

1. English Language Education

Ms. S. Yap

Kudos to the Class of 2023 who enjoyed a rewarding school life, seemingly unfazed by the mutations of a virus that affected schooling everywhere.

In the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education examination, three quarters of the cohort obtained Level 5* and above, with three in ten attaining the top level. Everyone was delighted with the resumption of Paper 4 because it enabled our students' oral proficiency to be fully acknowledged: 57% were awarded 5** and nine in ten attained level 5 and above. The English-speaking environment and the reading culture at DGJS and DGS no doubt contributed to this pleasing outcome, as well as to the performance in Literature in English, with 58% attaining Level 5 to 5**. In our alternative curriculum, 85% of the GCE A Level class that sat the IELTS examination attained Band 8 and above.

Notwithstanding their admirable grades, the Class of 2023, like DGS girls before them, understood that there is more to learning than examinations. On top of obtaining the results desired, each Diocesan girl would have embarked on many other intellectual pursuits and participated in extracurricular activities available at school. Each girl would have been encouraged by her peers or teachers, if not driven by her own curiosity to sample the array of taster courses, to try a new sport, to experiment with new technology or to volunteer for a cause. In so doing, she would have not only widened her horizons, but also acquired vocabulary in authentic settings to master the English language. This is how we teach and learn at DGS.

To optimize learning at school, a student should not be afraid to throw herself into different hobbies and spend time to discover her strengths and weaknesses. Presenting a paper for the Humanities Research Symposium for Youth at Sea World Resort in Brisbane saw our students learn about the Roe versus Wade debate in the United States as well as the humanitarian challenges in Myanmar. The pleasure of joining numerous Model United Nations conferences locally, across the border, and abroad, inspired our executive committee to host DGSMUN, in the course of which students learnt how to discuss social issues with wit. After debating and adjudicating debates in competitions like the HKSSDC, HKSDC, UNESCO, Sing Tao and Hong Kong Bar Association, our debaters wrapped up the year by organising an interclass debating tournament as a post-exam activity for Secondary 3.

At the 74th Hong Kong Schools Speech Festival, 17 Diocesans won first place, 13 second and 13 came third. Not satisfied with doing public speaking in English, several students accepted the challenge of a friendly trilingual speech contest with our sister school in Guangzhou, and some also took part in another trilingual competition testing writing and speaking proficiency among students territory-wide. Three senior students accepted an invitation to represent English Speaking Union Hong Kong at a Friendly International Forum for a global audience. Their fluent delivery drew praise from English teachers and admiration from English learners on different continents.

Relishing the opportunity to learn from an alumna turned academic, McQueen Sum, enthusiastic Secondary 6 students filled limited places in her special pre-university tutorials on political economy. Thrilled with the chance to meet Head Girl turned author, Mary Jean Chan, students read selections of her poems, then designed posters to promote the homecoming event at which they had a candid exchange on writing as a craft. Secondary 5 students continued with our decades-long journalism project by producing the VA magazine for sale at the mini bazaar to fund a charitable cause. The editorial team heralded a new dawn by inviting the entire form to contribute articles to Aurora. This project has grown to tap expertise, not only in writing but also in art and publishing, from both the HKDSE and AL classes.

Individually, aspiring writers continued to hone their skills by taking the initiative to join various competitions locally and internationally. Only in Secondary 2, Chan Tsz Yau Astrid was named overall champion of the Hong Kong Young Writers' Awards across all seven categories; Tan Shi Le Charlotte of Secondary 5 was named first runner-up in the Lions International Youth Exchange Scholarship Essay

Competition and Chung Nicole Mong Joo of Secondary 6 took home the South China Morning Post's Student Linguist Award (English).

It is, however, not only about winning. Many of our students cherish the opportunities to learn from the process itself: junior secondary students would gamely compete against older students in the Harvard Global WE Student Essay Competition and the University of Cambridge CCISTC 'Transcending Ideas' Global Essay Competition, and our novice debaters did not let the draw curb their enjoyment in sparring with a South Korean national team. None of these students won the contest but they gained from the experience to fight another day.

The zest for learning is the hallmark of a DGS student; the Class of 2023 embodies *la joie de vivre*.