

WHAT WE EXPERIENCE | BACK TO BASICS



Artist Reflection:

Gabriella Ignacio

Like the last issue, the theme of this quarter – education – is very significant in many Asian American and Pacific Islander cultures, so it was difficult to narrow down exactly how I wanted to portray it. Again, I ended up going back to a more simple concept with contrasting colors and values to give it a little more depth. I hope it proves to be a solid cover to kick off our third year of the magazine!



Letter from the Founders

Dear reader,

Welcome to our ninth quarterly issue! We are beyond excited, as always, to present to you our issue, which marks the beginning of our THIRD year! Thank you for taking the time to read our magazine. We are so grateful for all of your support.

If you are new to our magazine, our names are Jeenah Gwak and Hope Yu, and we are two college students from the greater Seattle area, now at Stanford University and Carleton College, respectively. Our project began as one of our many ideas. As Asian adolescents living in American society, we have witnessed countless instances of discrimination and xenophobia against people of Asian descent within our communities. Despite living in a relatively Asian-dense region, we have been exposed to various forms of social injustice against Asian Americans, such as the lack of Asian representation in academic curricula and recent COVID-19 related events. These occurrences galvanized us to take action.

Taking into consideration our abilities, we decided that promoting awareness through written works would be the most appropriate for our course of action. Through our magazine, we seek to share the untold stories of Asian-American experiences surrounding racism and societal pressures that are often overlooked in society. We hope to educate and inspire you to take action.

Our magazine, *What We Experience*, is released quarterly, on the last Sunday of every March, June, September, and December, covering the experiences of various Asian identities. This ninth issue, titled "Back to Basics," covers many topics related to education and academics of AAPI communities. We titled this issue "Back to Basics" because education is considered the "basic" foundation in many Asian cultures. From the recent Teaching Asian Pacific American History Act to the hagwon culture of South Korea, our writers and illustrators have explored many topics in depth to present to you.

This ninth issue will continue our series on AAPI individuals in various aspects of society.

Thank you for supporting us in our journey to advocate for the Asian-American community. We hope you enjoy our magazine and feel inspired to share it with others.

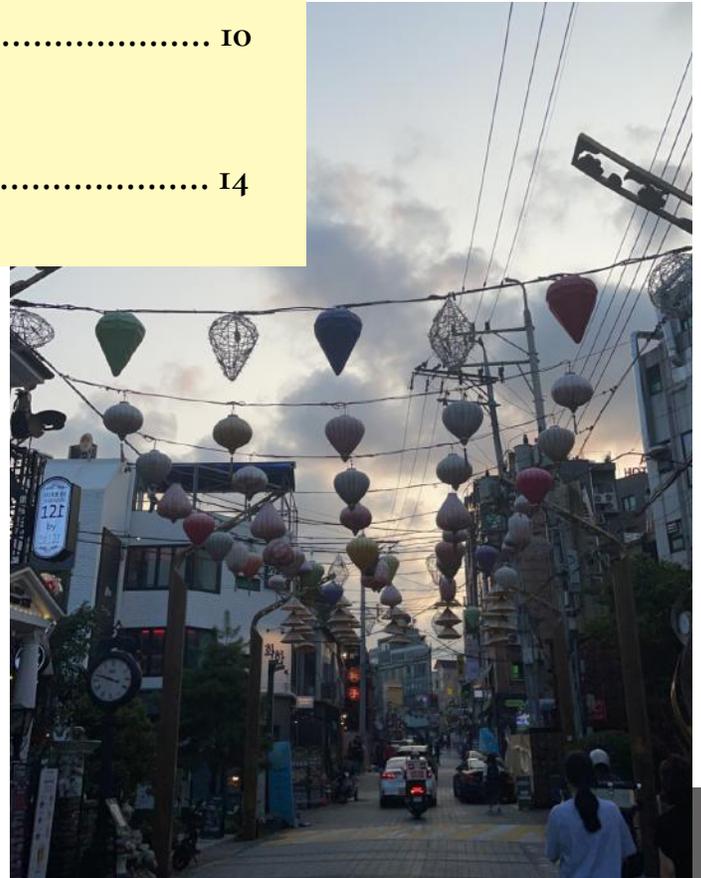
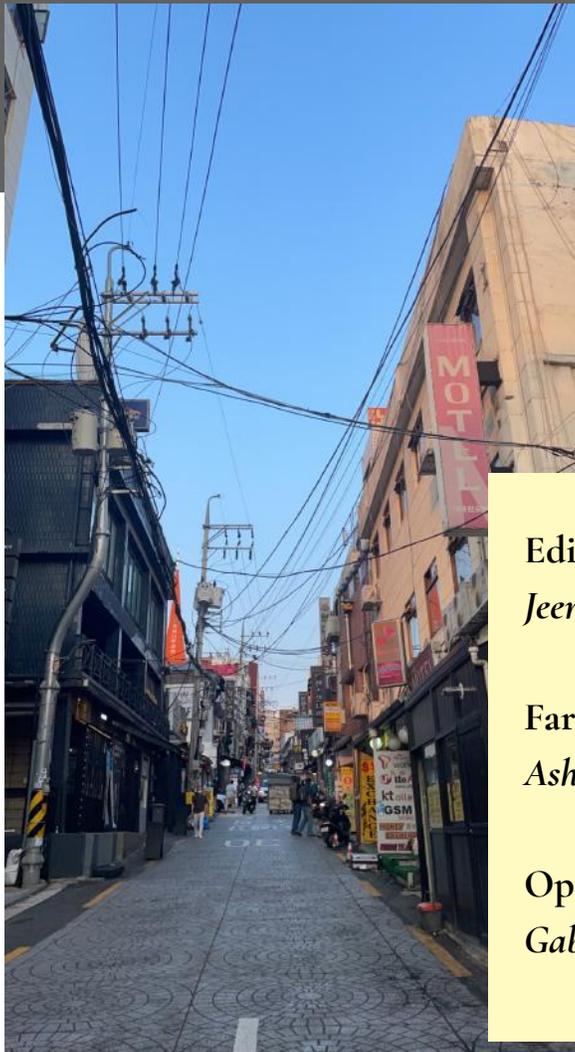
Sincerely,
Jeenah Gwak & Hope Yu

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TEACHING ASIAN PACIFIC HISTORY ACT

A group of children saluting the American flag at a school in the Chinatown area of Manhattan circa 1960. Photo by Keystone View/FPG/Getty Images.

BY JEENAH GWAK

Throughout my years of elementary, middle, and high school, I indulged myself in various history and social studies classes, ranging from Human Geography to Advanced Placement (AP) World History. I vaguely remember each topic and time period that I learned about, whether it be America's Great Depression or the rule of the Qing Dynasty in Asia. However, I don't recall learning about the lives of Asians and Pacific Islanders in the United States. Despite the many years that I spent learning about our nation's history in school – and despite living in a region with a significant AAPI population – I never had the experience of learning about my own people. My knowledge of the history of the AAPI people all comes from my own research that I pursued in my own time, out of curiosity.

According to the 2020 Census, Asians, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders (those who are not mixed with another race) make up 6.2% of the nation's population, with nearly 21 million AANHPI people in the United States. And this number is projected to skyrocket, reaching 46 million in 2060 (Pew Research Center). The growth of the Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander (AANHPI) population in the United States is inevitably accompanied by the rich history and achievements of the AANHPI people, none of which are detailed in the K-12 curriculum mandated by national and state standards.

