

Special Report on Excellent Teachers of the 2021 Academic Year

Pre-major Freshman Program for International Students

Hsiung Yu-Wen: Learn from the process, as experiencing is to accomplish a better self!

Entering the Holistic Education Village and arriving at the office of Professor Hsiung on the ninth floor, one can find her chatting happily and leisurely with students, demonstrating a harmonious teacher-student relationship. A teacher for the Department of Teaching Chinese as a Second Language for more than eight years, Professor Hsiung is also the person responsible for starting the Pre-major Freshman Program for International Students in 2021. Carrying the responsibilities of two departments and two teachers, Professor Hsiung says with a smile: “Maybe this is the arrangement for the best!”

Understanding needs while standing in other people’s shoes

Forming the connection between both parties The students from the Department of Teaching Chinese as a Second Language are faced with the teaching practice phase in their junior year, where they can work with foreign freshmen from the Pre-major Freshman Program for International Students as interns for mutual interactions. On the one hand, it conforms to learning needs, allowing students to understand the Chinese language teaching; moreover, it is an opportunity for more than 60 students to gather for the first time. Coincidentally, this arrangement also stimulated a learning partner relationship between Japanese students and local students, helping both groups to adapt to the environment and school life, and to make friends with each other.

Professor Hsiung discovered from observations that students from each phase encountered different issues. For instance, a majority of freshmen are faced with issues such as studying away from home, getting along with groups, and adapting to a new environment, while sophomore and juniors are faced with relationship issues, and seniors are faced with feeling bewildered about their career options. She says, “I applied my almost 13 years of life experience from studying in America and teaching to provide suggestions and opinions with empathy, which allows students to understand and accept more easily. Talking with them using less of a ‘teacher’s perspective’ or tone is also beneficial in creating quality relationships.” Organize suitable exploration group activities with the counseling center during each session of tutor time, and design staged forums and discussions according to student needs, to support them with bravely facing and solving various issues.

Professor Hsiung carefully observes students' conditions in classes. A majority of foreign freshmen are students from the science and engineering or business departments; a significant personality difference exists between these groups. Students from the Department of Teaching Chinese as a Second Language Applied Chinese are detail-oriented; therefore the consultation approach is adjusted according to the different habits of each country. She even prepared beef soup for a student with anemia, and accompanied countless students through sad and happy times on the sofa in her office, which allowed the students to feel the warmth of home and to feel extra heartwarming. "Care from different aspects and levels to not let the students feel lonely even when they are away from home." Maybe it is the ambience, but Professor Hsiung believes that such an environment filled with love will nourish the heart of every student.

Persist in one's duties

The students are wonderful because of you

Reflecting on sad situations in which she was unable to offer support, Professor Hsiung blames herself and feels heartbroken; despite this, she persists in the matters that she believes to be meaningful with a passion. These efforts – her words and her classes – can significantly influence students. Professor Hsiung happily shared with us the messages she had from a student who graduated recently: "Thank you, professor, for a class back then, which led to had such wonderful results for me later." This student even became a formal teacher in an elementary school. Professor Hsiung reflects, "I get to see students' endeavors and hard work connect to accomplish even something small, while these sacrifices made for constant growth in the process become experience. This is the greatest sense of accomplishment as a teacher."

For students, a teacher acts is someone they can talk to about issues regarding studying, family, or relationships, with whom they can always feel the vital support of being cared for. "I had a student who was bewildered about choosing the right department, so I analyzed the conditions of the departments and provided sources for reference. Although that student chose a different department in the end, I am still proud of him, as there is no absolute right or wrong choice." Professor Hsiung guides students to advance toward more active and positive directions with her life experience.

Watching the foreign students with their sincere learning attitude in the past year, improving their Chinese ability from beginner to intermediate levels, Professor Hsiung indicated happily that as long as the students are willing to learn and enhance their

professional strengths, she will do her best, even if she has to devote more time and effort and use after-school teaching. “One failure does not represent forever—as long as you continue to maintain motivation for learning, and to persist bravely towards your goals, although there will be some setbacks along the path, taking a detour may be a better arrangement for the next step.” She encourages students and shows appreciation to Daisy from the International and Mainland Students Advising Division, Ho-Chia from the Office of International and Cross-Strait Education, and Professor Huang Chi-Yi from the Military Education Office for their meticulous care towards the foreign students. It is the collaboration among all four parties that allows for more successful consultation for the foreign students.