathematics Diary of the Second Grade in an Elementary School

Reading an email from Chi-Feng about the information of 'Solicitation for Stories of Creative Education', I thought it was about time to reflect on the entire research process. In retrospect, these years are full of frustration, perspiration, happiness and gains. The students' work has been published. The project report is about to be in print. It is high time to conclude by recording what I have gained from participating in this action-based research during these years.

PART I: 20<sup>th</sup> July 2005

This morning my daughter voluntarily did her summer vacation homework ('New Mathematics' - to review old lessons learned and to preview new lessons). After awhile she called me, "Mom, how do I solve this question?" I read the question and thought it was not difficult. However, because it was a question of 'two digits multiplying two digits' was beyond what she learnt, she was "stuck." In order not to confuse her by adopting a different strategy from that of her teacher, I decided to use the concept of constructive addition to solve this question.

Question: Mary and three friends buy 12 cans of Cola. Each can costs 18 dollars. If they share the payment, how much should each one give?

My solution:

$$10 \times 12 = 120$$

$$8 \times 12 = 96$$

$$120 + 96 = 216$$

$$216 \div 4 = ( \quad )$$

I stopped here and asked if she understood it. She nodded her head. Then she pouted, erased what I wrote and wrote her own solution.

Her solution:

$$18 + 18 = 36$$

$$36 + 18 = 54$$

$$54 + 18 = 72$$

.....

When she wrote, I felt so confused that I asked: "Didn't you just say that you understood it? It will take you lots of time to calculate in **this** way." Then my daughter started to cry. She said "My teacher said we must calculate in this way!" My daughter was so obedient that she regarded every single word of her teacher as an imperial edict. Although I am also a teacher, so long as I contradicted her teacher, I am always considered wrong in her eyes. I replied, "Are you sure? Using my calculation is quicker in getting the answer." As I said so, she cried even louder. "OK, OK. Use whatever you want to!", I replied. I was surprised, since the Nine-Year Curriculum has been put into practice for years, teachers would not ordinarily dictate what kind of calculation students should use. Then I left without checking her answer. A few days





later, I checked her workbook, and the final solution after several revisions was:

$$\begin{array}{r}
 18 \\
 \times 12 \\
 \hline
 180 \\
 180 \\
 \hline
 216
 \end{array}$$

216÷4=(54)

Alas! When I saw this, I was speechless. I began to think about how to teach in a method that my daughter would accept.

## PART II: 2004 Creative Education Exposition 13-15 February 2004

"Welcome! You're welcome to take on the challenge of answering our mathematics questions! Choose any one on the wall, and if you get the right answer, you can win a prize!"

In the early morning, seven people walked in the exposition site with dark shadows under their eyes, exhausted from the long journey and the preparation work from the previous day. To our surprise, until midday, only a few people came to this exposition. We wondered if it was because the exposition was not publicized. After few minutes, however, a stream of people came to us, mostly kindergarten students led by their teachers to the exposition.

"Oh! Kindergarten students! So they can't solve these questions!" We said.

"Can we choose the question?" One mother asked me.

"Of course." I replied.

"Can I read the question to my kid?" The mother then asked.

"No problem, but can he do this?" I replied with doubt.

"Oh, he is good at mental arithmetic so I would give him a try." The mother answered.

Therefore, the mother chose an easy question of addition and subtraction, read it, and explained the meaning to her child. Then the child got the answer by using mental arithmetic. The kid happily left with the prize in hand, and I was amazed by the capacity of urban children.

In the afternoon, we were very busy because many junior and senior high school students visited the exposition. We spoke out loud to attract their attention.

"Come and take on the challenge of these mathematics questions!" A junior high school boy walked by and I asked him directly, "Would you like to try the mathematics questions for the second grade in elementary schools? You can win a prize if you have the right answer." I did not yet finish my words, but still the boy kept withdrawing. I thought he misunderstood the term "elementary" with "junior high



school". Therefore, I approached him and said it again, but the situation worsened. We were just like two magnets with the same polarity. The closer I approached, the more he drew back.

"It is very easy. It is fine even if you get the wrong answer." I kept persuading him in trying. Surprisingly, he said "I hate mathematics." "Oh!" I replied, feeling so discouraged that I did not want to persuade him anymore. Instead, I helplessly watched him walk away and began to wonder.

The second day of the exposition was the first day of the weekend and this meant that many parents attended with their children. Some of them related to the writing of the weekly mathematics journal after they saw our exhibition. They consulted us seriously about how to write these journals and decided to teach their children. Some elementary school teachers were also interested in our weekly journal writing and the streaming remedial teaching we carried out. They asked us questions repeatedly, and we amply explained and expressed ourselves fully. Visitors came and left, and we still discussed our project, visiting other exhibitions for as long as we had free time. There were expositions from the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Economic Affairs, the National Science Council and so forth, and in additions, there were shows and games. Some exhibitions were game activities, some were DIY teaching, and some were static performances. The contents of the exposition were so rich in variety that even we had a good time.

Three days passed and our exhibition drew so much attention that the stand next to us became envious. Perhaps it was because of the games and prizes that we became so popular. Some people even came to us twice. I recalled when we were first informed to join the three-day exhibition in Taipei, we were a little unenthusiastic. In the exposition, however, we quite enjoyed ourselves. Even though some of the teachers started to become hoarse from talking about the project, we did not give up the chance to promote the weekly mathematics journal. Although some of the junior high school students rejected our invitation (I was curious as to what made these children repel mathematics), most of the people gave us positive feedback. These opinions not only encouraged us, but also gave us great sense of achievement. Moreover, we were impressed by the urban parents' attentiveness to their children's education. Even though we returned to Taichung that very night and had to work next day, I realized that many people related to our pedagogy, and all the efforts that we devoted in the action-based research were worthwhile.





So many people came to our exhibition that our principal personally gave an explanation. (The man in tie in the left photo)



Mathematics is fun!



The research team

PART III: Sharing Experience of Action-based Research in one elementary school of Taiping City in November, 2003

November 2003 was the second time that I shared my experience of action-based research with fellow teachers from the other schools. However, when I heard that it was the principal's idea to invite me to give a speech, I began to have mixed feelings. On the one hand, I was glad because the idea of the 'weekly mathematics journal' has been successfully popularised by Professor Hsu in several workshops for principals, directors, and officials. This meant that this idea had been accepted by the principals. On the other hand, however, I was worried because even if the principals accepted the idea, it did not mean that the teachers would follow. Under these circumstances, I was afraid that this experience sharing would not resonate much with teachers.

After lunch that day, we brought the necessary documents and a laptop, and drove to a Taiping elementary school. Because the principal was on duty leave, the chief of the administration department helped us set up the equipment. It was almost time for the speech so teachers gradually entered the room. The quiet basement began to resound with noise, and immediately, we knew that this was not an ideal place to give a speech. However, just as we expected, when we started to share our experiences, we began to hear murmuring among the teachers. When we discussed the children's weekly mathematics journals, the colourful and childish works attracted all the teachers' attention. They began to concentrate on our presentation and discussed amongst themselves. From that moment, we knew that they were interested in our project.



When it was time for the teachers to give comments, they posed some questions. Some were about teaching –those who asked these questions were really interested in the idea of weekly mathematics journal. Some were about the research writing – those who asked these questions seemed to be critical of the project. Whatever they asked, we reached consensus on two issues:

**First, the qualitative research method was decided.** Although there were six teacher participants in the research team, none of us ever received postgraduate training and were not familiar with the style of academic writing. Since we were not familiar with the quantitative approach, we decided to employ the qualitative analysis, which is closer to our professional training.

**Second, powerpoint presentations should vary according to the types of audience.** Generally speaking, the audience of the elementary school teachers are children. However, the audience who would attend our presentations were mostly school teachers, scholars, professionals, or even parents. These groups may come with different motivations and want to know different aspects. Therefore, it was impossible to use the same version of the Powerpoint. We had to amend the content according to the different needs so that we could better promote our ideas.

#### PART IV: Ming-Chien Elementary School of Nantou County in August, 2003

When I heard that our team was invited to demonstrate in Ming-Chien Elementary School of Nantou county, I frowned. We just gave a speech in Nantou County, and to travel to Nantou county without a car was very inconvenient. With this in mind, I planned to decline the invitation. Nevertheless, when I heard that the principal of Ming-Chien Elementary came to our school in person to invite us, I became very curious as to the reason why the principal was interested in our project. I discovered that the principal had been interested in our 'Creative Teaching: Weekly Mathematics Journal' project. Moreover, the school's scale, the students' quality, and the teachers' attitudes were similar to ours. Therefore, the principal intended to carry out this project in his school. Since the director of Administration Department of Ming-Chien Elementary could not contact us during the summer vacation, Principal Wu took the initiative to come personally to our school to invite us. This invitation was so sincere that even though the school was very far away, we decided to go.

On that day, a teacher from Ming-Chien Elementary School came to drive us to Nantou. We were very grateful, but also aware that it would not be easy to promote our project if none of us could drive. This worry was later materialised and troubled us greatly.

We were surprised to discover that our presentation was scheduled after the morning meeting, where The principal and all the directors stayed to hear us. In order to impress the teachers of Ming-Chien Elementary School, and most importantly to







make them understand the content and the methods of this project, Chi-Fen and I did our best to explain the process and findings of our action-based research. I was so excited about the questions they asked that I began to form good impressions of them. Their questions and our answers are described in the following:

Question 1: When you carried out the streaming remedial teaching, did the parents object? If they did, how did you manage it?

Answer: The streaming remedial teaching is indeed very innovative in elementary schools. When many people hear of it at the first time, they think it is the streaming teaching. Therefore, before we carried it out, we explained to the parents the aim of streaming and the methods of implementation. Moreover, we utilized one alternative learning session rather than three formal ones for streaming remedial teaching so that the students actually had one more mathematics lesson. The teachers chose the teaching materials based on the students' levels so that they would not get bored and would also gain some sense of achievement through being challenged. Of course, in the beginning, some of the parents were concerned about which group their children were assigned to, and they hoped their children could be placed in the best group. However, after we communicated with them, they could understand and agree with us. Thus far, our parents have received this pedagogy well, and there are no problems like this any more.

Question 2: What are the criteria for streaming? How often are the students streamed? How do teachers arrange their lessons?

Answer: During the first semester of the first grade, we focused on the streaming remedial teaching of the notional phonetic alphabet. During the second semester of the first grade, we changed our focus to mathematics. There were six classes in the first grade. We streamed the students into three levels based on the mathematical test results. Taking the capacity of each classroom, and the needs of the students of low achievement into consideration, there was only one class in Level 1, which contained about 20 students. Three classes comprised Level 3 (for students achieving better results), and each class had 37-39 students. The other students were grouped in Level 2. We rearranged the students after every examination, but teachers could adjust the students' levels according to their professional judgment. In addition, the teachers draw lots to decide which class they taught and this changed every semester. Because the teacher in Level 1 put much more efforts towards teaching, he/she would not be reappointed in Level 3 in the following semester.

Question 3: Where did you get the teaching materials?

Answer: We used many extracurricular materials and acquired additional resources from websites. Actually, the teachers have wide access to many teaching resources, and all they often sift through materials according to students' levels. Basically, the materials used in level 3 should be broader and deeper, such as those questions for



gifted students. In level 2, we chose the different versions of workbooks and practice sheets from educational websites. In level 1, we did not use any supplementary extracurricular material but just enhanced the mathematical concepts of each unit.

Question 4: How do we teach students to write the 'weekly mathematics journal' from the beginning?

Answer: Because the students in the first grade do not have sufficient language ability, it is indeed difficult to ask them to write a meaningful question by themselves. However, we can use the examples in the textbook or workbook and encourage them to copy the way the questions are posed. As for the students with low language ability, we can encourage them to pose questions by drawing.

For example, one question in the textbook goes: "There are 5 butterflies in the garden. Three more fly into the garden. How many butterflies are there in the garden?" The teachers can ask the students: besides the butterflies, what else are there in the garden? The students' answers might be bees, flowers, trees, people etc. They may also change the numbers to 1, 9, 10, etc. Thus we can encourage them to fill in the blanks to practice posing questions. For instance, there are (number) of (animals) in the garden. After (number) more (action), how many (animals) are there in the garden? This is the simplest way. Or we can use: "Where? How many? What happens? What is the question?" This is a higher level practice.

After some guidance, almost every student could pose his or her question and would not be afraid of such an exercise. However, the amount of time spending on copying questions varies from student to student. Only a few students would become so bored as to pose their own questions; most of the students continue to emulate the workbooks. Therefore, we can motivate them by offering more encouragement and instruction, and by showing them other students' works. During the teaching process, we should tolerate students' mistakes and slow progress. The worst scenario is that the teachers punish students for incorrect answers or dictate what they should do. This not only discourages their interest, but also smothers their creativity and self-judging ability.

Question 5: How do we decide the theme of the 'weekly mathematics journal'? How often do we change the theme?

Answer: Teachers can know whether students understand the concepts by how they pose their question and solve the problem in their weekly mathematics journals. Therefore, we can decide the theme according to the units in the mathematics textbook. In principle, one theme lasts for two weeks, which amounts to two entries for students to write. In addition, we can choose the theme according to the activities in schools or year groups, such as school sports, field trips, or festivals and current affairs.



Question 6: What difficulties did you encounter when you carried out the 'Creative Teaching: Weekly Mathematics Journal' project? How did you overcome them?

Answer: When the students of the second grade started to write the weekly mathematics journal in the first semester, they made many mistakes because of their insufficient language ability, such as incorrect key words and punctuation, too many redundant words, the wrong quantifier, etc. It was a hard work for teachers, and the slow progress of the students was a hard blow to the confidence of the team. In the second semester, we used one reading session every other week to strengthen the students' language ability and provided them with the supplementary materials designed by us.

In order to avoid the plagiarism, we shortened the span of writing the mathematics journal in school. After that, the students became to progress rapidly. Their works were so excellent that we felt as if we won first prize. The creativity that students showed in question posing and solving was so brilliant that we were convinced that the journal did work to improve the teaching effects. Nevertheless, nothing is perfect. We did spot some problems as the students improved. For example, some students would copy the questions from the reference books of the third grade or the ones demonstrated by their teachers in cram schools. We tried to solve this problem by asking those students to write the journal on their own in school, and all students had to write journal on Wednesday morning in order for us to ensure that they fully understood the mathematical concepts.

Our discussion was so intense that we did not notice that it was time for the teachers to prepare their lessons. We exchanged e-mail addresses and ended our demonstration. This time I realized the joy of sharing experiences and I was also aware that one-man teaching could not fulfil students' needs for learning. It is the future educational trend to form a learning organization such as the teaching group.

#### PART V: National Taichung Teachers College in May, 2003

It was blazing. I rode my red motorcycle to National Taichung Teachers College. When I arrived, the sweat dripped from my face. We had set this date a few weeks ago, to discuss our research report and teaching reflections with the professor and to schedule the next stage of progress.


It was not a good idea to have a meeting on such a hot day. Sitting in the coolness of an air-conditioned room in the hot afternoon, we all felt drowsy. However, after a few discussions, I raised one controversial question regarding the additive solution that Chi-Feng and I had discussed it before. Neither of us was willing to give up our own opinions. Since Professor Hsu was here, we decided to ask for her opinion.



Example: Mother went shopping in a supermarket. She spent 85 dollars on meat, 94 dollars on fruit, and 35 dollars on vegetables. How much money did she spend?

Correct solution:  $85+94+35=179+35=214$

Student's solution:  $85+94=179+35=214$



I approved of the student's solution, but Chi-Feng did not. She thought an equation meant the values of the two sides should be equal. In the student's solution, the values were not equal, and so it would lead to confusion. Moreover, the teachers of the third grade might not approve of this solution. I could not refute her point, but the reason I approved of the solution was that I thought the equation was part of the calculation. The student's solution was in fact what we often used in daily life (especially with the use of a calculator). This was much quicker than writing the solution step by step. Furthermore, the student must understand the equation they wrote. Therefore, I did not think we should stipulate how students should write the calculation. When Professor Hsu heard our argument, she could not make any judgement since her specialty was not in mathematics and she was not familiar with the elementary school teaching. Thus she suggested that we could consult mathematics school teachers or the teachers of the third or fourth grade. We followed her suggestion, and discussed this issue again with teachers.

The year of 2002 marked the most important turning point in my education career. I had been teaching in the first and second grade for ten years. The same passion and expectations I had for education in the first year of teaching had disappeared. Teaching became a routine, and I was getting tired. I had lost the joy and complacency of being a teacher. This year, we (Shu-Yi Gao, Chi-Feng Young, Pai-Feng Yan, Ming-Juan Liao, Rong-Yin Liao and I) followed Professor Jhao-Li Hsu of National Taichung Teachers College to do the action-based research. At first, it was just a humble wish to improve our teaching methods. However, because of Professor Hsu's encouragement, the project turned out to be one of the Professional Development of Creative Teachers Project for the Minister of Education. However, what is 'creativity'? How can we present creativity in teaching and learning? The 'Weekly Mathematics Journal' and the streaming remedial teaching were indeed innovative teaching methods at that time. Yet how creative are they? We had no absolute answer, so we kept searching.

It was very difficult to research without a precise aim. We worked on the project in the teachers' lab during the breaks in the afternoon. We corrected the students' assignments and discussed their performance at the same time. Sometimes we complained about the students' laziness in not maintaining their journals well. Sometimes we shared the new discoveries and joy in teaching. Most of the time we wrote research reports. Professor Hsu was strict with the terms we used; hence we spent lots of time choosing the appropriate terms. In many respects, these reports were more difficult than sitting for a composition exam in the University Entrance Examination. We often had to work even after office hours.





In early 2003, the research project began to take shape. In the past half year, we were like recently-graduated trainees. We faced the problems raised in the project and acted with extreme caution to find the solutions. The students' progress gave us a big sense of achievement and motivated us to continue working. We wondered at the students' creativity from time to time, and we learned where their creativity came from. After all this hard work, we were convinced of the effects of the creative education. Thus we dared conclude that the action-based research of the 'Weekly Mathematics Journal' had succeeded!

A famous saying goes: 'Good things should be shared with good friends.' In the middle of 2003, our action-based research came to an end, but the more complicated follow-up work—the collation and record of the report—was under way. Since our sincere hope was to publish the students' excellent weekly mathematics journals, we tried hard to promote the 'Weekly Mathematics Journal' during many occasions, such as teachers' in-job training and workshops. Some people related to us and encouraged us so we would step forward. Sometimes, we felt frustrated when some people questioned and criticized us. Nevertheless, we would reflect on these shortcomings so that we would not repeat the same mistakes. The teachers of the research team helped one another when we shared our experiences during workshops. We never thought that everyone of us should devote equal energy to the research. In the year of carrying out the action-based research, I was a perfect teacher for the students, but at the same time, a lousy mother for my three children. When my little daughter fell ill with an unknown disease, she was hospitalised for three weeks and was even admitted to the intensive care unit three times. During that period of torment, I even thought of applying for a leave to remain so that I could devote all my energy to my family. Luckily, my partners in the research team gave me their wholehearted support. They shared my responsibility in the research and schoolwork so that I could take care of my daughter. I was so grateful to have such friends, especially when it was no longer easy to make friends like them in today's society.

After the action-based research ended, we applied the weekly mathematics journal and the streaming remedial teaching to normal teaching. We implemented this project in the first grade. The result was as satisfactory as the original research result after two years of implementation. However, in the year 2005 our 5-year research team will be disbanded for the sake of promoting the project to the other grade levels. Chi-Feng would teach in the fifth grade; I would teach in the third grade; Shu-Yi and Pai-Feng would stay in the first grade, and Ming-Juan would transfer to an elementary school in the Kaohsiung City. No matter which grade level we will be in and wherever we would teach, we all hope that the project will yield positive results. We are also looking forward to solving new problems in different year groups.

The summer of 2005, for me, has marked the completion of 13 years of teaching. Objectively speaking, in the past, the pedagogy was focused on one-man teaching instead of that of collaborative teaching. Nowadays, the pedagogy should be



collaborative rather than competitive. We ought to utilize the team-work to save time and energy in order to create more educational value. If we always think we are the best and never want to learn from the others, then we will be doomed to a life of very limited outlook and experiences. On the contrary, if we can be open-minded enough to explore new things and to collaborate with others, we can better develop as individuals and achieve our life goals. During these years, I learned to be active and to create new teaching methods. I now try to solve problems with a spirit of research, and have gained a sense of fulfilment in work. Although this was only one small step, if you are hesitant to step forward, you could never make your dreams come true.

## Epilogue

I was thinking of my daughter's mistake in her summer vacation homework, and I finally decided to let her find the answer. I told her to correct her answer and sat beside her. After a while, she gave me her workbook. My goodness! I did not think many people would have as innovative calculation like hers. However, I knew that she had constructed the concept of the long multiplication so that she could learn the traditional long multiplication. What do you think?

$$\begin{array}{r}
 18 \\
 \times 12 \\
 \hline
 16 \\
 + 20 \\
 \hline
 36 \\
 + 80 \\
 \hline
 116 \\
 + 100 \\
 \hline
 216
 \end{array}$$

There must be some traces left when we move along. 'The Collection of the Weekly Mathematics Journal of the Second Grade in an Elementary School' was published by the Taichung County government in 2005. There were 48 excellent pieces of students' work, each sorted by the sequence of the research stage. The research team made comments on each piece of work so that it helped the readers to understand the second grade students' logic and thoughts. Hence, they could know how to guide their students in learning mathematics more efficiently.





Our dream came true. 'The Collection of the Weekly Mathematics Diary of the Second Grade in an Elementary School' has been published in March, 2004.



## Growth Professional and Creative Teaching A Story of the Growth of a Team of Teachers

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<sup>1</sup>Zhi-Ren Tsai and Wen-Chun Hsiao are math teachers in Zhong-Lun Senior High School



## Abstract

The quality of teachers can determine a school's success or failure. While a teacher's mission is to help students grow as adults, teachers themselves should also gradually mature as professionals. The cohesiveness of school teachers can be built by establishing a team of teachers with a common goal; these teams can also serve as a school's supportive network, incorporating teachers' new ideas for improving instruction. In this case, it has helped teachers' creative teaching grow and flourish on the Li-Shan Junior High School campus.

We are a group of teachers exploring the frontlines of education. Our "Team of Growth" consists of teachers with common interests. Through interactions between members, we share our experiences and thoughts with one another. Meanwhile, through those profound conversations and a team-learning process, we developed creative teaching tools. All of our members have gradually adopted the efficient methods and teaching strategies developed by the team and have replaced old, inefficient methods and habits.

Due to the team's interaction, we have not only promoted innovative teaching, developed new teaching styles and creative lessons, but have also stimulated the culture of teaching creatively in Li-Shan Junior High School—an inert culture previously hesitant to change, to one that embraces progressive teaching. This is a collective story. It represents precious interactions, inspirations that drove our project, and our professional growth.



## Growth Professional and Creative Teaching A Story of the Growth of a Team of Teachers

### 1. People

Wen, Mei-Gui(溫梅桂):An experienced teacher and beautiful lady, currently teaching art at "Li-Shan Junior High School", ex-Section Chief of Curriculum, ex-Section Chief of Student Activities.

Hsiao, Wen-Chun(蕭文俊):"Hsiao Sir", currently a math teacher in Zhong-Lun Senior High school.

Tsai, Zhi-Ren(蔡志仁):Currently a math teacher in Zhong-Lun Senior High school.

Chen, Ming-Chuan(陳明娟):Currently a math teacher in Zhong-Lun Senior High school.

Tsai, Zhang-Lin(蔡長霖):Currently a math teacher in Liu-Gui Junior High school in Kaohsiung.

Yao, Gu-Hua(姚谷樺):Currently a math teacher in Bao-Lai Junior High school in Kaohsiung.

### 2. Origin

In the year of 1999, our Section Chief of Curriculum Wen, Mei-Gui, called Hsiao, Wen-Chun and Tsai Zhi-Ren for establishing a "Class for Gifted Math and Science Students"(數理資優班). They, Hsiao and Tsai, set up a meeting every Wednesday afternoon to discuss teaching materials for the special class. For two years, they collected questions and arranged them into proper stages for those talented students. As a result, they created a whole new teaching file solely for "Class for Gifted Math and Science Students" for Li-Shan Junior High school.

During the work, a marvelous thing happened: the two math teachers, one experienced, the other rather new, who barely knew each other before, became a team, appreciated each other's input, and cooperated to achieve mutual goals.

### 3. The Experienced Teacher-Novice Teacher Team

In May 2000, "Academic Attainment Testing" (國中學力測驗), on the subject of math, would test students from the first chapter of the first volume to the first chapter of the sixth volume. Tsai, who was to teach junior high school for the first time, encountered a difficult problem, "Will the students listen when I teach Chapter 2: Statistics and Probability?"

Seeking advice, young and cheerful teacher Tsai went to the more experienced teacher Hsiao, Wen-Chun. Because of their former collaboration for the "Class for Gifted Math and Science Students," they soon cooperated on a new project. Equipped with Hsiao, Wen-Chun's years of teaching experience, and Tsai's powerful computer skills, they transformed their ideas and concepts of teaching into computer screen files that were user-friendly and accessible to students. That was the first time they worked together and developed multi-media teaching material on a unit: Chapter 2, Volume six, Statistics and Probability, which both of them felt quite satisfied with.





#### 4.4-Person Team (the beginning)

The applicable math questions in a junior high school curriculum can be divided into four parts: simple equation with one unknown (一元一次方程式), simple simultaneous equation with two unknowns (二元一次聯立方程式), quadratic equation with one unknown (一元二次方程式), and the quadratic function (二次函數). These four units are very important for children, because they not only demonstrate that math is actually a very practical science, but also prove that math needs the process of thinking abstractly.

Even an experienced teacher like Hsiao, Wen-Chun was sometimes deeply troubled by the problem of using the blackboard to teach applicable math questions. The application of multi-media technology, however, improved the students' ability to grasp mathematical concepts. Consequently, after finishing the unit on "Statistics and Probability," transforming the four units into multi-media material became the top priority. Meanwhile, two other teachers, Tsai, Zhang-Lin, and Yao, Gu-Hua had joined the team. Each teacher was responsible for one unit: Hsiao, Wen-Chun, simple simultaneous equation with two unknowns, Tsai Zhi-Ren, simple equation with one unknown, Tsai, Zhang-Lin, quadratic equation with one unknown, and Yao, Gu-Hua, quadratic function. From then on, this 4-person team, which produced multi-media material, had formally been established, with their first project: applicable questions (應用問題).

Our team developed these materials by sharing personal teaching experiences, discussing what had successfully worked in the classroom in stimulating students—aiding their understanding of mathematical concepts. We made it a rule to have a meeting every Tuesday afternoon, where we decided the chapter, set the schedule for the current week and the next, and established deadlines. However, we discovered that meeting once per week was insufficient due to multiple problems during the process, such as, the ideal image shown on the computer, the links between concepts, setting for the situation, etc. Sometimes an unexpected and seemingly small issue could be extremely time-consuming, and we often worked past school hours, shifting locations to continue our discussion and to complete another unit.

