News

Students Visit National Museum and Join their Instructors for Lunch in Down Town

As part of its mission in building and developing student cultural awareness through social events, UPP organized a trip for students of all levels to the Lebanese National Museum. Students prepared ahead for the trip by downloading the National Museum’s software application on their smartphones, which enables visitors to scan barcodes of displayed items which in turn will show related information like historical account, date of discovery, and so on.

The displayed items at the National Museum show different historical periods in Lebanon’s history as early as the Phoenician presence. Objects in display varied from figurines, currency coins, statues and busts of historical figures, and accommodation utilities that reflect the life styles of the different cultures that once thrived in Lebanon.

To achieve the academic purpose of the trip, students were asked to choose three of the displayed items and write about them. The assignment was to write a letter to a friend telling them about the National Museum visit by describing and talking about three items and their significance, and recommending that their friend does it as well.

The trip was followed by lunch at City Café in Down Town, Beirut, following the traditional custom at UPP at the end of each Fall semester. The lunch is a chance for students to
socialize with their instructors and informally engage with them on a personal level. Students and instructors engaged in casual conversations, walked around Down Town area, and visited some shops and vendors. The lunch was a pleasant activity at the end of Fall and before students leave for their semester break.

**Students Present to Instructors and Classmates**

As it is the custom at UPP, students showcase their speaking proficiency in delivering 5 to 7 minutes presentations at the end of each semester. This usually happens in their classes, but this semester, students presented and delivered their projects in West Hall, Auditorium A.

The purpose of the final project is to serve as the outcome of a semester-long training on presentation skills, critical thinking, and argument. The topics of the presentations varied in form and content, and students engaged in for/against argumentation on topics that covered human rights, human nature, suicide, etc.

The presenters showed fair understanding of the nature of their topics and argued for their opinions with unwavering determination and confidence. The presentations were impressive and reflective of the students’ abilities. At the end of the presentations, students showcased an amusing video they have made all together as a gesture of thanks to their instructors for a great semester spent at UPP.

**Student Writing Samples**

**Stereotyping the Unknown**

*By Lamar Atallah*

In the news, we see different rumors spreading worldwide: Arab people are forbidden to enter a European country because they terrorize others. Also, all Japanese people are considered to be brilliant in math and physics. Even more, all Chinese are believed to look alike. These cases are some of the many stereotypes in our world. Whether these stereotypes are true or false, they have many positive and negative effects on their targets.

Stereotyping can have good effects because it can be beneficial to a certain group. In the first place, a positive stereotype leaves good impressions in the mind of its receiver. A group can be known for its brilliance, hospitality, creativity. Also, these stereotypes can strengthen the position of a group in its
surrounding due to the respect offered by their supporters. For example, German companies are known for their long lasting products. That is why their products, like cars and machines, are considered the best in quality and design. In the second place, positive stereotypes give self-esteem to the praised category. Although this group will not receive material support, the acclaim will increase its self-confidence by emphasizing the great accomplished work. Moreover, stereotyping people positively makes them proud, happy, and preserves their dignity. Therefore, they will have the ability to invent more and to evolve their creativity. For instance, young adolescents, considered as the generation of technology, are inventing and producing new effective and useful products. For example, a nineteen year old boy designed a clean-up device, which can remove all garbage from the world’s oceans in five years; this is a great proof for a teenager’s brilliance.

Although stereotyping has good effects, it also has dangerous ones. First of all, stereotyping ignores the diversity within groups. It judges all the members of a group according to their background. That is why, even if a member is trying to be successful and effective in the society, stereotyping will destroy all his hard work and will prevent him from achieving his dreams. For example, one stereotype is that Indians are considered idiots and stupid. In fact, this stereotype cannot be applied to all of them because many are smart and brilliant. Also, people are judged according their race. Some groups in society are considered a burden on it. That is why they become aggressive, fanatic to their origins, and full of hatred. One example of such a stereotype is that all blacks are known as drug dealers. Although it can be true for a part of them, it is wrong for the others. Many black people are efficient in their society, and they have managed to leave strong impacts on mankind, like Martin Luther King.

