

FLAL NEWSLETTER



# *Blossom*

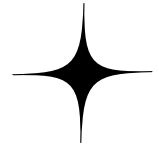
SPRING 2024



Editor Jasmine Kuo



# CON TENT



2024 SPRING

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2024 SPRING

# Singing the Way That Takes Your Breath Away



On May 4th, the junior students of FLAL put up a show featuring an adaptation of ‘Romeo and Juliet’ along with joyful singing performances, providing more opportunities for various sectors of society to engage with English and broaden their perspectives.

“Many people start learning English through songs, hence the idea of incorporating singing into the program popped up. The main idea is to liven up the entire event and increase audience engagement,” said Alice Liu, a junior student serving as one of the general coordinators of the event.

She also mentioned that her partner Jinny Wang, also a junior, agreed to the idea once she heard it.

“It can make the overall event livelier and increase audience engagement. Moreover, singing has a lower barrier to entry compared to drama,” said Jinny. “It is more relatable to everyone's daily lives. Perhaps the

audience might even be able to sing along with the chosen songs this time.”

This time, the whole show includes two songs, “I’ll Be There for You” performed by Rin Lin and Zoey Jing, both juniors from FLAL, and “We’re All in This Together” in chorus.

“The reason for choosing this song is that we thought it is a lively and youthful song, which perfectly suits the mood of juniors and seniors, who are about to graduate, and it can bring the delightful atmosphere to the audience,” said Jasmine Guo, a junior who is also the choir director.

The song “We’re All in This Together” is from the movie High School Musical. It tells the story of high school freshmen from two different, even opposing groups—the basketball team captain, Troy Bolton, and the beautiful math genius, Gabriella Montez. They come together to take on leading roles in their high school's winter musical. Ultimately,



**By Adeline Su**

they overcome various pressures and inspire everyone to break out of their own little worlds.

Just like the singing group, everyone in the group has practiced for this show since the spring break in early April, and overcome difficulties and pressures, even stepping out of their comfort zones to present their best.

“In the singing performance, we also incorporated the dancing part from the movie ‘High School Musical,’” Jasmine said. “This requires overcoming the challenge of singing while dancing, including singing out of breath and forgetting the choreography. It needs a lot of practice to be able to multitask effectively.”

Anthony Yan, a junior who has performance experiences in FLAL NIGHT also pointed out the difficulties he encountered.

“The most difficult task for me is not to sing out of breath,” he said. “Because every time I dance, I end up getting out of breath, which makes it difficult for me to sing well, and I will gasp for air between phrases.”

Everyone has been enthusiastic about participating in the event, hoping to contribute as much as possible.

“Zoey and I always enjoy being on stage, therefore, we would like to try different performances or competitions related to music. I hope



the audience and my classmates can enjoy our songs,” said Rin, one of the performers of “I’ll Be There For You.

“Taking on the solo part for the male vocals was a significant breakthrough for me, but I still tried to blend in with the energy and let go of any inhibitions, I just imagine myself as passionate as a high school student,” Anthony said.

The group has practiced 15 times leading to the showtime. They gathered to practice every Friday after school. As for extra practice, the members can choose between Tuesday and Wednesday in order to become more proficient. The practice plan is to become familiar with the dance first, then coordinate it with singing, and finally integrate it smoothly with everyone's teamwork."

Zoey, one of the performers of “I’ll Be There For You,” and Jasmine both mentioned everyone needs to be very proficient in each practice session.

“Me and Rin, we seldom have time to practice due to individual schedules. That’s why we value every practice session because time is limited,” said Zoey.

‘I’ll Be There For You’ is a song produced by The Rembrandts. It became famous because it is the theme song of the well-known series called “Friends.” This song is cheerful and lively. It tells the story of how friends are always there to support you, especially during the busiest and most hectic times of life.

“This song is from the famous TV show, which we think it might resonate with people.” Zoey said.

show, which we think it might resonate with people.” Zoey said.

Zoey and Rin have been working together in various big and small musical performances and competitions since their freshman year. “Both of us love performing on stage. We enjoy the happiness that the performing brings us,” Zoey said.

This time, I’m playing the guitar for the show,” Rin said. “I’ve loved music since I was young, and there happened to be an old guitar that had been sitting around at home. So, I thought why not teaching myself online? Then, I joined the rock club in high school. After graduation, I learned bass, and that’s how I’ve been learning all along.”

"One performance that left a deep impression on me was the battery issue,” Rin said. “I remember it was during a rehearsal, when suddenly my guitar had no sound. I have tried different solutions, but the problem wasn’t solved.”

“Eventually, we discovered it was the battery issue. I was extremely nervous because the performance was about to start,” said Rin. “I immediately ran to the nearest convenience store to buy new batteries. Luckily, we discovered the problem during rehearsal, so I could fix it in time. Otherwise, the performance would have been ruined. It really scared me.”

In order not to make mistakes during the show, Jasmine emphasized that the only way is to practice. “By becoming proficient, one can overcome

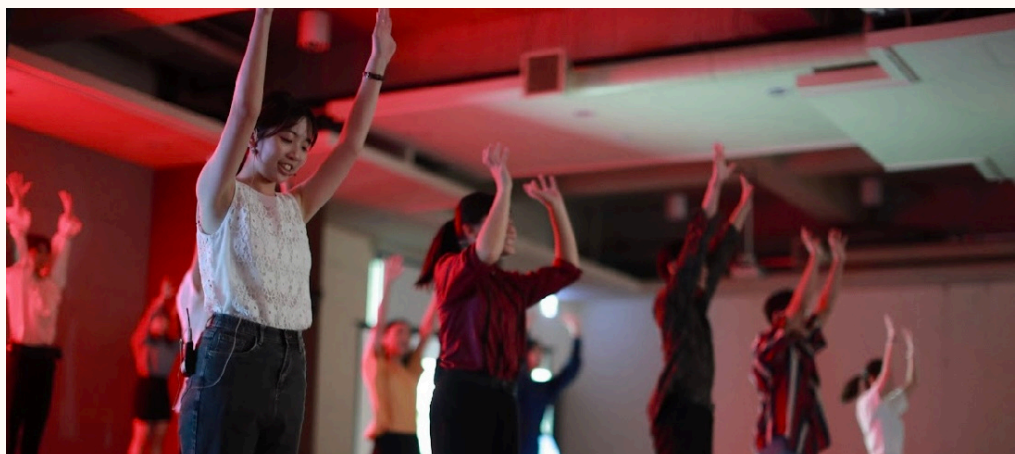
nervousness and perform confidently,” she said.

“Even though I’ve participated in many other performances before, I still worry about not performing well on the day of the show and fear that I might make a fool of myself,” Anthony said. “That’s why during rehearsals, I always strive to keep up and blend in with everyone. Practicing together creates an atmosphere that feels more like being on stage for real, and I find that helps me improve faster.”

“The first practice was before the spring break. Next, there will be small and large rehearsals, and the general coordinators, Alice and Jinny will come to do the acceptance check,” Jasmine said. “So, my job is to ensure that everyone is proficient.”

Everyone in the singing group has put their heart and soul into the show since the very beginning. Each person has been diligently rehearsing in the practice room and striving to perfect every detail.

“I hope the audience can genuinely feel our passion, sing along with us, and enjoy the pleasant atmosphere. The sweat and effort we’ve put in are all aimed at delivering the most spectacular show to everyone. I hope the audience can immerse themselves in our musical world, and together, we can create unforgettable moments,” said Jasmine.





# Adapting Shakespeare's Tragedy for Hope in Love



Like we do not create a sketch with a layer only, it is similar for the juniors of FLAL who presented the talent showcase on May 4th, 2024. Having the drama as one of the layers, the process of adaption and preparation is combining the enlightenment of classics and the experience that some students experienced for the first time.