In fact, the inclusion of AANHPI history is nearly impossible to come by in America's educational curriculum today, regardless of which specific state, region, district, or school. For countless generations, middle and high school students have learned about America's history – with limited exposure to the history of AANHPI people. However, many forget that America's complete and accurate history includes people of Asian, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander descent and their countless achievements and contributions. They have constituted a significant portion of communities across the nation for decades and shaped American society to be the way that it is today. In truth, some of the most successful people in the United States are of AANHPI descent.

To combat the injustice in our nation's education system as well as acknowledge the anti-Asian sentiment that has heightened since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, Representative Grace Meng introduced the Teaching Asian Pacific American History Act (H.R. 8519) to the House of Education and Labor on October 2nd, 2020, in the 116th Congress. This act essentially promotes the teaching of Asian Pacific American (APA) history for higher education institutions, libraries, and museums, requiring the U.S. Department of Education's American history and civics programs to include APA history in their programs. The official bill's caption is as follows:

“To authorize the Secretary of Education to award grants to eligible entities to carry out educational programs that include the history of peoples of Asian and Pacific Islander descent in the settling and founding of America, the social, economic, and political environments that led to the development of discriminatory laws targeting Asians and Pacific Islanders and their relation to current events, and the impact and contributions of Asian Americans to the development and enhancement of American life, United States history, literature, the economy, politics, body of laws, and culture, and for other purposes.”

Representative Meng announced the introduction of this bill on the same day that President Jimmy Carter signed a resolution to designate the annual celebration of Asian Pacific American Heritage Week, 42 years ago. Succeeding President George H.W. Bush later signed a congressional bill to extend this week-long celebration into Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month, in May.

Congresswoman (also the First Vice Chair of the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus) Meng said, “For decades, our children's social studies textbooks have misrepresented, or excluded, the history of Asian Pacific Americans. Our children are graduating from high school without learning of the

important contributions the Asian Pacific American community has made throughout our nation's history. They are also graduating without learning of the disenfranchisement and discrimination Asian Pacific Americans have faced at the hands of the United States government. I firmly believe we cannot fully empower our students to be strong and empathetic leaders without teaching them all of America's history – both the good and the bad. Our school teachings need to reflect the diversity of the American experience and accurately portray the history of Asian Pacific Americans. I urge my colleagues to support this legislation.” (Grace Meng from meng.house.gov)

The Teaching Asian Pacific American History Act, if enacted, would require the Department of Education programs to include APA history. One of the programs funded by the Department of Education is the Presidential Academies for Teachers of American History and Civics, which offers workshops to support American history and civics teachers with instruction, as well as the development of curriculum. The other is the Congressional Academies for Students of American History and Civics, which supports high schoolers in learning about history and civics topics. Hundreds of students and teachers attend these academies each year to study American history and civics in depth.

The act also mandates APA history to be included as a required component of American history for institutions to be eligible to enroll in American History and Civics Academies programs sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education. In addition, it promotes collaboration between these grantees and the Smithsonian Institution's Asian Pacific American Center to develop innovative programming for teachers and students and encourages the inclusion of APA history in National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) administrations of national and state tests.

In support of and in agreement with Meng, Senator

Mazie Hirono introduced the Teaching Asian Pacific American History Act to the Senate on May 19th, 2022, as bicameral legislation that is essentially the Senate version of Meng's proposed bill to the House. “When it comes to teaching Asian and Pacific American history in public schools, our communities are rarely – if ever – mentioned. If not invisible, APIA groups are often pejoratively depicted as foreigners, instead of people who have lived in and positively contributed to this country for generations – fueling longstanding xenophobia and racism against our communities,” Senator Hirono said. “Given the rise in anti-Asian hate crimes, it is more critical than ever before that we accurately portray the many achievements and contributions of our communities, as well as the racism and prejudice that APIAs have endured for decades in schools across the country. We have a long way to go – but this bill is a step toward making APA history part of the conversation.” (Mazie K. Hirono from hirono.senate.gov)

The bill was introduced to the 117th Congress by Meng on March 29th, 2021, and it is currently in the first stage of the legislative process, referred to the House of Education and Labor. The responses of the House and the Senate are uncertain. But with 71 cosponsors, and with the support of Senator Hirono, as well as other government officials, the AAPI community is hopeful.

On a smaller scale, there have been a few successes regarding the inclusion of AAPI history in the K-12 curriculum, on the state and district levels. In April of 2021, Senator John C. Liu of New York introduced legislation that requires all New York State public schools to teach Asian American history. Senator Liu proposed legislation S.6359 in hopes of raising awareness of Asian Americans through the development and study of a course that encompasses the achievements, contributions, and hardships of the Asian American community. In December of 2021, a bill establishing AAPI history in the curriculum in all New Jersey schools was enacted, with the efforts of Make Us Visible New Jersey, which is a coalition of

parents, teachers, students, politicians, and community members seeking the inclusion of AAPI studies in the K-12 curriculums in New Jersey public schools. And recently, on the other side of the country, the school district board of Verona School District in Wisconsin unanimously voted to provide instruction on AAPI communities in their K-12 curriculum, being the first in the state to do so.

The proposal of the Teaching Asian Pacific American Act bill itself, along with other legislation on the state and district levels, is crucial to our Asian American and Pacific Islander community and our place in American society. If passed, the Teaching Asian Pacific American Act would undoubtedly be a watershed moment for us.

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LEARNING CHINESE AT HOME

BY MICHELLE FUNG

My hands still remember writing rows of Chinese, repeating the same character over and over again in green-outlined boxes. I'd sit in the living room, memorizing the order of the pencil strokes until I could write them in my sleep.

For years, my mother would teach my sisters and me Mandarin on Saturday mornings. We'd prop open a folding table and bring out the grade school textbooks from China, the books beat up and torn at the binding. We'd read through the same short story until all the vocabulary listed at the bottom of the page was learned. My mom would take out a bright red Chinese dictionary and she would explain the definition of each character, along with the radical, direction, and number of strokes. I would scribble the information in shorthand in the margins of my character book, then rush through my assigned writings so I could spend the rest of my weekend doing something that wasn't Chinese lessons.

My mother was adamant that all of us would know Mandarin growing up. We mostly spoke Cantonese at home — that being my father’s primary language — and she knew that Mandarin is the language that most people think of when you say “I speak Chinese.” The lines between dialect and language may be blurred when it comes to Chinese, but Cantonese and Mandarin are not mutually intelligible when spoken, hence my use of the term language instead of dialect and my mom’s need to teach us Mandarin despite our already knowing Cantonese. She wanted us to be able to have both languages so we would be able to communicate with her side of the family in China. That was especially important because we weren’t and still aren’t able to visit my relatives overseas. Conversations over the phone were stilted for my sisters and me as we rehearsed our lines before passing the phone every time a great-aunt or uncle called, and we all knew that when we could finally meet them in person, we would struggle to exchange stories. It was a disappointing thought for us that the relationship between our family in America and our family in China was disjointed all because of the language barrier. When it came to Cantonese, I picked up how to understand and speak the language between my parents and my dad’s extended family. I can’t even remember not knowing Cantonese. But with Mandarin, regarding the people I saw most growing up, it was only my mom who spoke it. That made it difficult for her to provide opportunities for us to use the language, thus making it harder for us to learn it passively.

As a result, we created our very own version of Saturday school. Also known as Chinese heritage schools, Saturday schools are places where Chinese-Americans learn the Chinese language and culture through lessons on weekdays after school or on weekends, although anyone is welcome to enroll. Dating back to the mid-19th century, Chinese heritage schools were established in Chinatowns built by Chinese immigrants as their communities grew in major U.S. cities like San Francisco. These early schools



Picture of my old Chinese lessons materials

primarily taught Cantonese and the curriculum shifted with time, especially after the 1970s as the Mandarin-speaking population in America increased. Mandarin is the main language of Chinese schools now. Schools for other Chinese languages like Cantonese do still exist, albeit more sparsely.