Work continued as such, until it was almost summer, the time when elementary graduates were about to begin junior high school and become freshmen at Li-Shan. We were so driven by our mission that we decided, regardless of how busy we were, to provide the incoming freshmen with entirely new and improved teaching material. Our hope was that with these original and interactive materials, they could fall in love with the junior high math. Thus, we worked to complete another unit: first chapter, first volume, of the Junior High Math textbook.

Next, because students always encountered difficulties with the concepts of Approximate number (近似值) and Square root (平方根) in chapter 4, volume 2, our team decided to cooperate once again. After three months' of discussion, interaction, and revision, we finished this unit.

Of course, hard-work paid off. In two years, we had developed comprehensive multi-media teaching materials from unit one to three, chapter 1, volume 1; the whole units of chapter 4, volume 2; the whole units of chapter 2, volume 6; and all the applicable problems in junior high school math.



### 5. Critical vs. Turning Point

In June 2002, two of the members, Yao, Gu-Hua and Tsai, Zhang-Lin decided to return to their hometown, Kaohsiung to contribute to their professions and share new findings. The former began teaching in Bao-Lai Junior High School, the latter in Liu-Gui Junior High School. The two years worth of collaboration had resulted in abundant multi-media materials, but at the same time, had also incurred a respective debt. That was because we after completing a unit, we would occasionally dine at restaurants as a reward, writing the expense into our account. By the time we had a sendoff dinner party for the two teachers on 13th June, 2002, we were in debt for approximately NT\$17,178. Yao and Tsai kindly and quietly asked Zhi-Ren and me how much money they should contribute to help alleviate the debt. Zhi-Ren was very inspiring, and not only refused, but also granted them thirty thousand dollars. He asked them to wait in Kaohsiung, while he and Hsiao would stay in Taipei and continue fighting, not only to balance the debt, but to earn thirty thousand dollars for the future. We promised to meet again in Kaohsiung after we succeeded.

Fortunately, our efforts had been noticed by our colleagues. Under the arrangement of the Dean's Office, Zhi-Ren and I held an "ICT (Information Communication Technology) Combining with Teaching" workshop for teachers in Li-Shan Junior High School. This opportunity had helped us reduce our debt to NT\$7184! Unexpectedly, after this workshop, the school had inspired a wave of ICT combining with teaching. That year, the school won two championships: Taipei City Third Year Action Research Presentation, Group work, Junior High School (台北市第三屆教育行動研究成果發表會國中團體組); 2002, Invitation of Elementary and Junior High School Teaching Material, Group work, held by the Ministry of Education (教育部九十一學年度中小學資訊融入教學教材教案徵選活動全國團體獎).

Meanwhile, we sent the multi-media teaching materials to various teaching material contests. Numerous awards followed, notably a "Best" in "Taipei City Third Year Action Research Presentation, Junior High School, Demonstration" (台北市第三屆教育行動研究成果發表會國中教學演示類特優). This top honor has proved that the work of our four-person team can be successfully implemented in the classroom.

As a result of these honors, other schools had noticed our team and unique methods. Among them, The Affiliated Senior High School of National Taiwan Normal University (師大附中) was the leading school of "The Third Propelling Group of Taipei City 9-12 Grade Curriculum" (台北市九年一貫推動工作第三群組). The school invited Zhi-Ren and me to give a lecture to a group of math teachers on the topic of "Discussion of Multi-Media Teaching on the Subject of Math". After the speech, all the teachers demonstrated a lot of interest. Therefore, we accepted subsequent invitations of the school to hold workshops on "ICT Combining Teaching in Math", teaching how to integrate basic flash, power point, and frontpage. Afterwards, Zhi-Ren and I not only balanced all the debt, but also saved enough funds, that is, NT\$30,769, for the trip to Kaohsiung.

Our dreams of creating interactive and effective teaching materials and creating an invigorating environment for students finally came to fruition. Our three-day reunion in Kaohsiung, in which Zhang-Lin arranged the itinerary, and where Zhi-Ren, Mei-Gui and I traveled, marked one of the most rewarding memories we have had in our lives.





## 6. The Maturity of the Team

In seeking professional growth, our members' career plans transformed the team. Collectively, we four had developed an entirely new field, but were eventually separated; Tsai, Zhang-Lin and Yao, Gu-Hua left for Kaohsiung, their hometown, to teach, and Hsiao and Zhi-Ren transferred to Zhong-Lun Senior High School.

Zhong-Lun Senior High School (ZLSH) was a newly-built school. While Hsiao was teaching in ZLSH, he continued working with new, professional teachers like Chen, Ming-Chuan, to develop Senior High School Teaching Materials. He utilized his former experiences to institutionalize creative teaching in Senior High School.

To instruct freshmen on how to write short theses, Chen and I (Hsiao) drew upon our own experiences of writing theses, and transformed them into teaching materials. The students' enthusiastic reaction and that of school officers urged us to work closely together. Our outreach included giving school speeches on writing a short thesis, and holding workshops about using power point to build teaching materials and files.

Developing teaching materials for the students meant identifying the areas in which students have typically encountered the most difficulties. Unit 4, chapter 1, volume 2 of Senior High School math textbook includes Logarithms (對數), which has always troubled high school students. After many interactions, discussions, and corrections, we completed the very first multi-media teaching material of Senior High School curriculum.

Likewise, the Trigonometric Function (三角函數) in chapter 2, volume 2, was not taught in junior high school. Students were anxious, however, because they needed to learn the function in a very short time. We therefore worked together to create another set of creative teaching materials. Afterwards, Zhi-Ren had joined in the discussion and was inspired to transfer into Zhong-Lun Senior High School.

During the summer, several students that had been interviewed and recommended, came to ZLSH. The school had arranged a course for them to better introduce the school; besides, with both professionalism and creativity, Hsiao and Chen had completed the lesson of "A Pleasant meeting: You and Math" (高一新生相見歡) for the newcomers. We planned to break down the more complex theories of senior high school math in simpler language for them. Our hope was that the students would greatly appreciate ZLSH, and importantly, leave with a basic idea of senior high school math.

After creating a series of teaching materials, we had greater confidence in entering contests. With the aid of art teacher, Wen, Mei-Gui, who packaged our hard work beautifully, we won the "Best" rating in "Taipei City Fourth Year Action Research Presentation, Senior High School, Exhibition" (台北市第四屆教育行動研究成果發表會實物展示類特優) and an "Excellent" honor in "Taipei City Fourth Year Action Research Presentation, Senior High School, Creative Teaching Activity Design" (台北市第四屆教育行動研究成果發表會創新教學活動設計優等). Also, we earned five "Excellent" honors and one Grade A rating in the contest of "2003, Invitation of teaching materials of ICT combining Teaching Materials, Elementary and Junior High School", held by the Ministry of Education (教育部九十二學年度中小學資訊融入教學教材教案徵選).



## Results and Achievements

### Year 2001

(1). Developed 22 multi-media teaching material unit projects: In order to join the contest entitled "Invitation of teaching materials of ICT combining Teaching Materials, Elementary and Junior High School", held by the Ministry of Education (教育部主辦中小學資訊融入教學教材教案徵選), we rearranged and packaged our work. Hsiao, Wen-Chun, 7 pieces; Gui-Hua 4, Zhang-Lin 4.

(2). Promoted ICT teaching materials in school

a. Presented ICT with math teaching

The four members were all math teachers. Under the leadership of the team, each math teacher was extremely passionate about creating multi-media teaching materials. During the second semester, we held three multi-media teaching presentations, and produced 10 unit projects. In turn, the school was very supportive, and replicated all of our works into a disc so that every math teacher could possess one.

b. Every teacher enthusiastically joined the "Invitation of teaching materials of ICT combining Teaching Materials, Elementary and Junior High School", held by the Ministry of Education (教育部主辦中小學資訊融入教學教材教案徵選).

Besides our 22 projects, other teachers teaching different subjects like Mandarin, Physics and Chemistry, Health Education, Civics Education, and History, all sent their works up to 20 pieces. That is to say, in 2001, Li-Shan Junior High School had sent nearly 50 projects to enter the contest.

(3). Awards

a. 6/26, 2002, 8 projects had been selected in the contest "Invitation of teaching materials of ICT combining Teaching Materials, Elementary and Junior High School".

The 4-person team sent 22 projects, from which 8 pieces were selected, including the first hour of math class, Square root, etc. Every selected work won a certificate as a reward.

b. Group Award

15 works of Li-Shan Junior High School were selected. Our school took the biggest share amongst all the schools, winning the overall group award.

c. 6/4, 2002, second year, Math Creative Teaching in Elementary and Junior High school contest. The first hour of math had been selected.

### Year 2002

(1) Speeches given outside of schools

Workshop given on the Math of 9-12 Grade Curriculum in The Affiliated Senior High School of National Taiwan Normal University, second semester.

(2) Inter-subject teaching

We shared our experiences of instructing short thesis, second semester.

(3) Awards:

a. 9/1, 2002, Invitation of multi-media teaching materials, Elementary and Junior High School, first year", held by Taipei City.

b. 9/28, 2002, "Grade A" in "Taipei City Third Year Action Research Presentation,





Junior High School, Experience Sharing" (台北市第三屆教育行動研究成果發表會國中經驗分享類佳作).

c. 9/28, 2002, "Best" in "Taipei City Third Year Action Research Presentation, Junior High School, Demonstration" (台北市第三屆教育行動研究成果發表會國中教學演示類特優).

d. 11/22, 2002, "Grade A" in "Self-made Teaching material contest, Junior High School, Multi-Media Teaching Material, held by National Institute of Educational Resources and Research" (國立教育資料館九十一學年度中小學自製教材媒體競賽國中組電腦多媒體佳作).

#### Year 2003

##### (1) In-School research and study, workshops

First semester, power point

First semester, Team teaching on short thesis writing

##### (2) Inter-subject teaching

First semester, creating multi-media teaching material with the subject Counsel.

##### (3) Awards:

a. 9/28, 2003, "Best" in "Taipei City Fourth Year Action Research Presentation, Senior High School, Exhibition" (台北市第四屆教育行動研究成果發表會高中組實物展示類特優).

b. 9/28, 2003, "Excellent" in "Taipei City Fourth Year Action Research Presentation, Senior High School, Creative Teaching Activity Design, " (台北市第四屆教育行動研究成果發表會高中組創新教學活動設計優等).

c. 12/13, 2003, Five Excellents, one Grade A in "Invitation of teaching materials of ICT combining Teaching Materials, Elementary and Junior High School", held by the Ministry of Education (教育部主辦中小學資訊融入教學教材教案徵選優等作品5件, 佳作作品一件).

#### Year 2004

##### (1) Research Plan

Selected by "Fourth Year Creative Teachers' Action Research, held by Ministry of Education". (funds NT\$150000) (教育部第四波創意教師行動研究計畫入選)

##### (2) In-School research and study, workshop

Second semester, power point

##### (3) Out-of-School Research and study

Workshops for "Fourth Year Creative Teachers' Action Research, held by Ministry of Education" (教育部第四波創意教師行動研究計畫研習).

##### (4) Awards:

a. 9, 2004

Selected in "Taipei City Invitation of Digital Learning Teaching Materials, Elementary and Junior High School (台北市九十三年度中小學校數位學習單元甄選活動入選).

b. 9, 2003

Selected in "First Year Invitation for E-Teaching Material (第一屆創E盃網路多媒體教材教案徵選活動入選)

c. 11, 2003

Selected in "Invitation of teaching materials of ICT combining Teaching Materials, Elementary and Junior High School", held by the Ministry of Education (教育部中小學資訊融入教學教材教案徵選活動入選).

d. 5, 2004

1 Bests, 1 Excellent, 1 Grade A in "Taipei City Sixth Year Action Research Presentation, Senior High School, Creative Teaching Activity Design" (台北市第六屆教育行動研究成果發表會高中組創新教學活動設計).

2 Excellents, 1 Grade A in "Taipei City Sixth Year Action Research Presentation, Senior High School, Experience Sharing" (台北市第六屆教育行動研究成果發表會高中組經驗分享類).







## Transformation

In 2000, an event in a classroom triggered the formation of a group of teachers who had devoted themselves to exploring the frontiers of education.

They were partners working on the interactive teaching methods—holding enthusiastic conversations about teaching and sharing, combining unique ideas with multi-media, and thus creating effective teaching tools.

By 2002, they had successfully developed 22 math teaching projects. The projects have won awards such as the Excellent works of Educational Action Research Presentation, junior session which was held in Taipei. However, the group was not simply satisfied with producing computer-based projects; they actively faced the problems and solved them while teaching.

The following are some creative solutions that we have developed.

### 1. Alternative Assessment Methods

Some problems have been found on the traditional written tests, including:

- (1) Lack of flexibility on both time limit and content, which makes it hard to adjust to teaching students in accordance with their aptitude.
- (2) Lack of instant feedback, which is rather important in the theory of learning.
- (3) The mechanical assessment limits the interactions between teachers and students, and can only be taken in classrooms.

To solve the problems, we offered some strategies.

- (1) Establish a question bank.
- (2) Involve technology in the assessment.
- (3) Change the traditional written assessment, and set new rules.

After three experimental lessons, we felt that the ideas of “teaching students in accordance with their aptitude” and “teaching all students without discrimination” could be fulfilled in assessments. The statistics analyzed from our questionnaire showed that this kind of assessment allowed the students to feel differently from what they had done before, and thus enhanced their motivation of learning.

### 2. Action Research for Repeat classes

Students taking the repeat classes have less ability on math, which makes them feel less confident.

Therefore, we designed a lesson for the repeat math class in the hopes of:

- (1) acquiring the basic concepts of volume three, senior high math textbook.
- (2) creating a different learning environment to improve students' confidence.
- (3) turning students' attitude of rejection into one of acceptance.

To fulfill the hope, we

- (1) designed a “problems and solutions” curriculum from week 1 to week 14
- (2) developed on-line review files for week 15 and 16
- (3) held an activity “celebration” in week 18

The statistics analyzed from the questionnaire demonstrated that the curriculum



helped the students to better comprehend the materials, while changing their attitudes regarding learning math—encouraging them to want to learn more.

### 3. Thesis Action Research

The 21st century is an era of information. Stepping into this century, Zong-Lun Senior High School hopes to cultivate students to be "global citizens." Therefore, the school has planned lessons to teach "short thesis writing" for a year, specifically teaching theory in the first semester, and writing in the second semester.

Simultaneously, Hsiao, Wen-Chun and Chen, Ming-Chuan collaborated and designed a syllabus of "short thesis writing", which was used in their respective classes, 403 and 406. After the classes finished, Tsai, Zhi-Ren suggested that we revise the curriculum, which was later applied to class 404. Moreover, the lesson was recorded by the intern teacher "Zong". Students also recorded feedback of the program in their weekly journals, and as a result, these lessons are well-documented.

These three teachers, experienced vigorous discussions and the benefits of team-teaching. On the other hand, students, absorbed material, presented, shared with their class, and finished their theses. It was a wonderful journey of learning for both instructors and students.

### 4. A Pleasant meeting: You and Math

To welcome freshmen, we have designed the lesson "A Pleasant meeting: You and Math" with the expectation that students could, from the very beginning learn and enjoy math.. Our aims were geared to help students:

- (1) understand the difference between mathematical concepts taught in their junior and senior years.
- (2) realize the school's efforts on developing a bilingual environment.
- (3) comprehend that math is a kind of knowledge, which owns has its own historical and cultural backgrounds.
- (4) build positive feelings about senior high math.
- (5) love Zhong-Lun Senior High School.

In order to reach these goals, our strategy was to develop diverse and interactive lessons to more fully engage student participation. Our activities encompassed:

- (1) Pre-activity (break into groups)
- (2) Question and Answer sessions
- (3) Group discussions (break)
- (4) Sharing with each other
- (5) English review
- (6) History and Pedagogy of Mathematics

The lesson plans and interactions between teachers and students were the two main themes that dominated the project "A Pleasant meeting: You and Math". The lesson plan included such ideas as "Cooperation Learning Group (between students)", "History and Pedagogy of Mathematics", "Bilingual Education", and "Teaching with Computers". Throughout the lesson, students were expected to understand the conceptual links between junior and senior math. As for the interaction between teachers and students, we used such methods as "the story's point of view",





"problems and solutions", and "cooperation learning" as bases. Through conversation between teachers, students, and in group discussions, students could gain a better understanding about the lesson.

#### 5. Learning through games – a competition

Our lesson that was focused on student competition, was designed to increase interest in learning math. The lesson plan included several media teaching materials: 5 power points, 4 handouts, and a learning sheet, which were presented systematically, gradually, and logically. It provided learners a direct and concrete learning experience, increased the interaction between teachers and students, and thus improved the quality of teaching. It made both "teaching" and "learning" processes more efficient.

The lesson plan has also provided teachers with the opportunity to speak and exchange ideas with one another and usually achieved feasible and concrete results. Another advantage was that students could absorb the materials, present their findings, and use assessment to achieve better results. The experience was so beneficial for both instructors and learners that we thought it should be popularized to other teachers.



## Vision

### 1. Individual professional improvement

#### (1) The application of multi-media on teaching

Giving lessons is like always performing a show, requiring the instructor to execute different scenes in various ways. Some units need brilliant lectures, while others may need more testimonies to enrich the students' ideas of concepts. Teachers must constantly improve themselves to achieve outstanding performances.

Given that the world is quickly modernizing, we expect the classroom to as well. We thus produced teaching materials with cutting-edge software, creating files with multi-media like Word, Power-point, AuthorWare, Flash, and Microsoft Producer. As Hsiao, Wen-Chun, one of the teachers, has said of these materials, "As for the students, I see their eyes become brighter when having math lessons." In short, the students' interest in math, drives us to learn more about multi-media software when developing teaching materials.

#### (2) Attending workshops and researching multimedia

Attending workshops and researching new forms of multimedia can stimulate teachers, including renewing their knowledge of math concepts, fostering better communication about education, gaining new knowledge of computers, and acquiring computer skill certificates. As Tsai, Zhi-Ren, another teacher, has said, "Attending workshops opens our eyes, gives us new concepts, and provides us with the latest information. Most of all, interfacing with professionals can stimulate us with more energy and ideas." We hope that through our personal professional growth, we will take these inspirations and apply them to teaching.

### 2. Maturity of the team

#### (1) Professional conversations in the group

For each member, it has been the group's professional conversations that have been the most enjoyable activity. As Tsai, Zhi-Ren said, "Every meeting was like being reborn." Indeed, "a new branch in an old tree" has been the motto of our group, which meant that the experienced teachers led new, energetic teachers and collaborated to transform lessons into multi-media files. Every time we created teaching material, these discussions and brainstorming sessions were opportunities to perfect our work.

In the future, the primary goals for our team are to gain additional skills of making multi-media teaching materials by attending more workshops, combine the resources of the professors in Mathematics Department of "National Taiwan Normal University", engage in more profound professional conversations, and produce additional excellent multi-media math teaching materials.

#### (2) Group work in the team

The teachers' work were invaluable to the team. For example, we passed down the experiences of "the experienced and lead new teachers" in Li-Shan Junior High School. Now in Zhong-Lun Senior High School, we used this model to produce such initiatives as the "Zhong-Lun Math Question Bank", "Zhong-Lun Math on-line Question Bank", and "Linking junior-senior materials", which all reflect the team's





professional ability and efficient work. As a team, we will continue contributing our experiences and perfecting our work in order to become the leading models.

### 3. The professionalism shown in school

#### (1) Mathematics

While in "Li-Shan", we exhibited our professionalism as math instructors. Under the policy of "Grade 1-9 Curriculum", we were the first subject group to complete the lesson plan and establish an E-learning environment. Now in Zhong-Lun, when facing diverse problems, we employed our creativity and ideas into the following projects, "Alternative Assessment Methods", "Action Research for repeat classes", "Thesis Action Research", "A Pleasant meeting: You and Math", "Learning through games - a competition" and so forth. In the future, we will mature professionally, both individually and with the group, and will continue creating new and profound work to address the changes in educational environment and policy.

#### (2) Cross-Learning Areas co-teaching

While in "Li-Shan", we produced multi-media teaching materials with the subject Mandarin, and also entered and won many competitions. In Zhong-Lun, we combined the subject Counsel to produce multi-media materials. These experiences have bridged the gaps between different fields and helped teachers and students teach and learn with greater efficiency. In the future, we will continue holding more school workshops to improve teachers' teaching materials, benefiting both teachers and students.

### 4. The professionalism shown outside the school

#### (1) Workshops in the field

Every member in the group has given speeches in schools and has shared our wonderful experiences and impressions through lecture classes. Hsiao, Wen-Chun has assisted many creative research project workshops; Tsai, Zhi-Ren has demonstrated the application of math software on teaching; Chen, Ming-Chuan has shared the application of multi-media materials and flash on teaching, etc. Those precious experiences can be passed down. By offering those workshops in schools, we hope to inspire and encourage the participation of more colleagues in the production of multi-media materials.

#### (2) Nation-wide Project

This year, Hsiao, Wen-Chun has gained the "Creative Teacher's Action Research" held by "Department of Education". This particular experience has led us to believe that we should work harder to create additional learning experiences. In the future, we will continue the 4th creative project in 2005, establish an on-line question bank environment in Zhong-Lun senior high school, and complete the bank for "self-study class" in 2006.



Luck has brought us together

In the year that I arrived to "Li-Shan", the "Grade 1-9 Curriculum" was being implemented and I had met a group of passionate, energetic, and outstanding teachers. Because of their teamwork, a series of excellent scholastic performances followed one after another. For pushing educational boundaries, I can only say to them, "Bravo, Bravo, and Bravo."

Hsiao, Wen-Chun and Tsai, Zhi-Ren

Here is a picture of two math teachers: one was experienced, with very high expectations and full confidence of his teaching abilities; the other was rather new, fresh from graduate school, and full of dreams and ideas. The two instructors sat back to back, rarely talked, and simply focused on quality teaching.

This changed during a course meeting of the "Grade 1-9 Curriculum." That year, Hsiao, Wen-Chun led all the math teachers to begin teaching with computers. I still remember the very first time they brought forth their amazing works; each "senior-junior" team's power point informed the audience of how multimedia could enhance students' education.

Because of the project, they repeatedly held meetings, which finally enabled both of them to have face-to-face interaction. They recognized each other's professionalism, created brilliant projects, won numerous awards, and were partners dedicated to the life of research for math education.

### An Animated Life of Teaching

Besides Hsiao, Wen-Chun and Tsai, Zhi-Ren, the group has grown with the addition and contributions of Tsai, Zhang-Lin and Yao, Gu-Hua. Wen, Mei-Gui's assistance and support has also helped to smooth and perfect the process.

One of the greatest aspirations in life is to immerse oneself in a wonderful experience, and to become so absorbed that the passing of time is not even noticed. This team has not only aspired to this experience, they have lived it. As teachers, they often worked very late, forgetting they were actually very tired. One day, for example, they suddenly remembered it was Tsai, Zhang-Lin's birthday while they were still working at the office at midnight.

A few years ago, they all were the teachers of "Li-Shan;" now, they teach in different schools under the motto "Meet in Li-Shan; Get Mature in others." They have proved that teachers in north and south of Taiwan can still not only work together, but also recruit new members. They have proved that with determination, anything is possible.





## Applause

I believe that the publishing of this book deserves praise. I give them my blessings and am eager to see their next surprising accomplishment, of which I am sure to extend my deepest congratulations.

## The end

Six words for us – we are weary; we are paid. I cannot count how many times we stayed after school hours, or how many nights we “burned the midnight oil.” The reward for our hard work can be exemplified by a metaphor: “In the season of harvest, we do get fruitful trees.” Promoting creative and novel teaching is no longer a dream, but has become an accomplishment. With hard work, brainstorming ideas, and team work, we were able to create supportive teaching materials that advances the field of math education.

We, the team, pledge to continue our job, inspiring and assisting our colleagues while transforming our years’ of experience into multi-media materials. Through opportunities to communicate and professional interchange, we will share our successful team-work experience with Taiwan’s teachers.



The story goes on.....

Maybe

just like that

a care

a smile

a compliment

thus begins all the movements in life.

Anything, a resolution, starts with "a seed".

To find your own treasure

To compose your own story

That's how we know "life can be so wonderful."



## Still able to hear

Authors<sup>1</sup>: Lan-Chi Yang ; Chi-Shin Wu



<sup>1</sup>Lan-Chi Yang and Chi-Shin Wu are teachers of Jen-wen elementary school, Toucheng town, Yilan county, and are also team members of the Creative Language and Literacy Teaching Team.

## Abstract

As a teacher and an administrative manager, Lanchi has conducted action research. In her request to keep true to the emotional frame, she has encountered both gains and losses. Although Lanchi ultimately decided to leave her administrative position, as a researcher and teacher, she still personally continues her quest for action research in education.





"Action research" is a movement related to teachers' educational practice. This type of research encourages teachers to reflect and to develop personal regarding one's own conscious and unconscious actions. It helps teachers to act reflectively and enables them to develop personal knowledge; in other words, reflective thinking is meant to develop the new ideas for actions that will be manifested in subsequent actions. Under the condition of "collective creation" instead of enforcement creation, it's free to be discussed.

No matter what content the action research project includes, each project is unique; therefore, there is no set of the specific research steps concerning action research methods.

Adopted from the records of Hsia<sup>1</sup>'s guided action research study. March, 10, 2005

<sup>1</sup>Hsia is advisor of the Creative Teacher Action-Based Research Project.

Preface

I feel lonely/ Lanchi



Sweets-loving child/ Lanchi

For a Rice-loving sister/ Chishin

Negative thinking/ Lanchi

Letters in reply/ Lanchi

Still able to hear





## Preface

As you read these records, I've become the secretary of the research development department of the Humanity Elementary School, and a teacher of subject-teaching and guiding.

The department of learning management embodies the concept of 'teaching, instruction, and guidance as one' in educational reform. I spent one year as the chief and a teacher of the administrative system. During that period, three partners assisting me, concurrently serving as the secretary and teacher in the department. We prepared for the school's opening, arranged the curricula, and attended such events as the Green Fair, School Camping, etc. Despite suffering through misunderstandings and exhaustion, we also earned greater consideration and trust throughout all of our experiences.

I am Lanchi<sup>1</sup>. As a researcher, I tend to ask questions of myself as an example, especially in completing the records; I am glad to be part of this research project as one reviewing these records, which has made me see my progress, strength, and personal development.

<sup>1</sup> Lanchi is the story author; female.



There's a relationship between one's practice and personal reflection. When the relationship emerges, you can better grasp the practice and reflection yourself, which becomes a movement that lasts a lifetime.

