

Who says learning is all pressure and frowns? With just the right dose of flexibility, students are granted a fun and relaxed path through education.

TES German Section

ensures children learn with enjoyment

Education

By KATHERINE WEI
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Would you like for your child to study in a happy learning environment? And, better yet, one that allows your child to become fluent in several languages? If your answers were yes, the Taipei European School's (TES) German Section may be your best choice.

The TES German Section provides excellent learning opportunities and is able to guide even children with no understanding of German to become fluent in a relaxed learning environment. Children pick up new languages at remarkably fast paces when compared to adults, and blending into one — or many — new culture(s) can enhance the progress even more.

There is a notable difference between the German Section and local Taiwanese schools, said Jochen Hoheisel, the German Section Council Treasurer. "Instead of having the teachers explain problems and feed the answers to the students, the German Section teachers ask the students to try and come up with a solution of their own; thus the students are able to learn independent thinking," said Hoheisel.

Studying in a school with students of 50 nationalities, children are exposed to a multicultural environment that then broadens their horizons considerably and also provides an opportunity for the children to build a steady network of friends from all over the world, Hoheisel continued.

The first two years of the German section are flexible; children arrive at school for a day's fun and are able to learn by engaging in activities they enjoy. "You can tell they are truly enjoying school. Once my son had a fever and he still wanted to go so badly," said Hoheisel.

The parents of the German Section agree that its real strength is that children are entitled to a happy childhood without missing out on educational opportunities, so enjoyment is blended into learning for the youngsters to appreciate the latter.

"Also, German teachers encourage students to develop alternative thoughts and in grading only assess whether the opinion is logical and consistent rather than whether they agree with the students' opinions. Whereas

Taiwanese schools are taught according to the teachers' word, in German education

there is no single answer to many issues," said Hoheisel.

The preschool classes are taught mostly in German, and English is taught during a two-hour session each day in first grade. The required number of English-speaking lessons expands as the students make their way into higher grades until they are able to learn to use both languages fluently and adopt a third when old enough.

In elementary school, two adjoining grades share the same classroom; this benefits both younger and older students greatly as the latter aid the younger ones in lessons while reviewing what they have learned previously. And although there is a set curriculum for each school year, the students are not restricted to learning at a fixed pace, they may progress as each individual wishes — the school tailors to the needs of each individual student.

Students also discuss everyday issues and teachers try to help them benefit from these happenings; to understand, come to terms with and accept them before moving on with newly acquired knowledge, Hoheisel noted.

Student parent Jennifer Wang agrees with Hoheisel, noting that



German Section provides more opportunities than local schools when it comes to flexible learning and broadening children's horizons at a young age. Wang's family is entirely Taiwanese and, before enrolling their child in the German Section, was not familiar with the language and its background. "There are no grueling hardships as students learn from games and interaction with one another; the German Section's main advantage is that it leaves both students and parents with few worries."

"I really like going to school here. I was so nervous on my first day, but the

teachers and students made me feel welcome here ... I even went to a German friend's home for Christmas holidays!" said student Eileen Wu, Wang's daughter. Wu is an ideal example of a Taiwanese child who has blended well in the German Section even without prior knowledge of the language, as she was named one of the top two in her class' reading contest last year.

"The German section and TES greatly respect children's independence so they learn to finish projects alone at a very young age and the procedure instills motivation because they truly enjoy learning," said Wang. ■

1. Students of the Taipei European School (TES) German Section enjoy reading time in the school library.
2. TES German Section students discuss school materials and their favorite subjects in school, where teachers are flexible in teaching and classes tailor to each individual's needs.
3. In this photo from Taipei European School's (TES) German Section, students laugh and chase each other while donning superhero costumes. The German Section merges education and personal development with games and enjoyable activities, allowing the students to enjoy themselves while learning.

Courtesy of the Taipei European School