Romeo and Juliet is one of William Shakespeare's tragedy works. From the plot that the public knows to the scenes on the stage, Joanna Lin, a junior from FLAL, is in charge of both writing the script and directing the drama adaption.

For Joanna, rewriting the script gives her an opportunity to visit the moments in the original work. "Not until I started to work on the script did I find that details were all over the work," Joanna said. In the original play, the details were all connected for what comes around and goes around. "If we have not seen the drama by ourselves, we might possibly lose connection in between the scenes and the plot," she said.

Comparing to adapt a comedy work for the show, why did Joanna decide to give the tragedy a go? In her view, people might consider "what if it was not a tragedy?" when they see a work ends up wistfully. So Joanna decided to convert Romeo and Juliet for the audience and also for herself.

The way to stop the misfortune and adapt the plot is to find the turning point. Joanna spent some time to look through the context, so that the full script can correspond with each other. Sometimes the process is harder than she expected, since there were some discrepancies between early modern English and the English we use nowadays. Even with some difficulties, from conceiving the structure to gradually finishing the first version of the script, the whole progress took her about two months.

Finishing the first version of the script in December, 2023, Joanna sought advice from Dr. Sue-Han Ueng of FLAL. Dr. Ueng did not adjust much on the structure of Joanna's adaption, but edited some details that did not



**By Doris Liu**

correspond with the original text. Joanna's adaption turned out to be feasible. "With the desperation and hatred between families, the adaption seems to give audience more hope, cutting down the harm and stopping the inevitability," said Dr. Ueng.

Reading the script again in April, Dr. Ueng mentioned that the script was applying a frame that Shakespeare often use in his comedy work, which was the play-within-a-play. The function could be commenting on the ongoing narrative scenes. While Shakespeare used this structure in his comedian works more, the frame applied to FLAL's show, like the girl in the script commenting on the denouement of characters' death.

From Dr. Ueng's viewpoint, the acting needs to show a contrast between the original text and the adapted structure that Joanna tries to apply. For example, troupe is a media to perform in some of Shakespeare's work, then the adaption uses television to share the third-person viewpoint with the audience, and it do suit the way people receive information now. "I am eager to see a different perspective from young people, to interpret Shakespeare's work more positively," said Dr. Ueng.

Not only the script needs to show a contrast between the classic and the modern, for the actors, it is necessity for them to move a great step in order to convey the messages toward the audience.



As the television in the script is a media that shows up at first, the narrator in this era is like a key to the door of the classic. Acting a mother who is watching television with her daughter, Jennifer Wu, a junior from FLAL, said that acting the simplest character in an approach that can appeal to the audience is not as simple as she first expected.

“Comparing to Becky Chen, who is also a junior in our department, I am the one with more briskness in my character, but I need to act the calm one on the stage as her mother, while she needs to magnify herself to show the energy of a little girl. I need to be calm, but not being a rigidity person on the stage,” said Jennifer.

Zoey Jing, a junior from FLAL, is taking part in a character which involves two sets of action scenes, and this gives her feelings that she has not experienced before. The converse of her character, Tybalt of the Capulet, marks it challenging for her to portrait the arrogance toward the Montagues, and also bringing the aura to the audience.

Acting on the stage for the first time, Zoey, with the liveliness in her personality, did not find it difficult to fit in the character. Tybalt does not speak much, but the actions do include interactions with other characters. It takes Zoey some time to go through the details of every scene with classmates who are sharing the scene with her.

“Wearing makeup for the character is also a first-time experience,” said Zoey. For the visual it needs on the stage, the makeup should stand the facial features out. Zoey mentioned

that the whole makeup process took about an hour, “as the makeup was done, I even wondered who was it in the mirror. At the same time, I finally realized that the preparation needed for a person on stage is truly beyond my imagination.”

Acting Mercutio, another junior from FLAL, Dino Lai also presents the action scenes in the drama as the character on Romeo’s side. “Figuring out how to fight naturally took us a lot of time, because none of us has basics on action scenes.”

Since the actors cannot stab each other over their minds, discussing with each other and looking up references from the movies or musicals are both important. “Everyone renders their suggestions so we need to exchange these ideas for a performance that grabs audiences’ attention,” he added. “We need to fit ourselves into the character, sharing the joy and sorrow, or sharing the madness like me and Tybalt did.”

The preparation of the drama took almost two months, and the process gradually became a daily routine. From being unfamiliar with the character and the lines to speaking the lines like breathing, sometimes the rehearsal is processing without soul. “Currently an alumnus of FLAL came to give some advice when we are practicing, and that gives me a chance to view my character again, and knows how to present it with soul,” said Jennifer, who has a lot of lines in the opening.

For the juniors, adapting a script and acting on stage could be an experience that they do not approach normally, like the chances of diving in literary works is not frequent either. They might be newcomers into the world of drama, but by looking through the classics and real life, they made it an event to remember for a long time.



# Birds of Different Feathers Flock Together at FLAL



When first walking into the university, we envisioned the world as full of fun—making new friends or long-awaited dormitory life—all of which were about to kick off a new college life. However, when we first met our roommates, we didn't dare to talk to each other.

To break the ice, my roommate asked, "Hey, what is your major?" I thought for a while and replied, "I'm from the Department of Foreign Language and Applied Linguistics. We call it FLAL."

"I thought you were from the Department of Engineering or Electrical Engineering," she said after hearing my answer with a smile. "You know those stuffs. I thought that people who like anime would not go to the Department of Foreign Languages," she continued, pointing to the action figure I placed on the cabinet.

We may all have similar experiences. Whether it's being asked by relatives

and friends when you go home for the Chinese New Year, or when you meet your high school classmates. "What is your major?" The question may have become a spell that can uncover the mystery of you and me.

"When I first entered university, I was often asked by my relatives what my major is," Diana Tai, a senior from FLAL, said. "They like to ask me if I want to become an English teacher after graduation or if I want to go abroad in the future."

"I was asked what department I was in, and everyone was surprised when they heard it," echoed Michelle Chu, a junior who shared her experience about how she deals with her family.

People seem to see others with stereotypes. Holding heavy books in their hands, dressing fashionably, being good at dressing up, or with outgoing personalities have become the stereotype of students majoring in foreign languages. According to the statistics of Google Forms, 17 out of



**By Via Hung**

27 respondents believe that students from foreign language departments have different dressing styles.

"Students are good at matching clothes, I want to ask them, why do you have so many clothes?" said Yvonne Cho, a junior double-majoring in economics and FLAL. "I didn't have any idea what a student from FLAL would look like. However, when I came in, I realized that many people were very good at dressing up," she said. "My style of dressing is usually about comfort. I will follow the itinerary of the day."

People meet English teachers in high school. Do they have the impression of "foreign language majors"? In this survey, 22 students agreed that the English teachers in the high schools were good at dressing. Also, their personalities tend to be lively and outgoing.

"I found that the English teachers I met at the high school were also very well-dressed and had a lot of decorations," Diana said. "Their clothes do not usually repeat, and they were good at dressing," Yvonne said. "They are also very good at matching the color of clothes."

Based on the survey, 23 students would pay attention to their appearance: being clean and tidy, while not sloppy.

"I do think that girls from FLAL will dress up. Although I think it has





something to do with personality," said Becky Chen, a junior from FLAL.

In another survey, about 23 students believed that people with extroverted personalities usually have a more prominent style of dressing and have a stronger ability in language learning.

Graduates from FLAL are considered to be more difficult to find a job, with many people thinking that it is a department of literature. The career options for students from foreign language department include becoming an English teacher or working for a foreign company. In addition, students must have strong translation skills.

"They think we know all the words in English," said Annabeth Huang, a junior from FLAL, offering her insights on this stereotype. "I don't like people asking me what a word means, where the accent is, or how to pronounce a word," Becky also expressed her dissatisfaction.

