

Starfish

Lai King Catholic Secondary School

English Newsletter (2020-2021)

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72nd Hong Kong Schools Speech Festival

This year is a fruitful year for LKCSS! Although the pandemic had brought much inconvenience to training, our students still did a great job in the Hong Kong Schools Speech Festival. Our school managed to have 8 winners out of 25 entries this year. Undoubtedly, our students and teachers had worked hard to strive for such excellent results. We thank all English teachers for their dedication and congratulate all winners on their achievements.



Senior form winners and participants

Winners of 72 nd Hong Kong Schools Speech Festival			
Award	Class	Name	Teacher Trainer
1 st place	6A	Chan Wai Kit	Ms Ivy Yu
1 st place	6B	Chan Chun Hei	Ms Ivy Yu
1 st place	6B	Pang Wai Man	Ms Ivy Yu
2 nd place	6B	Tsui Pui Yu	Ms Ivy Yu
3 rd place	2A	Cheung Wang Yan Abbie	Ms Angel Yu
3 rd place	3C	Lee Yin Hang	Ms Phoebe Lui
3 rd place	4B	Lee Yuk Ching	Ms Ivy Yu
3 rd place	4D	Chan Hei Lui	Ms Cindy Lee



Junior form winners and participants

All awardees

The Key to Success in the Hong Kong Schools Speech Festival

Ms Yu Kwan Wai

I am honoured to be invited to share 'my secrets' in training this year's participants in the Hong Kong Schools Speech Festival, especially when I had to train the students during my maternity leave. Since the first day I worked in LKCSS, I have been proud of our students as their performances in Hong Kong Schools Speech Festival are always promising. For those who have joined the Festival, you should know that the competition is getting keener as there are more contestants every year. This year, with the pandemic, it was even more challenging as all the competitors had to perform in front of a camera instead of giving a live performance.

For me, it is truly a remarkable year as I was on my maternity leave during the Speech Festival training period. All of the trainings of my students were conducted via ZOOM as I would give birth to my baby ANYTIME. To be frank, it was not easy to train students for the Festival as the competition has been fierce these years, not to mention the trainings were forced to go 'virtual'. It's harder to listen to pronunciation and delivery of speech clearly via ZOOM. It's even harder for me to demonstrate the dramatic element of a performance due to the limitations of using ZOOM and of course, I was not supposed to move in a drastic manner. With all these obstacles, many might wonder why my trainees ranked high in place. With 3 champions, 1 first runner-up and 1 second runner-up, were they just lucky? The answer is a definite 'no'. Their attitude contributes to their successes.

To make every training more fruitful and productive, I set a very tight schedule and the students had to practise well before we met online. I had regular practices with them every day. Due to their tight schedules, sometimes the trainings were arranged late at night, for instance, 9 pm or even 10 pm. All of them were so hardworking as they clearly knew that every training session might be the last before my labour. It's actually their hard work that paid off!

So, my key to success in Hong Kong Schools Speech Festival? It's to treat every opportunity as if it were the last. Actually, this is not just for the competition but for achieving success in life as well.



Winners with their training teacher, Ms Ivy Yu

Words from the winners



6A Chan Wai Kit

Participating in the Speech Festival for the past five years has enabled me to interpret hidden meanings in poems and proses. It has helped me put myself in others' shoes. And it has also broadened my vocabulary bank. Other than the skills and prize that I got from the competition, my presentation skills have improved. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Ms Ivy Yu for her assiduous effort in training us. She taught us how to express emotions in poems effectively through the usage of voice and posture. Under her guidance, not only was I inspired but I also started to grow fond of public speaking. I know this is a special year for her to be a teacher trainer since she had to train us on ZOOM during her maternity leave! Her tireless effort given to students will always be remembered. Ms Yu is always there whenever I encounter problems. "Try your best and never regret!" These words of encouragement have carried me through the hurdles I encountered this year. Lastly, I would like to thank all the teachers in LKCSS.