In addition to the ignorance of diversity within groups, dividing the society is another bad effect of stereotyping. First, it affects the psychology of the stereotyped group and leads to serious complexes. For example, the members of this group will become lonely and full of hatred and spite. Also, they will have less possibility of succeeding in life. Moreover, people are judged according their work. If a person practices a craft, he is treated with disrespect and inferiority. If he is a well-educated and occupies a high post, he is considered as a noble and honorable man. Indeed, being a doctor or an engineer is better than being a plumber, a job despised by the society. However, each person is brilliant and skillful in his own field. For example, some people are good as programmers; others are ingenious as carpenters or sculptors.

Stereotyping is very common in any society. Whether it is true or not, almost every country has its own stereotypes. A few of them are harmless, but the majority of these stereotypes is destructive and can have very harmful effects. All of us are being stereotyped in one way or another. Therefore, it is our choice to accept this fact as a burden on us, or to consider it as an invalid opinion that will not stop us from reaching our goals.

**Where Are Our Weapons?**
**By Ibrahim Barada**

We all know World War II and World War I. But, we don’t know that World War I should have been World War II. Also, World War II should have been called World War III. There is a war that should have taken place... but it
didn’t. The First World War should have taken place 3,000 years ago but something strange happened which interrupted this war. What on earth could stop such a war? Who can stop those uncivilized people? You are not going to believe what happened!

It was a bad day; dark, cloudy, stormy, full of tension and fear. The world is divided into two great parts, Phoenicia and Greece. The armies were preparing themselves for the biggest war in history. Phoenicians are very strong now; they want to dominate this planet. They are building boats and ships every day. In addition, all citizens are prepared for this war; men, women, children, old people and even animals. Phoenicia is in its golden age now. The alphabet has been spread all around the place; the trade routes have opened with Egypt and Mesopotamia. They are ready now to control the whole world. On the other part of the world, people are like monsters. Greece is in its prime age. Greeks are very tough, strong, vigorous and powerful. They made camps for preparing the army. No food, no water, no rest. Hours and hours of running, days and days of struggling in the wild. At the age of 14, the boy leaves his family and joins the army. So what do you expect after all this tough training? Simply, an army of monsters ready to control the world. The Greeks, as well as the Phoenicians, gave a great importance to creating weapons. They are the first people to create killing weapons. Swords, knives, daggers, axes, spears and tens of metallic tools are available for all people to fight each other.

Let’s go back to the story. After years of preparation, the Phoenicians and Greeks are ready to go through “World War Zero”. Each one of them is holding his metallic weapon and moving towards the battle. The armies have reached the battlefield and they are all ready to start the combat. Suddenly!! With no excuse!! A storm of dust occurred, a strange loud sound from the sky: “STOP THIS WAR” he said. “PEOPLE SHOULD NEVER KILL EACH OTHER”, he yelled. After that, the great sound stopped talking and the dust disappeared. The fighters were astonished!! Their weapons disappeared from the battle!! They are no longer handling their knives or spears! Then, they all went home and the war didn’t happen. The great question is: if god took the weapons... where are they now?? I have the answer; the weapons are in the land of the Phoenicians and what is today called Lebanon. God knew that the Phoenicians are more responsible and smart, and the alphabet is a great example. Anyway, these weapons are now found in Lebanon. Actually, they are in the Lebanese National Museum. These weapons could have ended the human race! I went there; they look amazing and their charming gold color is so attractive. You should go there and check these incredible weapons. Don’t miss such a place. Visit the museum soon!