"I feel lonely," is, in fact, Lanchi's dialogue to Suchi<sup>2</sup>. I think that the frame has appeared in this article, which supports her, and helps her to progress in the educational field. Why did she employ the concepts of love and loneliness to describe the relationship between her and Suchi? Part of the reason is because love represents strong concern and affection, and that she can sense it deeply, even though they are apart without being able to touch one another. As a result, I suppose that love can become both a metaphor, as well as representing the tangible power to "hold on." In the article, the lines indicate not only the truth--that they saw each other clearly--but also hints of the complexity beyond their expectations. There are some difficulties to process.

Lanchi's writing has hoped to demonstrate her insistence and strength, especially as she was perceived not to be capable of everything and because she was misunderstood. The uneasy process as she framed her practice and reflections was undertaken by herself, as highlighted by her relationships.

The relationship between practice and reflection has to be one that is explored by yourself. The words that appear and the texture of affection, as shown in this article, in my opinion, are to intended to highlight the relationship between your practice and reflection. I feel that this relationship emerges in Lanchi's articles.

Adopted from the records of Hsia's guided action research study . June,22, 2005

<sup>2</sup> Lanchi's colleague; English teacher; female.





## I feel lonely/ Lanchi

~a letter from Lanchi to Suchi

April, 11, 2005

The long talk we had last night keeps me thinking about our relationship. Even while walking home, I wonder how we came to be like this.

When I wake up in the early morning, I think about the contradiction between us, and wonder what might happen today. A love story about two university students, crosses my mind. The girl fell in love with her friend, who was a senior in school. After awhile, she eventually broke up with him, for the very reason that she fell in love with him.

It occurs to me that we are, in some way, similar to those lovers.

*"It's perfect for Suchi to do the administrative work because of her careful nature and her ability to plan things....."*

I forgot when exactly I said that, but I do remember the sincerity and appreciation that I felt, the agreement from Chishin<sup>3</sup>, and the bright eyes of the principal, which gleamed approval.

As a result of this, you became a new partner that cooperated and handled various tasks. Every move that you made reminded me of my disorder, and your words made me worry about my carelessness. I feared that the department of learning management might not match up with your high standards.

*"Suchi is the best person to complete the data-filing, because of her competence....."*

I was opposed to this idea because transferring the digital data into paper-files was unnecessary, and had little point. In the end, it took a long time to convince the administrators of its needlessness.

You changed the way that I dealt with the other two teachers. I used to show up alone to the morning meeting; now that you've arrived and chosen to participate in the meeting, you helped me realize the feeling of cooperative teaching. We've realized that the formality of the meeting should not hinder the goal of cooperative teaching, and because of your contributions, the structure of the department's administration

<sup>3</sup> Lanchi's colleague; Mathematics teacher; male

office has changed.

Your being here has let me see more clearly where I should stand and how to face my role. (I begin to worry about the way you might view my words. Do you feel that I blame you for joining the meeting? Or do you feel as though I am thanking you for awakening us?)

June, 10, 2005

When I started to write the record again, the file remained the same, but the personnel and affairs in the office changed after two months. You returned to planning the English curriculum. Ifan<sup>4</sup>, with her cheerful laughter, became the newcomer in our office. She was bothered by the certification test, much like you were. Hearing you with me, I kept telling her not to be defeated by the test and showed concern for her.

*The girl's love faded as the days passed. I asked her, "How have you been doing?" and she replied, "I am doing fine. Let things be."*

Remember how our 'short experience of administration cooperation' exhausted us? I remembered the time that you said to me, "I feel lonely". I still recall us sitting in the Art classroom, which was illuminated by dim light. We were tired, but still we worked. Although we both appreciated and respected each other I think that it might have been distance that kept us too far away, so that we only felt the goodness of one other, separately in our individual corners.

June, 15, 2005

"How have you been lately?" This careful wording only seems to appear when lovers talk. I wish you well, from the bottom of my heart.

*There's a small card in the counseling center of Tsing Hua University. "Love is -Let it free," was written on it.*

I do feel that this saying, "love is; let it free", is true. In other words, love should mean sharing the same happiness and sadness. That's why I support you in your decision to return to your profession, to rid yourself of administrative work, and to leave me, who originally wanted to rely on your ICT specialties and system planning. I believe that we must have cherished one another too much to hurt the other; accordingly, we feel lonely. It's a pity that we didn't meet each other, in the right place, at the right time.

<sup>4</sup> Lanchi's colleague; Mathematics teacher; female





Not knowing how to put an end to this, I'd like to tell you, "I might not be capable of handling the administrative work, and so you should give it a chance". At last, I will return to my teaching and research, leaving the administrative position open. I am fine now. How are you?!

### Sweets-loving child/ Lanchi

~a letter from Lanchi to chishin

To a sweets-loving child,  
I stopped yearning for the past, and tried to imagine the difficulties you've faced since you've packed and left. Perhaps in the future, I will yearn for the moment when Suchi and I pack up. The image that you've built in my mind will never be replaced. I have to thank you. You tolerated my insufficient experience, enriching my life and reminding me to improve my attitude at times.

I felt sorry that there was neither a grand farewell party nor a well-written card for you..... There were too many things that I'd like to do for you, which were left undone. Thank you for your patience.

I invited Suchi to the grand activity room yesterday as we had once before..... (I feel alive again. Thank God. I have to eat before I write.)

*Are you available now? Would you mind coming out?*

The question took us away from the office. "The office" resembled a large operative machine, of which, the department is a small part. You and I, embedded in it, cannot move freely; even the thinking process is operated by the machine. We needed a password: "Would you mind coming out?". Now I still use the same words to ask my partners, but what is different is I now also ask Yuyon. This is interesting. Yuyon<sup>5</sup> is important to me, especially when I communicate with Monzhan<sup>6</sup> and Suchi.

Have you noticed that didn't happen to us? I thought the reason must have been because that we communicated and faced one another with a true childlike mind.

*Suchi said, "The school has run for three years. The institution was not so sound as it was in the beginning, now that we are entering the third year. Too many things need to be established..."*

*"That's why you are here. The principal keeps an eye out for you. During the first year,*

<sup>5</sup> Lanchi's colleague; male

<sup>6</sup> Lanchi's colleague; male

*Monzhan has been busy because he's been taking on too many positions at once, and I came here during the second year, and had the same thoughts as you. It's important to make things easy to record. Therefore, you are here to make the system better. We have to do the things that we can do, without asking the reasons why they were not done. "*

When the department was turned over to us, we only had few files. Now we have more than two scores of files, containing a lot of historical data from the department of learning management. We entered the department, thinking that our job was to help teachers deal with the administrative burden. I was too naïve at that time, in fact, we were both so naïve that we tried hard to build everything from scratch. After all, we accomplished our every job happily.

Our foolishness was similar to a child that is learning new things. Being responsible for the filing was difficult and troublesome at first; however, we encouraged one another to complete the process. The results were not necessarily satisfactory, but there is a lot of potential for the future.

Soon after school began in the morning, I spoke up about my dissatisfaction to Monzhan and Yuyon at our daily administrative meeting. This was the first time that I stopped persuading myself to be quiet and to avoid conflict with the school's staff.

*Monzhan said, "The school partners are like brothers and sisters who say goodbye to each other when going out. And we, the administrative teachers, are instead, saying hello to one other..."*

I forgot the details, but this sentence made a deep impression on me. So I told Suchi and Yuyon about Monzhan's quote yesterday.

*I said, "Just because we are like family, I don't suppose you tell us everything that's on your mind. Your emotions are shown in the tone when we talk."*

This reminded me of you. You are childlike. It's easy to get along with you, and to understand you. My brother and you are alike.

*"Lanchi speaks in a childish way", said the principal.*

It was cool. I liked his interpretation so much that I often told people what he said. Underneath my seriousness and my efforts to study hard and write teaching plans, the principal sees my childishness. Don't you think this is a compliment? As for me, I realize that I am willful and unsocialized in many ways. As I told Suchi and Yuyon, I hoped to keep my innocence.

*"I speak as a child, because I'd like to speak as much as possible without hiding my thoughts. Also I'd like you to understand me. Although I act like a child, you can tolerate me."*

I've never said such thing to you, because you are more childish than I am.





Yesterday, I told Suchi and Yuyon the reason why you are a sweets-loving child.

*"Chishin is a sweets-loving child. Sometimes you have to give him hard work, and sometimes sweets. Chishin is a child and you, Suchi, are an adult. I respect your principles and it's hard for me to help you now since my workload is heavy as well. I can't assist you anymore, unless you ask me to do for you. But please feel free to ask me if you'd like to know what I'm working on. Make yourself at home. "*

As I described you in this way, I hoped that you knew how I think about you. Chishin is a cute guy. With respect to "seriousness," Suchi is a professional and we are amateurs. Perhaps it was my fault to take on the responsibility for administrative work. Being easy-going did help me a lot in the field of administration; nevertheless, I enjoy writing teaching plans and playing with the kids.

I see that your rational makes you reflected before others can remind you. As your elder sister, I have to give you advice. We are teachers, not kids. (I'm sorry that I'm unable to say farewell to you decently. I'm leaving soon.)

Let's have lunch together someday.

## For my rice-loving sister / Chishin

~a letter from Chishin to Lanchi


April, 03, 2005

For my rice-loving sister,

As I packed my belongings, I considered telling you goodbye. I left the position quietly.. I couldn't let you know because it would be hard leaving you, not leaving the position.

Fortunately Emma<sup>7</sup> knew and you are married; otherwise, these words are ambiguous. It was lucky that I had the opportunity to work with you for nearly half a year. Besides the candy you sweetly offered, your consideration and understanding mattered. Because you knew me, we could sense these emotions easily. We might not do everything right, but we were passionate in making things work for us.

<sup>7</sup> Lanchi's colleague; Chishin's wife



Do you know how happy I was to find my passion? I really wanted to share this with everybody. I not only wrote it in my diary but also e-mailed it to Emma, Shiuwen, the Boss, and you. I can sense the affection from the records sent by you. I imagined sharing these thoughts with you---someone who knew me, who had shared her inner child with me. Though the surroundings around you changed, the people and the things you contacted changed, and even when the environment confronted you, you still had a "cool child" inside.

You were right. I made the call to Emma. I told her that I'd like to invite

you to be the guest at the relatives' table. You meant too much to both of us.

PS. I know that I used to be gruff during morning meetings, which influenced the mood during the meeting. I expected myself to be a solver, not the bidder. I'll try to change next time to see if I am the solver or bidder.

### Negative thinking / Lanchi

~Lanchi's Journal

May, 03, 2005

Through writing, I wish to clarify my emotions and rescue myself from annoyance. On the week before school opened, my conversation with Yuyon made me feel the school-opening syndrome, that is, "breakdown."

*"I can't do what the principal wants me to. You see, I need to collect all article from the weekly 'Humanity Voice' without numbers and pictures. How can I, working alone, finish it all? Maybe if I was given another week and was able to stay awake, working 24/7..."*

Before vacation, I was preoccupied in preparing for a presentation and other activities. After vacation ended, I was still busy arranging the school's evaluation and completing countless chores. By the time I left school, I had been dealing with work related to the school opening, the evaluation, and the book of 'Curriculum and Teaching', etc.

To make FTP (File Transfer Protocol) work, I tried convincing everyone of its merits. But after awhile, I became tired from trying to persuade others and felt reluctant to fight. It was late, so instead I let it be. That evening I really disliked trying to persuade Yuyon.





I started to doubt my insistence: staying after school hours, waiting for the files; trying to finish as much as possible from early morning to late evening; entering too much data in the files; begging others to do their portfolios; doing my portfolio and thinking about the school opening.

The hours dragged, until it became 9:00 at night. I rarely return home so late. As I drove home, I had to remind myself to be careful of traffic. As soon as I entered my room, I turned the television on and watched a funny soup opera I'm fond of. As a matter of a fact, many people in society must work late at night, but I wondered if they felt content with their jobs or were likely to complain, and feel disgusted or bored?

After pondering this, I realized that I was being overly critical of myself, finding too many faults. The duties that the principal gave me before vacation began, made me nervous. So many evaluation indication and formal operation of the school evaluation.....I was not experienced. As I tried to realize how they were done, I became more greatly agitated.

I was told that I AM capable. However, I felt as though I did not have the capability to finish these tasks nor did I feel empowered. Maybe the position concerning planning was no longer my expertise. Instead, I complained to my husband.

*I have to face too many chores ...too many 'that's just because,' made me dislike myself.*

*"Too many negative emotions resulted in my feeling blue. How could I deal with this problem?"*

During the conversation I had with my husband, I've been considering the ways to renew my happiness. So I made up my mind: I will not take responsibility for the book that the vice-principal requested me to work on; tomorrow, I will treat myself with delicious food and a cold beverage in Taipei; and finally, I will ask the principal to tell the vice-principal, "Lanchi is not almighty!".

~ records of advisor Hsia

As Lanchi discussed her work with the administration, she mentioned the word, "easy-going," as if this experience helped her to increase her competence to be an easy-going person. I believe that this was her "practical" frame, as she carried out her practice and reflection.

The last time she mentioned the concept, I felt as though I could also see the image. I sense the interwoven links between the people that appeared within the description of Lanchi's text. While I see a temper reflected in her article, there's the frame of your practice and reflection in the text of your description.

Adopted from the records of Hsia's guided action research study . June, 22, 2005



~Lanchi's Journal

June, 15, 2005

After the school evaluation, I had a easier time. I slept well and drove to school, hearing the laughter and voices of children. I slowed down my pace and let flowers blossom in my heart. There are still some traces of work related to the school evaluation on my desk, but I viewed them pleasantly and placed them aside to new locations.

The complaints faced during the school evaluation turned into gratitude and grace. Due to the short process of the school evaluation, I am able to appreciate this position before resigning.

During the meeting, and after the evaluation, the principal asked teachers to think about why they were exhausted. Every teacher took his or her turn, and I was the last to speak. However, the principal seemed to forget my presence, overlooking me. Thanks to my school friends, who noticed I had not yet spoken, I was able to describe how I felt about the evaluation.

*"I appreciate everyone who was involved during the evaluation. I used to have anxiety at night, thinking about the sheer amount chores that remained. NOW I don't feel tired at all. The people who are usually tired of being subjects of an evaluation are children; I am fortunate enough to have adults as my subjects. Thank you for giving the chance to take charge as the chief of the department of learning management. I do recommend you to take my position; it ought to be a good opportunity."*

My attitude during the meeting did not last long. What I learned was that I still need to deal with people in different events, and think about effective solutions. And I need to get used to it.

Recently, I regained the ability to work at night. Therefore, I replied to every letter concerning the promotion, the newcomers, the graduation ceremony, the creative action project, etc. The letters topic in red reminded me to finish it on time. So many letters in reply admonished me to work hard.

The relationship I have with others can be indicated by how I sign my name after writing the letters. For people that I rely on for support, I put a smile mark behind my name. For those I know too well, I neglect to write my name. Neglecting to sign my name in the letters reflects a part of my nature, the childish part. Some people will think a "childish nature" means only the naughty, lazy, naïve aspects, but it is also the part that is the most similar to nature,. For those correspondents that I respect or don't know very well, I will write the name of my position and full name, in order to ensure





that the right person in charge can talk to me.

"Interweaving" is the topic Miss Hsia gave me. Interweaving means I need to pay attention to my cares and concerns, such as involvement with my children, partners, parents, the education bureau, and research. However, too many subjects deprive me of interweaving too deeply. When you see my replies, it must have been written during the evenings after I returned to my room to type e-mails.

### Still able to hear

As school opens, I tend to be more fragile, forgetting my patience and strength, which is called 'the school-opening syndrome'. It occurs within one month right after the school begins.

During the latent phase of 'the school-opening syndrome', I must comfort myself with the words, "This doesn't matter, and I can make it". Every semester though, I end up with crying in front of the principal, speaking of my discontent.

So the principal in my story, shows himself as a leader and as one who supports others. Our principal previously was, Yang Wen Kwai, a professor in the National Taipei Educational University. We are lucky to be near the professor and fortunate enough to have him still with us, to encourage us to further develop our profession. Especially, when I am helpless, I am still able to hear the principal say, "I know. It's been hard for you".





## Recoding for The Project of Zhong-Lun Senior High School Math Online Test Learning and Inquiry System

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## Abstract

As we developed the "Vschool Internet School", a forum that provides an environment for learning math, we were greatly inspired by those students who demonstrated great interest in the program. Even a simple sentence uttered by a student would inspire us. For example, one student once said, "if it [the program] is free, how wonderful it would be!" This motivated us to develop a suitable system for Zhong-lun high school students, and the idea of constructing our own math online testing and learning system popped up in my mind.

The construction of this online system was expedited by the assistance of Shao Xuan and Ming-Ying. In addition, with the timely help from Shan-Ying, Zhong-Kui, Mei-Kui, Yue-Mei, and Yi-Jun, the system was further expanded. Its' processes were successfully guided under the instruction of Dr. Bo-Shen, Cao and Dr. Hui-Lin, Fan. Finally, Hong-Yi's participation, made the project possible.

In retrospect, it is a bit unbelievable that such a system was initiated, derived from, and later completed from a simple idea. Our project's members were varied and came from various work places. We were connected tightly to actualize one ideal—to offer a better environment for math learning as well as its evaluation.

Thus, it took one year to assemble the "Zhong-Lun High School Math Online Test and Learning System." After we finished constructing the system, teachers from different areas enrolled in the math teachers' seminars that we hosted. We taught these teachers not only how to build their own systems, but also instructed them to be "seed teachers", to spread our techniques to different schools. Since "Zhong-Lun High School Math Online Test and Learning System" was evolving, we all looked forward to witness its future growth and popularization.

## Background

Under the trend of "ICT Teaching", our school's academic administration played an important role in encouraging information communication technology to be integrated into teaching. In fact, in a regular seminar for math teachers, Yi-Jie, Huang, the chief of the academic administration, suggested her idea of the "Vschool Internet High School", which provided a mode for online learning. This idea actively motivated us to begin conducting a series of learning experiences.

Although Yi-Jie suggested the "Vschool Internet High School Project," the primary motivation that led us to devote ourselves to this project came from my beloved students.

During the project's beginning, the "Vschool Internet High School" forged an agreement with our school: for a one-year trial basis, all the math teachers in our school could enjoy use of the system, free of charge. If the math teacher thought it valuable to be applied in teaching, all the students would have access to the trial basis for one month, depending on their decision on whether the system was desirable or not. If our school agreed to use the system, "Vschool Internet High School" would offer us a discount: for each student, a six-month period would cost 1,200NT.

During this period, every time we brought the students to the computer lab to learn the new system, we saw excitement and curiosity on their faces. They often expressed disappointment that they had to pay for the online system. "How wonderful it would be if the system was all for free!", they reflected.

Indeed, as teachers, we felt it to be our duty to solve our students' problem. If we were able to apply the skills of this system into constructing an online test database which was belonged to Zhong-Lun high School, then all the students would not only receive this educational tool for free, but it would also reduce our students' barriers in learning math. To be more specific, the online test database correlated with what students had learned in their math classes. The improvements in their understanding of mathematical concepts were obvious and predictable.

With this idea in mind, I also discovered that Chen, Min-Juan had the same thought as mine. Thus, we participated in various seminars to learn how to construct an online test system.

## Seminars of the Math Teachers

Because of the website of "Taipei City teachers' e-passport of research and study," Chen, Min-Juan found useful material, including, "the Information Integrated Educational Teaching Material of the Life Design." Similarly, I registered for the following course: " Interdynamic Webpages Design of Multimedia with Advanced FLASH. "

However, this experience proved to be hectic, and balancing my duties at school with the demands of these courses was extremely challenging. The time-intensive courses began from nine to twelve o' clock in the morning and continued from one to four-thirty during the afternoons on March 2nd , 3rd , 4th , 9th , 10th, and 11th. In addition to completing the course assignments per class, we were required to make a final presentation at the end of the courses.



The worst difficulty was that I was forced to move my math classes. According to our school's stipulation, any teacher who wanted to enroll in teachers' seminars was required to manage his or her own class by himself/herself. Therefore, I needed to reschedule my math classes with four other teachers, which meant that all my classes (twelve classes altogether) were condensed into two days (Monday and Friday). That meant that my poor students took five to six math classes a day, and the scheduling change almost drove my students crazy.

Since I chose to enrich my knowledge of information technology, I was determined to concentrate and do well in my courses. After a series of course training, I finally received my certification license. I still distinctly remember the moment when I received the certification license in my hand. I could not help but have tears in my eyes.

### Integration

During the whole process, Chen, Ming-Juan was the one who integrated our system. Like myself, Chen, Ming-Juan also registered in similar courses, although she was most interested in the picture interpretative design program while I was most attracted to learning program design. I found that we were able to combine our interests together, integrating what we had learned from the courses to help build a desirable online test system for Zhong-Lun High School students.

After two weeks' of testing and revising, we finally created a "localized" Zhong-Lun High School online test system. The system would select questions at random. Additionally, the system also had a feedback function, in which all the answers were scored and the time spent on answering the question was also precisely recorded. Switching to an online system was truly exciting because it challenged the traditional methodology of teaching math class, in which paper testing was used for decades. Specifically, in a traditional math class, we encountered three substantial problems as follows:

1. A traditional math class, lacks flexibility, both on time limits and content, which makes it hard to adjust to teaching students in accordance with their aptitude.
2. A traditional math class, lacks a feedback system, which means that students' discussion was limited to traditional paper tests.
3. A traditional math class, can often lack interaction amongst teachers and students, while paper tests can only be taken in classrooms.

For these reasons, we tried to create an online test system, which had the following three strategies:

1. To set up a practice forum, derived from the content taught in class.
2. To integrate ICT with evaluation; we used computers as a multimedia tool to develop an interactive evaluation system.
3. To change the tradition of paper tests to a new evaluation form that is, we established new rules: we set up the entrance exams for evaluation, while helping students pass these exams.

Hopefully, we hope to achieve these three targets:

1. To ascertain which students possess basic competence for the learning curriculum.
2. To identify the students with higher competence and offer them greater challenges.



3. To better enable the students with lower competence by offering assistance from those with higher levels and from the teacher.

### **The First Experimental Teaching with An Online Test --- Review Test**

My students were all struggling with reviewing what they had learned in previous math classes. At my school, review tests were scheduled for April 14th and 15th. This year (in 2004), a great idea presented itself--- why not use the system that we had just created as the review test? As a result, we set up 78 math questions in the first experimental teaching with an online test.

Before the test, there were several procedures to follow:

1. Students should download the file of the 1st and the 2nd chapter of Book 3 to their computers.
2. Any student who received 100 points would have a mark from Mr. Hsiao, which meant that they finished the evaluation if they had passed the two entrance tests.

### **The Second Experimental Teaching with Online Test**

After the first experimental teaching with the review online test, the students' responses were sufficient enough to encourage us to try a second round of experimental testing. This run was also an online test, comprised of 52 questions that were derived from Book 4.

According to the deficiencies found in the 1st experimental teaching with an online test, we made four improvements as follows:

1. teaching places: In the first round of experimental testing, the places for having the online test differed and included the classroom, the multimedia classroom, and the computer lab.

2. teaching procedures: Students were first required to take the first entrance test, hosted by Mr. Hsiao. Any student who answered 5 questions correctly would receive the certification mark from Mr. Hsiao, indicating that they passed the first entrance and were allowed to join the second entrance at the computer labs.

In the 2nd entrance exam, which was supervised by math assistants, if any student answered 5 randomly-selected questions from the computer and received 100 points, he or she would receive signs from the math assistants. In the 2nd entrance, students who received three "one hundred points" were also considered to have passed the entrance test.

Any student who passed both the 1st and the 2nd entrance tests were allowed to return to their homeroom classrooms.

3. Using of the Transportable Whiteboard: This tool was quite convenient because whenever the questions showed up on the screen, all the students could answer the questions immediately. We asked all the students to answer each question in two minutes. As soon as they finished their questions, the teacher would immediately check the answers on the Transportable Whiteboard, delivering a concise explanation for each question.

4. Recording the teaching process: Due to the lack of records in teaching process as initiated in the 1st experimental teaching with an online test, in the 2nd experimental teaching with an online test, we used video-information facilities to record all





processes while teaching.

### **The Third Experimental Teaching with An Online Test--- Make-up Courses**

In the 2nd experimental teaching with an online test, we divided the entrances into two stages, which were led by math assistants. We believed that such a design could make a difference from the traditional paper tests, enriching the teaching and the learning of math.

Due to this, Chen, Ming-Juan and I gathered sixty students who needed to take a make-up course, conducting the 3rd experimental teaching with an online test. This time, there were 216 questions to be used. The teaching places included the multimedia classroom, the computer lab, and the homeroom classroom as well, as supervised by Chen, Ming-Juan and me.

Because all students were told that they should pass two entrances, students with lower competence in math often solicited more assistance from those with higher levels in math and from the teacher. Such cooperation in learning math was a result that we intended to achieve.

In the 3rd experimental teaching with an online test, we not only used the video-information facilities, but also created a questionnaire, intending to investigate what students thought of the online tests. From the data revealed in the questionnaire, what we designed actually made our teaching curriculum more comprehensible and also encouraged the students' willingness in learning math.

### **A Parent's Reflection**

Since Chen, Wei-er, one of my students, was under my instruction, his mother asked me to help her son. One day, she asked, "How could I improve Wei-er's math competence?" At that very moment, I thought: if such curriculum design could help students, why not let parents participate?

Before the system was developed, both teachers' instruction and the students' learning processes were not recorded. That is, the teachers and parents had little idea of what the students had actually learned. Due to this, a system, which could record students' learning processes and that could save data online, proved to be a better choice. In other words, the techniques of ASP and ACCESS Data Base were taken into consideration because of their greater effectiveness.

### **The Experience of Learning ASP and ACCESS**

Before I started learning about the ASP and ACCESS systems, I had gathered information from the Google Search Engine. I learned that the FLASH files had a two-way function and interchanges with ASP programming language. However, I was confused by the large number of program codes such as request, response.write, rs.open, conn.open, and loadvariables etc. Fortunately, I found a book, *Excellent FLASH MX Programming ActionScript in Chinese Version*, in which the application of Data Base and online Testing System were fully introduced.

Shi-Pai Elementary School was considered to be the center of training for computer programming system experts. The center offered had many "ASP writing courses" for teachers. As far as I was concerned, since I had very little experience in



programming design, it would undoubtedly be another struggle! Because the skills must be thoroughly learned, I did not receive the certification license until after four runs of this course.

Even after I had learned how to write ASP programming, the results were not what I had expected. Thanks to Dr. Xiao Jun, Wang, who helped me learn more about "ASP.NET", I was able to integrate theory with the teaching practices. Therefore, I finally integrated "FLASH, ASP, and ACCESS Data Base" successfully, developing the "Zhong-Lun High School Math Online Tests and Inquiry System."

### **Mr. Hsiao's online Test System**

Because of the online test and inquiry system, I was busier than usual. I was so preoccupied with testing the function of the system's database that sometimes when I could not sleep well, I would return to the computer revise the program. The more I became involved in answering online questions and solving the program's problems, however, the happier I became.