Is the ability to learn a language also related to an individual's personality and how they dress up themselves?

"Personality is helpful for language learning," said Michelle in response. Reflecting on her three-year experience at FLAL, she said. "They are more willing to talk and are very good at dressing. Outgoing people get their energy from the outside world, so naturally they care more about their appearance."

In the same way, Yvonne thought that lively classmates have a better ability to speak and learn than others.

"Because every interaction is a kind of learning. Extroverts are good at socializing, which is an advantage."

"Students from FLAL actually have different aesthetic qualities, and so is dressing. Generally speaking, I think that students from FLAL are more natural," said Professor Sue-Han Ueng, who specializes in drama writing and literature. She has met many students with different personalities during her teaching career. In her eyes, students at FLAL do have a different aesthetic from students in other departments.

"There are a lot of quiet students in the department, and they are very focused during class. Their language learning ability is good, and the performance in language use is also very top," said Professor Ueng.

"Regardless of the area of study, the following personalities are helpful: an autotelic personality that is able to sit down and accept new knowledge, have the courage to try to output, have a sense of autonomy and initiative in learning, and can get a flow experience from doing anything," Professor Ueng added.

"Although extroverted personality is not directly related to language performance," said Professor David Wang, who teaches interpretation classes at FLAL. "According to my observations in the teaching field, extroverted and lively students are more willing to accept the encouragement of teachers to participate in language competitions, to create opportunities for themselves to broaden their overall language skills."

"The Department of Foreign Languages is a unit that cultivates students' foreign language skills and worldview," continued Professor Wang, referring to the expectations and stereotypes of foreign language graduates. "There is a stereotype in society that those who have graduated

from here must have good foreign language skills and know how to translate."

"I got my PhD in the U.K., which allowed me to better understand the relationship between language and culture, and how to shape language skills." As for whether the extroverted students will have more language learning opportunities on their own, Professor Wang shared his own experience when studying abroad.

"I hope that students who do not have self-confidence can find out what they have and what others cannot replace," said Professor Wang. "Make up for your lack of self-confidence through your own strengths."





# An Anatomy of the Need for Freedom of Choice



“Education is not the filling of a pail but the lighting of a fire,” said William Butler Yeats, an Irish poet. When students are confined to choosing the course they want, they stay in the passive pattern to receive the knowledge. Then the knowledge will soon disappear since its form is waterlike.

In contrast, if students can choose what they love and love what they choose, it will turn out to be an everlasting fire in their hearts.

During high school, people harbor numerous fantastic fantasies about university. Most of them anticipate the freedom of pursuing their passions and interests without constraints. They keep this belief in mind upon entering university, as if they could truly begin to take charge of shaping their own destiny.

Before entering FLAL, a buzz of curiosity surrounds a particular policy that restricts the use of credits from C and D academic clusters towards

graduation requirements. The more students navigate their academic journey, the more questions arise about the rationale behind this regulation and its implications for their learning paths.

For people who may not know what the A, B, C, and D clusters in FLAL are, the following is the explanation. First, the A cluster is only a linguistic field. Second, the B cluster comes with the course of Applied Linguistics. Third, the C cluster focuses on interdisciplinary applied English. Last, the D cluster includes interpreting and translation.

“I’m genuinely curious why this restriction exists in our department, isn’t academic freedom supposed to allow us to choose our courses freely?” said Audrey Chen, a senior from FLAL. Many people majoring in FLAL have the same thoughts with her sentiment.

The policy has left students in a quandary. Students are hesitant to



By Elaine Huang

voice their inquiries for fear of appearing critical of faculty decisions. “As a student, we are reluctant to ask about these things because it might seem like we are questioning the professors’ decisions. However, we are just curious,” said Eva Zheng, a junior from FLAL.

In fact, for many students, the majority of their earned credits stem from the C and D academic clusters. This condition makes the restriction seem perplexing. “Since I joined this department, most of the courses I’ve taken fall under the C and D clusters,” said Doris Wang, a senior. She reflected on a common experience among peers.

Faculty members shed light on the historical context and intentions behind the policy. Professor Karen Chang, who teaches interpretation classes, recounted the evolution of the department’s structure. “Originally, our department consisted of two main tracks: English teaching and translation. However, around the years 2019 and 2020, dwindling enrollment in the teaching track, coupled with changes in licensure requirements, led to its decline,” explained Professor Chang.

With the teaching track losing prominence and the translation track asserting its importance, the department underwent restructuring. “We expanded our department’s scope by introducing additional clusters. The Applied Language cluster, or the



B cluster, emerged to accommodate the shifting landscape,” said Professor Chang.

At the beginning of the modified policy, faculty at the FLAL department envisioned that students can freely mix and match courses across clusters, leaving the course choice to the market mechanism. However, concerns arose about the potential imbalance in course selection and the need for foundational knowledge in both A and B clusters.

“Initially, there was an idea of allowing free combinations of clusters based on market demand. At that moment, some faculties worried about the possibility of neglecting literature courses or focusing solely on applied linguistics,” said Professor Chang.

“Ultimately, it evolved into the restriction on C and D clusters. Nevertheless, the official explanation cites the necessity for students to have a foundation in both A and B clusters to pursue their desired courses,” stated Professor Chang.

As NTPU navigates these changes, students and faculty alike seek a balance between academic exploration and foundational knowledge. While the policy may initially seem restrictive, its underlying goal is to equip students with the necessary tools to navigate the diverse landscape of language studies and beyond.

Moreover, some of students have decided to transfer to or double major in the department of finance after entering FLAL. “I originally intended to apply to a business school, but my math grades weren't strong. Since English was my only proficient

subject, I applied to FLAL first, as I was attracted to many business-related courses listed in the curriculum. However, I later found out that those courses were not being offered. So, I chose to pursue a double major instead,” said Steven Jiang, a senior from FLAL.

The policy restricting credits from the C and D academic clusters reflects a complex interplay of historical context, educational objectives, and practical considerations.

As students engage with these dynamics, the department continues to evolve, striving to provide a robust and well-rounded educational experience. In that case, the most important consideration for FLAL now is students’ willingness.

National Taipei University’s credit program allows students to choose freely. Students can cultivate skills and also enjoy a sense of fulfillment. Conversely, after completing the minimum credit requirements, students from FLAL are turning to other departments to take courses.

This is because students believe that most of the courses offered cannot provide them with sufficient prospects for survival after graduation. Besides, the current environment has made it even more difficult to make a living, and students graduating solely from the liberal arts are not being valued. As Thomas Edison said, “Men who have gone to college I find amazingly ignorant. They don't seem to know anything.”

學 群 選 修 課 程	A 文 學	必修		典國文學 4 英文短篇作品選讀
		選修		西洋戲劇 2 英美戲劇選讀 2
	B 應 用 語 言 學	必修	英語語音學 2	第二語言習得 2/2
		選修	英語字彙學 2/2 學習策略與語言學習	中英語文比較 2 英文動詞的形與意
	C 跨 領 域 英 語 應 用	必修		經貿英文 2 國際禮儀與文化 2
		選修		經貿英文 2 文
	D 口 筆 譯	必修		修辭學入門 2
		選修		進階英/中筆譯 2 中文英譯作品評析 英語紀實文本翻譯



# FLAL's Small but Spirited Volleyball Team



FLAL Volleyball Team gathers all volleyball lovers led by Chris Lai, a junior, as the captain. Different from other sports teams, they have their own ways to operate.

“FLAL is a relatively small department,” said Chris, who has joined the team for three years. “The numbers of boys in the department are limited, and among the boys, there are even fewer who plays volleyball. That is why our volleyball team is small.”