Today, a common reason for Chinese school attendance is the gradual loss of a heritage language. Pressure to assimilate into American culture can lead to immigrant parents emphasizing English education, leading to decreased heritage language fluency among their children. English proficiency level of their parents can also play a part in a second-generation immigrant's ability to speak their family language, as there is a lessened need to learn the language if the parents do not need their children to translate for them. A Pew Research Center study found that only 4 in 10 second-generation Asian Americans agreed with the statement that they could speak their heritage language “at least pretty well,” showing that Asian families in America tend to experience some degree of language loss from generation to generation.

To combat this loss, many parents will send their children to Chinese schools. These schools now typically offer classes in a variety of levels, where students can take basic phonetic classes before advancing into classes of different levels. Many school curriculums follow a textbook — Seattle Chinese School, for example, uses the Let's Learn Chinese books, and their course level numbers correspond with the book used in that course — which are used to introduce new vocabulary and increase reading comprehension. Listening and speaking are also taught, emphasizing the difference between the four tones in Mandarin. Depending on the school, preschool courses can be offered, geared toward young children for language exposure and basic comprehension. Some schools, like Mingyuan Evergreen Chinese School, offer an adult class as well, focusing on conversational Mandarin for everyday use and travel. For the heritage side of the curriculum, many schools include a Chinese culture and ethics lesson on top of the language portion of the class. This can include arts and crafts, the reading of historical texts, and the celebration of holidays.

My friend Chloe attended Chinese school for seven years. According to her, a regular day in class was split into three segments — learning new material, reviewing, and sometimes arts and crafts. Her classes used a textbook and work packet provided at the beginning of the year, and the teacher would go over the weekly vocabulary in different contexts to increase understanding. Despite the years spent, she still doesn't feel like she has a good understanding of Mandarin, noting that it was likely because she doesn't use the language enough, as her family speaks Cantonese at home instead. She also mentioned that her teachers weren't the best, with only one being interactive while the others mostly just based the class on the textbook. When I asked her if she liked Chinese school, she said she did. Even though it was, in her words, "biting," she had a lot of fun during her time because she got to grow up with the class. There were also many events she enjoyed, such as the Halloween and lunar festivals,

costume contests, and monthly potlucks. It was interesting to hear about her experience, especially because I had never really considered the different aspects of Chinese school all that carefully.

I actually used to wonder if my Mandarin would be better if I had gone to Saturday school instead of learning at home. My mother was strict during our lessons, but we worked at our own pace, and it wasn't exactly mandatory. She wasn't an established teacher figure to me and that made it difficult for me to commit to the classes seriously. I can remember several times when I, stubborn and deep in the internalized racism of my childhood, had locked myself in my room in the morning to avoid those Saturday classes, only to end up voluntarily studying the stories and characters I had missed that afternoon. Eventually, the lessons were phased out altogether.

Homework from public school started to seep into the weekends as my sisters and I got older, and the time that had been carefully carved out for those Saturday mornings Mandarin lessons disappeared.

I haven't touched my Chinese writing notebooks in years. AP Chinese students might have a better grasp of reading and writing common Chinese phrases than I do, but I can recite ancient poems. I might be able to handwrite Chinese, but all I write are birthday cards and well-wishes for the new year. And occasionally, I speed through the Chinese course on Duolingo, thinking that I'll learn some more vocabulary, only to give up from frustration because I don't need the phrases the program is teaching. I'm trying to talk to my cousin about the latest Marvel movie, not give a TSA agent my passport and boarding pass.

My Mandarin isn't as good as it could be. I know plenty about culture and traditions just by being a part of my family, but it comes back to the language again. I'm proud that I know any at all, though I do miss the Chinese that I never learned. I feel a surge of satisfaction and camaraderie whenever I can

understand Mandarin-speaking families at work, however, I'm also a little embarrassed because I can't say much back to them. I can tell when the English subtitles are wrong in the C-dramas I watch even if I can't understand all the words without said subtitles. It's bitter that I went from wanting to quit Chinese lessons to hating that I don't know enough.

My mom used to tell stories about her childhood in China on Saturday mornings. I miss that the most. And I might have been a bit of a quitter then, but I'm grateful that my mom was the one who taught me. She was a good teacher, and she wove memories into every lesson. No one at any Saturday school could have told me about the fruit trees in her village or about how my great-grandma was thirty years ago. These stories made learning Mandarin a family thing and that was, after all, my main motive for learning in the first place. Every time I open my mouth to speak the language, I think of them.

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BY NICOLE KIM

TICKET TO ACADEMIC SUCCESS

HAGWON

Now that the school day is over, what is everyone up to? Answers might vary depending on what is being prioritized in a student's life, whether that would be self-studying for an upcoming exam or attending an interview for a restaurant job. However, in South Korea, conglomerated establishments of hagwons that loom over major cities impair students' chances to be set free from the rigorous academic cycle. Hagwon is the Korean-language word for a for-profit private academy prevalent in South Korea. The chalk dust in the atmosphere, yellowish fluorescent light on the ceiling, and Samsung air conditioner set to 26 degrees Celsius give hagwons their unique ambiance that is claimed to keep students focused for a lengthy period in a compact classroom. There, students are responsible for perfectly executing academic tasks to become the best of the best.

When given a closer look at classes in hagwons, it is evident that hagwons typically allocate students in

certain classes based on their academic skills. Through that process, a hierarchy of classes within a hagwon forms naturally. Results of monthly progress checks, pop quizzes, and unit tests compile to ultimately classify a student as either Good, Bad, or Mediocre. In hagwons, local students, usually from the same school, study together after school with the goal of doing better than those sitting next to them. This sort of competition is ingrained in students' hearts and minds yet considered a taboo subject that no one willingly brings up in a casual conversation. Many feel uneasy when it comes to rankings, but competition for the highest rank possible carries on as Korean students embrace the discomfort to become the best fit in a selective society. These students endure sleepless nights striving for academic perfection. Although their parents understand the stressful nature of being under academic pressure, the parents usually feel a greater urge to push their children than to be more receptive to concerns regarding burnouts.



Not too long ago, a spin-off of the reality of Korean students was showcased in a TV show called Sky Castle. With just the right balance of an authentic portrayal of a typical Korean student's life and a bit of exaggeration, the K-drama Sky Castle successfully grabbed the attention of the majority of K-drama fans. The underlying concept of fierce academic competition is flawlessly connected to a fictional storyline about wealthy parents paying an immoderate amount of money for the sole purpose of their children's college admissions. Ironically, Koreans themselves mock their own education system through multiple interpretations as it can be seen in the drama Sky Castle. Dark humor is utilized to veil the insecurity of Korean students who live a life similar to the fictional character Kang Yeseo – the elite student in Sky Castle who is used to being number 1 in all the activities she participates in. Through Kang Yeseo's character development, the drama writer portrays the normalization of excessive competitiveness in the pool of highly ambitious students. The most famous quote

from Sky Castle says, “Who cares whether they acknowledge you or not? I just want to be happy”. This single line resonates with countless Korean students struggling to find a source of happiness in their monotonous lives. Hagwon is a part of Korean culture that seems to be inseparable from students' daily routines because of how common and accessible it has become over time.