With persistence, I finished setting up all the questions from Book 1 to Book 6 within two months. This indicated that it would be possible for my students to begin another online test as soon as they finished each unit. The program also had the additional benefit of creating a closer relationship between parents, students, and the teacher as the parents and the teacher could now more actively join students' learning process.

### **The Fourth Experimental Teaching with An Online Test ---- Self-study Class**

During the summer break of 2004, I was in charge of instructing the self-study class of 11th grade students. These self-study class students were placed in this particular course because they failed their make-up exams, which meant that they were required to enroll in additional math classes, earning missing credits. Because of the math online test system, I was able to manage three classes: one was on August 6th in 2004; another was on August 20th ; the third was on September 2nd in 2004. In the first class, students were brought to the computer lab to familiarize themselves with the system's basic functions. At the same time, students were required to finish their homework online in the system. In the second class, students were also brought to the computer lab to learn how to use the online test system. Students could not dismiss the class until they passed the first entrance of the online test system.

In my opinion, this system was suitable for the students in self-study class because of the following reasons:

1. The students in self-study class had little opportunity to interact with each other and with the teacher as well.
2. The teacher was unable to control students' learning activities at home.
3. These parents were unable to supervise their children's learning process.

In traditional math classes, the curriculum design lacks active interaction amongst peers. Therefore, this online system offered four strategies to assist the students.

1. By utilizing online test learning files with FLASH, and integrating the ASP and ACCESS Data Base, a powerful online test learning and inquiry system could be created. Students' learning process could be thus recorded through the system.





2. By utilizing FLASH, ASP, and the ACCESS Data Base, the teacher was able to control students' learning process through the inquiry function.
3. By using the FLASH, ASP, and ACCESS Data Base, parents were able to understand what their children had learned.
4. By using the FLASH, ASP, and ACCESS Data Base, active interaction among students and the teacher was initiated. As soon as students selected a correct answer, the system would give them feedback. However, if students selected the wrong answer, the teacher's solutions would assist them.

With positive responses from the students, teachers in various subjects demonstrated great interest in our system. Two Natural Sciences teachers, Mr. Guang-Zhuo, Gao and Ms. Xiao-Juan, Jian, were particularly interested. Therefore, the three of us combined to form a team and executed the 5th experimental teaching with an online test for the self-study class in August, 2005.

### **Ming-yin and Shao-Xuan**

With the support from our school authorities, teachers were encouraged to participate in any project or contest. In 2004, the government announced a policy of "Creative Action Research Projects", encouraging teachers to design teaching materials or methodologies of their own. This project was announced in an official document.

I did not pay much attention to the document until the appearance of Ming-yin and Shao-Xuan. I still remember the phone call that I received from Ming-yin, the first intern teacher that I instructed during high school. Ming-yin was younger, in a different year below me, when I was studying for my masters degree at the National Taiwan Normal University. Shao-Xuan, was one of my students when I taught at the Li-Shan Junior High School.

I thought that if I applied for this project, it would be a great help to have the contributions of these two intern teachers, so I invited them to join us.

### **Dr. Bo-Shen Cao's help**

The project's plan was unique in that it required a university professor to be the host of the project. However, the original intent of the project was to encourage junior high school and elementary school teachers to use creative teaching methods and assist them in reaching their goals. Thus, this was the first problem we encountered when applying for the project.

Because one set of the online system is about evaluation, my advisor Dr. Bo-Shen Cao, whom I met in during graduate study in the math department of National Taiwan Normal University (NTNU) came to mind. Professor Cao, an expert at evaluation in Taiwan a professor whom I admire greatly, and eventually my graduate dissertation advisor, agreed to join this project, and thus I began preparing for the project's application.

Working with Professor Cao was like returning to the time of writing a thesis; I saw how serious Professor Cao was in conducting research. He continued to ask questions and together, we sorted the relevant information of this project. Finally, we



had everything required for the application, such as strategies, processes, evaluation, and the perspective effect. At our seventh meeting, Dr. Cao finally said, "done" and added, "it's [the project is] of great hope." We never imagined that our program "Zhong-Lun Senior High School Math Online test Learning Environment" would be chosen in the competition of "Creative Teacher Action Research Project."

### **Hong-Yi's problem-solving**

The two main parts of the project were the "Set up of Online Test Archives" and the "Popularization of Online Test Files-Making Technique." The system that we created from the set up of online test archives still had an unresolved problem. We wanted the system to be designed so that when the students selected wrong answers, the system would show the correct answers with clear explanations. This part was not finished until Hong-Yi joined us.

Hong-Yi was a graduate student of the Graduate Institute of Information and Computer Education in National Taiwan Normal University. At the same time, he was a substitute computer science teacher at Nei-Hu Senior High School. He was also the speaker of a FLASH seminar hosted by the school in September, 2004.

In order to solve the problem that we encountered, I attempted to participate in the conference. The seminar was an eighteen-hour course divided into three weeks, and was held each Monday and Friday morning from eight o'clock to eleven o'clock. Not to our surprise, there were not many who were able to join the conference. During the first class, we had ten participants; for the second class, only three. On the second week, the teacher asked me if there was any techniques that I wanted to learn. I told him of my difficulty and, to my surprise, he emailed me the amended file and solved my problem.

This fortunate encounter not only helped us solve the biggest problem we faced, but also provided us with a new partner. Later, Hong-Yi contributed the most to the set up of the project's website's framework (the construction of the structure of WebPages) and the popularization of research and study.

### **Assistance from Zong-Kui, Yu-Mei, and Yi-Jun**

Zong-Kui, who taught math at Qing-Shui Senior High School in Taipei county, was one of the members in our study group when I was in my final year in graduate school at National Taiwan Normal University. He agreed to lend me a hand as soon as he heard of the project. He drove from Tu-Cheng to Nei-Hu in order to hand me the exam question material and even held once-a-month meetings with me each Saturday morning of the first week. I would never forget his sincere help.

During March 2005, during the first online teaching seminar when I introduced this project to my colleagues, there was a lot of interest in participating. Yu-Mei, and Yi-Jun volunteered to head the job of examining questions in order to maintain the quality of "Zhong-Lun Senior High School Math Online Test and Learning Environment." We held once-a-month meetings each Monday noon of the first week. The power of team work played an important role in carrying out the project and I appreciated their help.





### Popularization of Research and Study at Li-Shan senior high school

I had served in Li-Shan Junior High School for fifteen years, ever since I graduated from the National Taiwan Normal University. After I finished graduate school in National Taiwan Normal University, I applied to teach at the Zhong-Lun Senior High School because it was then in its first year of being established. Yet I still felt a deep love for Li-Shan school.

During February of 2005, I e-mailed Xiao-Ying Lin, who was the principal of Li-Shan junior high school, to express my willingness to popularize the research. Principal Lin is an ideal education reformer who was willing to support this "development of teacher's profession." Because of her help, we held four seminars on the popularization of the research, which are Chinese, English, Natural Science, and Math, respectively held on February 17th, 21st, 22nd, and March 4th, from two to four in the afternoon.

### Popularization of Research and Study at Xi-Hu Junior High School

Jin-Ling Lin, my classmate in National Taiwan Normal University, was a math teacher and was in charge of computer equipment at Xi-Hu Junior High School. Because of the ASP research, I knew that she also wanted to build an online test system in her school, but had not yet found a proper way to solve this problem. When she heard that we were implementing this project, she invited us to visit. Thus, we went to Xi-Hu Junior High School to have the math system popularized on March 20, 2005.

### Popularization of the Research in the Entire Taipei City

The popularization of the research in all of Taipei City was the most important part in the application of "Creative Teacher's Action Research" held by "Department of Education" because we applied for the category of "popularization of achievement of Creative Teacher's Action Research." We started to plan our strategies actively beginning March, 2005.

As for school administration, we were fully supported by the library director, Zhi-Yuan, Chen who helped us make the project run smoothly. We designed nine-hour courses in our lesson plan, which were three hours for the beginner class-- making the animation by using FLASH on April 21st, while using the advanced class to employ FLASH to make online testing profile on the morning of April 22nd, and the mix of ASP, ACCESS information system and FLASH on the afternoon of April 22nd. We posted the research as a study notice on the website of Taipei City teachers' e-passport of research in mid-March. We were supposed to receive only forty teachers but a total of seventy people had registered. We tried to increase the number of the computers, but only fifty-two teachers could participate in this research and more than ten teachers did not have the chance to join us.

### Popularization of the Research at San-Min Junior High School

San-Zhi Lin was an English teacher in San-Min Junior High school and also a member of the English subject counseling group in Taipei city. She was very much interested in our online test system. She told us that, "Da-Tong Senior High once did



research about an online test platform in San-Min Junior High. However, they just introduced this online test platform but did not popularize it. "

This was very different from our plan's purpose. The goal of the our research, was that we wanted all teachers to be able to use the system and to have their own online test system. Therefore, we were again invited to have a research seminar for English subject teachers in San-Min Junior High on June 4, 2005.

### **Popularization at a Teacher Research and Study Center**

On August, 2005, my professor Xiao-Rui Wang opened a course called "ASP.NET" at the Taipei Teacher Research Seminar Center. I met with Professor Wang and told him about the project. When he heard that some of his students had become the core teachers ("seed teachers" of the project) that disseminated these ideas, he thought that was a good model. He therefore invited Hong-Yi and me to introduce this online test and learning system to other teachers joining the course.

I benefited from these "ASP.NET" courses and became a so-called core teachers ("seed teacher"). Actually most of the teachers who had joined the courses were in charge of computer equipment and were regarded as the information technology group leader in their respective schools. After this research, we began anticipating how fruitful our project would be in the future.

### **Online Learning System of College Entrance Exam for Disabled Students**

The best accomplishment during the popularization of this system was that this system had built up an online learning environment for handicapped students, which demonstrated the potential of integrating technology and teaching.

In the afternoon of May 6th, one of our team members Shan-Ying, had completed her graduate school oral defense and met me in the office. A handicapped student in my class asked for her help because she wanted to join the College Entrance Exam for Disabled Students. She had already collected the examination questions for the last four years, but could not find the answers. She hoped that Shan-Ying could help to write down the answers for her.

Shan-Ying creatively proposed that we could use the online testing technique to build an online learning environment for handicapped students. We all agreed with her idea, so three of us (Ming-Ying, Shan-Ying, and I) worked together to finish the preliminary work of Online Learning System of College Entrance Exam for Disabled Students.

Wei-Ling, a classmate of Ming-Ying who was handicapped, was scheduled to take the College Entrance Exam for Disabled Students on May 21st, Ming-Ying proposed a plan to help Wei-Ling learn math for this exam. Ming-Ying and Shan-Ying also gave Wei-Ling two individual classes each. Two classes on May 16th were taught by Ming-Ying and the two other classes on May 17th were taught by Shan-Ying.

### **Schedule and Blueprint**

Overall, the outcome of "Popularization of the Research" was quite successful. Because the system was free and easy to learn, most teachers accepted the system and were satisfied with it.



We finished setting-up the Zhong-Lung Senior High School Math Online Test System and placed posters on notice boards in every school. This publicity encouraged more teachers to explore the possibilities of their own online testing system as well as to learn the techniques. The community of online test system was formed and "ZLSH math online testing learning environment" setting group would continue consulting and giving assistance to new projects.





## The HsiHa Together Creative Campus Project: A New Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Villa in the Old Hamasen



Author: Chin-Chi Chang

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## Abstract

National Sun Yat-sen University is located in Hamsen, Kaohsiung. Hamsen is the cradle of Kaohsiung city. Beginning from the 20th century, people have gathered in Hamsen due to fishery, military and commerce. Hamsen became a famous and flourishing district very swiftly. However, after the boom, Kaohsiung railway station and Pelagian fishing ports were moved by the government. The moving not only limited the industries in Kaohsiung but also caused the inevitable downfall of Hamsen. The rich culture, history and art were forgotten as Hamsen waned.

The Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Villa is the oldest building in National Sun Yat-sen University. It began as a restricted establishment for the authorities. Later on, it was transformed into a memorial hall for the public. Students, locals and tourists were finally allowed to peek into the lives of the public officers. In 1999, National Sun Yat-sen University began the Creative Campus project. The project focused on the altering of the Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Villa and created the Hsitzewan Art Gallery. Now, everyone can not only enjoy the old building structure and history of the Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Villa, but also feast on the various exhibitions in the Hsitzewan Art Gallery. It is sad that actually not many students are attracted to the Hsitzewan Art Gallery and the Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Villa. The locals of the Hamsen have much more contact with both places. The locals enjoy visiting the Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Villa and recalling old-time memories as they walk into the building. Tourists often leave without any deep impression and understanding of Kaohsiung.

The Hamsen District and the Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Villa are the unnoticed treasures of Kaohsiung. The glamorous history and culture of the Hamsen District and the Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Villa have long been ignored. Though the local people and the students live together in the same district, hardly any contact can be seen in between them. Therefore, the usage of creativity to link both the people and the place together became a very important issue. This article will emphasize on the creative ideas and the process of execution. It will begin with the Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Villa as the base of the Creative Campus project, and go on to explain what has been done to attract everyone on the campus to notice and love the Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Villa. Also, through the different programs held during the various seasons, the project links up the renovated Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Villa with the historical Hamsen District and creates a new culture for the old and the young, the locals and the newcomers to understand, appreciate and love.

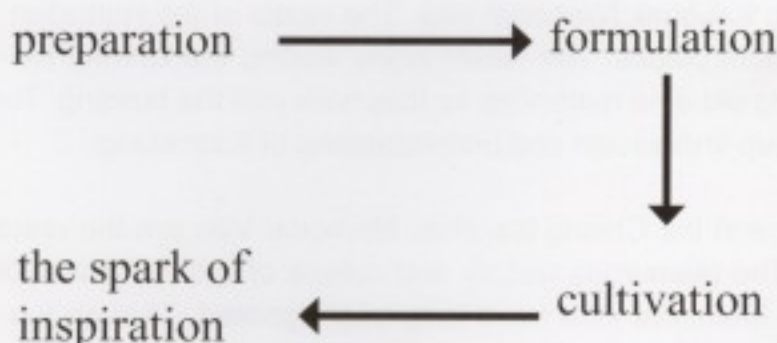
The HsiHa Together Creative Campus Project:  
A New Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Villa in the Old Hamasen

The Creative Campus Project, sponsored by the Ministry of Education, was my first assignment as the Head of the Performing Arts Activities Assembly. I only had 30 days to hand over the proposal. It was a great challenge to me even though I have guided various students through creative contests before.

I have been a staff of this beautiful campus for more than 17 years. It seems as if I am very familiar with every inch of the campus, however, the office, lab and classrooms are the only places I have been to. Therefore, with this opportunity, I tend to explore the familiar yet foreign campus and unveil its beauties.

Searching for Inspiration

In *The Creative Spirits*,<sup>2</sup> the searching for inspiration has four stages: preparation, formulation, cultivation, and the spark of inspiration. With these four stages in my mind, I embarked on my creative journey.



<sup>2</sup>Goleman, Daniel and Paul Kaufman, Michael Ray *The Creative Spirit* Tzung-tien (中天) Publisher 1998





## I. The Preparation Stage

In the preparation stage, various information, knowledge and topics must be researched and learned. Only by opening up and swallowing in everything could all the possibilities be thoroughly explored. However, in this stage, conflicts might occur due to traditional thoughts. And persistence becomes the only way to fight to success. As Mark Twain once said, "Anyone who came up with a brilliant idea had to go through a process of darkness." Therefore, anxiousness and depression should not be feared for they lead to triumphant victories as the night leads to the splendid sunrise.

The most important task during the preparation stage is to carefully study the instructions outlined by the Ministry of Education on the Creative Campus Project in order to fully accomplish the goal of the project. Through understanding the reasons of promoting the project, the project can be more focused and detailed. What kind of goals should the project aim for? In the instructions, the Creative Campus project is an opportunity for the restructuring of the public space on campus. It should at least have the following four characteristics:

1. A place that allows many functions of usage and attracts different activities.
2. A place full of opportunities and expectations of the students and staffs.
3. A place that supports public speeches and entertainment, where everyone can communicate and get acquainted with each other. Prejudice is not seen in the public sphere where the freedom of speech is guaranteed.
4. A place that encourages the linking in between the locals, students and the society.

Therefore, after fully understanding the goals of the project, I started my wandering on the campus wondering what I could change to make the campus an even better place. When I saw the brick walls of the dormitory, I wondered if it was possible to become a cliff for rock-climbing. When I walked through the tunnel, I wondered if the tunnel could link the campus from our side of the tunnel with the society on the other side of the tunnel. When I was sitting beneath the banyans, I wondered if the area could be transformed into an art gallery beneath the whispering leaves. As I continued to explore the campus, I tried to find a place where the four characteristics matched with the goal of the Ministry of Education. In the end, I came up with the answer as I approached the Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Villa.

The Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Villa is the oldest building in National Sun Yat-sen University. It began as a restricted establishment for the authorities. Later on, it was transformed into a memorial hall for the public. Students, locals and tourists were finally allowed to peek into the lives of public officers. In 1999, National Sun Yat-sen University began the Creative Campus project. The project focused on the altering of the Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Villa and created the Hsitzewan Art Gallery. Now, everyone can not only enjoy the old building structure and history of the Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Villa, but also feast on the various exhibitions in the Hsitzewan

<sup>3</sup>2004 Department for Education "Collage Creative Campus Project" Proposal plan instructions.



Art Gallery. It is sad that actually not many students are attracted to the Hsitzewan Art Gallery and the Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Villa. The locals of the Hamasen have much more contact with both places. The locals enjoy visiting the Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Villa and recalling old-time memories as they walk into the building. The Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Villa is very special to the habitants of the Hamasen because it aged with the people and stayed as an entertaining place in their lives.

National Sun Yat-sen University is located in Hamasen, Kaohsiung. Hamasen is the cradle of Kaohsiung city. Beginning from the 20th century, people have gathered in Hamasen due to fishery, military and commerce. Hamasen became a famous and flourishing district very swiftly. However, after the boom, Kaohsiung railway station and Pelagian fishing ports were moved by the government. The moving not only limited the industries in Kaohsiung but also caused the inevitable downfall of Hamasen. The rich culture, history and art were forgotten as Hamasen waned.

The Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Villa provided another educating and entertaining place for the locals, tourists and students by the establishment of the Hsitzewan Art Gallery. However, due to limited exhibitions and the waiting time between the exhibitions, the students and staffs of National Sun Yat-sen University often neglected the Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Villa in their daily lives. Though the local people and the students are seen living together in the same district, hardly any contact can be seen in between them.

The Hamasen District and the Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Villa are the unnoticed treasures of Kaohsiung. The glamorous history and culture of the Hamasen District and the Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Villa have long been ignored. Therefore, the usage of creativity to link both the people and the place together became a very important issue. So the project began with the old Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Villa as the base of the Creative Campus project and I started to research in order to formulate creativity.

#### (I) My first visit to the Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Villa

As the main focus of the project, a thorough exploration cannot be avoided. Before I started, all I know of the place is from the outside appearances and the stories that were told due to its restricted historic background. So one afternoon, I decided to walk right into the Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Villa and begin my journey. Due to traditions, the curtains of the Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Villa were never pulled up, causing the first floor to look dark and creepy to me.



When I climbed up to the second floor, my hair suddenly stood up on the end and I regretted so much for listening to the scary stories that were told about the place. Not only did the old furniture deepen my fear, the old photos and feeble lights extended my want to leave. During this first visit I had a swift glance of the inside of the Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Villa. And I didn't have time or rather didn't want to spend more





time to understand the history or the culture of the Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Villa  
(II) Observing the Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Villa surroundings

Even though the Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Villa is the base of the project, its surroundings are also a very tempting place to explore. So I walked around the Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Villa many times and took dozens of photos.

The back of the Hsitzewan Art Gallery is a parking lot.



The right of the Hsitzewan Art Gallery is a quiet alley.



The left of the Hsitzewan Art Gallery is a green park with many plants and a lily pond.



The front of the Hsitzewan Art Gallery is an old banyan.

1. The front of the Hsitzewan Art Gallery: a bus stop under an old banyan.

The front of the Hsitzewan Art Gallery is an 80-year-old banyan. Under the tree is the campus bus stop. Behind the tree are a resting square and a parking lot. Students wait for the bus to come under the old banyan and stand across the road facing the Hsitzewan Art Gallery. Teachers and staffs pass the Hsitzewan Art Gallery to park their cars in the opposite parking lot. Though close but never touched is the situation of the Hsitzewan Art Gallery unless exhibitions are held.







2. The back of the Hsitzewan Art Gallery is a parking lot.

National Sun Yat-sen University built an exterior road and parking lot behind the Hsitzewan Art Gallery in order to maintain quietness on the campus. Students no longer ride past the front of the Hsitzewan Art Gallery on their way to classes as they used to before. They simply go around the surroundings of the Hsitzewan Art Gallery and leave the quiet place as fast as they can.



3. The left of the Hsitzewan Art Gallery is a green park with many plants and a lily pond.

The big green park is located at the left of the Hsitzewan Art Gallery. It is a great garden for the locals of Hamasen. In the park there are ancient Chinese pavilions, a big lily pond with ducks, turtles, many plants and flowers. There is also a huge banyan in the park which became the favorite place for the habitants of Hamasen. Locals love to relax, exercise and chat in the green park. However, students often pass by without a second glance. They only pass by to go to their classes and never have the time to enjoy the beauties of the green park or chat with the locals.







4. The right of the Hsitzewan Art Gallery is a quiet alley with myrobalan.

In order to get to the classrooms from the parking lot, students have to choose to either walk through the green park at the left of the Hsitzewan Art Gallery or else they would have to walk along the quiet alley of myrobalan. Myrobalan changes with the seasons. Therefore, the alley changes to a bright red in the autumn and a thick green in summertime. The leaves fall during winter and sprouts up again next spring. Students that walk toward their classes do not notice the beauties of the alley as they hurry along.



### (III) The second visit to the Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Villa

After my first visit, I often visited the Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Villa. I learned that when there are no exhibitions, the Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Villa would be kept dark, forsaken and gloomy. I met many locals who came by with their friends and relatives to visit and recall childhood memories. They became my friends and I learned more of the history of the Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Villa through them. Once I met Li-guan (麗娟) in the Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Villa. She explained the designs and structures of the old building with much detail. It was not until then did I realize that the Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Villa contained loads of creativity from its inside all the way to its outside.



The special design on the stairs seems to look like the word "art". It is not possible to find out why the design was made during that time, but the imagination that the word triggered is amazing.



<sup>4</sup>Liguan Wang is a lecturer in the Department of Information Management and Communications in Wenzao Ursuline College of Languages. She loves antiques, art and culture studies. She is professional in the field of arts and design.



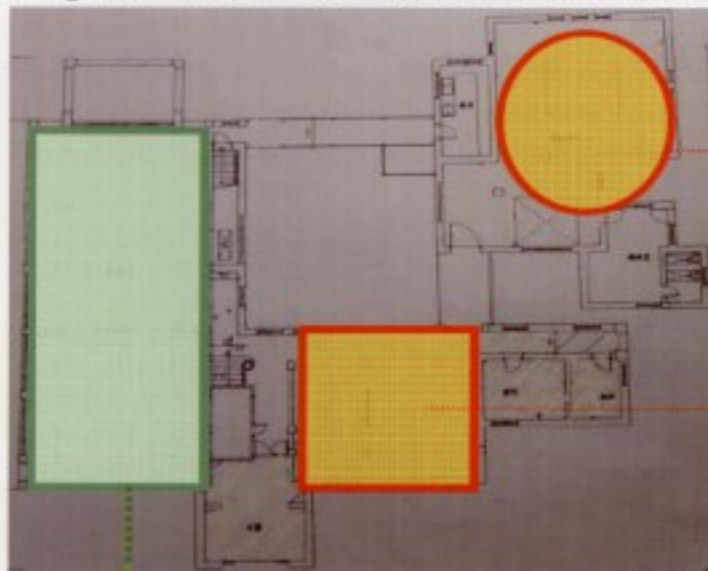
After my frequent visits, I started to like the Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Villa. I also deeply enjoyed the mysterious atmosphere it provides and the peace generated by the quietness in the area.

#### (IV) The environment of the Hsitzewan Art Gallery and its surroundings

On the right side of the Hsitzewan Art Gallery entrance, there is a Japanese garden under three banyans.



In the Hsitzewan Art Gallery, historic and modern exhibitions are seen hand in hand. Walking into the Hsitzewan Art Gallery, visitors would see the original furniture and decorations of the old days at the left part of the building, including the conference room on the first floor, the bedroom, dining room and living room on the second floor. The sofa in the living room came all the way from Nan-gin. The halls are decorated with pictures of the Chiang Kai-shek family photos. At the right part of the building are art galleries that were established by the university in 1999. There are two exhibition rooms on the first floor and one on the second floor. It is a pity that during the time when there are no exhibitions, these three rooms are left empty.



Ground plan (1<sup>st</sup> floor)



The ceiling of this exhibition room has a window. The high ceilings create a solemn atmosphere.



This exhibition room has a wooden board in the middle, creating two spaces. One of the spaces has a rectangular wooden floor.



This lobby was once the living room and dining room of the Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Villa in the old days. The furniture and decorations have been preserved as they once were. The leather sofa came from Nan-gin and is still in great shape.





Ground plan (2<sup>nd</sup> floor)



The red framed area is the exhibition room with a wooden floor and big windows. It is deserted when there are no shows.



The green framed area is where the old Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Villa is preserved, including the main bedroom, office, study, and guest room. They still look the same as old times. There are many black and white photos of the Chiang Kai-shek family on the walls. The photos were taken in 1961 when Chiang Kai-shek visited Hsitzewan.

#### (V) Visiting similar historic sights

Gun-gie and I traveled to Taipei especially for the project. We visited Grass Mountain Chateau, Taipei Story House, Linyutang Memorial Place, Red Play House, Taipei Spot Gallery, National Dr. Sun Yat-sen Memorial Hall and so on in order to extend and deepen the research and understanding of our project.



<sup>5</sup> Gun-gie Wu(吳俊頤) is a student of the Department of Finance in National Sun Yat-sen University. He is very interested in the preservation of arts and culture. He is deeply concerned with the environment in Taiwan.





#### (VI) Visiting the Hamasen district

Hamasen is a very special name for the cradle of Kaohsiung. Hamasen did not exist before 1908. In 1908, Japanese people used the mud they dug up to clear up channels to build land. The land was not the only establishment of the Japanese people, Hamasen railway was also built. Therefore, the locals named this new piece of land Hamasen. The name of the railway became the name of the place and society. Hamasen was the first stop for people that arrived in southern Taiwan. Beginning from the 20th century, people have gathered in Hamasen due to fishery, military and commerce. Hamasen became a famous and flourishing district very swiftly. However, after the boom, Kaohsiung railway station and Pelagian fishing ports were moved by the government. The moving not only limited the industries in Kaohsiung but also caused the inevitable downfall of Hamasen.