“Sometimes, it is about the desire of doing something you like. If having the ability, why not?” Chris replied on why he could be the captain. Actually, Chris started playing volleyball in his high school, earlier than most other team members. “I am not the best player, but I probably am the most experienced,” Chris said.

Despite its size, FLAL Volleyball Team has been making significant strides in the sports scene, showcasing talent, determination, and teamwork. “None of us has received traditional

volleyball training, including me. However, I think through some basic skill practices and teamwork, we are able to compete with other departments at NTPU,” said Chris, who knows their team members are not the top players, but trusts the process of their practicing.

As the captain, Chris plays an important role in creating a supportive and inclusive team environment. His leadership style emphasizes collaboration and mutual encouragement, ensuring every member feels valued and motivated to do their best on and off the field. Under his guidance, players not only improved their volleyball skills but also developed camaraderie and friendship that transcended the boundaries of the game.

“I do not dare to say that I am a perfect captain, but I just responsibly do my job,” Chris laughed. “Sometimes I just could not control the emotions of all the team members, especially on the court.”



**By Eric Su**

“I did my best to tell my teammates to be calm in the game, yet sometimes it would be out of control.” Chris said. He could remember once when one of the junior almost lost his mind in a blowout game versus the Department of Economics.

It was a school volleyball league match on a Wednesday at around noon. Their opponent had not lost one single game in the league so it could be tough facing them. “That game we did well on the first and second innings, but unfortunately we lost on the third,” Chris recalled. “During the third inning, one of the junior just lost his mind because of his missing on catching the ball.”

“I did my best to catch the ball, but just could not reach it. I was so upset about myself,” Ivan Lin, a sophomore from FLAL, who has strong emotions and almost cried when recalling that game. “I knew my emotion affected my teammates, and I knew that it was not good.”

After the game, everyone on the team sat down with Ivan, telling him everything was fine. Chris was pleased that he knew the team chemistry had been heated. He talked with Ivan alone, telling him making mistakes is unavoidable in all sports. Chris also told him it is okay to be upset, but influencing the whole team is a great damage for such a young team.

Despite their passion and dedication, FLAL Volleyball Team continues to



face challenges on the court. While they have shown moments of brilliance, they also grapple with inconsistencies and setbacks that come with competing against more experienced opponents. However, these obstacles have only fueled their determination to improve and overcome adversity, reflecting the resilience that defines their team spirit.

One of the defining characteristics of the FLAL Volleyball Team is its approach to training and strategy. Despite limited resources, the team has dedicated themselves into their weekly training. Two times a week, three and half hours for each practicing keeps all of them feel good to catch the ball.

“It is nothing but training the basic skills like the angle of catching the ball. We have to practice the foundational skillsets day after day,” noted Chris when it comes to training and strategy. “Most of them begin their volleyball career in college, so the uncertainty is their consistency and stability.”

As they navigate the downs of competitive play, the FLAL Volleyball Team remains focused on their long-term goals and aspirations. Looking ahead, they are committed to redoubling their efforts in training, refining their strategies, and honing their skills to become more formidable competitors.

After COVID-19 pandemic, there are some tournaments held by other colleges for the teams to participate. Over the past two years, FLAL Volleyball Team join three of them. In January 2023, they participated in NTU North Taiwan English Department Volleyball Tournament. This year, they have played in two tournaments: NDHU North Taiwan English Department Volleyball Tournament and NTHU English Department Volleyball Tournament.

“I am happy to have the chance to join the tournament like this because it is like a team tour in my aspect,” one of the team members in his second year in the team, a junior in FLAL, Paddy Liu, laughed.

“To me, it is a real chance for us to get closer. No matter we win or lose, we get unforgettable memories,” Paddy said. “I knew I am not a top volleyball player, but I just love the time we play and fight against our opponents.”

Although FLAL Volleyball Team did not get any prize in these three tournaments, with a renewed sense of purpose and a steadfast belief in their abilities, they are determined to turn their struggles into triumphs and emerge stronger than ever before. For them, those triumphs are not necessarily equal to win, but the nutrition to play volleyball.

When asking about how to maintain the energy to lead the whole team, Chris is a little shy. “In the beginning, I just want to have a habit of exercise. Luckily, there is someone who has the

same idea.” Chris laughed. “I think playing volleyball makes me happy and it becomes part of my college life. That why I am always energetic.”

The key, Chris believes, is the true heart of playing volleyball. “If you ask one of the team members why they love to play, they will probably give you the same answer as mine.”

In the future, the goal of the team is to have the ability to win. “Chris told us we can win if we try our best on both practices and games,” said one of the team members, Ben Xie. When asking about how many wins they want to get as their goal, Chris did not give a concrete number.

“I hope our practices are not in vain. We spend time and efforts to make us more competitive, hoping to shine on the court.” Chris said. In fact, different from knocking down for two straight innings last year, FLAL Volleyball Team could sometimes get one this year. “Honestly, I could see that everybody has improved a lot.”





# Dancing Feminine Freestyle in Chains of the Heart



In the rehearsal room, members of NTPU's Pop Dance Club (PDC) gather with excitement and nerves in equal measure. They're gearing up for a grand show, the culmination of months of hard work.

In May every year, PDC will hold a presentation performance to show the members' practice results. In 2023, PDC held the presentation performance titled "El Tiempo." Ted Lin, from the Department of Finance and one of the chief coordinators, said that the presentation performance was like chains of the heart, closing the gap among members, "Also, the performance was a medium for collective progress, making us stronger."

Because El Tiempo was a grand event, each member was winding up like a spring, working hard to prepare. "I will always remember that we practiced dancing four hours a day, 24 hours a week. Although the process was painful and exhausting, I felt that I still loved dancing with you guys,"

said Angela Tu from the Department of Recreation and Sport Management, who danced feminine freestyle.

"In spite of the exhaustion, I liked the way to sweat it out," echoed Ted Lin.

"The time of practice might be hard, dancing with you was my comfort, healing my fatigue from the entire day. In retrospect, we've had a brief yet happy time. After all, we saw each other every day and had supper together every day," said Clare Weng, specializing in feminine freestyle and majoring in public administration and policy.

To complete performances in various dance styles, the process wouldn't be possible without the choreographers. Melody Sun, from the Department of Finance and one of the choreographers, mentioned that her challenge while preparing El Tiempo was the pressure of choreography.

"I needed to choreograph for our dance club internally, what I produced



By Ivy Huang

will be the collective display of our efforts after everyone presented it, so there's concern that my output might affect the quality of the performance and the impression of our dance club," Melody said.

"Moreover, what one excelled at might not necessarily suit everyone or fit certain performance settings. Therefore, there's often anxiety about the adequacy of one's choreography skills," she continued.

Harry Chiu, an instructor from the Department of Foreign Language and Applied Linguistics (FLAL) said that he not only had to choreograph for performances, because of his club leadership position, he also had to check if each dance style goes well.

What's more, Harry shared his secret to choreography. "Every time I need to choreograph, I will do a lot of homework in advance. For example, I will watch many videos to figure out how other choreographers dance through their performances, but there's one point I should pay more attention to. I cannot choreograph anything too difficult because not everyone is able to execute what I want to choreograph."

Many people worry that if their basic dance moves aren't strong, can they still join PDC and even join the presentation performance? Alan Lai, who danced in the type of hip hop and from FLAL, said that he was not good at dancing in the beginning.



Every time he and his classmates needed to practice for performance, he would always be taught how to dance in an exact way.

However, by practicing again and again, Alan got the needed improvement. His initial efforts bore fruit. “As long as you’re willing to put in the time to practice, everyone will come to help you.” Alan continued. “It all depends on whether you have the heart for it or not.”

Doris Yen, who majors in Chinese literature, made a supplementary explanation, “When I was a freshman in PDC, I wasn’t as skilled as other classmates who were very good at dancing, but they were all willing to help me improve my dancing skills. They would schedule separate time with me to teach me how to use proper body mechanics, and after practicing, I’ve made progress and feel very accomplished.”