6A Chan Wai Kit

This is my first time participating in the Speech Festival. And never have I thought that I would score a podium place. This is a brand new experience for me as I am usually involved more actively in sports-related activities. I remember it was Ms Ivy Yu who had invited me to sign up for the competition. After agreeing to join the contest, Ms Yu has invested a lot of her time to help us practise. There were times I wanted to give up as I knew nothing about the delivery of a poem but I was taught how to convey meanings with different emotions through the usage of my voice, tone, pauses, postures, etc. Through countless practice sessions, I was able to grasp the idea of how a well-presented poem and prose is like. I would like to contribute my success to Ms Yu for if I hadn't been invited to join the competition, I would never have got a place in the Speech Festival. I'll remember her keen guidance which will surely be beneficial to my future.

6B Chan Chun Hei

This is the sixth year that I attended the Speech Festival. It had been difficult for me to sign up for the competition not just because of the revised format of the competition, but also the coming HKDSE that I would be sitting in. Preparation for the public examination certainly took up most of my time. I was worried that I couldn't handle the competition and the public examination at the same time. But Ms Yu encouraged me and gave me a lot of tips for both the competition and examination. The tips definitely eased my nerves a lot! Thanks to Ms Yu and her useful tips, I ranked the first in my category in the competition. This might be the best year for me ever.

6B Pang Wai Man



6B Chan Chun Hei



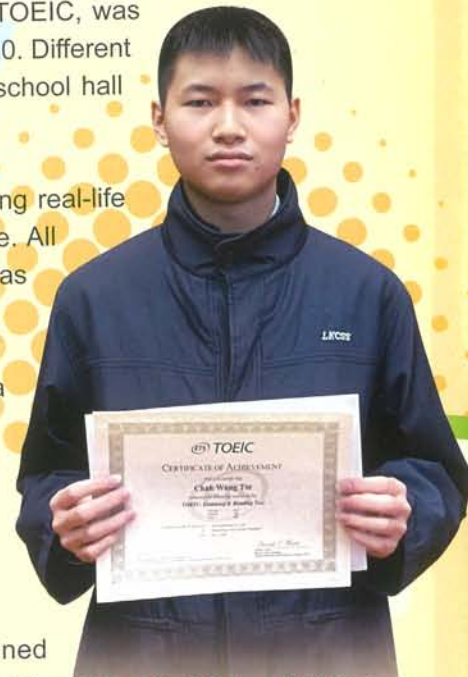
6B Pang Wai Man

S5 & S6 TOEIC

An international English language proficiency assessment for the workplace, TOEIC, was administered to S5 and S6 students by Smart Education on 9th November, 2020. Different from past practices, students had to sit the TOEIC in classrooms instead of the school hall owing to the undertaking of social distancing.

Students were tested on their listening and reading skills, with questions simulating real-life situations in order to help them deal with issues which would occur at workplace. All participants have received an evaluation slip regarding their performances, as well as a certificate in recognition of their English proficiency.

This year, three S6 students from 6A, Tse Chak Wang, Natividad Angelica Rebianes and Ling Chun Hei Marco achieved outstanding results (over 900 points out of 990). All three of them received the Gold Certificate. Moreover, eleven S6 students obtained 730 – 855 points earning the Blue Certificate. Furthermore, a majority of students have improved in terms of competence in English in comparison to their pre-tests which were conducted last year.



6A Tse Chak Wang, Attainment of International Professional Proficiency in English

A result analysis meeting, joined by all S5 and S6 teachers as well as a TOEIC consultant, was conducted on 17th December, 2020. The meeting was held on ZOOM and some constructive and meaningful feedback was given. Professional suggestions were also offered to our school to boost our students' English competence. Participating in the tests, students should become more competent users of English and surely, more confident in using it.



