

1. English Language Education

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Another year of change and uncertainty; another show of grit and solidarity. Like their alumnae, the Class of 2022 has demonstrated what the Diocesan spirit can accomplish.

In the HKDSE English Language examination, 23% and 60% attained Level 5** and 5* or above respectively. Everyone taking Literature in English attained at least Level 4, with 70% receiving Level 5 or above. Of the GCE A Level cohort that sat the IELTS examination, 95% attained Band 8 and above, and everyone scoring at least Band 7. With these commendable results in a year when public examinations were again affected by Covid-19 disruptions, our students have proven their mettle.

They did it while enjoying the opportunities available for extracurricular learning. One of the top eight HKDSE scholars in Hong Kong, Head Girl Jacqueline Sin also won the Lord Palmerston Award Essay Competition 2021. Madeleine Wu, our debater and the only local student on Team Hong Kong, was the highest ranked (overall top second speaker) when it won the World Schools Debating Championships 2022. Before that, she was named Second Runner-up in the SCMP awards ceremony for Student Linguist of the Year (English) 2022.

Led by these fine examples from our graduating class, students from other levels were determined not to let a virus threaten their vibrant school life. Even more students enrolled in the English Section of the 73rd Hong Kong Schools Speech Festival; of these 21 won, 11 came second, and 13 were placed third. This fun-filled public speaking competition enables students to hone their skills for a bigger arena like the 21st Century Cup National English Speaking Competition 2022: Charlotte Tan from Secondary 4 claimed the title of champion (Hong Kong region) and went on to face other regional champions at the Grand Final in October.

Our aspiring writers had a rewarding year too, submitting poems, stories, book reports, articles, essays, and translations for a wider array of competitions than before. There were prizewinners from Secondary 1 to 5. Among these, Keisha Kwok of Secondary 3 was the champion of the English Junior Section in the 33rd Book Report Writing Competition for Secondary School Students, and Gaille Su of Secondary 5 won the inaugural Hong Kong round of the Harvard Alumni for Global Women's Empowerment Essay Contest.

Individual successes aside, our teams and clubs have continued to showcase their mastery of English beyond the classroom.

The DGS Model United Nations Team participated in even more conferences this year, namely, the Hong Kong International School Model United Nations IV, Renaissance College Model United Nations VII, Singapore Chinese Girls' School Model United Nations, Hong Kong Model United Nations, Chinese University Model United Nations, Chinese International School Model United Nations, and the Diocesan Boys' School Model United Nations. Capitalizing on their mastery of English, team members returned with numerous awards for their excellent presentations, teamwork and social awareness.

Members of the DGS House of Debate won best speaker awards at the 37th Sing Tao Debating Competition, Hong Kong Bar Association Debating Competition and Hong Kong Secondary Schools Debating Competition. They also made the overall top rankings at the senior and junior World Individual Debating and Public Speaking Championships. Our senior team was Semi-finalist of the HKBADDC while our junior team was First Runner-up in the Grand Final of the HKSSDC.

A 19-strong team of Secondary 3 and 4 students became the first to enjoy the comforts of our Boarding House, their base for a week-long Humanities Research Symposium for Youth hosted virtually by Hwa Chong Institution (Singapore) for Bugil Academy (South Korea), Citipointe Christian College (Australia) and DGS. Appreciating the complexity of making an inter-continental conference work,

they admirably remained steadfast in their commitment to this learning opportunity as the final examination approached.

Learning a language organically in its milieu is what gives DGS an edge. When classmates came together to produce *Apricity*, this year's VA magazine for sale at our annual Mini Bazaar, English was the language for negotiation, transaction, copywriting, and other authentic discourse. When club reporters subsequently wrote about the annual fundraising bazaar for our school newsletter, *Kaleidoscope*, they polished their journalistic skills in English. All this learning came naturally and with a degree of fun; it was not for a quiz or homework but no less effective.

A eureka moment that newcomers experience at DGS is that English is more than a subject. Having been an integral part of our culture for more than 160 years, it is not foreign. It is used from the high floors of our Boarding House to our basement swimming pool. It is a medium of instruction and a lingua franca. We use it in more aspects of our school life than expected because so many, including members of our security and janitorial teams, understand it. Within our learning community of native speakers of English as well as locals, we share a passion for languages and an identity as global citizens with respect for universal values.

English connects us; it offers opportunities for more collaboration. When an invitation arrived for a trilingual speech contest to mark the 25th Anniversary of the Establishment of the HKSAR, two of our Secondary 4 students, Hilary Lau and Gladys Wai, gamely accepted and wowed an audience at DGS and an online one at the Affiliated School of Jinan University for Hong Kong and Macao Students. Not only do we have the students who are proficient in English, Putonghua and Cantonese, but on our team are teachers qualified to adjudicate such a competition – a team recruited before the need arose. This decision exemplifies the visionary leadership we have at DGS. Being multilingual, our school leaders inspire our teachers and students to master more than one language.

Under the nurturing influence of their loving parents and early years teachers, our students are talented, but what sets a Diocesan girl apart is her readiness to try, and to try her best. When their team mate from another school was taken ill on the eve of a match, two of our students who signed up for a debating workshop last summer persevered, delivering all four speeches and points of information. For their valiant effort, they won the match, one was named best speaker, and both had an adrenaline rush trying a new activity.

While we celebrate achievements on Speech Day, we would also like to appreciate endeavour because without it, no achievement is possible.