Still, not everyone is equally privileged to access high quality education at hagwons. The average monthly cost for classes in hagwon ranges from 320,000won to 390,000won (238.42 to 290.57USD). Some classes offered by top-tier hagwons are taught by the alumni of prestigious schools in Korea. Those teachers promise high quality education and provide reliable study resources, making their classes much costlier than the average-priced classes. Despite having to pay 500,000won or more per week, most parents still seek quality learning opportunities outside of school while managing to stay on top of paying school fees for their

children. Parents are eager to find availability in highly-rated hagwons because it is relatively common for K-12 students in Korea to be learning ahead of what they are supposed to know in their respective grade levels. Sunhaeng, which means to preview and master skills of higher-level educational content outside of school, has been a trend among Korean students. It is unusual to skip a grade in Korea, but even with that fact in mind, parents still encourage their children to go to hagwon to render an opportunity for their children to get ahead of their peers, and ultimately be better off than others in the future. Since hagwons are not accessible to everyone in Korea, the gap between those who are exposed to new content at the beginning of each school year and those who have a concrete knowledge of what they are relearning becomes clearer as students enter secondary school.

Can one's talent be distinguished as a natural, promising talent if hagwons are the ones precisely shaping a student into a high-functioning machine that produces correct answers for every single question on tests? By throwing thousands of practice problems, hundreds of new concepts, and a few chinks at students, teachers are able to prepare students for crucial exams including the infamous college entrance exam: the CSAT. While great resources do exist at hagwons, students may struggle to get themselves together once the workload becomes unmanageable. An anonymous student who attended multiple hagwons in Seoul experienced prolonged "chest pain that doctors could not diagnose" and "an allergy so severe" that it needed to be treated with shots.

Hagwon is like a drug that can be a source of motivation or spark of knowledge for students. Although helpful when hagwon is used properly to enhance academic performance, once students are "overdosed," side effects surge, inducing long-term physical pain or mental illness that may be untreatable. Korean students might seem tireless with their incomparable stamina trained from early on, but they are kids like any other K-12 students across the world.



Photo Courtesy of Yujin Kim from creatrip.com

Most are not born a math genius or a physics whiz. Countless hours spent in hagwon, countless car rides to and fro, and countless amounts of money invested in students' education — these cannot be ignored when judging who is genuinely gifted. In fact, behind each satisfactory academic achievement is the painstaking effort of both the students and parents who dedicate their lives to academic success. As new generations take hold of the education system in Korea, not only academic success may be redefined but also the standard of success may be reconstructed to better fit the developing society with newly emerging ideas on optimal education.

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This Act may be cited as the "Teaching Asian Pacific American History Act".

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress finds the following:

- (1) The United States of America benefited from the immigration of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders who have played in our country's history and contributed to the development of the Nation.
- (2) The Pacific Territories of the United States and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands have unique histories that have been overlooked in our Nation's history.
- (3) The traditional American K-12 curriculum continues to be taught from a Eurocentric point of view and exclude histories of racist immigration laws relevant to policies today.
- (4) K-12 social studies textbooks poorly represent Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, overlook the diversity within those communities, and present images of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in stereotypical roles.
- (5) The Federal Government, through support for educational activities of national museums established under Federal law, can assist teachers' efforts to incorporate historically accurate instruction on the comprehensive history of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders and assist students in the

To authorize the Secretary of Education to award grants to eligible entities to carry out educational programs that include the history of peoples of Asian and Pacific Islander descent in the settling and founding of America, the social, economic, and political environments that led to the development of discriminatory laws targeting Asians and Pacific Islanders and their relation to current events, and the impact and contributions of Asian Americans to the development and enhancement of American life, United States history, literature, the economy, politics, body of laws, and culture, and for other purposes.

EDITORS' TAKE

A BILL
To authorize the Secretary of Education to award grants to eligible entities to carry out educational programs that include the history of peoples of Asian and Pacific Islander descent in the settling and founding of America, the social, economic, and political environments that led to the development of discriminatory laws targeting Asians and Pacific Islanders and their relation to current events, and the impact and contributions of Asian Americans to the development and enhancement of American life, United States history, literature, the economy, politics, body of laws, and culture, and for other purposes.

With this topic, we thought it would be appropriate to share with you our experiences/opinions about Asian American and Pacific Islander history education in the K-12 curriculum in the United States, as well as those of other community members. We all have different experiences, as we come from various states, regions, counties, districts, and schools. There are countless factors that determine what is taught in the K-12 curriculum, such as the density of the AAPI population in the area, the availability of teachers, and support from government officials. Each experience and opinion is respected and valid.

To authorize the Secretary of Education to award grants to eligible entities to carry out educational programs that include the history of peoples of Asian and Pacific Islander descent in the settling and founding of America, the social, economic, and political environments that led to the development of discriminatory laws targeting Asians and Pacific Islanders and their relation to current events, and the impact and contributions of Asian Americans to the development and enhancement of American life, United States history, literature, the economy, politics, body of laws, and culture, and for other purposes.

"To understand who we are as a nation, Asian American history must be taught. Teaching this demonstrates how our nation developed and dispels the narrative that Asian Americans are not an inherent part of the U.S. Unfortunately, most of this history is little known or not taught. While teaching history in a diverse range of middle and high schools for 16 years, I never saw any mention of Asian American history in textbooks. According to studies by education researchers, two events in Asian American history are mainly taught, if at all — the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 and WWII Japanese American incarceration.

Also, these missing narratives of the curriculum can counter misconceptions of Asian Americans. This includes Asian Americans like my younger self, who was in the dark for so long, ashamed of being Asian. It's important to be seen in your nation's history, but the reason for teaching Asian American history isn't about making people feel better. It's about having a truthful understanding of the U.S."

Freda Lin, co-director and founder of YURI Education Project

"Mommy, why do we not learn about Asian American history? Why are other ones more important? Why are other people more respected?"

Jinhee Kim's Daughter to Kim

- (3) The traditional American K-12 curriculum continues to be taught from a Eurocentric point of view and exclude histories of racist immigration laws relevant to policies today.
- (4) K-12 social studies textbooks poorly represent Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in stereotypical roles.
- (5) The Federal Government, through support for educational activities of national museums established under Federal law, can assist teachers' efforts to incorporate historically accurate instruction on the comprehensive history of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders and assist students in the
- (6) The history of America's system of immigration is rife with racist and inhumane working conditions.
- (7) Congress has continuously passed anti-Asian laws as the result of the scapegoating of Asian immigrant laborers for the United States economic downturns.

(11) Twelve thousand Chinese laborers worked in atrocious conditions

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Teaching Asian Pacific American History Act".

To authorize the Secretary of Education to award grants to eligible entities to carry out educational programs that include the history of peoples of Asian and Pacific Islander descent in the settling and targeting Asians and Pacific Islander enhancement of American life, United States history, literature, the economy, politics, body of laws, and culture, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands and their relation to current laws.

Ms. MENG (for herself, Mrs. BEATTY, Ms. E. ESMO, Mr. EPSTEIN, Mr. GARCIA, Mr. KILMER, Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHY, Ms. LI, Mrs. NAPOLitano, Ms. NORTON, Ms. O. TORRES of New York, Mrs. TRAHAN, N.

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SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Teaching Asian Pacific American History Act".

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress finds the following:
(1) The United States of America has benefited from the integral role Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders have played in our country's history and contributions to the world.
(2) The Pacific Island Territories of Guam, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands have unique histories that are often overlooked in American history despite their immense contributions to our Nation.
(3) The traditional American K-12 curriculum continues to be taught from a Eurocentric point of view and excludes the history of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, overlook the diversity within those communities, and print their relation to current laws.

To authorize the Secretary of Education to award grants to eligible entities to carry out educational programs that include the history of peoples of Asian and Pacific Islander descent in the settling and targeting Asians and Pacific Islander enhancement of American life, United States history, literature, the economy, politics, body of laws, and culture, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands and their relation to current laws.