Before the start of TOEIC

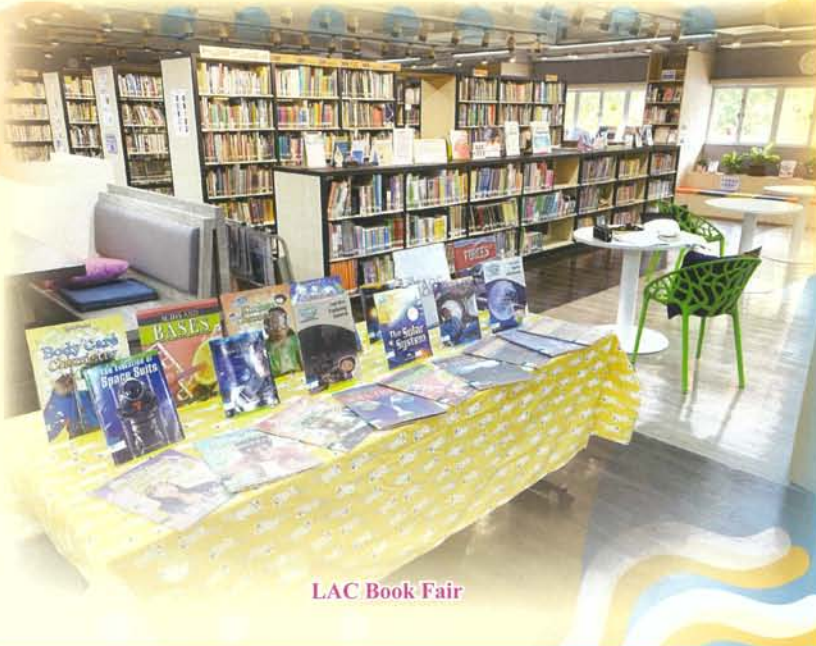


Distinction Certificate Presentation

Campus Reading

Library Visit

In LKCSS, we promote reading, not only reading Chinese or English literary classics but also reading across the curriculum. Every class is arranged at least one library visit a year to encourage students to borrow more books from the school library. In order to promote LAC reading and enhance students' English competence at the same time, a myriad of science-based English books have been purchased in the Second Term. To raise students' interest in borrowing the newly purchased books, the English Department along with the Library Management and Reading Promotion Committee organised some library visits for all S1 and S2 students. Two English teachers have been in charge of the visits, let's see what they have to say!



LAC Book Fair

Reading Across the Curriculum

Mr Alex Greathead

I've always wondered, 'How big is the Universe?' The answer may surprise you! Let's take our solar system as an example. Think about all planets in the solar system. Do you know we can fit all the planets in between the Earth and the Moon if we line them up? Yes, it is as jaw-dropping as it is when I was first made aware of this fact that Jupiter, Saturn, Neptune and so on, all of the planets' diameter combined would fit between the Earth and the Moon. On a smaller, more local scale, imagine if the Sun was just 1 metre in diameter, Neptune, the furthest planet in our solar system, is at an astonishing distance, 5.6 kilometres away. That's about the distance from our school to Shatin. All of these are just in our cosmic backyard! How fascinating it is! How did I know all these facts? I read them in science books which you can borrow at the school library now.

To promote reading across the curriculum, the school ran a space-themed quiz at the library with prizes offered. The quiz included these amazing facts and trivia about space so as to get students start thinking about the wonders of the universe. I hope this experience could cultivate students' interest in reading more science-related books, from the beauty of a Nebula to the destructive power of a Quasar. The quiz is just a start for discovering the space and the universe. There's more to offer at library. The library has purchased a large selection of materials for

our future astronauts or just those who are curious about space, to learn more about our world and what's further beyond.



Mr Alex's Visit Session



Prize Presentation

Mr Lam Hon Chak Ryan

Do you know we can learn science from amusement parks? No matter what ride you take, be it a roller coaster, a freefall ride, or bumper cars, different scientific principles are at work. The fun we have at the rides has science written all over. For instance, we can experience Newton's Third Law of Motion, 'for every action there is an equal and opposite reaction', when we play bumper cars. Let me put it this way, when both of the bumper cars are driving towards each other, they are heading forward. When they bump into each other, they move backwards. In other words, they move in opposite directions from their original paths because an action occurs, the bumping. They bounce away from each other. This type of action can be explained through Newton's Third Law of Motion.

It sounds interesting, doesn't it? And how do I know all of this? It is not because I am good at science but spending time reading helps further my understanding of the world. The library has purchased plenty of LAC books for all LKCSS students. You can always learn more about science in everyday life, and of course, English through reading. You can kill two birds with one stone!