Not only did I do more research on Hamasen through the internet, but I also visited Mr. Chang Lai-shi (張來喜), a member of the Hamasen arts association. He not only informed us of the long lost stories of Hamasen, but also supplied us many valuable books and magazines of Hamasen. He also took us to Gu-shan Elementary School to show us his photo exhibition of old Hamasen.

On the other hand, Gun-gei and a few classmates traveled around Hamasen. They not only took many photos but also interviewed many locals in the district.





## (VI) Interviews

Not only did we interview locals to discover the basics of Hamasen, but we also asked many professionals to learn more about Hamasen. Therefore, locals that came to exercise in the green park next to the Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Villa, the tourists that came to visit the Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Villa, the students and staffs' impression of the Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Villa and Hamasen, were all the targets of our interviews. We also visited the former Creative Campus project designer Chang Yu-shan and he gave us many precious suggestions, for example, old buildings are treasured in foreign universities and the old buildings would be the best place for important speeches and activities to be held on the campus.

Therefore, I fully researched on the project in order to prepare myself to the next stage.

<sup>6</sup>Chang Yu-shan (張玉山) is a professor in the Department of Finance at National Sun Yat-sen University. He has entered many Creative Contests held by the Department for Education.

## II. The Formulation Stage

- An important moment to soak up all the information.
- The formulation stage is the time to get rid of the activeness of the previous stage.
- Subconscious is much better than consciousness in the developing of creativity.
- Subconscious is made up of what one knows. It is much more rich and abundant than consciousness.
- Subconscious communicates with humans through feelings, images and emotions. It gives us the instinct of right and wrong.
- When we start to trust our instincts, we start to depend on our subconscious.

After a full research on the topic, it is time to sit down and let all the new knowledge sink in. During the formulation stage, seeking for more information is not the best way any more, understanding and learning all the knowledge is the most important method. During this time one should develop one's own opinion on the topic, use it as the base of all knowledge and prepare for the next stage in order to search for inspiration.

## III. The Cultivation Stage

- Without special intentions, daydreaming can offer a person opportunity to peek into detailed observations and reach one's subconscious.
- Daydreaming is very important at this stage!
- Sink into the problem and think hard for a while then leave the problem and try to forget about it. Giving oneself time is very important.
- Anything relaxing and soothing is good to developing creativity, for example, showering, walking and driving.

After going through the preparation stage and the formulation stage, the cultivation stage is the next step toward inspiration. In this cultivation stage, it is important to give oneself time to relax and think. I had 30 days to prepare for the proposal. After the preparation and formulation stage, I did not have much time left. I knew I had to give myself more time or else I would have to relax and help myself think. I think the best way to think is not thinking all the time. One should rather leave problems aside and focus on other things. It is funny but true that when one is relaxed, the problems that were once set aside find their own solutions.

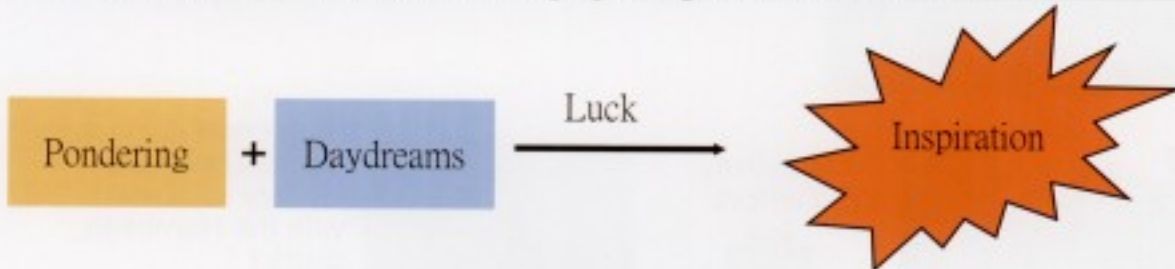
During the cultivation stage, I had the chance to go on a trip to Taitung. Going to Taitung helped me leave my surroundings and totally relax. During the trip I would suddenly come up with very creative ideas and I would write them down in my notebook. Though scattered thoughts had no focus, I gradually began to find my pattern of thoughts.

My proposal started from reading instructions to detailed research, understanding information and interviews. Through pondering and daydreaming it gradually took shape.



## IV. The spark of inspiration

- "That's it!" A sudden spark of inspiration came after striving hard for it.
- Inspirations are good only if they can be put into action.
- A creative act—transform. Changing thoughts to motions and facts.



In all the four stages, the most satisfying stage is when the spark of inspiration appears. "That's it!" transforms every painstaking step to sweet success.

This proposal is based on the idea to use the Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Villa to attract and merge with the Hamasen district. The Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Villa is the oldest building in National Sun Yat-sen University. National Sun Yat-sen University is located at Hamasen, the cradle of Koahsiung. Therefore our subtitle of the project became A New Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Villa in the Old Hamasen. The subtitle was created before the title. It was very hard to decide on the title of the project for it had to be to the point and attractive. "HsiHa Together" is a combination of "Hsitzewan Art Gallery" and "Hamasen". HsiHa also sounds like hip-hop when being read in Chinese. Using a word that sounds like hip-hop creates a young atmosphere. The Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Villa links up with the society and transforms from an old building to a new appearance. This proposal's goal was to push art and culture and combine them with technology. With the word Together, not only is everything combined through art, culture and internet, but everyone is also included in the idea of combining together. With the spark of inspiration, the project moves on to another stage. Not an ending but a beginning. A beginning for the project planners: to transform thoughts into words and actions.

## The emerging of Hsitzewan Art Gallery with Hamasen



The Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Villa  
Was once a mysterious restricted area  
Now it has become the educational Hsitzewan Art  
Gallery  
However only when exhibitions start do  
the students and staffs of National Sun Yat-sen  
University step into the old building.





Hamasen  
Once the cradle of Koahsiung  
With the changes of environment  
The rich culture and history  
Have been forgotten



Creativity  
Factors



With creativity factors  
the Hsitzewan Art  
Gallery combined  
with the Hamasen  
district :

HsiHa Together~ A  
New Chiang Kai-shek  
Memorial Villa in the  
Old Hamasen

### The Dream of Reviving the Hsitzewan Art Gallery

A space deserted, a faded history doesn't mean it will stay the same forever. When every school is complaining that their campus is too small, they do not look at their campus and think if they are truly using every part of it. We discovered a beautiful place in National Sun Yat-sen University. It is a place often visited by the locals but neglected by the students. Our proposal is not to change our campus, but dig in and renew it.

This project was helped by the Performing Arts Activities Assembly in the Continuing Education Center. They were the authority that was responsible of managing the Hsitzewan Art Gallery. Also many university staffs and students helped the formulation of the project. In Hamasen the cultural preservers and the head of the neighborhood also assisted us enthusiastically. We sincerely hope to revive the Hsitzewan Art Gallery and fill up the gap in between the locals and the staffs in Hamasen and the gap between the old building and the young students. We hope to create an educational and open environment for everyone in Hamasen. Allowing everyone to love the school, Hamasen and the beauty and culture of Koahsiung through the project and carry on in everyday life.

In this kind of academic environment, we tried to use the oldest building on the campus (the Hsitzewan Art Gallery) as the base of our project and combine it with the oldest district in Koahsiung—Hamasen. Hoping to create a new environment in the old area, the project was aimed to provide students, staffs and locals a real and abstract space to learn and have fun. Also the project aimed to link up everyone through its activities and allow the space to have various functions like a living,

<sup>7</sup> On the 1<sup>st</sup> of August in 2008, the Performing Arts Activities Assembly became the Performing Arts Activities Division.





thinking and accomplishing region.

The goals we aimed to accomplish through the execution of the proposal :

1. Total usage of the historical space of the Hsitzewan Art Gallery.

Through the transformation of space usage, students and locals have a second chance to know the old building. With activities and performances, the Hamasen customs emerges with the campus culture. Locals, staffs and students get to know each other and share opinions. In the many functioned space not only are there exhibitions to see, but speeches and performances of the students, doctors and professionals to hear and watch; a place where everyone can come as a unique person and leave as a mixture of everyone else.

2. Combine the culture of Hamasen and the sources of the Hsitzewan Art Gallery

Hamasen is famous for its classis cultural features and the Hsitzewan Art Gallery have beautiful scenery as backup. The two places provide a great atmosphere for the locals and students to develop their creativity. Combination leads the students and locals, the campus and the society to combine with one another through thoughts and talks.

3. Increased interaction between locals, staffs and students.

National Sun Yat-sen University is located at the oldest part of Koahsiung—Hamasen. Hamasen has a long history and locals that feel attached to the place and school, for it is where they grew up. Therefore, with the project, the Hsitzewan Art Gallery, situated in the oldest building links up with the locals and becomes an in-between. Culture, art and thoughts travel through it from the locals to the students and back.

4. A comfortable learning space

Beside the classrooms, this place will also become a place to learn. Students, locals and teachers can share their opinions and feelings through the interactions in this area. The history of Hamasen, the intelligence of life can all be learned through casual conversations.

5. Combining with technology and promoting creative culture.

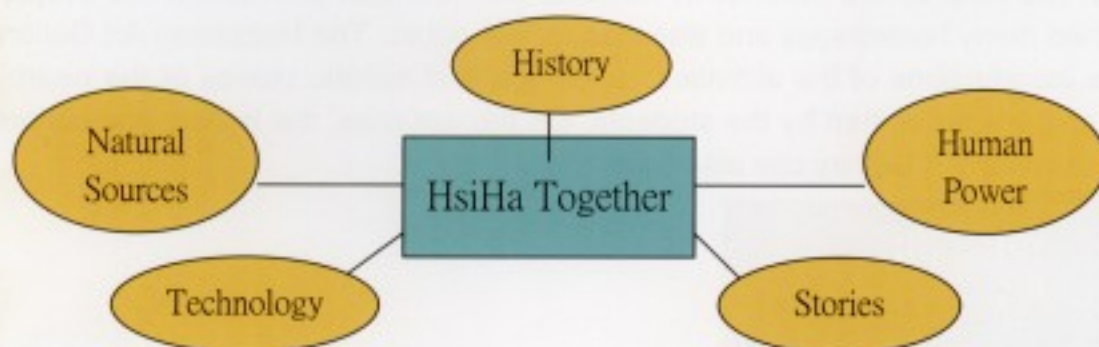
With the help of the internet in National Sun Yat-sen University, the project established many homepages and websites for the public. The Hsitzewan Art Gallery provides introductions of the activities, guide tips and historic stories of the nearby places, and articles written by the students. On the websites, the beauty and culture of the Hsitzewan Art Gallery can also be seen.



## Planning Thoughts

When we started to plan out the project, we had a hard time deciding whether to create a new environment by really establishing a new building in the already crowded campus or create a new environment that lives in the heart of everyone. We thought about what the students of National Sun Yat-sen University remember after they graduate from collage, for example, having classes in the classrooms, exercising on the field tracks, using their computer in the dorms, viewing the moon-lit sea during midnight. We also asked what the students remember of Hamasen and came up with the answers related mostly to food as the onion cakes, spicy fried rice and the famous huge bowl of ice eaten with fruits. Hamasen is the oldest part of Koahsiung. It is a pity that not more of it is remembered. The staffs working in National Sun Yat-sen University also did not have much contact with Hamasen. Most of the professors were more involved with the classes than the beautiful scenery surrounding them. What attracts the locals to visit and linger on the campus? Is it memories of their childhood or beauties of the area? National Sun Yat-sen University is a part of the society, it is a pity to see the students having no connection with the locals and leaving without great memories.

Therefore, the project was our hope to find a potential space on campus. We wanted to revive the old space and give it a new life. The new space would then provide safety, fun, education, and relaxation for the teachers, students and locals to interact. For this reason, we had to use the natural beauties of our school and combine with the ancient building Hsitzewan Art Gallery as our base and create a new environment with the building and its surroundings. We combined creative factors as history, human power, natural sources and technology to formulate the HsiHa Together project. We hoped to stimulate the interaction between the Hsitzewan Art Gallery and Hamasen.







Creativity Factors	Details
History	The oldest building in the university~ the Hsitzewan Art Gallery The cradle of Koahsiung ~ the history of Hamasen
Human power	Students and staff members that are familiar with internet Old locals, administrators and culture preservers.
Natural sources	Green park 、banyan 、butterflies 、birds 、plants.
Stories	Stories of Hamasen, the Hsitzewan Art Gallery and touching, creative stories that appeared with the creative project.
Technology	LAN internet on the campus and homepages

### Execution Process

The project's theme is to use the Hsitzewan Art Gallery as the base and create a new environment with the Hsitzewan Art Gallery and its surroundings. We wanted to show everyone the history, culture, beautiful scenery and attract the locals, students and teachers to have a second chance to know this familiar yet foreign place. We also desired to combine the old with the new, the locals with the students, the history with the scenery, the websites and the real building.

We also created activities according to the four seasons, for example, Poems for Autumn, Fun in Reading Winter, Spring Trips, and Playtime in Summer. These four activities were very different but they could be put into practice even after the project was handed over.

#### (I) Poems for Autumn

The project began in autumn. Therefore, Poems for Autumn was the first promoted activity. The bustle attracted many people to notice the old building on the campus. On the 12th of November, during our university's anniversary, our project started off in the Hsitzewan Art Gallery with the opening tea party of the famous treasured calligraphy exhibition 「名家珍藏書畫展」 of Shan-shi Tzen(鄭善禧), Guan-nan Hauang(黃光男) and Fu-sho Lu(盧福壽). It was on that day the HsiHa Together Creative Campus Project: A New Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Villa in the Old Hamasen began.



Head of the Students Affairs Professor In-Yau Tzen (鄭英耀) and Vice President Wei-shien Wang (王維賢) also attended the tea party. Tzen-ho Shu (許正和), the professor of Creative Designing class in the Department of Mechanical and Electro-Mechanical Engineering also came with his students and volunteered as the tour guide for his students.



During the activity, we had guests that came from the local elementary schools. They brought a lot of energy into our project.



We had a calligraphy exhibition in the dining room and living room of the Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Villa. The solemn atmosphere was softened by the artistic words and works.



Poems for Autumn ~  
Students, professors, locals...all had a great time during the activity!





## (II) Fun in Reading Winter

Many colleges in foreign countries try very hard to preserve their old historic buildings. When students leave school all they remember is the ancient buildings. In Europe, Middle Age castles and abbeys can be seen on campus. In the closed building of the abbey, monks often study the bible and walk in the halls that are like their gardens. Monks often think and debate on their thoughts. In this season, we use reading winter as our title to change the Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Villa's appearance.

We asked students of their impression of the Hsitzewan Art Gallery and received interesting answers. For example, "This place is opened?" "This place looks spooky especially at night" "I've been there only once to see and exhibition", locals have more understanding and came up with answers like "I grew up here, I even though where the shower room of the American armies is..." "I came to see that old black truck again" "I came with my Japanese friend." We noticed that without exhibitions, students abandon the thought of visiting the Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Villa.



To open up the Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Villa wasn't hard. The first step was to pull up the curtains. With sunshine and the beautiful view pouring in, the building emerged with the surroundings.



We realized that this place was perfect to read books so we bought new books and set up a shelf near the entrance to attract people.



The books were of difference categories, there were books of Hamasen, music, theater, literature, etc. We hope to inspire more creativity in this comfortable space. We also accepted the advice of others and made many souvenirs for visitors.

#### •Stamps

There is a souvenir stamp ready to stamp memories of the place at the entrance for tourists.



西哈藝起來

中山大學最早的建築是在地庫早的發展地

#### •Notes to write down what one has learned after reading

Reading is great in this comfortable space, and sharing one's thoughts is encouraged. Everyone can interact through the books, words and opinions.



#### •Notepads

Delicate and various notepads were created for tourists to leave messages on the spot.



#### •Magnetic bookmarks

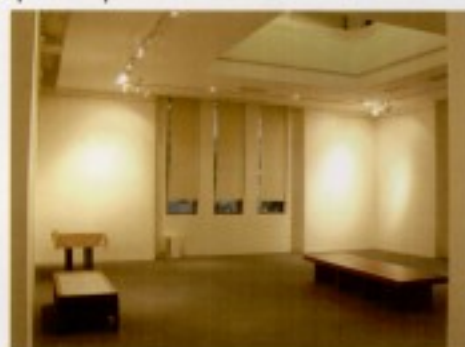
Magnetic bookmarks can promote the HsiHa Together Project and serve as a souvenir for tourists.





In the oldest collage of Netherlands Leiden University, thesis debate and famous speeches are held in the old buildings.

We also held two thesis debates in the oldest building of National Sun Yat-sen University. The participants as Tzi-hau(志豪) felt really excited and touched after this unique experience.



Fun in here · Fun in winter  
Cold winter with sweet books  
Academic debates gave the space more meaning

### (III) Spring trips

Spring came with the New Year, we promoted a new activity. New Year resolutions: be the master of the Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Villa. Project contests were held, hoping that students would participate and think more about their campus and the old building.

The activity was held during the final examination period. Still, many students came and helped out with the posters.



Regardless of the fact that the activity was near the finals, many students entered the contest. Students with different majors and degrees joined hands to compete. We also invited judges from various backgrounds, including creative professors, administrators, students with PHD, MA, BA, graduates, Media Marketing Professionals and Visual Designing Experts.

#### Results:

Group	Members	Place
Who's building? Who's culture?	Chemistry BA Gen-hon Tzen(曾建洪), Foreign languages and literature BA I-tein Wu(吳恬綾), yuan-I Fan(范遠一), Politics and Economics BA Si-yu Tsai(蔡昕俞) and Mon-si Lin(林孟希)	1 <sup>st</sup>
Light and Dream in the Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Villa.	Public affairs MA Gia-sin Huang(黃家興)	2 <sup>nd</sup>
X Files	Finance BA Gia-ing Ho(何佳穎)	3 <sup>rd</sup>
The Math Two	Math BA I-tzon Chen(陳奕聰) and Hei-yu Tsai(蔡蕙瑜)	masterpiece
The legend of the white house~ creating a new landmark	Environment Engineering PHD Jun-hon Lin(林俊宏)	Masterpiece



With the contest going on, we also asked help from the locals, volunteers and professionals to decorate the Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Villa. We made posters of the landmarks of Hamasen with introduction, history and stories.







With the introductions of the famous sites of Hamsen, tourists have been given more opportunities to travel around Hamsen and reasons to linger longer in this district.



#### Spring Trips

Spring in all green,  
We invite you, as the host of Hsitzewan!

#### (IV) Playtime in summer

The project ended on the 15th of March in 2005. Though summer has not yet arrived, our project will continue on with its activities. We will invite clubs of the university to perform at the Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Villa. We will also ask students to beautify the surroundings in their service classes.

#### Playtime in Summer

Summer  
Clubs with bring their final performance  
The Dancing club with their hip-hop lights up the area  
In the future  
Activities of the four seasons  
Will continue in the Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Villa  
Art links the locals and students together

#### Finale

The ending of the project does not limit our creativity. The Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Villa is an ancient monument under the government and National Sun Yat-sen is merely the preserver. We started with the project by trying not to change the ancient building therefore we had to refuse to enter the second contest of the Creative Campus Project in the end. Although our project ended, we continue to

fulfill our dreams. We will be holding movie conferences, music band performances, dancing lessons, and all kinds of other activities for the locals, staffs and students. We still have so many dreams, and the ending of our project will be the beginning of our project put into practice!



We welcome you to come and see for we have lots to share!  
HsiHa Together! A New Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Villa in the Old Hamasen

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## Nectar-Searching Children

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<sup>1</sup>Sheng-Chiun Chen is a teacher that joined the "Regional of Creative Education Project" in Yilan.

## Abstract

Narrated in a fictional way, this story is about two children, who, under the guidance of the science teacher, developed a methodology for seeking the truth, and undertook a creative and adventurous exploration in science, from which they learned new ways of thinking.

A-Bo and Ian were two kids with very different personalities and approaches to learning. Both of them were smart; however, A-Bo only stuck to his extensive knowledge of the available facts, not bothering to explore the importance of and the surprising aspects of gaining new information. While very observant as well as inquisitive, yet without an abundance of facts, Ian was strongly motivated by new knowledge and his own imagination. As a result, the two became a complementary pair, working well with one another. Not only did they find the answers they wanted between the unknown and the known, but they launched a "competition for knowledge" with their teacher. Finally, through researching a flower, specifically the nectar of the ericaceae, they won the fruitful reward of knowledge gained and the fulfilled the teacher's expectations.

The story was narrated by the teacher, who was persevering, insistent, a little bit "cruel" but also a little panicked, explaining why it was so important to think, to doubt, to explain, and to begin again. Yet, if there were an ending for the story, it would not be about the teacher but would focus on the two kids. Nonetheless, the kids will not put an end to it all; instead, in the future, they will continue such reflections and explorations....



## Nectar-Seeking Children

I somehow faced the blooming azaleas all over the campus, feeling overwhelmed, and my heart, until now, still throbbed with complex emotions.

The overwhelming rays radiated from the spring sun; what a perfect season for sowing! However, one's "sown dream" could not always be reaped. In spite of failures, this process of striving for one's dream still could be taken as a fruitful process. Like plowing and weeding, we also contemplated and sought. Following the paths of the season, the movement of sunshine, we allowed our eyes to doubt what we saw, and let our ears to question what we had heard. Exactly! The process of experimentation was like a sentence being written, eventually building up to make up a chapter, and then a book.

"A-Bo" firmly stood up from his seat, and walked towards me.

In fact, in his name, has a character "Bo," (which written down in Chinese, means cypress, but is pronounced the same as the character that means "uncle"). With a pair of old-fashioned glasses that hung on his little face, and as chubby as he was, he was given the nickname, "Uncle." At first, A-Bo could hardly accept it, and argued with classmates whenever they used the nickname. Nonetheless, as the time went by, A-Bo gained authority feeling with the kids, because he was frequently called "Uncle." A-Bo eventually stopped refusing this nickname with an attitude of superiority.

"What's wrong, Uncle?" I said as I marked the page, and finally put down my red pen. He adjusted his glasses slightly, softly saying, "I also want to do a research paper." Looking at him, I nodded my permission.

### A half-completed paper

Uncle's research was to observe a bunch of ericaceae all over the campus, which are also commonly seen on the streets. The flowers blossomed in three colors—scarlet, white, and pink. Early spring was their growing season; you could see them in full bloom on every corner of the campus.

Before long, Uncle handed in his first draft. I skimmed through the whole paper as soon as I received it. Indeed, this paper looked like those he had written before, with a great abundance of information and a nice design, which made it seem rather "professional." The very beginning of the paper, laid out his notes and research result in great detail:

#### Knowing Ericaceae

**Frutex, arbor, or sometimes second frutex; with simple leaf; evergreen forest or falling few leaves; leathery texture without a stipule.**

**With two sexes and flowers growing in order; usually a solitary flower; raceme or panicle; 4-7 calyces and 4-7 corollas, but most are 5 corollas. The number of stamen equals that of corolla, sometimes two times more. Thruws grow separately, with two anthers. The top looks like a tail with an open hole. The ovary is located on the top . There are numerous ovules with one style growing singly....**

At the end of the paper, Uncle even suggested that "ericaceae on campus were





**not originally grown in Taiwan, but are instead are ameliorated species,"** with a Japanese name.

"Are you sure that they were originally grown in Japan?," I asked.

"The reference books did not say very clearly. So this was only my inference." With a shy smile, Uncle demonstrated a little uncertainty.

I murmured, "Actually, it could be better, if you found some more evidence...." Then again, I flipped through this three and a half-page paper, which was tidily typed out. Uncle was standing confidently next to me; he seemed to stare at his own "masterpiece," which was glamorously designed with colorful printing. The frame of the paper had ostensibly showed what the azaleas would look like in vibrant bloom.

I closed the report, giving it back to him. Feeling startled, he muttered, "Teacher...."

I said, "You have already done the first half of a research paper. I really admired your efforts and hard-work. Even though it is only the first half, it is the best part."

"Only the first half?" Uncle wondered with a puzzled look.

"Exactly! It is half of a paper, and you still have to finish the other half," I purposely left him this riddle and made my words vague.

"But I thought it is already very complete and well-done," Uncle tried to argue.

"I also said it was a good paper." I smiled, patting him on his small shoulder.

"Then..., what do you mean by the other half part?"

"Your own stuff."

"My own stuff?"

Apparently, Uncle did not get what I meant. "Your own comments." I said. Smiling, I tried to answer his question, explaining, "A good paper does not only organize the key points that are found in books; those books are written by others, and include other people's ideas and research. Uncle, don't you think if there are none of your own comments, that this is not a complete paper, but only one half?"

Uncle frowned, saying, "Ah! My own comments? That is hard!"

"It is hard." I said.

"Teacher...." Uncle said with a pettish voice, "Even you find it difficult; how could you ask me to do that then?" It sounded like he was trying to make me concede. However, he did not know that I was already like an old tree deeply rooted down in the ground, which was impossible to shake, even by a fierce hurricane.

"Your difficulty is different from mine. My difficulty is to guide you in conducting a good research. Yours is to face your laziness during your work." Smart as Uncle was, he caught my words; then replied with a smile, "Oh! It is not hard!"

Already formed habits are hard to change. Uncle did not truly keep my suggestions in mind.

Like a greedy and devouring spider, he used the internet to spin a web, catching all the complex information. It was obvious that he still refused to get close to the garden to observe the azaleas, but only crammed in as many graphics and charts as possible in his brain.

Old Uncle always buried himself into books, encyclopedias, picture references, journals, or magazines. If asked to complete an informative assignment, he could rapidly organize all the material without missing a detail. Then, he would tell me with great confidence and pride that he did not have to go explore the world. Instead, only





by sitting in front of the screen and clicking the mouse, his perfect answer would be shown on the screen.

He enjoyed using his color ball-point pens, highlighting the conclusion in each paragraph. He handed me another draft, saying, "That's it. This is my paper." However, this time, my reaction was the same as before. Returning his colorful "masterpiece," I firmly said, "I only see a 'replica,' a copied one. Uncle, you should not rely so much on the internet. On the internet, azaleas do not breathe, grow, or wither! You should hold the real ones like the ones outside of the window, because they won't last long but will fade away."

With determination, I spoke these words in my heart, but I said them too severely. Uncle did not refute me, but lowered his head as his eyes gradually blurred with tears.

Ian, who had conducted an interesting paper not so long ago, and who saw my unusual attitude towards Uncle, could not help but say, "Teacher, don't be so mad!" "Did I sound mad?," I asked, taking a deep breath, wondering if my outburst was an emotional expression due to my high expectations for Uncle?

"Ian," I suggested, with a quick idea clicking in my mind, "why don't you work with Uncle? You just mentioned that your easy paper is almost done. Perhaps, you can make use of the rest of the time to finish this research with Uncle."

"Sure! His research is exciting to me." Ian promised right away, without any second thoughts.