H. R. 2283

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

(7) Congress has continuously passed anti-Asian laws as the result of the scapegoating of Asian immigrant laborers for the United States economic downturns.
(8) The history of South Asian Americans in the United States dates back to the late 1700s.
(9) The history of Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders in what is now considered to be the United States predates the founding of our Nation.
(10) In 1993, Congress passed a resolution that was signed into law formally apologizing for the United States' inherent sovereignty of the Native Hawaiian people and their relation to current laws.

"In college, I learned about the Chinese migrants who built the transcontinental railroad from 1863 to 1869 and about the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1822, the only U.S. law banning immigration based on ethnicity. I soon realized just how little I knew of those who had come before me. Asians are the second fastest-growing demographic in the nation, but public schools like the one I attended often gloss over — or completely bypass — Asian history... Growing up, the erasure of Asian history and culture gnawed at me. How was I to know what was missing if I'd never learned it in the first place? With little sense of history to ground my identity, I grappled with what it meant to be Asian American — a paradox that felt like two distinct worlds; I didn't quite feel like I belonged in either of them."

Kayla Huynh, from University of Wisconsin-Madison

Ms. MENG (for herself, Mrs. BEATTY, Ms. ESMO, Mr. EPSTEIN, Mr. GARCIA, Mr. KILMER, Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHY, Ms. LI, Mrs. NAPOLitano, Ms. NORTON, Ms. O. TORRES of New York, Mrs. TRAHAN, N.

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"I never learned Asian American and Pacific Islander history in school. In my twelve years of primary, intermediate, and secondary education, I never learned about the Chinese Exclusion Act, Yellow Peril, or even the Model Minority Myth — some of the most significant events and phenomena throughout the history of the AAPI people. Instead, I listened to lectures about White settlers who built railroads and the presidents of the United States through the textbooks. My education on AAPI history was entirely my effort, out of curiosity, not from a textbook, but from the Internet and historical archives missing from the K-12 textbooks."

Jeenah Gwak

"Every time (Asian history) was brought up, I felt a high... History is something you connect with. I was never able to connect with it."

Kiana Kenmotsu

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FAR AWAY FROM HOME:

Studying Abroad in Shanghai



By Ashley Chen



I've never quite understood this hyphen nonsense: am I “Chinese-American” or “Chinese American?” To add to this complication, I have now relocated to Shanghai, so would that mean I'm “Chinese-American-Chinese?” Or does the “American” suddenly cancel out because I'm someone of Chinese heritage in China, making me just “Chinese?” Or does that mean I'm just “American” because the Chinese part is a given since I'm in China?

Everything would be so much easier if I decided to study in the U.S., right? Yes, many things would've been easier if I decided to stay in my home country, like speaking a language I'm fluent in or interacting with a society I'm familiar with or possessing a less confusing double identity. But to say I'm missing out on everything is far from the truth – I have never felt as passionate about education as I do now.

With every step I take in Shanghai comes another piece of learning. Some days, it's learning that taking four classes a day is grueling and stressful, even if I'm starting my calculus WebAssign during lunch or finishing my CS assignments two days before they're due. Or today, it was learning that the “caramel macchiato” I can't read off the menu from our school's cafe is simply “玛奇朵 (mǎ qí duǒ).” Or on Sunday, it was visiting The Bund way too late at night to see the skyline with all the lights on.



9th floor view from NYU Shanghai

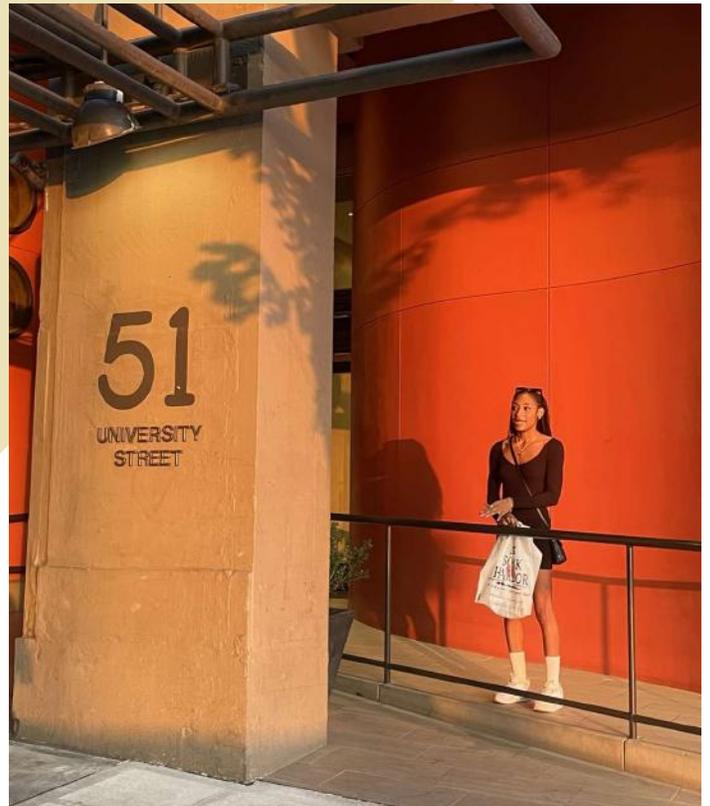
Coming to NYU Shanghai was less about attending this college over other colleges I got into, but rather to gain experiences. As the author of my first college reading likes to put it, I am seeking to become a “citizen of the world” or “cosmopolitan” (Appiah 2). What this entails includes constant interaction with different peoples and constant interrogation of my own beliefs and knowledge, although I've found tenets with my peers' thinking based on where they were raised. Peyton Washington, a first-year student at NYU Shanghai from Washington, claimed a similar point:

“One of my favorite pastimes to do with my friends and with my family is to travel. From Ocean Shores to Washington D.C., I try to make the most of my time here on Earth, and the limited time I have with the people I love. When I had the opportunity to travel to Shanghai to study for college, it seemed like the only option. With a completely different cultural background than that of my own, exploring new possibilities and interacting with a diverse group of people seemed invigorating and presented itself as a chance to learn. That is just one reason that I decided to come to NYU Shanghai. Once I finally arrived here, it illustrated that it was more than just a place to visit and study. It demonstrated that it was a place to live, thrive, interrelate, and network with fresh faces and broaden my perspectives on living. In addition to this, as NYU is a notable university that could possibly offer me a chance to pursue my intellectual interests, being able to traverse into a community that I had nothing in common with was an adventure that I could not pass up.”

Like Peyton, many of us like to go to new places for a one week vacation whenever we get the chance to, but few of us would actually go outside our comfort zone and live in a new country for the entirety of our college careers. The logic just doesn't add up: why would you get an American education halfway across the world? The answer is that education isn't defined by a nation or where a school is located – instead, it is the subject matter that is discussed in school and how an education system socializes a person for the world.