Mr Lam's Visit Session

Online Reading – The New Norm

Ms Shu Yan Yu

It is due to the pandemic that a lot of activities which were originally to be held face-to-face have now carried on using novel means. Such a change is rather interesting. For instance, the face-to-face 'book recommendation session' in which teachers would have shared their books to students is now transformed into a new form of sharing where teachers make videos to introduce different books. As part of the Reading Week activities, English teachers have produced videos to recommend English books, including *Animal Farm* (Mr Alex Greathead), *A Scandal in Bohemia* (Ms Joanne Yu) and *The Adventure of Tom Sawyer* (Ms Jennifer Law) to name but a few.

Recommending a book online is quite different from doing it in person. The obvious pro of a recorded recommendation is that videos can be played anywhere anytime. Teachers could play the videos in different classrooms and at different times during the Reading Week. It is also made possible for students to watch the videos at their own pace and revisit afterwards. While producing a video for the recommended book, teachers have paid attention to compress intriguing ideas into as short as 4-5 minutes and to how videos can be made more visually attractive. For example, when I was producing the video for *Frankenstein*, the book I recommended, I considered the use of different graphics and pictures to convey meaning. Different pictures of the monster in *Frankenstein* have been included, as well as a simple animation introducing the author.

Another unconventional thing about the book recommendation this year is that all teachers have introduced e-books on eLibrary Plus, which contain user-friendly functions and language aids. Have you borrowed a book on the platform? If not, the summer holiday is surely a good time for a good read!

If you are interested in some of the books which English teachers have recommended, feel free to scan the following QR codes and enjoy yourself!



A Christmas Carol
Made by Mr Ryan Lam



Frankenstein
Made by Ms Jenny Shu



The Call of the Wild
Made by Mr Brian Lau

Can online learning and teaching be the new mode in education?



Ms Man Lai Ping

In recent years, face-to-face learning was the only teaching mode. With Covid-19 and technological advancement, online learning and teaching becomes more prevalent. *Teachers and students are experiencing a whole new type of learning and teaching.*

No matter which type of learning is adopted, both the traditional and online modes share the same objectives. We, as teachers, try our best to create the best learning environment for students. To help with their learning, we have merged the traditional teaching materials onto some online learning platforms, such as Nearpod and Notabiliity. The pandemic has, no doubt, fast-forwarded the pace of employing online learning strategies into classrooms.

Is online learning better than face-to-face learning?

Online learning is a great alternative and complement to face-to-face learning. There is no arguing that online learning brings education further than it had ever been. With the wide usage of the Internet, students can access information with their iPads anywhere as long as there is an internet signal.

Also, students now in general are more apt in using online learning tools as their media literacy rate is substantially higher than the previous generations. They should be comfortable using different online learning tools. The more comfortable they are, the better they can learn. However, there is something that online learning cannot offer. Students need to stay away from possible distractions at home. It is so much easier to dose off at home without any supervision from teachers. It is also more challenging for teachers to check if students are paying attention in class. Besides, being physically present in the classroom enables students and teachers to develop a much stronger bond and among themselves.

Ultimately, learning is a social activity. While the Internet has made communication easier, it is not always as effective as face-to-face meetings. Students can get to interact more with each other during face-to-face schooling, while students are somewhat disconnected from their peers when having online lessons. Both modes of learning and teaching have their pros and cons, surely, although online learning and teaching tools complement the inadequacies that face-to-face learning and teaching has, a fully digitalised lesson neglects the physical interaction the face-to-face lessons give.



2021 has been a rather quiet year for the English Society mainly due to the timetable restrictions brought about by COVID-19 which made access to students outside of lesson quite difficult. Nevertheless, we ran a few small-scale activities, i.e. IELTS & DSE discussion practices. Despite the restrictions, we found some innovative alternatives to hold some English-related activities, e.g. Online Spelling Bee. The English Society has also created a social media account for easy access to students and to cater for circumstances like this.

The Society held several DSE and IELTS-based practice sessions for senior form students to hone their skills and prepare for their speaking examinations in both the HKDSE and IELTS. Alas, the cancellation of the speaking examination was announced at a later time in the first term. We are sure that students can benefit from the sessions even though the examination was cancelled.

