

Collaboration? Look no further than CCC Kei Faat Primary School (Yau Tong)

Collaboration comes in many forms. It is a concept so important to the NET Scheme that it occupies three full pages in the NET Deployment Guidelines. But if you want a real-life example of collaboration, look no further than CCC Kei Faat Primary School (Yau Tong). These dedicated teachers and support staff work as a team to produce amazing results.

The school entered the NET Section's 'Story to Stage' Puppetry Competition this year, and it involved far more than just a couple of teachers and a few students, with everyone from the office staff to the janitors getting involved.

The process started with the NET, Mr Ben Bridges, and students co-writing two scripts and making sock puppets. After performing both stories, everyone voted for the story they liked best. At this point, the NET helped students to refine the script, using lots of adjectives and rhyming couplets which were not only humorous but made it easier for students to memorise their lines.

The EPC, Ms Anna Tang, and the janitors worked together to produce the puppets, using skills and ideas they had learnt at the various puppetry CPD workshops offered by the NET Section. Even friends and family members contributed their various talents to this task. Turning a noodle cup into a puppet is no easy feat, but perseverance paid off and the end result was something to be proud of. Uncle Kai, the amazing janitor, spoke no English but we still managed to communicate and get the job done, and nobody lost any fingers in the process!

Ms Tang called on some colleagues from the Art Department, and the backdrops were designed and made. However, she admitted they were still making adjustments the night before the big performance.

Mr Micky Ng, a LET who also teaches drama, was roped in to help. He says that puppetry is more challenging than actual acting, since so much depends on the voice rather than gestures and body language. Micky was also responsible for sound effects, which certainly added to the overall performance and audience enjoyment.

Each of the three teachers had a role to play. Ben trained the students in fluency and articulation, Micky trained them to use their "acting" voices and Ms Tang trained them for the actual performance ensuring there was lots of interaction between the puppets and they made good eye contact.

In all, 10 students were trained and were able to change roles easily as they knew the entire script. They also improvised movements and gave their puppets personalities. They willingly gave up their lunch breaks to practise every day for the month before the competition. The students who did not perform at the competition attended the performance and supported their fellow puppeteers enthusiastically.

Ms Tang said that everyone who contributed gave their best. The culmination of this wonderful teamwork was even better than anyone had dared to dream, when this first-time puppetry team won first prize at the 'Story to Stage' competition with a near-perfect score. It was difficult to make out which students had performed and which had been in the audience, as they all rushed to the stage to receive their well-deserved trophy. Again, it was a shining example of teamwork, as they all considered themselves winners.

As a result of their fantastic performance, they were invited to perform at the World Book Day on 27 April, 2019 and again made their school proud. They will also perform at school later this year on their English Day and plan to use puppetry in the classroom in the coming school year, supported by the NET Section and of course their own fabulous team.

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