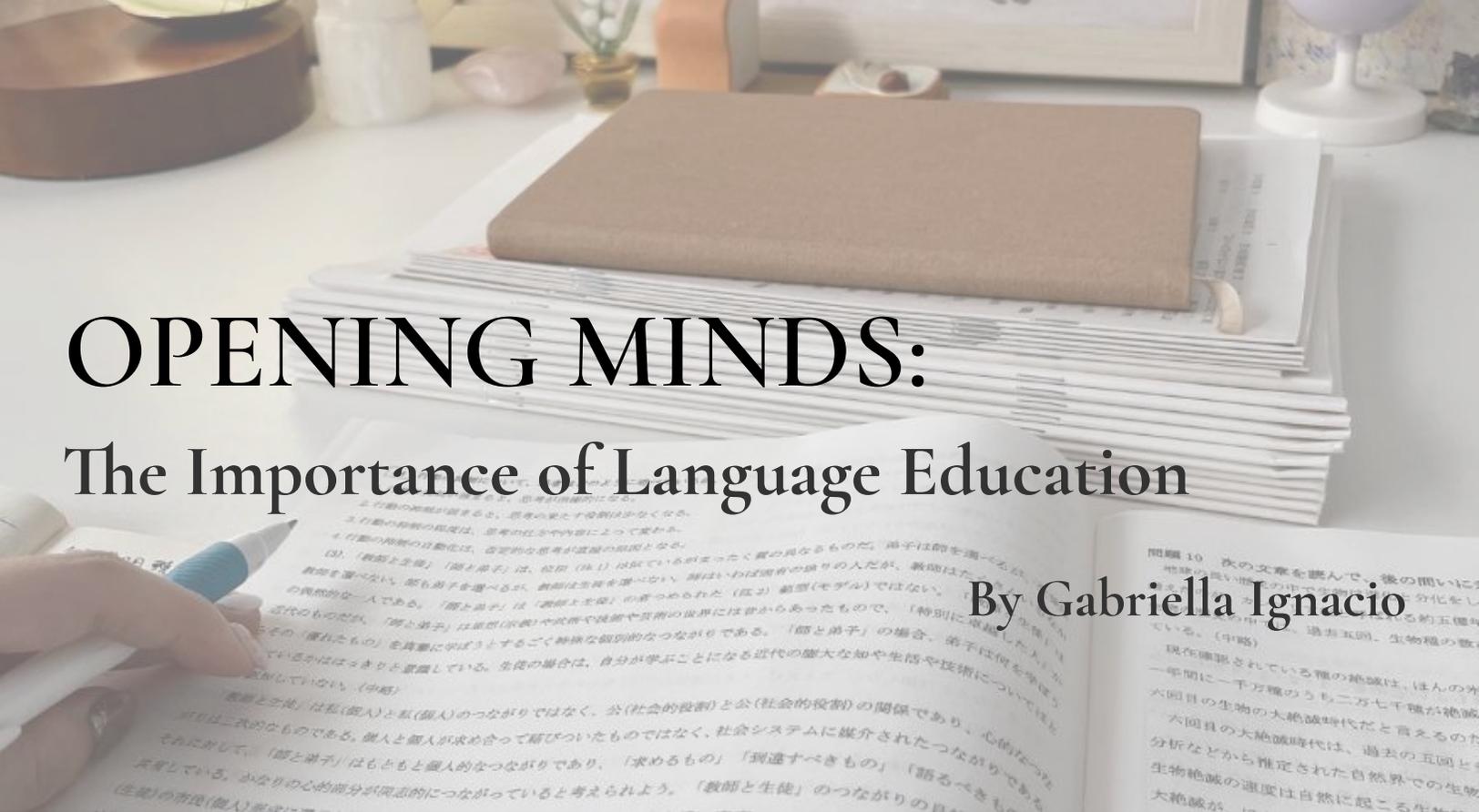
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Peyton Washington (Courtesy of Peyton Washington)

Do I have regrets coming to Shanghai, going through ten days of isolated quarantine, and moving myself far away from where I call home? Not really. There are many skills I could never obtain by remaining in my home country, such as instantly translating phrases for my friends who don't speak Chinese, ordering food and transportation off of Alipay, navigating a mega-sized mall, a staple in Chinese megacities, and protecting myself from the onslaught of mopeds and cars roaming around. Adapting to a new society, a new normal, is a skill only gained by living somewhere so different from home. And with that, comes an exciting new world to explore.



OPENING MINDS: The Importance of Language Education

By Gabriella Ignacio

“TO LEARN A
LANGUAGE IS TO HAVE
ONE MORE WINDOW
FROM WHICH TO
LOOK AT THE WORLD”
- A CHINESE PROVERB

Language is the means by which we build relationships, communicate, and interpret the world; as a result, it is also an essential aspect of culture. For Asian Americans, as well as other immigrant families, language can play a significant role in preserving cultural connections and is often a more practical manner of communication due to English language barriers. Because of this, a considerable amount of Asian Americans speak a language other than or in addition to English at home – roughly 66%, according to Pew Research Center (Budiman). There is a common misconception that the children who grow up in such bilingual households are hindered in their learning development, though in fact, the opposite is true. Although language is intrinsically connected to culture, its relationship with education is almost equally as prominent. Children who learn a language at a young age have been observed to acquire various advantages – including heightened learning capabilities – which ultimately advances their educational achievements and improves life overall. Much is still unknown about the topic, yet most can agree that language learning results in many positive cognitive developments. In that case, how exactly does bilingualism change a child’s educational experience and shape their brain for a lifetime?

Learning / Cognitive Development

It has long been recognized that the environment and experiences that animals live through play a significant role in their mental development, but only in recent decades have neuroscientists discovered that the same concept is applicable to humans. In particular, factors such as socioeconomic status, formal education, and musical training have been proven to affect brain volume and structure. If such experiences can alter brain makeup, then it is not surprising that bilingualism would also be considered to reap similar (if not more amplified) effects due to the persistent presence of language in everyday life. The concept of bilingualism as a means of altering the brain has intrigued researchers, and as told by Judith Kroll, a professor at the University of California, Riverside, “In the last 20 years or so, there’s been a virtual explosion of research on bilingualism” (Bialystok). Since then, ample evidence has been uncovered to conclude that bilingualism indeed changes the brain. This is not solely applicable once an individual is proficient or fluent in a language, however – even brief periods of second-language learning causes increased gray matter density and significantly modifies nearly all regions in the brain, not just structures related to language acquisition and use (Bialystok).

From a classroom perspective, these findings support similar experiments related to school-based language learning. In Portland, Oregon, for instance, a random 10% of students are assigned to dual-language classrooms. Upon conducting a 4-year trial on the English reading capabilities of students from that region, it was found that the dual-language students outperformed their monolingual peers by “a full school year’s worth of learning by the end of middle school” (Kamenetz).

In a more lengthy example, two professors at George Mason University have spent the past 30 years collecting data on the benefits of bilingual education, and have found that within the 37 districts they observed, dual-language students tend to have higher test scores, better attendance, and seem to be happier in school overall (Kamenetz).



Image Courtesy of TedEd: The Benefits of a Bilingual Brain

Long-Term Effects

When considering long-term implications, consistently engaging with two or more languages appears to combat age-related dementia as well as general cognitive decline. While observing patients with Alzheimer’s in a Canadian study, for example, researchers found that actively bilingual adults performed equally as well as their monolingual counterparts, even though the brain atrophy of the bilingual group was five to seven years worse than the latter (Kamenetz). This suggests that bilingualism offers some form of protection against brain deterioration, and could possibly be used for further research on mentally degenerative diseases.

Still, perhaps the most compelling advantage of bilingualism is not apparent in physical health; instead, it is the fact that being multilingual is extremely useful on a global scale. After interviewing a few teachers about the importance of language education, all of them came back to that same idea, and as one of my past Korean teachers stated, “Learning a language is not just about making the right sound or writing correct sentences. It is the foundation for mutual understanding and negotiations which expands our world and reaches out to the global community. [It] is probably the most outward expression of culture.” Language is indeed a definitive aspect of global citizenship, and being multilingual can not only give an individual a head start in their career and future ambitions, but it can also aid the international community as a whole.

From my own perspective, language has played a definitive role in my education for as long as I can remember. Attending a Spanish immersion school has not only given me a unique educational opportunity, but has fostered a further interest in trying out other languages as well. In pursuing this task, I have realized that the merits of multilingualism are not only existent in academic spaces – for me, learning new languages actually turned out to be captivating and even fun. The power of language has allowed me to experience the lifestyle, media, and overall culture of other countries, which is something I will always cherish. This is not, of course, meant to deny the overwhelming scientific benefits of being multilingual, but rather to acknowledge that personal enjoyment is also a common outcome.