On social media, the Society has created an Instagram account, which although currently is more a story of what's happened this year, is in the process of being turned into a more interactive element. So, if any of you wants to help run this endeavor, please approach our native English teacher (NET), Mr Alex Greathead.

In the coming school year, if the social distancing restrictions are loosened, we are surely going to deliver more to you; if not, we will become innovative and find some new ways to host some events for students to enjoy and also learn English meanwhile. Students are always welcome to play board games and talk to our NET, Mr Alex Greathead, at the English Corner which is located on the second floor.

Spelling Bee

Traditionally, in a spelling bee competition, the host would enunciate a word for contestants to spell it out in a hall. Yet, due to the social distancing guidelines, the society was forced to hold the competition in an online format. How on earth can you have a spelling competition online when everyone could just check the spelling of a word easily at home? Not to mention the experience of having a spelling bee in person and online is completely different. For the sake of holding the competition, an alternative was proposed to solve the problem. We decided to have the competition on 'Kahoot!', an online quizzing tool where a series of spelling related questions would be given, and all students had to do was to click on the correct; or in some cases, incorrect answers.

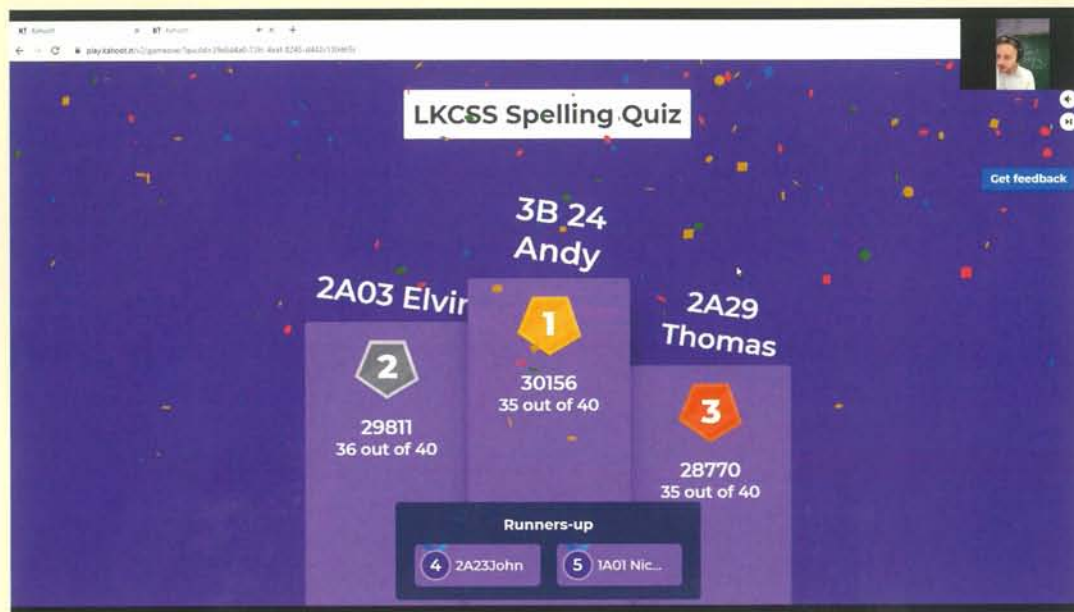


Participants waiting for the competition to start

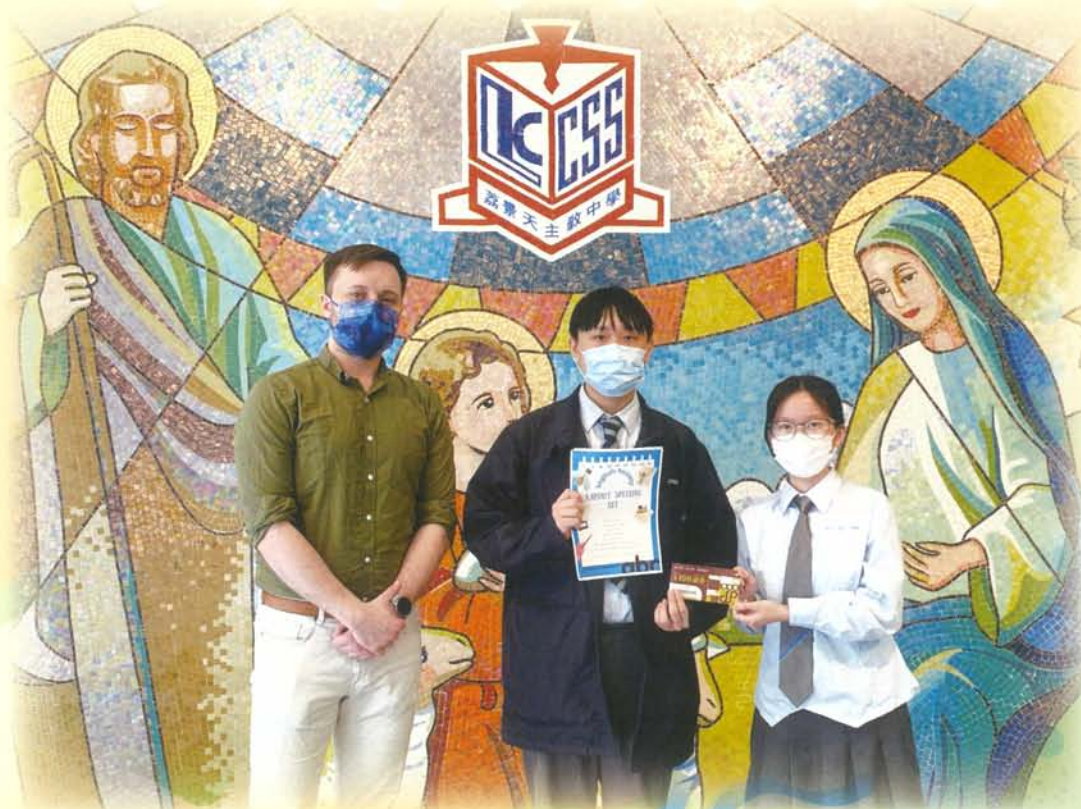
This is a rather new approach to what we would have thought of a spelling bee competition. The goal for this competition is for students to learn English and have fun, why don't we do it out of the box? There were 4 sections in the Kahoot! Spelling Bee: Picture Spelling, Unjumble The Letters, Odd One Out and finally, Fill In The Gaps. With the bonus round being 'Is It Spelt Correctly'.