Raising his hand to his head to secretly wipe away tears, Uncle asked, "You did the experiment about coloring all the fan-leaves in the classroom, to see what color would be as they spun, right?"

"Yes! But I'm almost done. I'm so bored now, because that experiment is too simple." Ian answered.

Shaking his head, Uncle replied, "Not at all! I skimmed through your paper, and it is quite good. I did a lot of research before about this. Except for the idea of the persistence of vision, you included a variety of results."

"Uncle, if you can set your imagination free, drawing the fan-leaves with different colors, is easy. It is evident that creativity might be hidden in any small corner, isn't it!"

I was always convinced that Ian's research was simple, but provided wonderful amazement. Probably someday, with each fan-leaf colored differently, everyone in this classroom would wonder, or guess what color would be surprisingly spun out!

"I very much look forward to your research results." I told Ian.

Ian's frowning face turned into a smile, looking at me and Uncle.

### Changing into butterflies

Two kids borrowed my camera, which could take pictures as close as one millimeter. They visited in the garden every day, setting up the camera, and tuning the shots. They became like a warm breeze in the garden, like a ray of sunshine to erase the cold, running back and forth among the flowers to observe and take records.

Because of their hard work, their paper looked totally different from any previous ones. I would sometimes take a look at it. Pressing "Page-Down" and "Page-Up," I





was astonished by the pile of attractive images.

As I was reading their paper, Uncle interrupted, "Teacher, I have a research topic. How about discussing the nectar of ericaceae?"

"Sure! Be a hard-working worker bee." I joked in reply.

"Nah!" Uncle explained seriously, "Ian and I want to do research by collecting nectar. Of course, the first step would be collecting nectar! We tried so many methods, but all in vain."

"Ok." I also became serious, listening Uncle's problem. Yet he did not beat about the bush but turned to me for a direct answer. "How can I collect the nectar?"

"Ok." I pretended I did not understand his question, joking, "Make yourselves butterflies, or just get a bee!"

"Come on!" Ian sighed with exaggeration.

In the following days, I saw them using straws to suck the nectar out, but this was useless; they also tried tissue paper to absorb nectar; finally, they decided to use a small ladle to scoop out the nectar, but they always poked through the tender petals. Obviously, they had failed at the first step...That is, until they bought something "mysterious" from the drugstore.

At first, they tried to hide from me with cunning smiles, spending all afternoon doing research on their own. Once finished, they proudly took three 0.5cc injectors filled with nectar, and showing their samples to me, saying:

"Would you like some nectar? 100 % pure nectar!"

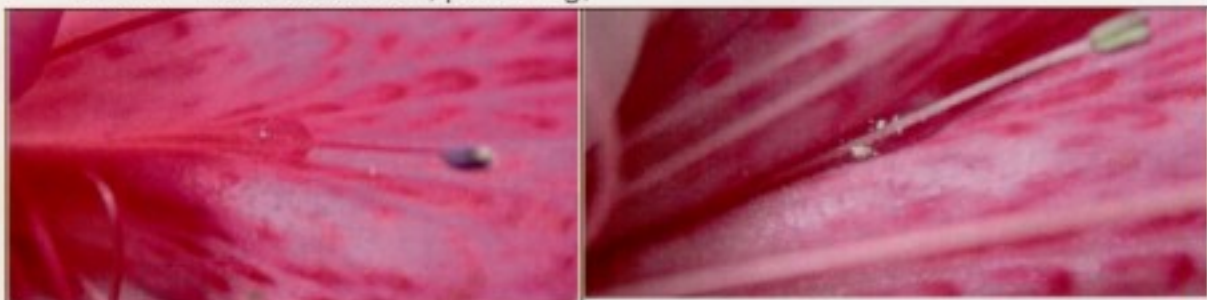
Wow! They did collect the nectar by themselves! But seeing them with dangerous injectors in front me, (even with caps on) I was truly "on pins and needles." I was really concerned about safety. I asked them to turn in the injectors to me, using scissors to cut off the potentially harmful needle, "You should be rewarded for such a great and practical idea. However, you also should be punished for ignoring its potential danger. The next time you conduct research, safety should always come first, alright?" These two little geniuses seemed to keep my words in mind this time. They rubbed the flattened needles with their little fingers, looking at me with great satisfaction.

"And now, what's next?" I asked them.

"Oh! Next?" looking at me, Ian also wondered.

To play a joke on them, I grabbed the injectors, saying, "Come on, let's dry them up, cheers!" I intentionally sipped a little nectar with an exaggerated action.

"Teacher !" Uncle shouted, panicking..



There was a mysterious groove at the bottom of the stamen, with nectar being secreted and condensed.

The three of us squeezed together to watch the computer screen. As shown on





the screen, this was a magnified image of the ericaceae's inner parts. It could be clearly seen that there was a mysterious groove at the bottom of stamen, nectar being secreted and condensed.

"Is this really nectar?" I asked. Using the best resolution, we magnified the image to look carefully at location of the nectar condensation.

"It absolutely is." Uncle gave a very affirmative answer.

"I tasted a little bit; it was very sweet." Courageous and yet careful as Ian was, he determined that it was nectar by tasting it.

"Are you afraid of it poisoning you? The juice of some plants are poisonous!" I warned them. Even though I nagged at them, I still felt quite proud of them for their courage.

"That's not enough. You don't have enough evidence to prove it is nectar." I made up my mind to construct a wall for them to overcome. "Find out convincing evidence, or design some unexpected experiments to prove to me that this is nectar."

"Teacher " Ian complained, a high pitch emanating from his deep throat.

#### **Where is the answer?**

Waiting for a long time, Uncle finally used my camera to take an extremely clear picture. It could clearly be seen that there was a bee moving towards the inner part of ericaceae, closing upon the deep groove to suck up the sweet nectar.



This was Uncle's first time in getting so close to a bee. At the very beginning, he was not only timid but also panicked. Despite his fear, after taking a deep breath, he calmly pressed the shutter button. With the flash turning on and off, the bee was frightened and began jetting around. Wow! After hearing this exciting story, I told him, "This picture does allude to the thrilling atmosphere when facing great danger. Very nice!"

Nevertheless, how could I be satisfied that easily!? After closer scrutiny, I



commented, "This evidence is still too weak. What if it was a just a bee, which coincidentally, rested on the ericaceae, and you happened to record that image...?" I intended to give them a little trouble. Never mind, I still had a lot of time, and I wanted them to broaden the angles of their observation, exploring beyond the original boundaries of the experiment. Being easily contented with an quick answer, you could hardly attain true satisfaction.

It was a sunny day, and the following session was the outdoor activity class.

Fluffy clouds were floating outside of the windows, and the river's currents flowed by. In the classroom, Uncle and Ian prepared three ericaceae of different colors, stood before the podium, and readied themselves to present the result of their research.



The red ericaceae had a clearly-spotted nectar mark on its petals, while white ones did not.

"Look, these three flowers all have 5 petals. The petal on the top has clear marks that extend from its' middle. Both the violet one and the pink one have scarlet marks, whereas marks can hardly be seen on the white one. Uncle and I think these marks show that there is nectar on the flowers. In other words, nectar marks are meant to guide the location of nectar, like a traffic sign. The marks can clearly attract passing insects that they have nectar here! For ericaceae, the nectar is secreted exactly below the nectar marks. Therefore, it can be proved that the nectar of ericaceae is located here." Ian assertively presented his findings in an organized manner, maintaining eye contact with his classmates and me.

"That's the end of our presentation." The applause filled the entire classroom, with some cheers and whistles. Slowly standing up, I made a short comment, "These two students could associate the nectar with the marks, this discovery is a really great job."

"Thank you. We found information about 'nectar marks' in Uncle's encyclopedia. As soon as we figured it out, we put it in our research."

"However," I changed my tone, "I have a small question. Nectar marks should all be obvious. But as can be seen here, white ericaceae seemingly do not have those marks. Are they just too stupid to evolve with clear marks? Based on this point, I quite doubt your argument that the nectar marks point out the exact location of nectar." I raised one question after another, as a test.

"Teacher, look." Uncle walked toward me, with one white ericaceae blossom in his hand. Peeling off the layered petals, he pointed at the petals covered with spots. I





was thinking," How obvious those marks are! They are definitely nectar marks."

I was rather surprised that they already prepared evidence to tackle my questions. But could it be possible that they were already well-prepared for any of my refutations?



The petal of the white ericaceae blossom have dark green nectar marks.

Uncle calmly walked back to podium, replying to my question, "As a matter of fact, the patterns and colors of nectar marks are sometimes invisible, because different insects have different senses of vision. According to the reference books, the insects are able to see marks that human beings cannot see.

Apparently, they did prepare for my questions and refutations. With a long pole, they seemed to easily jump over the wall that I had constructed.

Thus, I decided to take the questioning one step further, "Do you have any better evidence?" raising high the nectar they collected. "Apart from tasting, I expect you to conduct an experiment, or find more evidence to directly prove it is nectar, not just by showing a picture."

That was my last line of defense, which was also the most difficult. Like in the Battle of Normandy, I was testing their landing and ability to attack.

I was presenting one difficulty after another. Yet, I believed that dreams are waiting behind the door of the shrine of wisdom, dreams for them to explore, to touch, and to break through. At this moment, they could not see or hear, and the door was secretly hidden and locked. Yet if they chose to return and give up, they would never have the chance to enjoy the feeling of absolute surprise and the taste of excitement. I believed that in their small brains, creativity was developing and was gushing out incessantly. As long as they took action, the key to the shrine of wisdom would come handy, making it possible to open the door, and walk inside the shrine....

However, everything seemed to pause at this crucial moment. On one hand, they were excited to confront this challenge. On the other hand, they were facing their midterm exams and had a heavy load of schoolwork. They did not continue with their research for the entire week.

I feared that they had given up, asking, "Could it be possible that they only moved as far as this stage?"

I couldn't help but to slow down to give these kids more time, so that they could catch up. I felt like giving them a hand, and kept turning my head to check on them. I



told myself, "Be patient! Wait for them! Move on, kids! Even if it's just a small step...."

### **A test paper as a solution**

"What's wrong?" I wondered what the two kids were sneakily doing. I had smelled something weird.

"Nothing, nothing." They both shook their heads in false negation. How cute they were! Old as I was, I undoubtedly noticed the secret hidden in their smiles, which easily piqued people's curiosity.

I pretended that I did not notice, and continued doing my job. Yet my ears were perked up and were as alert and as sensitive as a rabbit's.

"Are you sure? It is disgusting though!" Uncle whispered.

"I tried already. If you don't trust me, we can try again." Ian whispered, too.

Softly, I sneaked behind them.

"Ah! Spy!" Ian immediately hid the "secret weapon" that he intended to show Uncle. Only getting a quick glance, I did not clearly see what exactly the "weapon" was.

"What's that?" I bent down in an attempt to take a closer look. Yet Ian held the object tight in his hand, and then tucked it into his pockets.

"We can't tell you now. It's our secret weapon." Like a guard on duty, Uncle stopped me from getting close to Ian.

"OK. I'll let you try first, and see if your "secret weapon" really works." I walked away with a short laugh.

"It can absolutely work." Ian yelled, far behind me.

It truly worked! I was completely startled as soon as I saw it. I did not expect that such a little thing could easily answer all my tough questions.

The whole story was.....

On the day after the midterm, Ian went to grandparents' place with his parents. As a result of diabetes, his grandfather was very careful about his diet. That day, Grandpa was looking at a small sheet piece of plastic less than 10 cm. Feeling curious, Ian crept closer to Grandpa.

"Don't look, Ian! Get away." Grandpa said.

"What are you doing, Grandpa?" Ian wondered.

"Well....," Grandpa pondered for a second, and conceding to Ian's childish begging, answered, "This is for diabetes."

A brilliant idea was sparked in Ian's mind, like rays of illuminating light. What Grandpa was using was a sugar test paper for diabetes, which indeed, proved to be a treasure for Ian....

The two kids eventually were ready to make a final presentation of their research on ericaceae.

"Mm, huh." Clearing his throat first, Ian started, "Teacher, and my dear classmates, because of the last super big difficulty raised by the teacher at the end of our last report, we had nonstop discussions, fights, and brainstorm around the clock, and even after we checked out all the related books in the library," at this point, I had





already grown restless and impatient, "we still had no clue at all. However, at last, my savior came that is, my grandpa...." Ok. Finally, here came the key points! I wouldn't allow myself to miss a word.

On the platform, they brought out the sugar test paper, beginning experiments that tested mineral water, hot green tea, juice, and ericaceae's nectar. Suddenly, everyone was shocked, watching with eyes wide open, because all of the test paper that was dipped in the drinks with sugar turned from light green to brown, including ericaceae's nectar. "We also proved that nectar contains more than 50 % of sugar." Uncle added.

Once they were finished, I stood up right away, giving them the loudest applause. Standing on the platform, listening to my frantic applause, two kids looked at each other. They seemed to be speechless with astonishment, still wondering why the teacher would give up so easily today.

I stepped onto the platform. Before speaking, I patted them on their small shoulders as a silent yet powerful encouragement, which was also my most direct compliment. As I was preparing to make comments, I noticed some more pictures on the podium. Ian said, "This is back-up evidence in case you give us more challenges. However, we probably don't need them now." In one picture, there were two puddles of liquid. One was the juice squeezed from the petals; the other was the collected nectar, which attracted armies of ants. Ian and Uncle were ready to put away these great pictures. Yet, I picked them all up, presenting one by one to my students, "Look! These valuable pictures clearly show evidence that...."

Spring, set off bunches of ericaceae, which bloomed all over campus. Nevertheless, the blooming season was like a paragraph, complete with a beginning and an end. An exciting yet slightly panicked start blooming season used to make me feel lost, but with the sunshine settling down through the window, shaping the contours of my dreams, it could be a graceful ending.

### **More mysterious than nectar**

After class, Ian and his friends still played basketball out on the court, while Uncle remained stuck in his books, with pages upon pages of knowledge being reflected through his glasses.

With the change of seasons, all the ericaceae had withered. The heat of wisdom and knowledge that had shone in the classroom last month seemed to cool.

I could not help but speak with the two kids again.

"Before long, the result of your research will become a showcase for the 'Science Workshop' at our school. Thank you so much for your efforts!"

Hearing my compliments, Uncle just smiled, while another clever idea came to Ian's mind again, " 'Science Workshop'? Hehe, does that mean everyone have to become either butterflies or bees?"

"Exactly!" I replied to his funny question. "However, you two have seemed to stop moving on? Isn't that a great pity?" I tried to test them deviously.

"Teacher! Please give us some break! Even if we want to work now, there are no flowers blooming at the moment." Ian responded.

"Why not try something else?"

"Actually, I have already decided what to work on for the following year." Uncle



finally added.

"Wow!" Again! I was quite surprised by their ambitions for the future. Could their ambitions be so accurate, so reliable?

"Mm." Ian nodded. Using the computer, he clicked the mouse to show me the blooming season in frozen frames.

"Teacher, look!"



The bracts (modified leaves) of ericaeae had a gluey secretion, which made some insects stick to the leaf and die.

Although the blooming season had already faded away, the two kept hundreds of enthralling images of ericaeae taken from every angle during each of its growing stages, so that they could explore from time to time, with more acute vision. These two kids had already developed keen observation skills through their last research project, never losing track of any questions or doubts.

"Teacher, look! The bracts of ericaeae have a sticky secretion, which is a special feature. We didn't notice that until we reorganized our pictures. This gluey secretion can be a secret weapon to protect the blossoms. Also, it's going to be our 'secret weapon' for the following year, haha! That is, next year, we're decided to work on this."

With their strong motivation and interests, another fascinating blooming season could be expected.

Uncle turned and looked at me. He seemed to look through my expectations, through the depths of time, to stand firmly in embracing their dreams for the next year.

"How's that?" Ian asked, with his head raised high like a small warm sun, radiating rays of ambition and confidence, seeming to light up a bright future.

Yeah, just after school, some kids hollered outside the window, calling for Ian. Grabbing his schoolbag, Ian ran out of the classroom with excitement. He loved running, back and forth on the basketball court, just like a busy worker bee bustling in and out of the flowers, buzzing with an engrossing wit.

Uncle, slightly pushing the glasses, which hung on his nose, quietly went back to his seat and packed. I suddenly realized he did not only read these books, his little brain had started to compile other people's words, to further produce his own works. Perhaps he did not notice that he was changing and growing. As for me, I probably could only serve as a little editor behind his back, or just a proofreader made for correcting. Even so, this role would be my greatest pleasure.






## 2005 Digital Content Camp

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<sup>1</sup> Ting-Fung Li is a student who was a member of Team one in the Digital Content Creativity Camp that took place from 2005/6/27~7/1

## Abstract



Team one, also known as “All in One,” was the smallest among all that of the teams that had joined Digital Content Camp 2005. “All in One,” consisted of only five members, as the two other members could only contribute to various pre-camp discussions. These five team members included: Lin, Yeng- Huay, Chen, Wei-ju, Shiao, Wen-jie, Liao, I-ting, and Li, Ting- fung. In addition, members were advised by an outgoing and friendly guide, Johnny. To decide the story theme, the team held two precamp meetings. At first, they decided to take Yeng- huay’s story, “Waiting,” but met with great difficulties on the first day’s review due to the small size of the team. They then had to deliberate between “Waiting” and “The box” for the final storyline. As the team cooperated to reach a consensus, they finally chose, “The grandma’s waiting”, but were nearly split into two, because of disagreement on whether to add new elements to the storyline as suggested by Wei-ju. As the deadline approached, the decision was still up in the air. In the end, they agreed to take a risk to incorporate new ideas and images into their work. Although every step could not be finished, the team’s final work was still highly praised by the competition judges. This experience has demonstrated the small group’s hard work, as they completed the project with patience, determination, and most importantly, as they cooperated as one cohesive team to achieve the best results.



## 2005 Digital Content Camp

### Creativity Camp—Team One, All in One

It was one o' clock in the afternoon, July 1, 2005, the last round of ratings and selections for team projects entered in the Digital Content Camp. As the quality of the camp's lunches was getting more delicious every day, our appetite worsened, as if we all developed ulcers. It was funny—how all of us tried to hide our extreme nervousness and to encourage our teammates "to hang in there". Everything would be presented at that very moment, and memories of the exhaustion faced from 5 days worth of hard work, the maturation of our strong friendship when previously we were but mere strangers, the happiness we felt from our triumphs and the disagreements we held—everything would culminate very soon.

#### \*The very "mini" team

There were only 5 of us, excluding the guide, in our team. Only four were able to be on stage on the last day of the Digital Content Camp. Compared to with other teams of 8 or 9 people, we had a relatively small team. If one asks, "Why was it that the only people absent at the camp were from our team?" I have no idea.

There is, however, an advantage to being on a small team. Other teams, for instance, would occupy the entire table when they sat to eat. As there were a few vegetarians on our team, our table was able to offer 9 people's serving for our 3 non-vegetarian members. That was a great deal! Then again, our team was often moved around when there was not sufficient room or seats for the teachers.

But the small size of our team also built a strong bond between members, and everyone's input was crucial. Something fantastic about our team was that we could all contribute substantively to the team. There was no friction and no one was ignored. What could be better than making four good friends in 5 days? The following are descriptions of our team members.

#### #Our mascot—our guide Chen, Dzi-chiang

A first-year student in the Graduate School for Information Management in Cheng Chi University

Nickname: John, Johnny

Contribution: The mascot and spiritual leader of Team One

Johnny always made our team laugh. Even when he was entirely exhausted, he would still cheer himself up, in efforts to support us.





### #Our leader—Lin, Yeng-huay

A graduate from Art Education Department in Shin-chu Teachers' College, currently an elementary school teacher.

Contribution: Leading the team, the design and making of the background.



Yeng-huay always shared good jokes when our discussion lapsed into silence. As the perfect cheerleading partner for Johnny, he was talented, responsible, and very good at painting and image design. It was a pity that he had to leave before the last day of the Digital Content Camp.

### #Our sweetheart—Chen, Wei-ju

A junior from the Chinese Department in Cheng Chi University

Contribution: Director for creativity, the Design and making of characters, voicing—Ting Ting, the little girl



Wei-ju thought like a poet—in a very elegant and unique way. Although it was a bit difficult for us to understand at first, our finished work proved that her ideas were worth insisting upon. We, the single ones, were also envious of how our sweetheart Wei-ju and her boyfriend were inseparable.

### #Our angel—Shiao, Wen-jie



A junior from The Department of Information Management in Yuan Ze University.

Contribution: voicing of a grandma, the angel serving instant noodles and snacks, sound effects

Wen-jie was our angel, bringing us coffees and instant noodles when we were about to collapse with exhaustion. The ways in which he showed his kindness, almost put us in tears. It was also a great surprise on how his attractive voice could suit the role of a grandma, leaving the female teammate impressed.

### #Our genie—Liao, I-ting

Currently a student from the Department of Business Management in Long Hwa Technology University

Nickname: Ting Ting

Contribution: Voicing Director, the voicing of the auntie, sound effects







Without I-ting, we would not have had such an impressive voice performance. She stayed up to record in the middle of the night, with great acting worthy of that of a professional actress.

#Our knowledgeable lady—Li, Ting-fung

Currently a student from the Department of Advertisement in National Cheng Chi University

Nickname: The Yellow Bird

Contribution: Director, Technology Director



Ting-fung was the story-maker and also the team member that knew the most about flash. She definitely paid 100% to efforts for the team and also had the most fun.

Also, we would like to acknowledge the following two people, who participated in our discussions prior to the camp, but could not participate in its activities:

#Liu, Dwan- ru from The Department of Information Management in Ming-Hsing Technology University

#Wang, I- fan from The English Department in National Taiwan Normal University

\*Our meeting before camp:

The Camp officially did not begin until late June, but in anticipation, we had held a group meeting on June fourth. The purpose of this meeting was to get to know each other better, and also to come up with the story that would be needed during the camp. Our leader, Yeng- Huay shared thoughts that did not seem like it could be created from a person that liked to joke all the time. He had an acute observation of the "little things in life" and could see the potential of a great story as shared by simple things. He then came up with this short story:

A colored picture would turn into a black and white picture. Each color that turned would represent the experience of waiting for a wonderful thing in our life. For example, a little girl named Mary would sweetly say good morning to her family every morning; Every day, at four o'clock in the afternoon, Jack, who lived next door would play a song after he returned home... The last picture was about waiting for death. Maybe at two o'clock tomorrow afternoon, I'd be taken to some church and cremated. The moral of the story was to remind everyone to pay attention to all the wonderful little things in our life. It also shared the hopes of all the characters that were happily waiting for the wonderful things in their lives to occur. The story could also be viewed as a satire describing the situation of elders living alone.

Along with this tale, we all shared some of the interesting stories we had read, including: a mysterious suicide, a mosquito's flight, various tales of relationships, adventures, and remakes of fairy tales...etc. As camp was in a few weeks, we had to conclude our meeting, lest we would have had nothing to show for the first day's



prework review. I-fan's "Box" and Yen-huay's "Waiting" were the last two proposals. At the end, we decided to create a play, using the story "Waiting" as its theme. After saying our farewells, we looked forward to seeing each other again at camp...

#### \*Crisis? The first day of Team One

I-fan and Dwan-ru both called to say they were unable come. Because of their absence, the big space that reserved for our team with a sign saying "Team One," only had 5 people in it.

"Excuse me. Do you mind sitting at the back? We don't have enough seats for the teachers," said a school sister from a graduate institute of science management. The five of us, along with our guide then trudged to the back and sat in cramped space. Still Johnny made us laugh by saying "How close we are! All sitting here shoulder to shoulder!"



Simulation

As happy as we were, asking what each other on what she or he had been doing or making comments on other teams, we had to face a substantial problem. There was a review for each team's story content, but two of our team members were absent and this left a gap in our storyline that was worrisome and almost chaotic. Luckily, with the help of our guide, Johnny, we finally finished our first act of the story, "Waiting."

It wasn't a hilarious story. There was no epic tales of love or courage, looking for one's dreams, or of exciting adventures in our story. Neither was there the 3B elements—"Beauty, Beast, Baby." We simply wanted to depict a picture of some forgotten corner—it could be about the elderly, or a little thing in our life, something that might seem simple, but that which was ultimately moving. The teachers didn't seem to like this. It might be that we couldn't use that storyline. Upon listening to our story, a teacher remarked, "A happy ending would be better." "Maybe you should take your potential readers into consideration. Who are your readers?" We all seemed somewhat disappointed, as the story we first wanted write, was never a story that would be marketed all over the world. Yeng-huay, the story maker simply wanted to point out simple moments of happiness that do not require imagination or visiting different places in the world.



Yeng- huay and his sensibility

We wanted to capture the fact that there is such simple happiness in our lives that already exists. What we didn't realize was that our story was never meant to be a bestseller in the market.

#### \*Goodbye, Waiting. And Welcome, the tree of boxes and the flying mosquito.

We might have all been influenced by the fact that the deep "Waiting" wasn't given





a good review. Thus, the theme of discussion changed at our 11 o'clock meeting after we returned to our dorms.

Wei-ju introduced an idea of a different "mosquito," that the one she had suggested earlier, for which she drew a storyboard, hoping it would help us build a better understanding of her story. After explaining it a few times, she was a bit disappointed for we still couldn't understand. Wei-ju smiled, "That's fine. Why don't we just use the story we talked about before? So, the second ranking proposal, "Box" became what our new storyline.

*It was about the ending of a relationship. My friend suggested that I buy a big box, in which I could put away all the gifts from the old lover. I thought there would be a lot to put away, but the box ended up not even half full.*

Box was about the ending of a relationship. My friend suggested that I buy a big box, in which I could put away all the gifts from the old lover. I thought there would be a lot to put away, but the box ended up not even half full.

But to illustrate this story, we had different conceptions of boxes. "A scary box?" asked Wei-ju. "I think the box represents some kind of hope," said Yeng-huay. "Maybe a box that could make your wishes comes true?" "Or a box that sings?" We all started sharing our thoughts. Wei-ju said again, "What about a tree of boxes?" That caught everyone's attention. We thought, "If a tree has boxes as its fruit.... What will the boxes contain? What would the tree grow on?"