Upon Visiting the National Museum
By Cynthia Salameh

Bacchus, a god who lives in Tyre, has curly hair that represents his power as people assume. His graceful face reflects his strength and shows how realistic he is. He is interested in acquiring knowledge. He knows very well how to distinguish between the bad and good wine by tasting it. That’s why he is called the god of wine. However, Jupiter lives in Tripoli. He always worries about his appearance. He wears a high flared hat and girdle decorated with eight motifs. His reputation is spread in the religious center, in Rome and many other places in the Empire. That’s why he believes that he is the most powerful in the world and he can get whatever he wants.
One day, the servant of the Empire announced that they found a mysterious artifact. Everyone in the city was astonished by its beauty. It is shiny with a beautiful mixture of colors such as orange, red, yellow, green, blue... Once the god Jupiter saw it, he decided that this greatest beauty should only be for him. By this time, Bacchus was passing in the city to buy some books from the library. His eyes were attracted to this marvelous piece in the hands of Jupiter. He cried: "For who is the Pilgrim Flask? It is amazing". Jupiter replies with remarkable confidence: "It is mine. I am the only one who deserves possessing it". Bacchus could not believe his ears. He shouted: "no, absolutely not. It is part of our heritage. It should be at the Museum where all the people can go and see it. After all these years, it still has all its shiny colors. You are not allowed to take it anywhere. Give it to me now; I will put it in the Museum." Jupiter laughed loudly and didn’t accept to give him anything and he said: "you cannot do anything. I am the king here and if I want, I can destroy you and your silly knowledge.” Bacchus was determined to take the Flask. He returned the next day with his army and a war took place. Suddenly, I heard my mom’s voice. She woke me up to go to school. It was just a dream.

I told my mom what I saw last night. She was very happy because I am interested to know about these people who make our history. She told me that their real story is different than the one I dreamt about it. In addition, she promised me to go to the National Museum of Beirut where I can find all the ancient monuments. Also, there are many coins, necklaces and statues. As my mom says, every citizen should go and visit the Museum of his country and know about his past because the one who doesn’t have a past, doesn’t have a future.

The Friendship Box
By Nour Al Halawani

Like a box of chocolate, friends come in different flavors and colors. They can be classified according to what we share with them. First, there are the acquaintances. These are people we know little about and meet less often, and they in turn know little about us, like the neighbor that lives 4 blocks away or the distant cousin who visits us once every year. Then there are those who we run into every day. These know a little more about us, but they are not concerned with our private lives; neither are we with theirs. Lastly, there are those who we trust on our secrets and share our depression and craziness with. These are our best friends with whom we forge the strongest and most intimate friendship ties.

In conclusion, the more we share with someone, and the more we know about her/him, the stronger our relationship with that person becomes.

Women in Arab Society
By Roukia Saty

It is sad to see that nowadays, girls and women in Arab societies are suffering because of class and gender distinction. A woman is not treated as human being in our society. A woman cannot make a mistake, and if she does, it will be an unforgivable mistake. Also, she will suffer because of the judgment of the society that can lead sometimes to her death. Women are discriminated against since the beginning of their life. When a baby girl is born, it is a normal thing, but often it is a bad beginning of their life.

Women in Arab Society
having a boy than a girl. What are girls for?” Girls are raised in a way so that they don’t love themselves, are not confident about themselves and are afraid of their family and their society because girls are tied to the dignity of the family. Here’s a story to illustrate the point. A girl got pregnant. Her parents knew and hit her every day. Then they went to the guy and begged him to marry their daughter, but he refused. Before they came back home, the girl threw herself out of the window. Both she and the baby were killed. She preferred to kill herself instead of getting killed by her society. She preferred to kill her baby because she knew what kind of life she will give him in this type of society. However, it is noteworthy to mention that the blame is to be put also on her mother. After all, the fruit does not fall far from the tree. Since the boy carries his family name, he is more important than the girl. Since the dignity of the family is linked to girls, the blame is to be put on them. In this way, boys live their life freely because they know if they make mistakes, nobody will blame them and their parents will love them no matter what they do. For them, there is nothing to worry about when making mistakes. Girls are human beings same as boys are. They have the right to make mistakes, to be forgiven and to live a normal life. It is a shame on us and our society to keep talking about women’s rights without providing those rights. It is a shame on us that we still have girls who kill themselves or are killed by others because they can’t speak and there is no one to listen to them.