During the introduction, the interviewees also shared anecdotes from the dance practice sessions when preparing for El Tiempo. “We usually perform some funny actions when we’re dancing. Also, when we stopped dancing and rested for a while, someone would sneak a glance at handsome popping boys, telling me how handsome they were,” said Angela Tu.

“There was once when we were practicing until 1 a.m., and then we got kicked out by the security guard. At that time, we just ran full throttle

to the outside. After we ran out of the college, we walked to McDonald to have late night snacks and chatted with each other,” continued Clare Weng.

“Looking back now, it feels like we’re all transported back to the happy dancing days of last year,” said Doris Yan. However, the situation was not always optimistic. Johnson Yeh, from popping and locking teams and majoring in business administration, said he and his team members once invited a teacher to help them choreograph. The teacher was paid, but always started choreographing only when he got to the rehearsal venue. The teacher didn’t prepare in advance. This experience made Johnson feel terrible.

Although members in PDC would encounter the good with the bad when they prepared for the performance, they still believed that the scenery they encounter along the way was all pleasure, with everyone maintaining fond memories of El Tiempo. Despite the arguments, moments of despair, and thoughts of giving up during the planning and preparation process, they persevered, and upon reflecting later, they would reminisce about those carefree times.

“Completing this activity together with everyone is a meaningful achievement. It feels great to dance together with everyone and have fun. During this period, I also learned how to manage my time, collaborate with others, and improve my skills. If I hadn’t participated in El Tiempo, I

might not have had the opportunity to experience these things, let alone meet the group of friends who have worked hard together with me,” said Lindsay Chen, from waacking team and majoring in business administration.

“On the day of the performance, I truly witnessed the members’ dedication. Everyone gave their all, showcasing the results of months of hard work on stage. Seeing my fellow Dance Club members shine as they worked together towards a common goal moved me deeply,” said Ted Lin. “I’m grateful to everyone for sacrificing their free time to participate in this grand event together.”

“If I hadn’t taken on the responsibility, overseen the arrangements, and supervised the work of each group last year, I thought I would never again experience the passionate feeling exclusive to my student days,” Ted continued. “At that time, all I could do was about making the performance a success, but it was not until that I was no longer in the performance that I realized how passionate I was back then.”

“El Tiempo will be the highlight of my college life, a shining memory that I will never forget,” whispered Clare Weng.





# *A Literature Enthusiast with Hearty Passions for Drama*



**By Gigi Lin**



Professor Sue-Han Ueng is known for her dynamic teaching style and unwavering passion for her subjects. She has a unique approach to teaching that sets her apart, attracting students who eagerly enroll in her classes.

Professor Ueng is dedicated to creating an engaging and interactive learning atmosphere for her students. She stated, "I aim to keep class sizes manageable and actively engage with students. I motivate them to give presentations, participate in discussion sessions for feedback, and utilize different assessment techniques like written assignments and in-class interactions."

Students in the department have enjoyed her unique and engaging teaching style and find her courses interesting and stimulating, often choosing them as their first choice for literature and art courses.

Professor Ueng didn't stumble into academia by chance. "I've always had a passion for drama," she said. "But in

Taiwan, opportunities in the drama field are scarce, so I decided to become a teacher instead."

In her teaching approach, Professor Ueng prioritizes an interactive and adaptable learning setting, favoring a hands-off method that promotes student engagement. She states, "My classes promote interactive and flexible experiences. While adhering to standards, students have the freedom to delve into topics beyond literature. I believe in fostering a relaxing learning environment where students can thrive happily."

Moreover, Professor Ueng is diligent in her teaching approach, utilizing different evaluation techniques such as written tasks and classroom discussions. Kathleen Tu, a student in Professor Ueng's class, appreciates her dedication to providing feedback on assignments and exams.

Coco Tung, a literature writing student, says Professor Ueng is very dedicated in class and provides rich

materials. She carefully reviews and uploads study materials to the online platform for reference. She gives detailed feedback on assignments and motivates students with positive affirmations.

Yvonne Cho, another student, recounts her time in class, saying, "The instructor is very dedicated and encourages students to freely share their thoughts. However, since the majority of her lessons revolve around literary texts, it can occasionally feel dull when analyzing the articles."

"I used to find literature uninteresting before this class, but now I have a more varied outlook on various literary works," said Kathleen. "I also gained a deeper understanding of the field of literature."

While Professor Ueng has found joy in her teaching, she acknowledges that time constraints pose a significant challenge. She recalls a difficult moment when a former student she had mentored tragically took his own life. Despite her efforts to offer support, she was unable to prevent the tragedy. This highlights the emotional strain that teaching can impose at times.

Nonetheless, she stays strong and continues to offer her steadfast encouragement to her students. "I strive to be there for them to the best of my abilities, recognizing that each person's path is unique. I don't push my opinions onto others, since my role



is to provide assistance," she explains.

In the near future, Professor Ueng envisions exciting opportunities. She encourages students to explore their passions beyond just literature, emphasizing that personal growth is rewarding. Regardless of the path they choose, she emphasizes the importance of working hard to achieve success.

Professor Ueng values giving over receiving, which drives her passion for teaching. Her dedication to her students is evident in her efforts to inspire them to embody generosity and kindness.

Utilizing innovative and engaging teaching methods, she aims to make the learning experience both enjoyable and impactful for her students.

Beyond the classroom, Professor Ueng actively participates in community service and motivates her students to do the same. She believes in the importance of giving back and making a positive impact on society.

In addition to her teaching responsibilities, Professor Ueng is involved in research and scholarly writing within her field. Her appetite for knowledge drives her desire to equip her students with the tools they need to thrive. Professor Ueng is a dedicated educator who prioritizes giving and strives to empower her students with the skills and values necessary for success.

Professor Ueng is dedicated to her students and has a deep passion for literature, making her not just a teacher, but also a mentor and role model. Year after year, students flock

to her classes, a testament to the immense influence and positive impact she has on those she teaches.

Professor Ueng's impact goes beyond the classroom. She is committed to staying current with the latest teaching strategies to enhance the learning experience for her students. Her dedication to her career and those she teaches has earned respect and admiration from her colleagues.

Professor Ueng's commitment to the arts and literature goes beyond the classroom. She actively engages in Taiwan's art exhibition, regularly attending literary events, art exhibits, and seminars. By immersing herself in these activities, she not only enhances her own knowledge but also offers her students valuable perspectives on the realms of literature and art.

Professor Ueng has made a significant impact on the academic community in Taiwan. Her creative teaching techniques and dedication to her students have raised the bar for excellence in literature and arts education and can also be regarded as a contribution to Taiwan's teaching institutions.

Students in Professor Ueng's class mentioned that she is admired by students and colleagues as a role model. Her talent for blending academic excellence with a caring and encouraging teaching approach has endeared her to a lot of students.

Professor Ueng's dedication to literature and arts education is unwavering as she progresses in her

academic career. Through her creative teaching approaches, commitment to her students, and participation in Taiwan's cultural activities, she is making an impact on the literature and arts education, with profound influence on both her students and the academic community.





# Linguistics Professor's Many Tools to Boost Efficiency



By Kelly Chen



“When Professor Chia-yin Hu walked into the classroom, she always greeted the students energetically,” said Yvonne Cho, a senior from FLAL. She remembered that the teacher always looked happy every time she stepped into the classroom.

“The teacher gave me the impression of being friendly,” said Judy Lee, a sophomore from FLAL who is now taking Professor Hu’s Introduction to Linguistics and is not scared of asking questions in her class. “Her passion in linguistics makes me more willing to find out why linguistics is so interesting,” said Judy.