Image Courtesy of TedEd: The Benefits of a Bilingual Brain



"NERDY"

- Success in Relation to
- Parental Expectations

by Meilan Uyeno
edited by Jeenah Gwak and Hope Yu

"No, sorry, I can't go out. My mom wants me to work on more math." I cannot recall the countless number of times I have heard this phrase from many of my East Asian friends over the years. If it's not math, it's violin, or coding, or a science project. The extra math projects and homework always preceded school plays or hanging out with friends or playing a sport for enjoyment and relaxation. It is not uncommon amongst the East Asian-American community for students to feel excessive pressure to perform well academically. From extracurricular math competitions to perfect scores on every exam, East Asian-American students are constantly pressured by parents and other members of their family to excel in school.

From the sixth to the eighth grade, I attended Odle Middle School as a part of the advanced learning program, which is a program that primarily consists of East Asian students. Compared to non-Asian students, East Asian students were often the ones competing for a slightly higher percentage point in every assignment. They were often the ones with a little extra stress and concern about failing. I would often hear "Darn, I only got a 94 on that essay!" or "Why'd I get such a low A on that exam?" in the hallways from fellow East Asian-American students. Other students (non-Asian) would laugh and call them silly, especially if the student still received an A. But for most East Asian students, it isn't the matter of receiving an A or an E, it's the matter of receiving the highest possible score versus the average score of other students.



The phrase “Asian nerds” exists as a strong, partially devaluing stereotype. Most of my Asian-American friends are indeed “nerdy,” excelling in many subjects at the top of the class. But much of this often stems from parental pressure to succeed. In an excelled program that predominantly consists of East Asian students, every individual feels pressure to outcompete their classmates. This is exacerbated by how parents view their kids’ successes as increasingly more ordinary compared to other kids at the same level. Their children’s successes are how they define themselves as individuals, and most importantly, their success as parents.

While many stereotypes such as the “Asian Advantage” exist, suggesting that Asian Americans are especially intelligent and intellectual, these key phrases/stereotypes fail to acknowledge the nuance of people’s lives and the power structures at play with both the individual and the community as a whole. For many children, their parents force their hand in perpetuating these myths. This parental pressure often induces stress in Asian-American students and brings on feelings of not being “good enough”. However, it is important to note that the parents are not all to blame. In fact, they have good intentions, wanting the best for their children. They, too, must deal with the pressures of immigration, culture clash, and societies standards for their children. These stereotypes are larger than just family dynamics; they actually encompass decades of history that used the image of Asian Americans to the advantage of many White people while capitalizing on a people’s desire to survive.

Many immigrant parents start off with high expectations for their children in America. For generations, the high standard exists, and students continually strive to excel in an ever-increasingly competitive environment. Much of the high standards stem from parents’ desires for their children to be successful, as they believe that adequate education is the best way to open up opportunities in life. And they aren’t necessarily incorrect. But the overwhelming amount of pressure that East Asian students endure in academics proves to be harmful in many ways, and we, as a society, cannot look past that.



AFFIRMATIVE ACTION: AN EXPLORATION

From the perspective of Asian Americans.

BY HOPE YU

The term Affirmative Action has followed me over the years. As I've run towards where I am today, it sort of meandered and tumbled behind me like it was attached to my wrist on a string; this was a concept that wouldn't affect me personally but would interact with the college applications of many of my peers. I vaguely remember hearing about *Students for Fair Admissions v. Harvard* in 2015 but the outrage I felt in the moment quickly flew from my body to be replaced with some other middle school worry. Sometime in pre-pandemic high school, I was at a retreat for a Korean American organization and we touched on it briefly (although I barely understood what it was and bullshitted my way through the conversation). The first time I truly grasped why the debate over affirmative action was so important to everyone was during my senior year AP Government class. My teacher introduced the concept slowly and allowed us to interact with the landmark cases related to college admissions through multiple mediums. This allowed us to quickly understand concepts that would have taken ages for us to otherwise grasp. Although I'm forever grateful for that class, I remember that the scenarios were a bit hard for me to emotionally relate to (at one point I was some white guy trying to argue that some school had discriminated against me for my race and that was a very hard thing to be serious at the end of my senior year of high school haha). While I retained the information, my actual consciousness was not able to develop a connection with the personal stories and emotions surrounding affirmative action.

I ended up reading about six to eight full research articles on this topic and supplemented them with web articles. This is the first time I will tell you to read the sources as they are truly intriguing and impressive works of scholarship; the piece by Frank Wu was especially touching and an easier read than others.

By writing this article, I've learned a great deal about individual narratives and frames of thought specifically from an Asian American perspective on holistic admissions and general education. Moreover, as someone who is now on a college campus with a very very small number of asian people (although probably an average percentage.. my class is just tiny haha), it is interesting to observe racial and ethnic dynamics; affirmative action, among other things, feels very real and in my face for the first time.

Over the past couple decades, a great deal of presumed beliefs and established structures have changed; much of which has been driven by a younger generation. This is especially noticeable in the specific terminology used and the characterization of certain racial and ethnic groups. Throughout this piece I will point out any specific phrases that I think need to be modernized or described from an alternative perspective.

[WHAT IS AFFIRMATIVE ACTION?]

The preconceived notion that affirmative action and race based admissions policies are entirely left to individual academic institutions to implement is inaccurate. For a school to carry through with anything related to affirmative action, the specific measures must be cleared by the courts.

The court vets affirmative action policies based on these two major guidelines: narrow tailoring and compelling state interest. For a policy to qualify as having “compelling state interest” the, “underlying goal of the policy must be especially important and must be supported by sufficient evidence,” (UCLA). The specific program must either target the institutions current diversity or work to remedy past discrimination. In the context of affirmative action, narrow tailoring means that, “the means chosen to accomplish the government's asserted purpose must be specifically and narrowly framed to accomplish that purpose” (Grutter v. Bollinger). In other words, whatever the program is, the outcomes cannot supersede or exceed the scope of the goals of the institution. The institution must have the most efficient program policies in place. There are other policies as well but these two are the most prominent and widely applied.

Affirmative Action in the context of this article is not an ‘Asian’ thing, but I will be looking at it from the lens of Asian Americans for today. It affects people of all ethnicities and spans beyond just academic institutions.

[AAPI RESPONSE]

“Although Asian Americans have increasingly become central to these debates, few have accounted for their diverse political perspectives in examining why they oppose or support affirmative action,” (POON).

The livelihoods of Asian Americans actually matter. Too often have we been used as pawns by White people to further their own advantages or to divide different ethnic groups against one another. Even in *Students for Fair Admissions v. Harvard* (2015) - a case decidedly about Asian American students - the focus quickly shifted from our own interests to a broader message. Although some may argue that a broader conclusion would positively affect more communities, I believe that Asian Americans - and the treatment they receive - should still be at the forefront of the culminating argument.

Asian Americans are not a homogeneous group of people and therefore our opinions on something as contentious as Affirmative Action span the entire gradient of beliefs. There are many who hate and actively fight against any sort of Affirmative Action policies; on the flip side, there are a great deal of Asian Americans active in grassroots organizations working for more holistic higher education admissions.

“The whole front of the pleading is about Harvard allegedly discriminating against Asian Americans. The prayer should be for an end to anti-Asian bias. Yet the remedy has nothing to do with Asian Americans. It refers to only abolishing affirmative action. There is not even a mention of Asian Americans. The case is, at the end, not about Asian Americans. It is, instead, an attempt to use Asian Americans as a means to an end,” (Wu).

The different schools of thought surrounding the Asian American consciousness in relationship with Affirmative Action are as follows: Ethnocentric Nationalism, Abstract Liberalism, Conscious Compromise, and Systematic Transformation (YOON). Note that the creation of these categories are from Asian Americans, Affirmative Action, and the *Political Economy of Racism: A Multidimensional Model of Raceclass Frames* by Oiyun A. Poon and colleagues.

Ethnocentric Nationalism is the adherence to the belief that cultural differences, especially the value of education in said cultures, lead to unequal performance and race related gaps within higher education. Those, within the context of Yoon’s paper, who followed this sort of thought, “dismissed significance of race and class barriers and denigrated the cultures of Black and Latinx students while celebrating their own Asian ... cultural heritage,” (Yoon). Abstract Liberalism is a “color-evasive tactic”. Those who fit into this category believe in a class-based affirmative action system but do not contend for racial disparities. They fail to, “acknowledge how racism contributed to class inequalities, and vice versa,” (Yoon). The Conscious Compromise is exactly as named; those who fit into this category believe in using affirmative action to diversify class demographics but don’t acknowledge, “ racial barriers to college access, particularly as experienced by Black, Latinx, and Indigenous students...this frame still privileges the accumulation of individual educational benefits and capital through diversity,” (Yoon). Systematic Transformation is the most progressive frame. This focuses on more than just affirmative action and transcends, “specific and narrow definitions of the policy, situating affirmative action within a transformative agenda for systemic change,” (Yoon). In my mind, this sort of analysis is what a middle school teacher might call “big picture thinking”. No longer is the topic at hand seen only in the moment but it is instead applied to a historical and socioeconomic context.

[*Students for Fair Admissions v. Harvard* (2015)]

"Those who expressed a conscious compromise lens also spoke to their values for systemic transformation; those who utilized abstract liberal arguments against affirmative action also engaged in ethnocentric nationalist tropes." (Yoon.)

One of the most relevant affirmative action landmark cases for Asian Americans is *Students for Fair Admissions v. Harvard* (2015). Note that this case has evolved into something much larger than it originally was and a final ruling hasn't quite been determined. On November 17th of 2014, a group of anonymous Asian-American students who had been rejected from Harvard sued the institution on the grounds that they had a "soft racial quota" in their admission policies that discriminated against Asian American applicants. The group was called Students for Fair Admissions (SFFA) and was founded by Edward Blum; Blum has an intricate history of working with specific affirmative action related cases. Some external Asian American groups filed amicus briefs for both SFFA or Harvard.

Harvard denied the accusations and stated that they had studied a slew of affirmative action related systems from other institutions and that the one they were using best fit their institutions goals of equality and diversification. Additionally, they argued that the data SFFA used was only preliminary numbers and therefore could only conclude a preliminary analysis.

Although Harvard is a private university, it does receive federal funding and therefore must follow the Civil Rights Act of 1964 that outlaws racial discrimination.

The lawsuit was paused until *Fischer II* could be concluded within the supreme court. After losing in the lower courts, SFFA petitioned the Supreme Court to take both the previous decisions on their Harvard case and a similar case from the University of North Carolina with a similar theme. Harvard then filed an opposing brief and asked for SFFA's case to be rejected. After some back and forth within the government and the Supreme Court, both petitions were certified in early 2022 and brought together under Harvard. However, because Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson is on the Harvard Board of Overseers, they have separated the cases and they will be heard sometime in the upcoming year.

The Asian-American community is and has been deeply divided on all sides of this case. There are multiple coalitions both for SFFA and Harvard as well as many later amicus briefs submitted on either side as well. Other BIPOC groups have also stood on either side of the case in solidarity and against Asian Americans.

[CONCLUSION]

There is a lot more I could talk about but that would require a much higher level of education and an in-depth understanding of the legal system plus college admissions. At the end of the day, there is no clear answer to any of this and there will continue to be different models of affirmative action and race related admissions into higher education. Some will be more successful while others will mobilize large protests; all outcomes just seem like a natural development for humanity to me. I remember Asian friends joking about applying to Harvard as White just to see if they could have gotten in after being rejected and - although funny - that makes me terribly sad. At the end of the day, our race and ethnicities need to be seen and heard within our applications to schools and jobs and even retirement homes in an ethical and holistic way. As we continue to diversify as a nation, this will become increasingly more crucial. I certainly don't have any solutions, but I hope that reading this piece has made you think and reflect on the demographics of the schools you've attended and your workplace.

"We should try to answer the following question: "What do we wish our institutions of higher education, especially those that are both publicly supported and elite, to look like?" Next, we must ask, on the basis of a consensus, "How do we produce such a result in practical terms?" "What should we do about racial discrimination that continues? And racial disparities that cannot be disputed?" (Wu).

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Our Summer, in Photos
Many of our team members visited Asia this summer. We wanted to share our special memories with you, our readers. Enjoy!







Learning Steps

ALLISON CHAN

"I've been suffering with a major art block this whole month, so it's been hard for me to brainstorm ideas for this issue. I honestly didn't know what to draw or where to start for the longest time because of how broad this topic was. I often looked at reference images to help me spark ideas, but the more I looked at the images, nothing felt right. Since my friend just started school, I decided to call her to see how it was, thinking that I could maybe get some inspiration from her school experience. Our conversation ended up shifting to her studying and learning Korean, which sparked an idea for me: someone writing and learning how to write and read Chinese, Korean, and Burmese vocabulary. I spent a few days studying and educating myself on both Chinese and Korean, learning how to write and pronounce each word, which overall helped me connect with my friends and family."



meet the team



Jeenah Gwak

founder, editor-in-chief

(she/her; human biology - neuroscience & piano performance at Stanford University) Thanks for reading our 9th issue and supporting us! Besides the AAPI community, I am passionate about the brain, piano, reading, and lifting.



Hope Yu

founder, editor-in-chief

(she/her; math & history at Carleton College) Hi! I spend a lot of my time reading, watching BTS dance practices, studying, and hanging out with friends + family. I'm a large museum enthusiast and an advocate for a full 8 hours of sleep.



Ashley Chen

editor, writer

(she/her; NYU Shanghai) My passions include playing piano and videogames. In my free time, I likes to watch Chinese dramas and hangout with my friends. For *What We Experience*, my favorite topics to write about are Asian American mental health and current events.



Gabriella Ignacio

design manager

(she/her; Newport High School) I really enjoy art – whether it be making my own or appreciating the works of others – and looking for places to try new food. Being a part of this magazine has been very valuable for me, and in the future, I hope to keep writing and being involved in Asian-American spaces.



Grace Park

artist

(she/her; cognitive science at Rice University) I enjoy learning about the human brain and mind, as well as exploring different cultures and histories around the world. I also love playing in an orchestra, having philosophical conversations, studying at the library, listening to music, curating artworks, and meeting new people!

meet the team



Meilan Uyeno

writer

(she/her; Bellevue High School) Hi! I'm a competitive diver and I love to bake and ski. You can always find me outdoors in the sun somewhere!



Allison Chan

artist/writer

(any pronouns; Garfield High School) Hobbies and interests of mine are swimming, coding, painting and running.



Nicole Kim

media manager

(she/her; Bellevue High School) I find folding laundry oddly satisfying. Aside from appreciating every step of doing the laundry, I enjoy rock climbing and baking granola!



Michelle Fung

writer

(she/her; Hazen High School) Hi! In my spare time, I enjoy painting, going to parks, and playing board games. I also like writing poetry and playing the flute.

writer not pictured: Hannah D



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