It was amazing how imaginative we were in discussing the storyline. From suggesting fairy-tale genies, a tree with a body hung on it, a beanstalk that contained countless beans, or a tree with birds of love would constantly fill the boxes...strange stories presented themselves one after another. "The gifts given by someone you love the most?" suggested Yeng-huay. "A memory buried deep inside?" Ting-fang pondered. Maybe it would be an amazing tree that grew once you buried a memory, and that would produce boxes as its fruit. They would grow, one after another. The boxes would differ in shape and looks; some could be fancy while others would be old and weathered. The boxes would even have different scents. Another idea was that you could find the key to changing the past, or starting the future, in one of the boxes, but, you couldn't be sure, which was "the right box." With all our group members' contributions, the story seemed to be finished, however we still had questions to answer:

"Why a rectangular shape?" "Should we explain why?" "Does it mean then that a regretful memory, after being buried, could still be hopeful?" "What is its meaning? What are we trying to say?" "I still think it a bit too plain..." "Maybe we can change our stance and look at the story from the boxes' points of view?" "Why worry so much? It is just a story. Vagueness will only expand the space for intrigue!" Our discussion quickly ran into disagreements. Also, a teacher suggested that we consider our potential readers and that a happy ending would increase its' appeal and perhaps bring more business opportunities. But we grew tired of changing our story to meet



the demands of the market. We asked, "Shouldn't creative writing serve as an outlet?" Discussing the story further, we shared the same belief that, in entering the camp, we were not after the prize, but simply looked out for everyone's happiness. We were always looking out for each other, thinking the moment that we shared a secret smile that it would reflect real happiness. In other words, winning the prize wasn't why we were there; we would only try our best. Interestingly, we noticed that Ting-fung, who was single, only thought about buried boxes or half-full boxes, whereas Wei-ju, who was deeply in love, always thought about boxes full of weird things, or even boxes that were overpacked.

"Wei-ju and her boyfriend are almost inseparable. When I picked her up, they were like..." our guide, Johnny, acting with Yeng-huay, imitated the couple holding onto each other, and gazing deeply into each other's eyes. Wei-ju blushed, saying "No we did not! Come on guys!" The noise and laughter ended our discussion. Although we all had different boxes in mind,



Naughty Johnny attacks!

it was 3:00 in the morning. So we decided that we would all brainstorm more specific storyboards, which might be helpful in writing a concrete conclusion. "I-fan, who came up with this idea isn't here. But we are, like, sweating blood and tears for this proposal!" said somebody. Ha! That was true. I guess we were a team of determined and hardworking fools!

\*Grandma, the outline of our story was finally finished!

We all had to create our own storyboard, either about "Waiting" or "The Boxes." In class, we were all thinking about potential ideas and drawing secretly. Ting-fung liked the notion of half-empty boxes but didn't know how the story should go. It was at that time that Professor Chang, Bao-fung spoke about the skills of storytelling, and how we can begin with developing the characters and asking ourselves where the contradiction would be. Interestingly, the first drawn and complete story was about "Waiting". Possibly influenced by Yeng-huay's sensibility, Ting-fung thought about her grandma, whom had always loved and taken good care of her, since she had been a young child. Ting-fung always felt guilty when it came to her grandma, thinking about how her grandma had probably always been hoping for visits by children and grandchildren. When Yeng-huay was telling the story of "Waiting" earlier, Ting-fung remarked, "Little things? For me, what I wish for is that my grandma could call me Ting-fung again and that she would say she wanted to see me as a bride. I wish she could say 'great! I'm so proud of you' when she learned that I got admitted to graduate school. But every time she saw me, she would only say, 'Who are you?' and I had to smile and say, 'I am A-hong's daughter' because I knew she wouldn't know my name, Ting-fung. After three minutes, she would ask again, 'Who are you?' and I had to give the same answer, 'I am A-hong's daughter.' And then the same question and the same answer would be asked and answered over and over again...She even called my mother 'mom' in Japanese, crying at night and saying that she wanted to





go home..."

In the evening, we all shared our storyboards. Yen- huay, perhaps due to last night's overwhelming discussion about boxes, came up with a story called 'I hate talking about boxes.'; Wei-ju 's "Waiting" combined boxes and mosquitoes—exactly the Wei-ju we knew; and Ting- fung shared the story she wrote. It was a story about a grandmother and a granddaughter. It was approved by everyone and thus our storyline, which had started out being "Waiting", switched then to "Boxes", and finally, was returned to be "Waiting."

#### \*Truth or Dare!

During camp, we often had to stay up and attend many classes, so we were so tired that we were almost beside ourselves. Our guide, Johnny, worried that we wouldn't be able to finish our work in time due to whispers of other teams' progress: "I heard that team has already started." "They stayed up till 5 in the morning everyday." These reports really served as a warning to us—our team that had not yet come up with a story until the third day. Initially, we had wanted to sleep well for the first few days and then work harder for the next few days, but Johnny cruelly dragged us out of bed.

"Hey! I'm exhausted! It's not yet one thirty in the morning!" we groaned. After telling Johnny where how far we were in our agenda, we thought about heading for bed. Johnny saw how sleepy we were and said, "Truth or Dare! Who wants to join?" We exclaimed, "What? Now? Truth and Dare? Are you kidding me?" Despite our initial feelings, we all became more and more involved in the game. It could be Johnny's personal charisma that inspired our sleepy team to say some funny and personal insights.

"I think I've learned, during this camp, to think in other people's shoes and to understand other people's



Our discussion in the middle of the night

thoughts. Everyone is outstanding! I feel like I'm all opened up. I've also learned to trust people as I try to earn people's trust." Said Yeng- huay.

"Uhh...actually, I've never really liked Johnny. He said I was good at flash and that I'd be responsible for all the flash work," said Ting- fung, "I've been working on too much flash and I've felt like a robot working without inspiration. I joined this camp to have more interaction and discussion, and to enhance my imagination. I want to do those things instead of being responsible for too many tasks. I think Wei-ju had the right metaphor when she put 'I want to eat things, but I feel I've been throwing up too much!'" After Ting- fung's shared her thoughts, we all patted her, saying that we wouldn't let her feel alone and overly-burdened, and that we would assist her in any way. Yeng- huay said, "I'll take care of the background!" I- ting offered additional help, saying, "I can find some good music." Our support warmed Ting- fung.



Wen-jie said, "I feel sorry and guilty because I didn't contribute much. The software thing was also some other geniuses' job. Sorry for not having been helpful..." We all laughed because Wen-jie was where our sense of security had come from. I-ting said that Wen-jie had been the sweetest guy--staying up cooking instant noodles, making us coffees, and by bringing us joy.

However, I-ting surprised us with what she said: "I've gotten this feeling that Johnny doesn't like me as much as he likes the others." I-ting then suspiciously looked at our guide, who couldn't believe what she had said and replied no emphatically. "The last time we held a discussion, you only asked Ting-fung and Wei-ju to speak with you in private, leaving me, the only girl left, alone. That was a bit weird. I am guessing perhaps that you haven't been happy with me because I was sometimes absent for our meetings before the camp?" asked I-ting. Johnny spoke seriously saying, "No. That is not true. I would have said it directly if I were not happy with someone's behavior. I talked to Ting-fung about work; I talked to Wei-ju because I thought she might get hurt easily...She shared a few stories that eventually were not understood. I didn't want her to feel bad so I wanted to talk to her. How could you think that I didn't like you?" Johnny explained. The explanation finally cleared out any worries that I-ting had and made her smile. What a misunderstanding!

Wei-ju said, "I would like to know why you guys couldn't understand my story." She looked serious and said that she knew she had always like light-hearted plots. But she didn't think it would be hard to understand. This was the mosquito story first brought up by Wei-ju:

*The spider web takes up the whole space. What the audience can see is the ordinary situations in an everyday life (People greeting each other or jogging along the road...)*

*Afterwards, some violent incident made the spider web infected and forced a big hole in the web.*

A mosquito flew through the hole,

The mosquito touched the objects that could hurt its feet (for example, standing on some sharp object made of stone or a roughly-made basket)

It was safe and sound

But human beings could hurt themselves even from turning pages

The mosquito had a very elastic body and could touch the hard ground

But humans would be pieces of flesh when hitting the groundà that could be represented by the picture of a watermelon falling from a tall building (with screaming as its background)

A close shot at the mosquito's feet

and of his actions--

How he lightly removed his feet from the ground to avoid the dirty spots

The mosquito flew and stopped on a person's skin without yet inserting the needle in





the person's skin

The mosquito simply placed his feet on the person's skin and that began a sweet dream for that person.

The person subconsciously scratched the itch  
Breaking the mosquito's legs or even killing it  
And his sweet dream fades away

The last scene was a zoom-out from where the man was, and as the audience watched further, a spider web comes into sight

The last scene for the ending was the incomplete spider web with a hole in it.

\*Cheerful music

Wei-ju's story was meant to illustrate the following points:

#Human beings build up a wonderland with the values they firmly believe in. What they don't know is they are walking towards the wrong direction... In contrast, mosquitoes and spiders are closer to the real wonderland.

#The feet of the mosquito serves as an important point and so does the spider web. The mosquito is representative as the opposite of human beings.

(The complete spider webà representing the wonderland)

(The spider web with a hole, which the mosquito had flown through. The mosquito then stopped on the person's skinà representing people actually have many opportunities to move to a better place)

(The more explanation we have here, the less imagination the audience will have to identify their own meaning )

#Interaction is the most common and familiar element for everyone in the world. (For example: people meeting each other, talking; the desks and chairs being put together in rows; how the wind touches our skin, our hair, the flowers, grass and stairs...) But most interactions are very often ignored.

à So the interaction here can be viewed as "management."

Later on, Wei- ju shared other few stories she liked, such as a lonely elder sitting in a room, a spider working on its web in silence at a corner of a room...expanding with other images, and it came from a person leaving with a box...colorful butterflies on the screen, etc. But Wei-ju's abstract images were somewhat difficult for us to understand. Now, involved in a game of truth or dare, we all frankly shared what we thought about her ideas and gave her advice. In our daily lives, sometimes we wouldn't even share our thoughts when it came to our friends' ideas or shortcomings, but here between members from Team One, there was no hypocrisy or unnecessary politeness, for we





trusted and liked each other.

Johnny put his arm around Wei-ju and smiled, saying, "Wei-ju changed the most! Do you guys remember how stubborn she was before the camp? Obsessed with the mosquito, the spider web. But now look at how open-minded she is!" We all started joking about her saying, "You know that from how she wears her shorts! She was a girl with ironed shirts and skirts and look at her now!" True, now Wei-ju, who had been a typical sweetheart, was wearing a shower cap, a t-shirt and jeans, and outside her jeans, she wore red sport shorts!



The second mentor session

#### #Disagreement? Stubbornness?

We went through a mentor session on the afternoon of the third day of camp and read the teacher's comments that evening. One of the mentors bluntly said he/she didn't like the work; another teacher said she really liked it and that she would encourage us to use more images and sounds to present our work; there were also other teachers that said that our work would not last in international markets, etc. Those comments were frustrating and left us disappointed. Yeng-huay even was scolded by our guide for what he said on stage during the mentor session, "What is in your heads now is probably due because you could not see how our work could be marketed. But what you really can't see is what we had talked about during the whole process, and how that can be made into thousands of stories." Ting-fung agreed with another teacher, Yao, Kai-yung, saying, "We can't be simply making news. After all, what we should present is a story, not a piece of news."

Afterwards, Wei-ju, along with I-ting, talked with Ting-fung in private with the new storyboard Wei-ju had finished. Wei-ju said that she would like to add a new element—butterflies, to the story. In Wei-ju's version, the pace of the story seemed a bit slow with a lot of abstract symbolizations involved. Ting-fung thought it would be too abstract and off-the-point, blurring the focus. But undoubtedly, abstract concepts were what the old story missed.

Our very real problem was that we were running out of time. The newly-added part would definitely require many more pictures. We wouldn't be able to finish it because of the size of our team. Besides, Yeng-huay, a graduate of art education department, would have to leave the next day. That would leave Ting-fung, who was already our busy director, the only person to take care of all the drawing and the use of software.





We had a discussion in the mens' room. Yeng- huay disagreed that adding new content for our work would be completed in two days. Wei- ju, who was stubborn with respect to the images of mosquitoes, butterflies, spider webs, etc., felt bad too, saying, "I wouldn't want to make it so hard for me either, if I didn't want to make our story a better one." The atmosphere got worse. "Does Wei- ju always dwell on little things?" "I think it is worth being added. Wei- ju's idea is fantastic!" Our five-people team was almost split into two as our director, Ting- fung, still couldn't make up her mind...

"Ting- fung, you are the director and also the one that is best at flash, so you probably have a better idea on whether we'll be able to finish it or not. Why don't you just decide? We'll support you no matter what." Silence followed the end of our debate, as everyone else waited for Ting- fung to decide.

"...Let's give it a try!" she said.

But we couldn't do it completely according to Wei-ju's version, because Ting- fung thoughts were different from Wei-ju's. Besides, flash work would occupy some time, so Ting-Fung could not draw all of the characters. Wei- ju thus took responsibility for all the characters' designs, apart from voicing; Yeng- huay needed to finish all of the background drawings before he left; Wen- jie shouldered the extra task of taking care of the background music; I- ting needed to coordinate all of the voicing and each member's jobs. All the responsibilities were finally assigned during the last two nights before the end of the camp. We promised each other to put forth our best efforts for the last evening for our final work.

\*And finally...the rating and selection

Compared to the other teams, we had a relatively late start, and we were faced with the disadvantage of fewer people in our group. Our only advantage was our personal determination. We grouped ourselves into two—the flash group and the music group. These two groups were one classroom next to one another, which was reassuring and representative of how far we



had come, and convenient for sending files. "I've sent you this. Is there anything else you need?" asked I- ting. "Can you get me...? Give me the number again!" Ting- fung was getting dizzy from the flash. "We still have to work on the slides! Ok! We will take care of that!" said Wen- jie and Johnny. The beeps from MSN messenger never stopped, but it seemed that we just wouldn't be quick enough to finish the parts about the butterflies and the grandma in time.

It was one o' clock in the afternoon, July 1, 2005, the last round of ratings and selections for team projects entered in the Digital Content Camp. As the quality of the camp's lunches was getting more delicious every day, our appetite worsened, as if us all developed ulcers. It was funny—how all of us tried to hide our extreme nervousness and to encourage our teammates "to hang in there". Everything would be presented at that very moment, and memories of the exhaustion faced from 5 days

I- ting and Wen- jie all focused for the perfect voices and sounds



worth of hard work, the maturation of our strong friendship when previously we were but mere strangers, the happiness we felt from our triumphs and the disagreements we held—everything would culminate very soon.

\*The butterfly they had in mind



The story's background took place in a rapidly developing city in which there were some old forgotten shops. A big butterfly with yellow wings and a bright red pattern was flying in the city of concrete jungle as if it was looking for a corner for a rest. In a traditional grocery store, the granddaughter of the shop owner, Ting ting, was watching the butterfly, not knowing that she already

had some customers waiting to be served. Ting ting always liked to be in charge of the shop, and did not wish for her grandma to take over. But whenever a customer made inquiries about the prices, she couldn't give him an answer but only yelled, "Grandma! Grandma! We've gotten customers!" Those customers who were never given the prices of the products would view Ting-ting as a naughty girl, but told the grandma that she was lucky to have a healthy body, good memory, and a good grandchild. However, grandma wasn't really that lucky. Her daughter-in-law, Ting-ting's mother, often complained how the grandma's eldest son only cared about making money in Taipei and ignored his responsibility as the eldest son. She also complained about how her husband was addicted to gambling and cared nothing for their shop's business. One day, she took her daughter, Ting-ting with her, and left.

Everything seemed unchanged. People traveled back and forth in front of the grocery shop, which was almost blocked by busy traffic and crowds. The grandma is still taking care of the business, sitting in front of the shop. When a customer asked, "Hi! Grandma! How are you? Where did Ting-ting go?" The grandma always smiled and said, "I'm good. Ting-ting? She hung out with her friends..."



The old grandma sometimes thought about how she would take a bath with her little granddaughter, braiding the child's hair with beautiful ribbons, and how the girl would follow her saying, "Grandma, grandma" without a purpose. The old grandma, trapped in her memories, felt as though she could see her granddaughter, who had long since been gone. Grandma would wave her hands in the air, as though she had been touching her granddaughter's head, adorned with beautiful bows of ribbon. But everything seemed to be falling apart, collapsing, as the bright redness of the ribbon expanded. It was like a dried blood drop of a butterfly, unraveling like the ribbon of the





bow. The voice calling, "Grandma! Grandma!" was fading away...

The piercing siren of an ambulance rang and rang. People's cursing and screaming accompanied the telephone rings.

"What are you guys doing? Mom fainted!"

"You guys...she...hasn't eaten for days because she felt too embarrassed to eat out, worrying people might laugh at her because she did not have good children that would take care of her. Shame on you!"

"What? Other illnesses? Stomach cancer? Dementia? How could that happen?"



叫你是誰?

Grandma opened her eyes. Bright light and people surrounded her. A little girl kept saying, "Grandma! Grandma!" But Grandma felt rather confused, "Who are you?" "I'm Ting ting! Your granddaughter!" "Who is Ting ting?" she asked. Every few minutes, the same conversation between the grandma and the granddaughter had to begin again. The grandma and the granddaughter still had their happy bath hour.

The grandma would wear the same smile. "Grandma! Grandma! I have your favorite ribbon bows with me today!" "Ting ting said happily.

But something on Ting ting's mind just couldn't be uttered, "Grandma! Grandma! How I wish you could call my name again..."

That was the end of our work. The judges said they appreciated the idea of the butterfly and that they liked how we depicted the bond between the grandma and her granddaughter. They even said there was a big Chang- Ai-ling's influence in our work. The judges remarked how the story would be strengthened if we had included more description and images for



the relationship between the butterfly and the grandma. We were shouting in silence, "Yes! That was what we wanted too, but could not finish. We really thought about it!" The judges also complimented us, telling us that the backgrounds and the music matched perfectly. Ting- fung and Wei- ju hugged each other in joy. Our decision to make last-minute changes was worth it. Had Wei-ju never brought up her ideas again, we wouldn't have made that change, and in the end, there wouldn't have been such a great result. Our story also taught us that if you don't have confidence in your own ideas, there will never be change.



"Insistence is what we need to get the world's attention." That was a judge's comment—a quote from a TV advertisement. I believe. In Wei-ju, we saw a great example.

#### \*All in one

After camp, we spent all of our prize money to treat ourselves to dinner. As we had a "mini" team, we were able to spend quite a lot per each individual. I guess that was one advantage of being in a small team. Also we nicknamed our team "All in One" with a gesture of a heart meaning "love you!"—something that we said all the time within our team. I know that sounded kind of overly sentimental, but it was kind of cute, wasn't it?



#### \*Schedule

6/4 The first meeting

6/19 The second meeting. A discussion for the story theme

6/26 We decided to take Yeng-huay's "Waiting" as our story theme and for the first day's review.

6/27 Struggling between two themes: "Waiting" and "The box"

6/28 Final decision was made. We would use "Grandma's Waiting", which came from "Waiting", as the outline for our final work

6/29 With the teachers' suggestions and the creativity of teammates, we've decided to add the abstract meaning of a butterfly to our work, which was then made "The butterfly"

6/30 Sparing no effort for our work

7/1 The final rating and selection. The end of the camp and goodbye!





## Workshop of Dreams & Creativity

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<sup>1</sup>Jia-Jen Hsieh is a student that joined a subproject of "Creativity Education Development Project".

## Abstract

Beginning from the self-reflective experience of dreaming, Miss Hsieh kept a sensitive record of her emotions, memories, and fantasies aroused by these dreams. Dreaming became a journey that took her to one destination after another. By joining "Workshop of Dreams & Creativity," Hsieh set off on a journey of dreams to truly confront herself.

One dream brought Hsieh to encounter her late father. The dream was filled with overwhelming memories that reminded her of the contradictory co-existence of life and death. Then, using the dream as a crayon, Hsieh drew out a Thai fighting fish, named *Fighty*, whom she wanted to meet the most. The images of such a companion gave Hsieh courage to continue her trip. After joining the workshop, by associating dreams with free writing, Hsieh figured out the solutions to her questions about life, releasing her caged spirits and emotions.

Through these dreams, Hsieh dug out her inner self within problematic interpersonal relationships and secret love, resorting to writing as a way out. "Lots of things can never be understood just by using the brain," she thought. Could that be the very reason for dreaming...?





## Workshop of Dreams & Creativity

"What a weird dream!" I murmured, sitting on the stool in the kitchen.

The tumult between the frying pan and the turner seemingly never stopped. After a short while, Father returned to chop vegetables; I came back to consciousness to watch Father's agile movements.

"In my dream, I saw a line in my composition workbook. It said the real you is the one that never moves. Now, you are false with each action. Dad! Was it real?" I tried to discuss my dream with Father.

As far as Father's reaction was concerned, though, I could hardly remember. That was five years ago; everything was frozen in that moment. Now, we rarely cook, and I have not chatted blithely with Father for a long time. In the past five years, I have dreamt so many dreams; some were so real that I would never wanted to wake up, while some made me so helpless that I had to keep comforting myself that "it was all just a dream," as soon as I woke up.

In summer of 2005, the exuberant singing of cicadas was just emerging from the trees. Depressed as I was, I rode my bike to Gem café singing loudly along the way. No sooner, did I begin pedaling, did a knight with contradictory personalities confirm that he was also going on the trip of dream-telling. Dreams, like a series of soap-operas, always lingered in my mind. Yet, during this process of growing up, I tried to convince myself that at night you dream what you think during the daytime. If that were true, dreaming became certain fear for me.

*As Goethe's friend described a poetic dream to Goethe, Goethe replied, "Muses often visit you while you are sleeping, and indeed infuse you with a special meaning. Because you have to admit that the moment you are sober, it is extremely difficult to create such extraordinary and beautiful poetry."*

For me, dreams were a chain of codes. If asked what it would be like to join to a trip of dream-telling, I would rather say it was a trip of "decoding." Decoding would not be like the sacred missions as in the The Davinci Code. Nevertheless, for me, dreams were like secret female genitals, which one could barely dare to peep at. During the process of socialization, we used to be so trained that we scarcely got close to ourselves. As I held up the mirror to check my private parts with the reflection of my naked body, I wondered: would I be too embarrassed to accept myself? Would dreams be like budding roses, in a silent bloom deep in my body? Soft and tender dreams are sometimes like music videos—like a movie with unforgettable scenes, like honey, like spinning ferry wheels, like Gravity which, all of a sudden, stops.

That day, glorious morning sunshine was directly injected into my room. I stared at the ceiling, until my eyes became so sore that they shed tears. I could hardly tell whether the tears arose from deep sorrow, or if they were an automatic physical reaction. In my dream, my brother had accompanied me to the train station as usual, passing by a traditional market. I could not help but to sneak away from my brother to enter the market. I took a detour and before long, I was walking down a dark



and narrow lane, whose end was marked by a bright light. I paused and hesitated, wondering whether I should have breakfast. I spent a longer time than I had expected walking back to the breakfast store, whose location had been changed at the intersection. There was an excavator digging the road, and the breakfast store was gone.

Writing down the dream, and munching the British bun at the café, I intended to tear the little bun open, to check if it had a tiny book that could be seen by the magnifier, to tell me the unknown answer to life. Of course, undoubtedly accepting the disappointment of finding nothing, I looked at Ms. Chen's vigorous smile, which grinned with the passion of a clown, releasing the smile up to her crow's feet.

The teacher wanted us to write down our dreams, arranging brief phrases with descriptive nouns and verbs to allow the dream to get more and more lucid. I savored my unfinished chains of words, exploring their meanings. The teacher said that the devastating destruction in the dream represents the gust of pain often felt in adolescence, a nuclear fission between the individual and the inner mind.

*C.G. Jung said, "The first emotion is the mask of dream; masks usually present fear; the shadow is courage, and dream is the tool to discover shadows."*

If one could choose to relive the best time of one's life, without any hesitation, I would choose having breakfast with Father during my junior high school years. The breakfast store in my dream had been destroyed, disappearing like time passing by. All of these reasons made me determined to express my hidden emotions through dreams. During the process of dream-telling, I yielded myself to the dream, a trip of growth.

That day, as my dream brought me to remember the funeral, I returned to feel my earlier sense of panic and loss. The reciting sutra sounds bouncing around my ears, I took my teacher, who cared for me so much during college, to a dark, fist-shaped sized hole. The teacher inclined closely to the hole, saying something. I also crouched close to the hole, and saw a black and white portrait of Father. I remember being shocked in the dream. The last scenes of dream took place as I stared at the funeral. A great number of Tzu Chi Foundation members in blue robes, recited for the dead, chanting with soothing monotones, walking in line like a long stream delivering a floating paper boat. I took this to mean that I had finally accepted something that I used to fear in the dream. For the past five years, until now, I remained hesitant to express those dreams related to Father. Just like a leading actor in Taiwanese traditional soap-operas, Father was resurrected over and over again. In a dream, we could trespass the line between life and death, but I wondered why would he kept reminding me of the existence of death in the dream. Yet in real life, the death and the existence were paradoxical. The line of life and death was vague in the dream; a weak conscience was the only thing left, reminding you of the fact that you could not choose but to accept.

*Notice before the beginning of the trip, "Wherever you are going, please remember to fasten the safety belt that loves you."*





During the summer, the Workshop of Dreams & Creativity carried an intoxicating atmosphere. Perhaps, partly due to the quote that I had written down in my notebook from a teacher that “lots of things could never be understood just by using the brain,” partly because of the cool beer in my hand, I was able to set myself free for daydreaming. In the following lesson, we were instructed to travel and daydream to music.

We set off from a river bank; my feelings of intoxication disarmed my curiosity, and I never asked why we started from the bank. In my daydream, I was at the fringe of a tank in my junior high school science lab. Standing at the center of the lab, I saw classmates dressed in white shirts busy washing testing tubes, the edge of their pleated skirts swaying to and fro, like joyfully dancing white clouds. Giddy as I was, I still heard the teacher softly saying, “We are diving into the water.”

I turned into a goldfish, shaking my tail vigorously, swimming through the dark and narrow tube to the bottom of the tube. I could hardly see the darkness ahead of me, and the music that played in the background was intermittently slowed. The goldfish that was previously floating in the darkness moved leisurely toward a dim light, while the teacher made us return to the bank to see where we were. Not until I raised my head did I realize that I was near the playground of my junior high school, surrounded by its oily green bushes, hearing the familiar singing of cicadas. I had returned to the place where I felt comfortable and secure. In this atmosphere, the teacher asked us to allow ourselves to imagine the person that we wanted to see most in this space. The teacher's voice was like a painter, while my conscious was like a crayon. The dream was a canvas, upon which I drew *Fighty*—a Thai fighting fish that had accompanied me for two years during college. One day, it died because of the freezing weather. Since *Fighty* was already affected with a virus, I was already prepared for its death. But the date of its death was so unpredictable when it happened, I felt inexplicably sad. My distress began waning after that cold day. In my daydream, *Fighty* was miraculously unrestrained, swimming in his globe, and free around me. Its nimble body remained a distance away from me. This time, it was he that stared at me, prancing gracefully to the music, shooting towards the sky in farewell.

At this moment, the teacher said softly and slowly that the person that you most wanted to see was ready to leave. In this space, he or she would say goodbye in a certain way, leaving you a small present. I picked up the crayon to draw a trace of red drizzles. *Fighty* flew higher and higher, sprinkling red drizzle in the sky, like mottles of *Fighty's* tail. At this moment, threads of red drizzle fell in a flourish, like the blossoms slowly dropping to the ground. I tried to catch some threads to put them in my pocket. I felt the courage *Fighty* gave to me, a drizzle of gallantry to push me forward on my trip.