However, Professor Hu actually had little interest in Linguistics in the beginning. She still remembered that when she was in the ninth grade of junior high school, she was still learning the Kenyon & Knott (KK) phonetic symbols and how to pronounce words in English. “At that time, I looked at those symbols, but I have no idea about them,” she said. “I had little interest in these things.”

The situation remained unchanged when Professor Hu was a freshman at National Chi Nan University (NCNU). Since the first course related to linguistics was Phonetics, which required students to learn International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA), Professor Hu maintained the same attitude.

Nevertheless, when Professor Hu became a sophomore, she took the course Introduction to Linguistics. Sitting in the amphitheater, she used to take a seat allowing her to have eye contact with teachers at eye level. Listening to the teacher’s gentle voice, she suddenly felt like she really liked this thing.

“I don’t know why I suddenly fell in love with Linguistics. My initial interest in it, I would say, is kind of like falling in love with someone without knowing the reason why,” said Professor Hu.

Then she decided to do her M.A. in linguistics. After Professor Hu was

admitted to the graduate program, in the classes of language analysis, she and other prospective graduate students were assigned to solve more difficult questions. At that time, they had deeper discussions, and Professor Hu had a totally different learning experience.

When Professor Hu was a senior in the university and took the courses of Philosophy of Linguistics and History of Linguistics, she found the linguistic knowledge she learned before was integrated together, and she started to know more about linguistics and could gradually appreciate how entrancing linguistics is.

When Professor Hu went to the graduate program, she reflected on linguistics more and found her relationship with linguistics even closer than before. “In my daily life, I would relate almost every language phenomenon I observed to linguistics,” said Professor Hu. And she had lots of discussions with classmates and seniors who were all obsessed with linguistics, “We were like those crazy fans talking about our idol all day long,” Professor Hu joked.

During the summer vacation in 2005, she attended the Linguistic Society of America Institute (LSA Institute) at Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). “I was kind of like stargazing, very excited,” she said since one of the professors there was Noam Chomsky, a major figure in linguistics.

At that time, Professor Hu and her classmates discussed linguistics as if it were their idol. “But can you say we truly understand our idol? I’m not sure,” she said.

When doing her Ph.D. Program in Linguistics, Professor Hu had another completely different learning experience. “It was like learning martial art. At first, you learned different approaches of linguistics from different courses. But later, when you are actually going to analyze language data, you don’t limit yourself to only certain approaches but just play it by ear,” said the professor.

Later in the graduate program, Professor Hu then had a deeper understanding on Linguistics and, “like boyfriend and girlfriend, you settle down.” And then “you build a family with him.” In the Ph.D. Program, “you may still be a little picky, but you’re together anyway.”

Besides linguistics, in her everyday life, Professor Hu likes to watch TV series. She started to watch TV series because of a senior in graduate school. At that time, they would watch *Friends* together while having lunch. The professor was not used to watching TV series, so initially she couldn’t understand those punch lines. But later, she realized that she could pick up lots of collocations while watching the series which even provide the scenarios for her.

“I’m a down-to-earth person. I value productivity,” said Professor Hu. Therefore, when Professor Hu found that watching TV series can be combined with her major, the activity became her hobby. She also watched *The Big Bang Theory*. In this way, she

can maintain her interest and spend time with her husband at the same time.

Since Professor Hu values productivity, she has tried different time management strategies and applications. When she was little, her mother once taught her to make to-do lists. However, Professor Hu easily got frustrated when seeing too many things waiting on the lists to be done.

Then she discovered, on the website called “playpcesor,” that there was another time management method named “The 1-3-5 rule.” “The concept is that people can’t accomplish endless number of things each day. Then you just get one big thing, three medium things, and five small things done.

Another method Professor Hu also uses is “Bullet Journal.” She shared that when starting using the system to become more organized, she got to know herself better. More precisely, she could find out when of the day or week she can be most productive and then arrange her schedule.

Besides, Professor Hu also learned to use “Markdown” which allows users to add formatting elements, such as headings, bulleted lists, or URLs to plain text without the use of a formal text editor or the use of HTML tags. She also used it to draw mind maps when reading papers.

“And I also use ‘Roam Research.’ I am even it’s ‘Believer’ because I choose to subscribe to the service for five consecutive years,” said Professor Hu. Since she likes to absorb lots of information, she found the application useful in terms of organizing the information into networked thought and forming her own graph database.

Speaking of being productive and saving time, Professor Hu keeps an open mind towards AI tools, like ChatGPT. She viewed ChatGPT as a helper who can get paperwork sorted and data organized or can adjust the format of documents. Its personalization is a major feature for

“I also learned how to use ‘Notion’ before. Users just type in the data once, and then they can view the same database in different ways, such as table, timeline, or calendar, but I seldom use it since I can’t customize it,” said Professor Hu.

In class, Professor Hu would also introduce some tools to students. “The teacher will introduce some AI assistance writing tools to us,” said Judy, who is now taking the teacher’s course Types of Essay Writing. “Like ChatGPT or Grammarly.”

“Maybe it’s my father, who teaches computer in a middle school,” said Professor Hu. “He is like my role model. Because of him, I am not afraid of technology.” She does not want to waste her time on things which can be finished more efficiently by robots.





# *Volunteering in the Philippines Isn't Charity, But a Way of Living*



“Will you come back?” asked a child with an innocent look. It might be the most difficult promise in the world.

“I was struggling about what to say,” said Alice Liu, a junior in the Department of Foreign Language and Applied Linguistics (FLAL), just back from the Philippines in March 2024. Every winter and summer, the International Volunteer Group (IVG) at National Taipei University (NTPU) goes to the Philippines to execute a mission. 2013 was the first time they started. Unpredictably, it turned out to be the last time due to the outbreak of the pandemic in Taiwan.

In these three years, IVG was forced to cease all overseas volunteer works, but they still held experience exchange events, trying to pass down the international volunteers' experience. After the pandemic, it took efforts to get everything back on track. “Finding the leader is a more challenging task after this long halt. Without previous experience, the pioneer ought to start from scratch,” said Grace Wu, an

administrative assistant at the Office of Student Affairs at NTPU.

At this vexing moment, Wu got to know Jerry Lai, a junior who majored in the Department of Accounting and minored in FLAL, by coincidence.

Seeing Jerry come into sight, “He has been committed to volunteering and exhibited a strong willingness to try,” said Wu. By serendipity, Jerry found the vice director of IVG was his old friend. They hit it off immediately. “It looks like everything is waiting for us,” said Jerry.

Late in 2023, Jerry and IVG resumed their journey in the Philippines. As a pioneer, Jerry led the members to explore the unknown.

This March was the 3rd time IVG headed to the Philippines. Soon after getting off the plane, they drove three hours from Manila downtown and first stopped at a red tin sheet metal house, Children's Mission Philippine (CMP), a local shelter taking care of



**By Jasmine Kuo**

children from dysfunctional families in nearby neighborhoods.

Some children were sent to the shelter because their parents were unable to raise them, were put in jail, or simply disappeared. After unloading the luggage, Jerry and his teammates dived into the preparation of courses promptly, ranging from breakfast-eating in the Philippines and Taiwan, calligraphy writing, baseball playing, fairytale acting, and even Taiwanese learning.

“Children are curious about us, about things we might have been so familiar with, they seldom have a chance to learn about,” said Jerry.

One day in the camp, some elder boys were late. When they came to the class, Jerry noticed they brought some money. “Where did you go in the morning?” asked Jerry. “The semester is going to begin tomorrow, and we went to help move some bricks,” said the kids. Jerry paused a while before asking if it is heavy. “One kilogram each,” said the kids wearily but high-spirited. Soon they were engaged in the class, but then Jerry gazed thoughtfully at them in silence.

Reflecting on the days in CMP, a boy, who is competitive in the class, came to Alice's mind. He tried to answer every question and get the first place in order to catch everyone's attention all the time.

“At the beginning, we thought he was

just naughty, but after class, he approached my partner. ‘Can you be my mom?’ asked the boy. At that moment, she held back her tears but later had a meltdown on the last day of the camp,” said Alice. “He just needs someone to be loved.”

In CMP, members of IVG not only taught children in the classroom but also paid a visit to their neighborhood. They walked deep into the mountains and continued into a back alley. A row of tin-sheeted houses are built along the hillside. Some buckets filled with household water lined aside. “Salamat Po,” said residents, which means thank you in Tagalog, a major language in the Philippines. “Come on. Let’s play basketball,” said the kids together.

On the hilltop is a lush tree with a basketball net. “These moments are plain but powerful just like the smiles on their face,” said Jerry. “Walking into their neighborhood enables us to know what they really need, instead of what we think they need. It is a priceless learning opportunity.”

As the advisor of IVG, Professor Rae Lan, the acting Chair of FLAL, has been dedicated to volunteering for over 10 years since 2010. While students are ready for the children’s courses, Professor Lan also takes on other projects.

She runs a Women’s Empowering Plan. Most women in the Philippines take the responsibility of looking after children and families at home, so sometimes they come to class with a baby held in their arms. “We, twenty-odd people, shared our cultures and made Decoupage – they are surprisingly good at handicraft – in a small classroom watching a small laptop screen. Even though the environment is limited, their passion is boundless. The optimism has been rooted in the Philippines,” said Professor Lan.

Professor Lan always emphasizes the importance of devotion, and it is

revealed in her own experience. This abiding companionship has created a special bond between her and the locals.

One day, Professor Lan received a call in the office. “Teacher Rae, our second daughter is about to be born. Are you willing to be her godmother?” asked Rhudie Verzosa, a beneficiary in CMP. They have always kept in touch on Facebook since the first time they met in 2019. “Of course. But I am not there, is there any obligation I should fulfill?” said Professor Lan. “No, no, you just need to give us a blessing,” replied Rhudie.

“Every time I go back to the Philippines, we visit each other. Now my goddaughter is two years old. They even started a small business selling donuts, and we have made a deal to meet this summer,” said Professor Lan with a satisfying smile.

Earlier this year, Professor Lan also sent a red envelope to her goddaughter on her birthday as a way of sharing good luck and blessings, and her parents later bought her a tiny table.

Waving to CMP, IVG proceeded to another children’s shelter in the neighborhood. Children here suffer from different disabilities. Some of them have Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), some have Cerebral Palsy, and others are mute or deaf. This time, drawing becomes their common element of communication.

“We drew and danced together. Without verbal language, we can still communicate through our eyes and hearts. Sometimes I felt like they gave us more than we did to them,” said Alice. In the end, the kids and their parents wrote the upside-down “Fu,” a Chinese character that means blessing, and hung it on the wall together.

At the end of the journey, IVG had a campus tour with college students at

the University of the Philippines Diliman and cultural sharing with the ambassador of the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in the Philippines, keeping down the volunteering spirit and experience.

After Alice came back to Taiwan, the 12-day volunteer in retrospect is like a 12-day-dream, the most beautiful one to her. “This is the life you see on the news, but the moment you see it in reality, it is a completely different, more overwhelming, fiercer feeling,” added Jerry.

“They don’t have high material wealth, but I can see pure, simple happiness in their eyes. Unlike them, even though we seem to obtain more than they do, we lack the ability to be happy. Through volunteering, we learn to see things differently,” added Alice.

As Professor Lan always reminds the students, volunteering is a way of life. It is the people to achieve this journey. It is never a fleeting moment. This summer in July, IVG will proceed to the Philippines and visit children and residents there. This time Alice becomes the director and shoulders more responsibilities. Stories there will continue in sparkles.





# *Tales of Transformation and Self-Discovery Abroad*



Peter Ke is a student studying at FLAL in his third year. In the realm of digital wanderlust, where YouTube reels paint vibrant pictures of faraway lands, Peter found himself drawn to the allure of overseas adventure.

For Peter, the decision to venture abroad was born from a desire to break free from the monotony of routine and embrace the unknown. "I saw it on YouTube, and my friends went to see it too. It looks like a lot of fun," he recalled.

Setting his sights on the Philippines, Peter was drawn to its vibrant culture and English-speaking environment. To his astonishment, the scorching sun in the Philippines stood for 24 hours, leaving me drenched in sweat during the 8 hours I spent with the children. In this melting pot of diversity, Peter saw an opportunity to immerse himself in new experiences and broaden his horizons.

Getting ready for his trip abroad, Peter faced many challenges, with the

biggest one being the idea of living alone in a foreign country. "Living alone in a new place for two months means learning to adapt to a new environment, making new friends, taking care of oneself, and planning finances effectively," he reflected.

Arriving at his destination, Peter found himself navigating the intricacies of cultural differences, from culinary preferences to communication styles. "Many of the dishes served there are Korean cuisine to cater to the higher-ups, which made it difficult for me to adapt," he shared. Yet, through patience and understanding, Peter forged connections and bridged cultural divides, finding common ground amidst diversity.

Amidst the ebb and flow of work and study, Peter discovered newfound confidence and skills. "During the semester, I found that my English-speaking skills improved, and I became more confident," he acknowledged. Through the crucible



**By Jasper Chen**

of experience, Peter emerged transformed, with a deeper understanding of his own capabilities and potential.

Yet, amidst the triumphs, Peter confronted moments of adversity, from the challenge of language barriers to the daunting task of managing household chores. "The biggest challenge is how to manage household chores by myself," he admitted.

As his journey abroad comes to an end, Peter feels comforted by the warmth of home, but also holds onto a wealth of memories and experiences from his journey. "I deeply miss my family and friends, especially when I'm sick with a cold," he shared. Yet, amidst the pangs of homesickness, Peter finds solace in music and exercise, drawing strength from within to weather the storm of loneliness.

Wilson Sun is a student who is now in his third year studying at FLAL. Different from other students, Wilson's decision to venture abroad stemmed from a desire to break free from the familiar confines of his homeland.

"I wasn't very fond of the environment in Taiwan," he recalled. "I wanted to try living in a different environment for a few months to see if it is suitable for me." Thus, the stage was set for an adventure of a lifetime.

With determination and a map of



possibilities before him, Wilson set his sights on Wildwood, a charming locale nestled near the vibrant city of New York. Despite limited options due to a late application, the proximity to his desired destination fueled his decision. "I chose this location because it's quite close to New York, which I wanted to explore," he explained.

Preparing for his overseas stint posed its share of challenges, yet Wilson remained undeterred. "Apart from the tedious preparation of documents, I didn't encounter many difficulties," he reflected.

When Wilson arrived in the land of opportunity, he discovered a mix of different cultures everywhere he went. "Americans are very inefficient in handling tasks," he observed. "Opening a bank account could take half a day."

Wilson encountered moments that shaped his journey. From the punctuality lesson learned during a lifeguard test to the resilience forged in the pursuit of a second job, each experience left an indelible mark. "This experience taught me the importance of punctuality," he shared. "Since then, I always arrive 20 minutes early for work."

Beyond the realm of work, Wilson found solace in the simple pleasures of daily life abroad. "Eating out in the US is expensive and offers fewer choices," he noted. He embraced the culinary journey by opting for homemade meals over dining out, relishing the comforting tastes of home amid unfamiliar surroundings.

Wilson found companionship in

unexpected places. From chance encounters with fellow travelers to musical exchanges with newfound friends, each interaction enriched his journey. "The key to making friends abroad is not to be shy," he affirmed. "They are usually very warm and engaging."

