

Summer Schools Program Benefits Around 75,000 Students in Six Years

(Courtesy of Hao-Ran Wang at the Division of Junior High and Elementary Education)



Since the Summer Schools Program launched by the Ministry of Education six years ago, a variety of theme-based activities and courses have been organized during summer vacation and have been well received by all participants. The number of participants has continued to grow. So far, 74,900 students have participated. The Ministry of Education held a press conference on the 2020 educational achievements on December 22, 2020, at which it also presented awards to the participating schools with excellent performance as recognition of their efforts in the development of various creative courses that help to stimulate students' interest in learning. In particular, the local language activity courses serve to strengthen the emotional connection between students and the land, which is of significant help to expand students' learning horizons.

The Ministry of Education has implemented the Summer Schools Program for six consecutive years and has, thus, subsidized elementary and junior high schools to develop two to four weeks course modules each summer vacation. A variety of theme-based local language or integrated activity courses have been developed to guide students to "enhance their abilities during the

summer vacation and to learn by doing." This year, more than 20,000 students in 863 classes at a total of 695 schools participated.

At the press conference on educational achievements, students who spoke Hokkien, Hakka, and indigenous languages were invited to sing lovely ballads in their local languages while dancing in the lively melodies, showcasing their learning outcome and experience of the program. Meanwhile, a video of the highlights of the student activities in the program was aired to demonstrate the effectiveness of this featured learning program.

The Da-Nan Primary School in Taitung County adopts the traditional customs and rituals of the eastern Rukai tribe as the theme of the courses under the program. Featuring forest and mountain surviving skills, music and dance, weaving, and ingenuity in daily life, the immersive and experiential courses incorporate elements of local culture and customs to guide students to step out of their classroom to learn about the tribal system, cooking without using cooking utensils, shell flower weaving techniques, and the Millet Harvest Festival and the Swing Festival of the Taronak Tribe. Through the combination of traditional wisdom and the tribal ritual activities, the indigenous languages and local cultures can continue to be passed on and take root.

The Longdu Middle School in Kaohsiung City has implemented the program and offered local language activity courses for three consecutive years. Ranging from daily life topics, languages to culture. Its programs focus much on Hakka rap art, dance, plant dyeing, creative cuisine, Longdu cultural tours, and Hakka ballad creation. Through interactive and experiential activities, children are enabled to speak their native languages naturally, creating a new experience of happy learning.

At the press conference, the Wang-Gong Elementary School in Changhua County was also invited to share its maker creativity course. The school's courses under the program this year were aimed to teach students how to control the navigation of the Brain Go car through

programming languages and the MBlock5 5 program, while guiding them to make the "Brain Go treasure box," which can be opened with a password and a keycard, through assembling a motherboard and a touch keyboard based on the knowledge in the electromechanical field. In the hands-on process, students could pick up the concepts of programming and logical deduction, all while experiencing the fun of exploring and resolving problems encountered, thereby stimulating their learning potential and enthusiasm.

Furthermore, in order to encourage schools to record the experience of the program, the K-12 Education Administration, Ministry of Education, organized a creative video and photo storytelling contest. A total of 16 works were selected for the High Distinction and the Excellence Awards, and the awards were presented at the press conference today. The Si-Kou Elementary School in Chiayi County, which was awarded the High Distinction Award in the creative video group, created a series of international guide training courses with local characteristics by integrating English teaching with the concepts of rural tourism that are based on the featured local sectors and cultural attractions. Through the courses, children were able to serve as tour guides and even became YouTubers to lead the audience to tour their hometown from an interesting and novel perspective.

According to the K-12 Education Administration, the program has opened up the door for students to learn happily while allowing them to learn the local languages and cultures in a relaxing manner during summer vacation, so as to strengthen their emotional ties with their land and hometown and to broaden their learning horizons and scope. The integrated thematic courses place a great deal of emphasis on localization, school-based characteristics, and students' needs; as such, students can develop their abilities to learn independently, interactively, and reciprocally, while creating unforgettable summer vacation memories. This program will continue to be implemented in the future to allow more students to experience diversified, innovative, and extensive courses.