The competition was reasonably smooth sailing with a couple of hiccups. The participants were definitely having fun during competition. Next year, if the situation allows, we hope to run a face-to-face Spelling Bee.

Will you join us next year? Can you beat the current champion, Andy? There is only one way to find out!



Result of the competition



From the left Mr Alex, Andy, Champion of Spelling Bee and Vicky Kwok, Chairperson of the English Society

English Morning Assembly

Morning Assembly: a chance to have a brief discussion with students about a topic, be it, 'hobbies', 'school' or 'health'. I usually give students some preparation time, but I encourage a more natural, improvised discussion as I value fluency over accuracy in spoken English, which is why I will sometimes ask a new question 'on the spot'. This format allows a more authentic talking experience for our students. I hope the speakers can learn from it and get more comfortable speaking in public, and also those who are listening in the classroom can learn from the assembly too.

Mr Alex Greathead

Mr Alex, Sky, and I did a morning assembly in April. We talked about hobbies. Before the assembly, I had butterflies in my stomach. Imagine having a morning assembly where two third of the school were listening to you; what a big deal it is to me for it was the first time I addressed a topic to such a large crowd. Prior to the assembly, Mr Alex had several brainstorming and practice sessions with Sky and me. They soothed my jitters. On the day of the assembly, it went rather smoothly. My hobby is Taekwondo; Sky's playing piano; and Mr Alex's gaming. Although I stuttered a bit during the assembly, Mr Alex's assuring smile encouraged me to try my best. Huge shout out to Mr Alex for his advice on my presentation skills and thought process. It was great working with Mr Alex and I look forward to collaborating with him again.

