



# In Labore Gaudium - Joy in Duty

## Recipient of the Certificate of Merit

Mr LAU Man-kit, Tony  
(Years of teaching: 24 years)

## School

Tak Sun Secondary School

## Teaching Levels

Secondary 6 - 7  
(Use of English)

## Teaching Beliefs

“An English teacher needs to provide students with English lessons that are entertaining, unexpected, and student-friendly.”

# Interview **with the Teacher**

“There is nothing wrong with the ‘old school’ teaching methods but teachers have to modify the traditional teaching approach and use it as a springboard for interesting things.”

The boys at Tak Sun Secondary School should not be unfamiliar with the many student-friendly English activities on campus, such as Monday Movie Shows, Grammar Olympics and Board Game Extravaganza. The names of the activities alone are enough to provoke expectation and excitement in the air.

## Teaching is not a one-way street

Teaching requires interaction, especially with students. Mr LAU believes in innovation and creativity, which are the tricks that make his lessons unpredictable in a nice way. He remarks, “We all like surprises. Teachers should try to inject new elements into their lessons and arouse the interest of the students. Each lesson should be entertaining, exciting and enjoyable. Isn’t it a basic human instinct to thirst for something different, something alternative, something new?”

## Many heartfelt thanks to his late mentors

Teachers can make or break a student. One of the studies conducted by Kati Haycock of the Education Trust in the United States shows that a child who has two, three, four strong teachers in a row will eventually excel, regardless of his/her background, while a child who has just two weak teachers in a row will never recover. Mr LAU could not agree more with the findings.

Mr LAU was lucky to have come across his first mentor, Uncle Charlie, at the young age of four or five. Graduated from St. Joseph’s College in the 60s, Uncle Charlie would visit Mr LAU at home every Sunday and teach him English grammar and colloquial English expressions. A few decades later, another mentor advised him to learn from the art of cooking. “A teacher and a cook are similar in the sense that both have to master one thing – time management.” That was the advice given by his late father-in-law.



*Apart from fun, fun, fun, sometimes there is a need to sit down for serious discussion.*

## English is still a global lingua franca

English teaching is more than just teaching the language. English, being a global lingua franca, allows people from different countries to get access to the world of information, entertainment and knowledge. Under Mr LAU’s influence, most Tak Sun boys are familiar with fun cultural facts, for example, Eric Clapton is the Guitar God in the United Kingdom.

## The importance of text ownership

Mr LAU reckons that writing just for him can be boring for his students. Thus, he always encourages his students to write letters to the Young Post and the SCMP Editor. He hopes to help them develop a sense of audience and an appreciation of writing as both a process and a product they can enjoy. Many letters of his students have been published in the Young Post and students were simply thrilled.

## Joy in English language teaching (ELT)

On a day just like any other day, which can be full of surprises, the Education Bureau gave Mr LAU a call. He was informed that he had just earned an extra bonus for his hard work.

This award is surely a feather in his cap. Confessing that he is not a workaholic, Mr LAU adheres closely to the school motto – Joy in Duty.



# Teacher's **Sharing**

In this age of globalisation, our young people should be good at English so as to compete with their counterparts in this global village. As an ELT professional, I would like to try my utmost to contribute to the betterment of English Language Education in Hong Kong.



*A teacher who lowers himself to the level of the students deserves love and respect.*

I have a real passion for English Language and ELT. My goals are to make Tak Sun Secondary School a true and top-notch EMI school and to share my experiences with English teachers in Hong Kong.

To achieve my first goal, I have tried to create an English-speaking campus by:

**Setting myself as a role model for my students and colleagues** At school, I only use English with my students and all the teaching and non-teaching staff. In my daily life, I think in English and use English whenever I can. For more than 15 years, I have used only English in all ELT seminars, workshops and training courses.

**Maximising the strengths of the NETs** I treat the

Native English-speaking Teachers (NETs) as my buddies. I show appreciation for their cultures and recognition for their strengths. Hence, they willingly organise different cross-curricular activities which students enjoy.

Besides, I have dedicated myself to developing students' language abilities by:

**Creating an English-rich learning environment** My insistence on using only English has brought about an English-speaking school where students and teachers use English naturally. I also organise a variety of co-curricular activities to enable students to experience the cultures of the English-speaking world and consolidate their language skills.

**Being inspirational and bringing out the best in students** I do not mind spending time preparing students for the Speech Festival. I always ask them to speak the same sentence in ten or more different ways with different emotions to help them realise the huge range of possible expressions. One of my students got 96 out of 100 marks in the Solo Verse Speaking! We were overjoyed. My passion for the English language must have positive washback effects on my students. Some of my former students are now English teachers.

My second goal is to foster professional sharing and development at Tak Sun and the teaching community. I have devoted a lot of efforts to:

**Building a happy and harmonious team** I strongly believe that happy teachers make good teachers so I have never asked my panel members to stay after 5 pm. Sitting in the same area, we share jokes and teaching ideas every day.

**Fostering sharing and learning among panel members** I share with my panel members what I have learned in seminars and courses. My classroom is always open and they are free to come and observe my lessons.

**Providing active support to the teaching profession** Besides giving presentations in workshops and conferences, I have served as a university tutor and a mentor teacher. I enjoy sharing my teaching experiences with student-teachers.

I would never have achieved so much but for the support from my Supervisor, Principal, students' parents and colleagues at school. A thundering applause to all of them!



*Students are beating their brains out and beating one another on the chessboard.*

# