In Their Own Words
Chinese University Students Reflect on Education
Student Reflections edited by Daniel Ross, SJ
Preface

A hundred years ago people had to learn about things by going to find someone who knew the answers to their questions. If they were lucky they also had books that they could read or there was a library that was close enough to consult. Education usually meant sitting before teachers who had the answers to the questions.

There was the blackboard, the textbook, the teacher in front and all too often only objective written tests. Fifty years ago schools operated much the same way.

Today, however, the answers, the “facts”, are available for each student who not only has a computer, but a smartphone. We educators, however, are too often still standing in front of a blackboard textbook in hand lecturing. This shortbook describes the results of efforts to teach by inspiring students to look for the answers themselves and learn also from each other.

It is only a beginning.

Daniel Ross, Ph.D., Editor
Table of contents

Dedication iii

Part One: Seminar on Multicultural Education

What I Feel About This Course--- Zhong Si Ran (钟思燃) 3
A Mind-opening Journey--- Danny Lao (劳丹妮) 5
A New Experience in My Final Year--- Zhang Kexin (张可欣) 8
Multicultural Communication Reflection--- Benson Huang (黄彬洵) 13
Reflection on the Cross-Culture Study Class--- luisa Gu (古慧彬) 16
Relationships Are One thing, Politics Are Another--- Victor zhang (张天一) 19
A Very Special Course for Me--- Olivia Ou (欧阳茵) 23
Reflections on What I Learned from the Multicultural Class--- Vincent Yang (杨树坤) 26
Let’s Talk--- Li Chu Han (栗楚寒) 31
Grow Up By Learning From Myself--- Snowy Luo (罗雪) 34
Education in China--- Alan Qiu (邱建豪) 38

Part Two: Communication and Cooperation Skills

Reflections On My Favorite Class--- Carol Wang (王超) 43
A New Trial A Novel Discovery--- Katie Tu (涂宇祺) 47
Learning in a Group--- “Ice” Jia Chi (贾奇) 51
A Unique Class--- Noah Hong (洪建龙) 54
The Undiscovered Self--- Emma Tan (谭乔尹) 58
Live, Act, Cooperate and Communicate--- Matthew Ma (马骁) 62
A Special and Memorable Experience in College--- Amy Tsui (徐颖欣) 67
Reflections on This Seminar--- James Tu (余俊) 72
Reflecting On This Class--- Stella Liu (刘伟) 77
What Did I Gain From This Course?--- Jackson Tai (戴夏敏) 81
A Creation---- An Unusual Class--- Charlene Han (韩绮旋) 85
What I Gained From This Class--- Jim Li (李品丁) 88
Dedication

The Huoban Center in Chinese is 夥伴中心. The first two characters carry much more meaning than the closest English translation I can think of. The Chinese “huoban” means something more like “close cooperating friend” or “group of close cooperating friends”. Our center is in part an effort to promote education based on “the cooperation of friends”. Lacking a better way of expressing this in English we have chosen as the formal English name of the center the “International Center for the Promotion of Partner Based Learning.”

A key word in the above is “we”. I have been teaching for many years in the Sociology Department and later Social Work Department of Fu Jen Catholic University in Taiwan. Through the years my Fu Jen students have helped me through many difficult times. As a foreigner and working in university department level administration my students have given me advice and most of all have aided me in designing different projects and developing different methods of teaching.

A result of forty years working with them has brought about the organization of the Huoban Center. Without this cooperation and also support the center would not be possible.

With the help of my former students we are now working closely with Sun Yat Sen University at the Zhuhai campus in China. The seminars I am teaching are only two of the projects of the center.
In addition to the seminars that I teach at Fu Jen University and Sun Yat Sen University students from the two schools have an opportunity to join service/immersion programs in the Philippines and Cambodia during vacations. These projects are organized by my former students. Each year former students also visit our center in Zhuhai and they support international visitors two or three of whom spend a couple of weeks at the center each semester. I try to introduce the students to each other and to others over the internet.

“In Their Own Words” is dedicated to my former

Fu Jen University students.
Part One:
Seminar on *Multicultural Education*

Every Thursday morning last semester twelve undergraduate students from the School of International Studies at Sun Yat Sen University came by bicycle to the Huoban Center. It is a 15 minute ride from the SYSU Zhuhai campus in China to the center. Before class the students were given the transcription for a TEDtalk video that I had chosen. Each class began with a viewing of the video. This was followed by an open discussion based on, but not limited to, the video.

Part one of this book contains the reflections of the students on this two credit “Seminar on Multicultural Education”. It is not an English course, but the language used is English breaking off into Chinese at times.

The topics chosen varied, but all focused in one way or another on human social concerns in different cultures. This was a new experience for these undergraduates and something that is usually missing in formal education in a large country like China.

At the end of the semester the students were asked to write short reflections on the experience. The result is this book. The reader will be impressed, as this instructor has been, by the English level of these undergraduates. The group discussions that followed the video talks were not structured but open exchanges of ideas. The emphasis was on the process
and not reaching consensus or conclusions. No attention was paid to grammar or even pronunciation. Communication was the goal. Learning to speak and also to listen, to reflect on what the other has said and expand on it or even bring up a new idea.

Through the weeks the students grew to respect the knowledge of the others and openly share their own ideas in an atmosphere that was welcoming. Quiet students became sure of themselves and dared to speak up. Talkative students learned to listen and learn.

I have kept the same attitude toward these reflections. I respect what the students have written and the way they have written them. It is their English, not always polished, but their ideas.