

Summer 2022—Teacher Training Center Hosts the Schweitzer Program for Disadvantaged Students in Rural Areas

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In summer 2022, the Center of Teacher Education of National Yang Ming and Chiao Tung University (NYCU) organized the 10th annual Schweitzer Program camp at Baoshan Junior High School in Hsinchu County. The success of this event was particularly appreciated because of the circumstances of the pandemic. We thank Baoshan Junior High School for their willingness to provide fieldwork opportunities for trainee teachers. The attendees of this event included Principal Wu Ping-Jui and Academic Affairs Director Shen Ro-Chieh of Baoshan Junior High School; Associate Dean Chen Yong-Sheng of NYCU; Director Sun Chih-Yuan and Associate Director Chen Ken-Zen of NYCU's Center of Teacher Education; and Assistant Professors Chen Sheng-Chang and Chen Ya-Chun of NYCU, who assisted in supervising the camp.

Since 2013, NYCU's Center of Teacher Education has implemented the Ministry of Education's Schweitzer Program to encourage preservice teachers to develop Albert Schweitzer's care for the underprivileged and professional service and to translate the educational knowledge and basic theory of the Teacher Education Program into practical and problem solving-oriented "learning by doing." Each July, 20–30 preservice teachers from NYCU spend 8 hours a day (over 120 total hours over the course of 3 weeks) at Baoshan Junior High School in Hsinchu County and provide on-site counseling on schoolwork, morality, life, and career planning to 60–80 disadvantaged students.

The experience of managing small groups enables the preservice teachers to practice the classroom management theories they learned and to more deeply consider classroom management concepts. Through activity planning, the pre-service teachers can improve their ability to implement activities and practice management theory. This project provides future teachers with an opportunity to test their skills, broadens the perspectives of students in rural areas, and actualizes zero distance education.

In the summer of 2021, the program was suspended because of the pandemic. However, the preservice teachers and alumni of the program proactively initiated a teacher training matching program; they contacted junior high, senior high, and vocational schools to ensure the preservice teachers could gain experience in education. In April of 2022, 18 teacher trainees visited Baoshan Junior High School in Hsinchu County for 2 weekends (16 total hours) to conduct the Exploring the Living Treasure Mountain exploration and hands-on camp. This camp involved inquiry teaching, in which teachers were encouraged to exercise their teaching expertise and service-learning spirit to enhance students' inquiry learning skills and motivation. This event partially offset the disappointment of the Schweitzer Program being suspended in the previous year.

In the summer of 2022, the Schweitzer Program was scaled down because of the pandemic. Nevertheless, 14 enthusiastic trainee teachers were recruited to implement the program under the request of the chief convener and deputy chief convener: Hsu Shao-Lun from the Department of Computer Science and Information Engineering and Chen Wen-Pin from the Institute of Education, respectively.

Schweitzer once said that the individuals "who are truly happy are those who will have sought and found how to serve." Humanity is at the core of education. As of 2022, the Schweitzer Program has continued for 10 years without interruption. More than 200 preservice teachers from NYCU have participated, and more than 400 students at Baoshan Junior High School have been served. Throughout this program, we witnessed energetic future teachers working through the night on lesson plans and activities, and we have witnessed the eyes of the rural students light up when they participated. This group of preservice teachers expended considerable effort on this project but learned much in return. For this group of preservice teachers, this was a joyful summer.