



# To develop in students a lifelong interest in English

## Recipient of the Certificate of Merit

Mr CHAN Wing-por, Robert  
(Years of teaching: 29 years)

## School

Concordia Lutheran School  
- North Point

## Teaching Levels

Secondary 3 - 7  
(English Language)

## Teaching Beliefs

"I strive to develop in students a lifelong interest in English, and help them to incorporate the language into their daily lives. A language should be a means of communication, enjoyment and a way of living."

# Interview **with the Teacher**

Mr CHAN Wing-por, a father of two, and a teacher for 29 years, thinks that students can succeed only if they have developed an interest in learning.

“Learning is a never-ending lifelong journey,” says Mr CHAN. “Students can succeed only if they have developed an interest in learning, so there is no use in forcing them.” Mr CHAN carries the same belief for his own children and for his students at Concordia Lutheran School – North Point.

## **Arousing students’ interest in English**

Mr CHAN thinks that learning a language is like opening the gate to a new lifestyle. A person will forget what he learns quickly if he is merely peeking from the outside without entering into the new world. “It is the teacher’s responsibility to arouse students’ interest in the language, and offer opportunities for them to use it in their day-to-day lives.”

To Mr CHAN, teaching is like performing on stage and how the audience will react is important. Mr CHAN usually begins a lesson by bringing up issues of interest to students, and prompts them with questions to get their brains ticking. “Students are especially interested in celebrities and in their teachers,” he grins. The lead-in can usually whet students’ appetite, preparing them for the “main course” that follows.

Mr CHAN thinks that constant reflection on one’s teaching methods is important. “Like in movie-making, you want to appeal to the audience, but there is no guarantee that you will succeed every time. Reviewing after each lesson and thinking of ways to improve has now become my day-to-day routine.”

## **English as a means of communication and enjoyment**

Mr CHAN enjoys drama and hopes to foster that same passion in his students. “Through drama, English is brought to life, and the words are no longer a string of meaningless symbols to students.” Mr CHAN points out that through performing skits in class, students are naturally engaged, and the learning becomes memorable.

Likewise, by introducing his students to the world of literature, Mr CHAN hopes to further arouse their interest in English. “Classics are extremely rich in terms of content, diction and human emotions. They allow students to experience the power of language, and, hopefully, keep them enthralled.” With the help of multimedia such as video clips from the Internet, Mr CHAN tries to help students develop a taste for the classics he loves so much.

Debate, which fosters discussion of clashing viewpoints, is another activity enjoyed by the senior form students. By going through preparations before the debate, the light bulbs in the students’ heads go on, and everybody learns, including those on the floor.



Mr CHAN is assisting students with their class work in the English Room.

## **Passion still running high**

“No two students are identical,” says Mr CHAN. “It is a brand new experience for me every time I teach a new group of students. Experiences surely help; nonetheless, I have to come up with new solutions and tactics all the time.”

Throughout the years, the only thing that remains unchanged about Mr CHAN is his passion for teaching and his professionalism. “I enjoy learning, such as taking courses or reading books on my own. I am constantly stimulated by newly acquired knowledge, and this is how I keep my passion running high.”



## Using English for Life and Enjoyment

### Learning English should be fun

Language is fun. Learning a language should be pleasurable. Throughout the world, people go to language schools to learn another language. They do not have a practical need. They just want to learn another language for interest. Why should learning English in schools be otherwise?

### Interest and learning go together

I believe that if students have a real interest in English, they will learn it well. Pleasurable learning is not just a slogan. It is an important element. Without interest and a fun element in the classroom, students can soon forget what they have learnt. On the contrary, if the learning experience is memorable, they will have a better chance of acquiring the language and be able to use it in future.

My role in the classroom is therefore to facilitate the learning of English as a means of real life communication and enjoyment. To achieve this purpose, I have to employ a repertoire of strategies and techniques.

### Know your students

Understanding my students is the first step. I need to know the kind of students I am teaching. Even within the same school, different classes may have quite different characteristics. Having said that, young students generally are curious about the lives of celebrities, particularly their idols, singers and TV stars. I find that using the latest news about them or the gossip of the day is always a good way to arouse their interest in the beginning of a lesson. Show them a good picture of a character of a recent TV drama or show and you are bound to heat up the atmosphere of discussion in the start of a lesson.

### Grammar in context

In teaching grammar, I try to teach only those items which students have a greater chance of using. In designing the lessons, emphasis is put on using the target language in real life. For example, students may learn to use the past perfect tense in the writing of a biography. Real life situations can always be exploited for learning and using English. These situations include those set in their own school context. For example, giving suggestions to the school for a fund raising event, checking the school's fire prevention measures before writing up a report are some of the activities I have asked students to do.

### Language arts open a greater world

Thanks to the newly introduced New Senior Secondary curriculum, language arts have become a major component of the electives. Poems, songs, drama and short stories are my favourite means of making the learning of English enjoyable. In fact, all of them can be used flexibly to enhance students' interest and emotional engagement and thus resulting in deeper learning.

I have tried Shakespearean plays like *Macbeth* and classics like *A Christmas Carol* with my students. I enjoyed the lessons and so did my students. These days when a number of classics have already been reproduced with spectacular cinematic effects, teaching language arts, in particular, the classics, would be the "in" thing to do with students.

Above all, language arts expose my students to a greater world of culture and human experiences, help them to be more critical and creative, and foster in them some values to guide them for life.



Newspaper clips are often used in helping students to learn English better, as well as raising their social awareness.



# Assessment

## Summary

A teacher with a passion for teaching and good professional knowledge, who is dedicated to developing in students a positive attitude and a life-long interest in English.

Mr CHAN's passion for teaching and his professional knowledge have made him stand out among other teachers of English. Mr CHAN is dedicated to helping students see English not just as a tool for study and work but a means of communication and enjoyment.

Mr CHAN's teaching and professionalism have made an impact on students. One of his former students expressed his gratitude to Mr CHAN for introducing him to Shakespeare's plays and Pavarotti's music, which had enriched his knowledge in English and the cultures of the English-speaking world. In another instance, a student-teacher who later became a colleague thanked Mr CHAN for inspiring her with his passion and enthusiasm about English language teaching.

As a professional English teacher, Mr CHAN keeps himself well informed of the trends and development in English language learning and teaching. In everyday teaching, he integrates language skills in real-life tasks and project learning, and helps students to understand the meanings behind the grammatical forms and structures and use language in meaningful context. Through extra-curricular activities like debates, solo verse speaking and drama competitions, Mr CHAN helps students to develop the confidence of speaking in front of an audience and experience the thrill of acting on stage.

Mr CHAN's passion for drama is reflected in his approach to the teaching of Language Arts in junior forms. He has introduced Shakespearean plays and literary classics such as *A Christmas Carol* to students. In the Language Arts lessons observed, Mr CHAN read aloud the banquet scene in Shakespeare's *Macbeth* with feelings and successfully brought out the high-strung atmosphere after the murder of Banquo. He made use of a range of effective teaching strategies and activities to help students understand literary texts, read dialogues with feelings and learn vocabulary.

In the interview, the students said that they liked *Macbeth* and enjoyed their English lessons. Mr CHAN has shown students that English is not just the language used in their textbooks, it is a medium for performing arts and enjoyment too. He has hit on one of the aims of English language learning and teaching.



Mr CHAN believes in learning through projects, and regularly assigns pair/group projects to the students.

### Way of Access to Information of the above Teaching Practice

Please refer to contact below

### Preferred Way of Dissemination

Sharing sessions and seminars

### Contact

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