As his overseas odyssey ended, Wilson returned home with a treasure trove of memories and insights. "This working experience in the US made me realize the saying, 'Slow down, let your childhood courage catch up with you,'" he said. Through the lens of his journey, he discovered the beauty of embracing life's uncertainties with unwavering courage.

"Yes, because it allows me to learn independence, experience the culture of foreign companies, and at worst, improve my English," he affirmed.

Allison Yan is a graduate from FLAL in 2021. Being an intern in an international company, Allison found herself embarking on a journey of cross-cultural exploration. With a spirit of spontaneity and a thirst for new experiences, Allison seized the chance to venture abroad, immersing herself in the vibrant tapestry of Austrian life.

For Allison, the decision to embark on a short-term exchange was guided by the serendipity of timing. "Because the timing was just right, I had the opportunity to go abroad for an exchange," she shared.

Setting her sights on Austria, Allison was drawn to its rich cultural heritage and convenient transportation links.

"I had previously studied German, and the transportation here is convenient," she explained. In the heart of Europe, Allison found herself surrounded by the echoes of history and the warmth of Austrian hospitality.

As Allison prepared for her overseas adventure, she found herself confronting the unknown with a sense

of trepidation and excitement. "Preparation went well," she remarked, her voice tinged with optimism. Armed with resilience and a spirit of adaptability, Allison embraced the challenges of living abroad with open arms.

Arriving in Austria, Allison found herself immersed in a whirlwind of cultural differences and new experiences. "Cultural differences may include everyone being eager to express their opinions," she observed. Yet, amidst the cacophony of voices, Allison discovered a sense of balance, learning to assert herself while respecting the perspectives of others.

Amidst the backdrop of academic pursuits and cultural exploration, Allison found herself undergoing a profound transformation. "Not bad at all," she reflected, her tone filled with newfound confidence and self-assurance. Through the crucible of experience, she emerged with a broader perspective, a deeper sense of empathy, and a newfound love for herself.





# *To Stay or Not to Stay, That is the Question*



Have you ever thought about your next step after graduating from university? Being a local student, you may think about having further study in other country or starting your career journey. However, foreign student at National Taipei University (NTPU) have an extra option for returning to their countries. Facing these crucial decisions, how will they choose?

Emma Chan, an officer from the Office of International Affairs, mentioned that there are distinct differences in the scenario. “Most of the students, who are from Hong Kong or Macau, would rather go home because of the higher salaries. However, students from Malaysia tend to stay in Taiwan,” she said.

According to Hong Kong’s Minimum Wages Ordinance, Chapter 608, the minimum wage for a month has been HK\$16,300 (TW\$67,718) in Hong Kong since 2023. Compared to the minimum wage of TW\$27,470 in Taiwan in 2024, Hong Kong offers a

much higher alternative. “Therefore, many students from Hong Kong will decide to return to their country, but the situation of Malaysian students is the opposite,” said Chan.

According to the International Trade Administration in Taiwan, the Economic Section in Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in Malaysia stated that the minimum wage for a month has been raised to MYR\$1500 (TW\$10,202) since 2023.

Yong Xin Yuan, a senior at the Department of Foreign Languages and Applied Statistics (FLAL), is a Malaysian from Ipoh. Originally, she decided to study abroad in Taiwan because of her siblings. “There is a university next to my high school, but I want to experience a different living environment,” she stated. Therefore, she came to Taiwan, which is the most acceptable distance from her parents.

When she was a freshman, she believed that she would just find a job right after graduation. However,



**By Angel Shum**

during her sophomore and junior years, she suddenly had an idea that she would like to take some course related to music since she has been fond of singing since small. Or, she said, she may go and experience a working holiday.

Now, Xin Yuan is about to graduate. She decides to work first to save money and then decides whether to study music or apply for a working holiday visa. “Although I feel a bit missing home, I don’t want to return to my comfort zone so early. I will probably stay in Taiwan to find some jobs in administration or related to music. I think accumulating working experience right after my graduation is good for my future,” she said.

Tam Huai Jun, also a Malaysian—from Johor Bahru—is a senior at the Department of Leisure and Sport Management. He has liked Taiwan very much since he was a junior high school student. “I like the attitude of Taiwanese people, and the environment in Taiwan makes me feel comfortable,” he stated. “Also, some relatives are living in Taiwan, so I think it is a great memory for studying here.”

When he was just a freshman, his attitude toward studying was similar to most other freshmen, focusing on meeting and playing with friends. He stated, “I didn’t think too much about my future, and I thought the graduation was still far away from me.”



In his junior year though, Huai Jun realized that if he was still just focusing on hanging outside, there was a high probability that he would need to postpone his graduation, so he started to work hard on his academics. “I think the companies in Taiwan has better welfare for employees than in Malaysia,” he mentioned. Therefore, He decided to stay in Taiwan for two to three years and saw whether he could adapt or not.

Tim Leung, a senior at the Department of Public Administration and Policy, is from Hong Kong. Before deciding to study abroad in Taiwan, he preferred to apply for a working holiday visa. However, “I am afraid that I do not have enough money and good language skills, so I decided to come to Taiwan for my bachelor’s degree,” said Tim.

When he just came to Taiwan, he wanted to stay after graduating, simply because he wanted to escape from the environment that he didn’t have. Afterward, owing to some reasons from his family, Tim changed his mind about going back to Hong Kong. “I will probably go back to Hong Kong first, and then consider the working holiday and how my future is,” he stated.

Another senior student from Hong Kong, Julian Fung is studying in the Department of History. In the beginning, he decided to study abroad but didn’t confirm where he would go. He mentioned, “I initially thought about the U.S., U.K., or Canada, but

I finally chose Taiwan because I like the culture here. Also, the working environment and the communication manners among Taiwanese people does not exist in Hong Kong.” Julian has loved acting since he was little, and he would like to do some jobs about performing himself. However, his parents deemed that doing jobs of acting could not earn much money. Therefore, “I want to study history and become a teacher. In the future, the classroom will be my stage,” said Julian.

When he was a freshman, he thought about going to a western country for a master’s degree after graduating from NTPU. “I found that I cannot be a teacher in elementary school or high school in Taiwan because I am not a local resident,” Julian stated. “So I gave up the original idea.”

During these years, Julian found that he didn’t like studying history at all. “I like acting, and I would like to pursue what I love to do,” said Julian. He registered for the artist training class, organized by Sanlih Entertainment Television in Taiwan. Later on, he took some acting jobs. “I would like to know whether it is the world that I imagine and like,” he mentioned.

“I have to postpone my graduation for at least one year.” Since Julian has not taken his classes seriously, he cannot graduate on time. However, he found the way that he like to go in his future in these few years.

Julian stated that when he finishes his bachelor’s degree, he would like to return to Hong Kong. Although life in Taiwan is what he loves, the reality is different from the dream. “If I want to do some acting jobs in Taiwan, the salary will not enable me to support my daily life,” said Julian.

Apart from students from Hong Kong and Malaysia, Rowena Li, from Daegu in Korea, is studying at the Department of Law. Originally, the decision to study abroad in Taiwan was made by her parents, and they thought studying law was good for her future.

In the first year, Rowena was not interested in law at all, but she didn’t think too much about her future. However, since she was a junior, “I started to get interested in law, and I thought it was meaningful,” she said. She thought the teaching style of her professors let her believe that law is the highest authority in society, and litigation is the final step for people’s arguments.

Now, Rowena is planning to stay in Taiwan. She thinks that she can find some job like a translator or related to law in Taiwan. Although the minimum wage in Taiwan is less than that in Korea, KRW\$2,390,124 (TW\$56,577) per month—according to the statistics from the Seoul Metropolitan Government—she still wants to stay.

“There is a superiority for foreign students over local students,” said Chan from the Office of International Affairs. “Their language skills, since they are fluent in three languages, Chinese, English, and their home languages.”