Successful or Successful?
By Josleen Barathie

No matter what your aim in life is, no matter what your religion is, no matter what your nationality is, and what age you are, we all share something in common: a desire to be successful. Each person defines success from his/her point of view. Some people relate it either to love and wealth, to luck, or to power. Here is a story told to me by my grandmother. Once upon a time, a woman came back home from school. She saw three old men sitting in her front yard. Although she didn’t know them, she asked them to get inside and have a lunch, but they refused because her husband was not at home. In the evening, when her husband came back home, she told him the story. He asked her to invite them again and she did. They were firm in stance and told her that they couldn’t enter the house together. She cut in and asked for an explanation. One of them explained that his name was Wealth, and the others are Love and Success. Success asked her to discuss with her husband whom they prefer of the three. Actually, her husband was overjoyed and asked wealth to come in and fill their house. The daughter disagreed and asked love to get in and fill their house. However, the wife suggested that success to cheer up the house. Finally, the three of them invited success to be their guest for the night. Success got up and started walking towards the house. In the same manner, Love and Wealth also got up and followed him. The family got surprised and wanted an explanation for this action. Success replied: if you invited any of the others, he will be getting inside alone, but since you invited me, wherever I go they come with me. So, wherever there is success, there is also wealth and love.

Luck has nothing to do with success since success without hard work is simply impossible and being lucky is exactly doing no effort to gain something you want in life. For one thing, to enter college you must work hard if you want to succeed, and when you are in the exam, luck doesn’t do you any good. It is doubtful that someone who knows nothing will pass the exam. So, in order to succeed you must work hard. Secondly, it is impossible to build a
career if you lack knowledge and experience and that luck will be standing there sheepishly. Luck has no place in such a play.

Life doesn’t always go in the direction we want it to go. In difficult times and when we fail, we ask ourselves the following questions: “why me?”, “Do I deserve this?” Having the power to change undesired situations is success itself. But when you don’t have any chance available you think of yourself as a victim of life. So gaining power over your situation will provide a positive attitude towards life.

We all want to achieve success, so we could live a comfortable life, have financial freedom, fancy house, and fancy cars.

They say: “So to be successful you have to think big, do only what you always dreamt to do, balance your life, do not be afraid of failure, have a pure mind, keep going on, and believe in your own power. Even if your 99th struggle fails, your 100th won’t.”

**Self Confidence**  
**By Mohamad Araji**

Self Confidence is how we feel about ourselves. It is like nutrients—the more we have it, the healthier and stronger we become. Self-confidence is one of the most important characteristics of one’s personality. It is the bedrock on which most other traits rest and it will do more to determine an individual’s future than other factors. It is impossible to live with low self-confidence, and indeed there are many people who do: it is like trying to ride a bicycle with flat tires.

The first step in building self-confidence is achieved by making those who surround us feel better. Many people are doomed just to be failures, and that’s how some adults look at kids. Maybe you have heard the saying “a bird with a broken wing will never fly as high”, but as one develops his confidence, he will not remember but that a bird with a broken wing only needs mending. When anyone of us wants to make changes in his life he should begin with himself, not with his parents or surroundings. He has to trust himself and follow his goals. He has to find a talent and work on it and be happy for the successes of others, be honest and kind to them, and never let other people influence his mood.

As a conclusion, building self-confidence is not easy to maintain. It takes time, practice, and desire. If one wants to be a strong teenager, he can do it. But it is not going to happen overnight. One has to set his goals because it is a process of making a dream come true step by step.

**Out-of-School Children**  
**By Zoulfikar Nasser Al Deen**

Un-schooling is an educational method and philosophy that advocates learner-chosen activities as a primary means for learning. Un-schooled students learn through their natural life experiences including play, household responsibilities, personal interests and curiosity, internships and work experience, travel, books, elective classes, family, mentors, and social interaction. Un-schooling encourages exploration of activities initiated by the children themselves, believing that the more personal learning is, the more meaningful, well-understood and therefore, more useful to the child.