1A Chan Hon Leung Edward



From the left Mr Alex, Sky and Edward

I remember the topic of the morning assembly I had was 'health'. Ways to enhance our mental health and physical health were discussed, for example, in the aspect of mental health, listening to music helps relieve stress and in the aspect of physical health, drinking water helps improve our bodies' metabolism rate. Actually, those methods can be frequently applied to our daily lives. As I was very nervous before the morning assembly, I took a deep breath so as to lift the anxiety. And it worked! In the assembly, I have learnt a great deal of ways to maintain our health. Also, it was great to work with Mr Alex who has taught me some new English vocabulary related to the topic. It's a fruitful journey for me, and I am sure, for my schoolmates as well.

3A Ho Pui Sze



3A Ho Pui Sze

I have joined the Hong Kong Schools Speech Festival several time but this is my first time speaking to the whole school in English. I was very uptight when I was first invited to speak in an English morning assembly. Thanks to Mr Alex's tutelage, I got the hang of it rather quickly. He showed me how to expand my ideas by providing more examples to my statement and also citing statistics and references to strengthen my credibility. The assembly was about reading habit. We talked about the ways of finding a suitable book for ourselves and how we can utilise books to improve our language competence. It was a mesmerising experience.

3B Jayden Cheung



3B Jayden Cheung

This is my first time having a go at a morning assembly with a foreigner who, in this case, happens to be my native English teacher, Mr Alex. Mr Alex comes from the United Kingdom. I've always wondered what life is like in the UK, so we decided to talk about the similarities and differences between living in Hong Kong and the UK. One of the differences we came up with is that the UK has a lot more group discussions and project-based assignments than Hong Kong. This assembly has been a joyous experience. I have gained a better understanding of how life is like in the UK. Also, communication is key in learning any language. Speaking with people using the language can no doubt level up your oral skills in a tremendous scale. If you see Mr Alex walking in the corridors, go talk to Mr Alex. I am sure he is happy to listen to you, your stories and your thoughts.

5A Kwok Sin Yu



5A Kwok Sin Yu

Student Teachers Sharing

'The mediocre teacher tells. The good teacher explains. The superior teacher demonstrates. The great teacher inspires'. Bearing this quote in mind, I entered LKCSS with excitement, in the hope of bringing students some 'inspirations'. Yet, I later realised that qualities in a great teacher weren't built in a day. What it takes to be a good teacher is way more than waking up at 6 a.m. in dusky mornings and marking assignments at sleepless nights. It needs, more importantly, the effort to care of students.

On the occasion of disquiet and confusion of society, I would like to thank the Principal, teachers and staff of LKCSS for welcoming and taking good care of me; and better still, for demonstrating the roles and responsibilities to take as a teacher to me.

After showing my gratitude to teachers at school, it's a must to thank the two classes I've taught: 3B for trying their best not to rely too much on Google Translate; and 1B for paying full attention to the lessons. May happiness rain on my lovely students and great mentors Ms Joanne Yu and Ms Christine Zheng.

Finally, thank you LKCSS!



Ms Agnes Yu Ho Yan

LKCSS has given me flexibility and autonomy to explore different teaching pedagogies. Throughout my 8-week teaching practicum in LKCSS, I have received warming support from the school, which has made the experience fruitful and rewarding.

My mentors have been very supportive throughout this journey. I feel grateful that they have provided me with helpful advice when there were setbacks and obstacles in my lesson execution. Their sharing of personal experiences guided me through the teaching process.

For not only my mentors, students in LKCSS have also been very positive and welcoming. Being a student teacher did not undermine their confidence towards me. What is more uplifting is their engaging attitude in class. Even if there were times that I might not perform well, students were very understanding. I was strongly motivated to learn from mistakes and improve on my lesson delivery because of their encouragement. As a newbie in teaching, I am lucky enough to have these supportive students when I was making my first steps into everything.

I would like to end this sharing by giving my sincere gratitude to my mentors, S3G2 and 4B students.



Ms Joyce Lam Hoi Yee

Note of Farewell

It saddens us to let you know that three of our experienced panel members are leaving LKCSS. They are Ms Yu Lai Kwan Joanne, Ms Lee Pui Kar Cindy and Ms Law Shuk Chun Jennifer. We, the school, the panel and all students in LKCSS, thank them for their many years of service and wish them all the best in embarking on new journeys of their lives.