At the beginning of the dream, we could choose a notebook we liked. Not until then did I realize it was written on the notebook,

“Lots of things could never be understood just by using the brain.”

At school, I was told that I was a forgetful person. Many people expressed doubt every time I was nominated to be the supervisor of general affairs, because I was always forgetful. Now, would you like to hear one of my stories?

There once was a girl, who used to neglect this and that, forgetting what was





her next step. Yet, she got a lovely fighting fish, which swam alone in its globe and seemed to be lonely. But if it had been with another fighting fish, they would have fought till death, and if it was with another type of fish, the fighting fish would have eaten it up. The girl was sometimes numbed, staring at the fish. One day, owing to the cold weather, the girl put the globe underneath a desk lamp. The next morning as she arose, the fish had jumped out of its globe to die alone. Once the fighting fish jumped out of the globe, it could never ever jump back to the space where it could breathe. Looking at the empty globe, it occurred to the girl that Father had bought her that fish from the flower market. The girl was so excited that she put the fish on her desk. After awhile, Father passed away isolated in his room, like the fighting fish out of his globe. It all came to her mind; she remembered everything.

I am inclined to sympathize with and believe the stories of forgetful people, because I know that they must have many memories haunting them, which they attempt to forget. Unconsciously, they use the excuse of "forgetfulness" to protect themselves. Yet in dreams, one was never forgetful.

During the days that I joined "Workshop of Dreams and Creativity," I often considered dreams to be like phases of life. Dreams were artistic, and often filled with a chain of invisible and mysterious codes and metaphorical messages. There were so many things in the world that I could not understand. These unsolved mysteries, the things that I could not understand, I could not help but to get involved.. The power of youth trapped me like a cornered wild beast that fought desperately; the pain of growing up and struggling with loss surrounded me. The ripping wound was left to fester in the deepest part of my subconscious, which was unknown to me.

I still remembered the dream of a girl that I had met who had a nose allergy. We talked about her dream together. In her dream, she missed pressing the elevator button for a classmate who was just entering. The elevator, without waiting, continued down its path. She apologized to her classmate, explaining that she pushed the wrong button, but it was already too late. Through asking her to describe the dream in further detail, and fishing for information, we helped her to recall something that was happening lately. In the workshop, we learn to push the dreams back to the dreamer. When we spoke, I sensed her fear of leaving, because the girl was departing to study in France, feeling as though she could hardly leave everything in Taiwan behind. Then, she started to analyze her dream, noticing some meaningful details that needed interpretation. In the dream, her subconscious desire for control pushed her to control everything, including a contemporary intersection of mood. The girl shared her feelings with us, ready to say goodbye, but was overcome with emotion from starting to explore her dream. I was convinced that the girl would stride more firmly towards her dream, with the power to say goodbye and embrace her next step.

After joining the workshop for two months, I was also headed for a new school to study, and needed to adapt myself to the new environment. My classmate told me of her short dream. I tried to do dream-telling for her with the methods that I learned from the workshop, and by accident, figured out that she felt insecure about her new environment. She, who used to study in Taipei, felt her life circle shrinking after coming to Tainan to study. The journey of her dream was actually surprising, because everything was as marvelous as the scenes seen in sci-fi movies; adventures can





come from any trivial event....

Thus, I carried my trip of dreams to hit my future, feeling curious about where dreams would take me, not knowing where I was heading for, but on my way, and picking up so much that could not be understood only by my brain.

*Free writing was troublesome, always making your wrist sore, but the entries written down resemble volumes of a "life dictionary," where you could look for life's answers.*

Many times, after I woke up feeling disturbed, I would tell myself that having these unsolved dreams would be alright. So many dreams happened because I felt regret because of my carelessness, making me realize that I tended to ignore the passing of life. In the final four mornings of the workshop, we began a period of "free writing." The teacher set aside time for writing.. Sometimes, the teacher would give an opening to guide our writing as private dreams were often difficult to reproduce.. Free writing always brought me to an unknown place, with some sentences jumping out in my poems during the workshop's closing. Sometimes we could figure out a poem from free writing. There was so much association between dreams and poetry, and wonderful metaphors, like the flower aroma during foggy to float in the wind....

Before I encountered free writing, searching for inspiration to write had been a big problem for me. By joining Workshop of Dreams and Creativity, little by little, I tried not to tear what I had learned about how to write into two. Creativity moisturized writing like a lubricant. Staring at my works, I abruptly realized that like subconsciousness of images and creation mixed with empty scene, sounds, and subconsciousness were ubiquitous.

Turning on a dim light ahead, and making efforts to work with consciousness and subconsciousness, I dug out creative inspiration from within. Although my study was related to making social observations, yet for mean, would this mean curing or tearing wounds further? Free writing begins from consciousness, changing with the author's thoughts, so that an individual life can become fantastic. When shadows are cast forward in your life, you should strive towards the light. I would say, try to make friends with the shadow, to breathe with it. Sometimes, I would leave silently; when I felt perplexed, life might give me an answer; I shed tears, and then I laughed like crazy. After laughing, I felt content about the happening of flash on idea, which was appealing and appropriate.

I found that I enjoyed photography. The moment I stretched the film, I set free the spirits inside the roll By free writing, I got closer to words, keeping my heart close in efforts to organize my emotions. As I faced my emotions, without the frames for my spirit, my words were released out of boundaries, miraculously sliding into private, metaphorical, and the exhilarating poetry of dreams.

*At last, we carried out each other's dreams; I was not brave as I imagined.*

Every time I suffered from missing my Father, I would always comfort myself by telling myself that tonight, Father would be in my dream. I remembered the suffering



that was caused once in real life when I offended my friend, who then never forgave me. In my dream, I returned to the intersection near the elementary school gate. There was a delicious bakery there, and I saw Father selling bread at a stand outside. I asked him how I could attain forgiveness from others. He answered, "Try a chocolate flavor bun." Buying the buns with a big smile, I swiftly woke up. This dream did not solve my problem, but his words were remembered fondly in my mind. Every time I came across something personally frustrating, I would have a chocolate bun....

However, I did not have this dream at the end of the workshop's activity, because by then, I was drunk by cool summer beer. These intoxicating emotions can make people feel as though they are falling in love. Yet it was not until the end of the workshop did I get to know fantasy man. His silence intrigued me. Such a fantasy made me wish I could dream of seeing someone I secretly loved-- my true ideal. Secretly loving a classmate seemed to be as crazy as asking for world peace. I, running after my dream, took his girlfriend to visit him at a distance. I tried to interview him with a camera, but felt so anxious that I got lost, because the boy acted purposefully against all my ideals. But this experience suddenly made me aware of the airy ideals with which I fell in love, sometimes too far to reach, sometimes so close that they became extremely fragile.

The teacher cared about my feelings, and my friends were worried about me, because my dream was broken. I realized that I had mischievously and unconsciously tried to get close to someone that I wanted by writing, because I could not simply befriend him, I thought perhaps writing could be my social tool. This was the motivation for writing that I unintentionally discovered. With the camera, I discreetly interviewed my classmate, sticking to my original role. I was not brave as I had imagined. I could use writing to see this world, to organize and express my ideas, but my writing seemed to be like a spring gushing forth syrup. I did not know where exactly I would be led to, but in the meantime by writing, I perhaps had destination which I just did not see, or pretended not to see.

Back home in Taipei, I needed to pass a long hallway to enter the kitchen. Sometimes, when the light was dim, I turned back to the hose, and headed toward the light. I walked to the kitchen, hearing neither the chopping from cooking, nor the cacophonous hullabaloo caused from the suction fan. I opened the fridge, when its orange rays surrounded me, I felt a bit cooled down. In such a mood, I closed my eyes to continue daydreaming through streams of consciousness, entering the fridge to discover the source of light, I would listen to the person I were most eager to see, telling him that his own trip of dreams was true. The dream would lead the one who had lost love, forward. There was a feeling that one would weep on the floor, crying out for that "missing someone," which could be a moving scene. Outside my dreams, I neither waited, nor honestly confronted myself, because I was truly afraid that my beloved one would abruptly leave in real life. "The Tibetan Book of Living and Dying" mentioned that the most terrifying thing was not to believe anitya (impermanence); dreams made me learn to accept anitya, so that I could let go of permanence or uncertainty, facing the real me.





## Harmony with Shi-Chang: Love Is Here

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## Abstract

The article is the story of the author, under the theme of "Concerning Community In-Depth with Service; Enabling School Resources to Meet Community Needs," implemented by Creative Education Plan, Ministry of Education. The author has adopted the first person narrative to describe her project, entitled: "Married Far Away from Home; Here Is Also Home" and her magnificent experience with Shi-Chang Community Development Counsel.

The content is divided into two parts and then a reflection. The first part is the "Rise of the Plan," which discusses the process of creation and deliberation of the plan, and the difficulties of overcoming challenges and seeking a community's cooperation. The second part is "Interaction," which highlights the interactions between a student team and the community and their establishment of relationships, differences, trust and growth. The author then recalls some of the memorable and touching moments to find personal value, and from personal value, continues the spirit of creativity. The conclusion, "Recollection," is a short reflection that uses metaphor to explain personal learning, growth, confidence, and vision.

Keywords: Case Story, Community Interaction, Creative Education





## Harmony with Shi-Chang: Love Is Here

### Chapter One: Rise of the Plan

#### 1. Prologue

During the second semester of my second year in graduate school, my thesis advisor had to teach at another university. My classmate, Yin-Chei Houn and I became uneasy and anxious as soon as we learned this news. According to the school's policy, a student needed an on-campus professor to serve as the advisor. Professor Cheng-Ta Yang eventually was appointed after an intensive discussion with the instructors.

I received an email from Professor Yang soon after we had arranged our appointment. In his email, he mentioned a project under the Creative Education Plan, executed by Ministry of Education, and that he wanted us to participate. I thought to myself, "Ha! What a strange professor!! Does he know that I don't even have a clue about my thesis and graduation could be a problem? I don't want to bother with this project." After a conversation with Yin-Chei, we concluded to leave this mail alone.

#### 2. Picking a Good Topic

Taking a break from the uneasiness and anxiety that we had felt earlier, the serene night was the perfect time to relax. Not wanting to do anything after dinner, I decided to clean up the emails from family and friends in my in-box until I reached the last email, the one from Professor Yang, which I didn't read closely the last time. It stated, "Concerning Community In-Depth with Service" upon a closer read. It seemed a bit unbelievable that the so-called the "serious" Ministry of Education would promote such an interesting campaign.

"Ha! Ha!! Isn't this social work? I majored in Department of Child and Adolescent Welfare during my undergraduate years, and it's no problem for me to care for the community. But, what was I learning in my social work class?" I could not recall anything about that class, until I realized it was merely one of my possible selective courses. Regretfully, I didn't take this course because then I didn't know that there would be an opportunity for me to use it in the future.

The content of the email stayed in my head. It was like a beckoning hand, luring me to accept this challenge. A voice vibrated and kept reminding me that the community needed me. I wanted to sleep, but I could not control my thoughts. As I fell into a deep meditation, I asked myself, "What can I do for the community?" From the conditions of poverty, sickness, filthiness, and foolishness of the society, which all affected the elderly, the infirm, the matrons and the young, the problems were either too broad to handle, or simply too widespread and difficult to make significant contributions.

When I was just about to give up, suddenly, I thought about a Vietnamese bride that I had met in a Vietnamese noodle shop. Her spoken Mandarin was not fluent. I had once asked her about Vietnamese noodles and whether they were the delicacy



of the country or not. Also, we had compared and exchanged opinions about them with some of the Taiwanese specialties. She mentioned she wanted to earn money so she could go back to visit her parents. She missed her friends and family but enjoyed chatting with other Vietnamese brides in the shop.

Yes! I found a group of people who needed me. A topic, "Married Far Away from Home; Here Is Also Home," popped up in my head. I knew that if I gave this topic further consideration, the results would be out-of-the-ordinary, like unlit fireworks ready to explode on Double Ten Day. My sleepiness disappeared; I quickly recollected my experience and memories. I also evaluated my abilities and estimated my resources. Furthermore, I considered the interaction and differences between the brides and me. I stood from the perspective of a graduate student of early childhood education and the perspective of foreign brides (subjectively speaking), and chose to focus on culture and family as my main topic. So, I named my work, "Married Far Away from Home; Here Is Also Home: A Project of Family and Cultural Inclusion for Foreign Brides."

Regardless, it was eleven-thirty at night; I called Yin-Chei to have a long discussion. Yin-Chei changed some of the Chinese wording of this topic and hoped that this project could make foreign brides to acclimate and flourish on this every soil, making Taiwan their home.

### 3. Brewing

The topic was set, but our routines changed. In the morning, we went to school, but we stayed long after school ended, to conduct research in the lab; "the moon walked us home" every night. We earnestly started to get familiar with this unfamiliar topic; searching for any possible related information online and in library. However, the information was either too abstract or too shallow (my own opinion). There were some rather remarkable academic works, and yet they focused on single cases. Single cases were helpful to understand some foreign brides' difficulties, but we wondered if they were reflective of the general cases. Searching and digesting what we had found, as first-timers, we were lost in the unsubstantial and meaningless messages, and without any confidence, we didn't know where to begin.

Impatience grew and giving up crossed our minds, especially as then, we were still not too involved and it was easy for us to withdraw from this situation. Gladly, curiosity and confidence overcame that thought. We altered our strategy to examine the actual figures of population and distribution. The journey began with visiting Minshiang Township. The Township Administration and the town's departments had no information or statistics. According to the staff, the government did not even want to consider foreign brides and it was better to change a topic. This concluded that foreign brides were not taken seriously and definitely needed our concern.

Because of our insistence, someone finally suggested that we go to the Police

<sup>1</sup> The term, "Foreign Bride," is controversial. There is a more acceptable term, "Foreign Female Spouse." But, recently the "Foreign Female Spouse" groups call themselves "Vietnamese Taiwanese," or "Tai Taiwanese," and etc. The term, "Foreign Bride" was first used at the proposal of the project. There is no intention of any disrespect.





Bureau of Foreign Affairs, to find some information there. Later, the police told us they had the statistics on foreign brides but were not sure whether these numbers were accurate, since the foreign brides all claimed that the reason for coming was "joining family." It was not guaranteed that "joining family" meant "joining husband." In addition, we needed the school's official document, so we connected to Chiayi's Police Bureau to retrieve this data. Because this information was difficult to retrieve (even with this data in hand, there would be no statistics on distribution, so we had to record it one-by-one and then report to the Police Bureau and Minshiung Township Administration) Yin-Chei and I spent much time. In the meantime, we visited some local organizations and people to double check our information and to check resource availability.

#### 4. Seeking Cooperation


The Creative Education Plan emphasized "Society Concerns In-Depth" as one of the requirements. Because of traffic, the access to the school, and community resources, Yin-Chei and I chose our school as the center. We then, one-by-one, visited three communities within the school's radius. We addressed the purpose of the visits, introduced our project to the Village Heads, Community Development Counsel Presidents, and their secretaries and solicited for their aid. They gave us their feedback and shared their concerns over the problems of foreign brides' wrongful behavior, such as running away. But the real issue with which they were preoccupied with was the next election. Their answers to help were perfunctory; there was not an obvious answer for rejection or cooperation. I could easily tell this throughout our meetings and no matter how hard we tried, still everything was in vain.

Unwillingness from our first group shifted our direction to Minshiung Township's Social Department Chief. She was a devoted and assertive female leader and immediately expressed her willingness to help. She said no one had ever done this before and she would give her maximum support to accomplish this project. She predicted some difficulties we might encounter, then suggested the community named Shi-Chang in Minshiung Township to seek assistance because that was by far, the only community which was concerned about foreign brides and its community development. Plus, the Community Development Counsel Secretary had one foreign bride as a daughter-in-law.

Shi-Chang was a remote area which was also the smallest community. It was difficult to access our resources from school and we clarified this issue to the Social Department Chief. She understood our situation and through her connection we attended a 28-Township Secretary Meeting. In the meeting, we requested publicly for their cooperation.

Yin-Chei and I specially prepared a brief plan summary and hoped we could find the community to support us. Throughout the briefing, we tried our best to explain our work in detail and to answer their questions, but they thought this project was difficult to execute. They raised various questions such as "how to find money, how to find people, how to start activities, how to invite foreign brides, how to guarantee the brides won't run away?" (Everyone thought that foreign brides would run away,





and from this it was obvious that the trust towards the brides was extremely low.) Although we had our methods to reply these questions, they still declined all of our requests politely, because of the risks; no one actually had actually attempted to carry our project out in to action before. One of them even said, "Money is what foreign brides lack the most; you can just give the funds to them and they would be appreciative. It would save us a lot of sweat," to which, Yin-Chei and I were smoldering with rage. This suggestion not only implied we were untrustworthy, but also underestimated our abilities, as if we were only looking for trouble.

I remembered I said agitatedly, "It's a waste of life if one doesn't do something while one is young. We want to do something which is more satisfactory than giving away money and undoubtedly more meaningful. We are reaching a dream. Just because no one is doing it, doesn't mean it is not important, also it doesn't mean it will fail. We don't have experience, so we need more support, and we hope that the secretaries to advise us." (Anger made me spoke out my heart, and it became one of my classic quotes.)

This meeting pushed our dream one step further. We realized that we needed to spend more time on promoting and persuading people of the plan. Also, we saw the difficulties and the attitudes from base-level social workers. One secretary responded to us that communities needed and lacked something similar to our project but there were interior problems in his community and he could not work with us, but he hoped that we could persist until we succeed.

## 5. Recommendation

After the meeting, we realized that "Connection" was crucial to our success. We did not cling onto the problems of time and space anymore. We reconsidered Social Department Chief's recommendation then soon we decided to visit Shi-Chang's Village Head, Community Development Counsel President and Secretary.

One afternoon, Yin-Chei and I rode the scooter on the paths by the green rice paddies. It was a distant ride. At last, we reached Shi-Chang, and then soon after, we found the Village Head and the Community Development Counsel President in front of the temple. It seemed to me that they were expecting us. They showed their deep interest in our project and phoned the Secretary. He talked about his daughter-in-law endlessly after he arrived and pointed out several problems on his mind. The Secretary was the key to the door of this community and by speaking to him, the sense of steadfastness built inside of ourselves. Finally for the first time, we received a clear image about how the community felt about this project. Moreover, we understood what to revise to allow our project to become easier to execute.



## Chapter 2: Interaction

We organized a team from an early childhood education department after our proposal was accepted by Creative Education Plan. The intensive interaction with the community began and lasted for more than one year. (The duration was only planned for half year, but we started at the beginning of the proposal.) My heart was full with emotions and they will be introduced in the following descriptions.

### 1. Bonding

The simple farm village of Minshiung was filled with friendly inhabitants. Many residents were either relatives or have been neighbors for years. It appeared that their life was invariable but I was touched by their intimate bonding. For example, the Secretary had a few close friends and every afternoon approximately two or three, (a period of time, in which we also visited constantly) they would gather and watch Taiwanese Puppet Play on TV. When they were free, they would have some tea while watching TV. When they had some important matters to do, they would discuss these matters, but still with tea being served and the TV on. The main purpose for this meeting was to watch TV and so we naturally had a few more friends every time we visited.

Their passion surprised the city people, like me. I thought they were just being polite when they invited us to their homes. But, the invitations truly came from their hearts. They always prepared tea and fruit to treat us. They desperately wanted to introduce themselves and the community, and they also wanted to know everything about us. After our proposal was accepted, we were invited to many activities such as the Dragon Boat Festival, Ghost Festival, Mid-Autumn Festival and endless banquets. We were definitely treated as one of their own. Maybe to other people the invitations could be stressful, but we enjoyed the events very much. These were the ways of their life and I liked being their friends in this carefree lifestyle. This bonding deepened our relationship and because of this bonding, we could speak directly, without causing any friction and misunderstanding.

### 2. Difference and Admiration

The first event I joined was a temple fair during the Ghost Festival. I was deeply moved by the staff of Community Development Counsel. Pursuing perfection, each of them in the Counsel wore their uniforms. Our team was invited to this event and asked to provide help for the preparation. We received orders about what to do. But, they were a bit unorganized because different orders were given by different people, and this in turn, created some conflicts. There was one elder around his fifties or sixties, who communicated in a "funny" way. Some people were angry, some were

<sup>2</sup> The project "Far Away from Home; Here Is Also Home: Project of Family and Cultural Inclusion for Foreign Brides" is directed by Professor Cheng-Ta Yang. Team included Ting-Jun Ou, Yin-Chei Houn, Shu-Jen Chen, Yi-Shian He, Wan-Ru Jang, Hiou-Wen Liang, Juo-Yan Wu, Wei-Ling Hu, Shiau-Shan Jang, Bin-Huei Guo, Shing-Yu Guo, Yu-Ting Gau



trying to quell their anger, some were working hard and some were doing the wrong things. Many village seniors were fighting.

Later, the son of the Secretary explained to us and said, "Excuse us; such a big event is rare in this village. The elders are just trying to reach perfection. That is why my two brothers and I came back to Taichung from Taipei to help our father because we were worried about his inexperience." This experience touched me, as one who had always lived in the city. Although the staff didn't have a structured plan and this led to a mess, I could feel their affection among each other. They made me see hope within this community and made me look forward to our future.

### 3. Earning Trust

In the beginning, some of the elders had doubts towards our abilities. To them, we were just some inexperienced, young students that needed discipline. They thought that working together meant for them to provide their experience for us to learn and sometimes they did it unconsciously. One day, the Secretary interrupted us and took the lead during the preparation of one program. He started to give orders, and subjectively provided his guide without fully understanding the content. We thanked him for his courtesy, but it was our project, and we needed to take back the lead. In later preparations, we began to discuss the programs beforehand with the elders and tactfully shared our opinions. Then, there was one event which focused on the elders, instead of giving us direct orders, changed their way to only inquiring us about our plans and suggestions towards this event. I thought we succeeded and progressed to another notch. At the end of the event, they exclaimed, "Those students from National Chiayi University are really 'something!' They can take charge of any event. Wonderful!!" To this, I knew we earned each other's trust.

### 4. Relying on Each Other

Throughout the half year, Shi-Chang soon learned about the characteristics about our team. We were the group with motivation, vitality, and creativity. We knew how to use Powerpoint and operate digital devices. These became helpful resources to the community. They often relied on us to lead their activities and had the younger generation involved. We provided many ideas and the young ones observed us and imitated, or even improved our ideas or combined our ideas with their own. So, the community's invitations were no longer just for creational purposes; we were invited to their interior community meetings. "Could you come and provide some guidance," they would ask politely, but they didn't know that we were the ones who should be thankful. The meetings offered us some great lessons, such as the opportunity to have a glimpse on how a community operates, how to communicate with staff, and how to coordinate different opinions.





## 5. Building Dreams

There was a group of residents around their thirties and forties in Shi-Chang that played very important roles. They were the foundation of the community, but kept their profiles low, supplied free labor, and worked silently. They took orders from the elders because they grew up under the elders' supervision. The elders needed them, praised them, and also complained about them. However, they rarely expressed their opinions in the public. Because of a late night chat, I realized, the future of Shi-Chang was on them. It all started from a little dream.

I remembered that night that I was once again invited to a banquet for the new establishment of night-watch team and to appreciate those who had served the community. Many elders started to offer toasts to show their appreciation after the meal and many of them started their drinking games. Mr. Kuen-Ming Wong felt that the banquet had ended then, so he invited his friends, Village Head's son, and me to his residence. We were sitting in the beautiful garden to enjoy the moon, and the desserts and tea that Mrs. Wong prepared. Mr. Wong was an important advisor to the community, also the planner to many projects.. He was aware of my background and brought up problems in the community. According to him, Shi-Chang was getting better and better, after the appointment of the new Secretary. The environment had improved and had received a first place award. People agreed on environmental issues. Holding events became easier because they recognized Development Counsel's ability. But, of course there was still room for improvement, and he was looking forward to my suggestions.

Then, I shared my feelings and said Shi-Chang's environment had improved, so the next step should be awakening, awareness, and cultural education. Awakening should involve serious discussions with the Secretary and staff. It was difficult for me to provide a specific example. A community's growth depended on awareness, and awareness was closely associated with awakening. I was afraid that I couldn't help either. Cultural education was difficult to accomplish in the short term because it required time to cultivate. But since this part was related to my study, so I suggested the community to keep contact with neighboring schools by working together on activities and lectures to provide local cultural education for individual growth. Community could also provide awards to encourage residents involving in community service, learning self-discipline and so forth.


That night, the community and I built dreams. Soon after, I learned that the community established parent-child reading, creative door-sign making and other initiatives. I knew that the night's dreams sprouted and continued.

## 6. Friendship



We kept in touch even after our project was finished; whenever the community needed assistance, the Secretary would call us. We were like old friends. Mr. Wong called me one day during the summer vacation before my graduation. He said Shi-Chang had passed numerous stages of evaluations and the judges would come and give the final evaluation. Mr. Wong wanted me to give a briefing with him for the





judges. He thought by working with me, the briefing would reach perfection. I was delighted because I was treated as an important figure. But, I considered myself not to be a part of the community and felt that it would be inappropriate. Instead of me, it would be much more acceptable if Mr. and Mrs. Wong were together for this briefing, because Mrs. Wong had more emotional ties to the community. Yin-Chei and I took the positions as technical directors; we helped to organize the content of the briefing and the dialogs, and encouraged the bashful Mrs. Wong to step on the stage. It was the last activity for Yin-Chei and I, and it was a successful one, too.

After my graduation, I received news from Shi-Chang constantly. Winning various awards, many communities asked Shi-Chang to share its experience. Mr. Wong had to perform nonstop speeches and there were times he phoned me because he met some difficulties and ran out of ideas. I would clear his mind, recap, and remind him some important points. I admired him as Mr. Wong became more knowledgeable along the way. He expressed his affection towards the community in detail. He strengthened the community by holding enjoyable activities. I learned from him every time I talked to him. Maybe these were the natural ways to present awakening and awareness.

### Chapter Three: Recollection

"Married Far Away from Home; Here Is Also Home: A Project of Family and Cultural Inclusion for Foreign Brides" in Shi-Chang was a very significant learning experience. This project caused me to rearrange all the formal and informal learning from undergraduate and graduate school. Before, I only realized the importance of receiving grades from tests. Every subject was like a new textbook on the bookshelf stored neatly in my brain. There weren't any marks and notes in them. The shelf owner only liked to buy books, but not to read them. Because of this project, however, I had to read and search from my own collection to learn the knowledge and solve the oncoming questions. Now, I am able to use the power that was converted from my knowledge, better.

I see what is possible in my life and moreover, I believe in my abilities because I have worked with a group to accomplish a challenging project. The payback from the community and the reward from Ministry of Education have given me a firm foundation. In the future, when pursuing my goals, I will ask myself to display more creativity and show more concern for others.