While courses may occasionally be taken, un-schooling questions the usefulness of standard curricula, conventional grading methods, and other features of traditional schooling, in
maximizing the education of each child. In addition, we see some children who are out of school, and are immersed in community work. Un-schooling has become a popular trend in education over the past few years. There were approximately 15,000,000 children who were un-schooled in the world, and the number continues to rise. Kid who are un-schooled, compared to those who go to educational institutions or are home-schooled, have an educational background that consists of limited knowledge. They do not attend school not are they homeschooled. For the most part they stay at home and are not encouraged to read, attend classes, or learn any type curriculum.

Parents allow their kids to do whatever they want, and they believe their children’s natural curiosity will lead them to seek knowledge, believers in schooling argue that kids should be allowed to set their own educational pace, and purse expertise on topics they find interesting and necessary, so they think that unschooling gives their children the right way to learn from life experiences which is wrong.

There’s Always a However
By Mazen Farhat

The statement “there is always a however” is extremely accurate, for most things in life come with conditions. Most of the time, it is not always easy as saying that you want to do something and then doing it, or saying that you want something and then getting it. There is always some condition or stipulation set by someone else and you must follow. The word “however” is especially relevant to teenagers, shoes parents and teachers take advantage of it to spoil whatever plans or ideas they may have in mind.

Take for example a typical teenage boy who has just been assigned a project to do in his history class: the teacher begins the assignment with “you have full freedom to choose the topic of your project”. And here marks the entrance of the dreadful “however”. The teacher continues, however, the project must have some relevance to the current situation in the Middle East. Then the boy finally comes up with a topic and goes to discuss it with his teacher. The teacher begins, “that is very intelligent and well though idea”. The boy is elated, but then that word shows its ugly head. The teacher continues, “However, it is not relevant enough to the situation at hand”. And that one word has, once more, ruined that boy’s day.

Another example would be a teenage girl getting ready for a night out with her friends. She is just about to walk out the door when her mother says “your outfit is very lovely”. Automatically the girl becomes suspicious. The mother continues, “However, I cannot let leave this house wearing it”. The girl changes her outfit and returns when her mother says again, “You may take my car.” The girl is excited for she was afraid she would have to walk. Then the mother continues, “However, you must bring it back by 9:30” and the girl’s evening plans are cut short and her night is ruined.

The word ‘however’ is very powerful. It has the ability to ruin entire nights when used incorrectly. The modern teenager especially feels the harsh usage of ‘however’ for his/her teachers and parents always make some sort of condition or stipulation on every activity that he or she wants to participate in.
Ibrahim Barada, 19

Ibrahim heard about AUB four years ago, when one of his friends joined AUB to study Mechanical Engineering. Having his mind set on joining AUB himself, Ibrahim worked hard in high school and managed to get accepted into the USAID University Scholarship Program at AUB.

Ibrahim’s interests are varied. He is interested in politics, philosophy and global concerns. These, he says, “encourage me to read, search, ask and learn.” He enjoys exercising in the gym, watching TED talks, reading books related to politics and philosophy or novels for improving his English language skills.

Ibrahim is talented, as he claims, “in presenting an idea and convincing people by [his] ideas and beliefs”. He has joined few clubs so that he could improve his skills and talents.

In terms of life, education, and future career plans, Ibrahim hopes to obtain a Master’s degree in Computer Science and a degree in Business. These two degrees, he believes, “will provide [him] with a secure job and a good start for a career”.

Ibrahim summarizes his experience of UPP in one word: Prosperity. “What I have learned at UPP,” he says, “will definitely improve my English skills, therefore, I can handle my courses the next semester. Also, I learned this word at UPP so I like to use [it] to show how thankful I am for this successful semester.” Ibrahim is surely on his way to building a successful career.

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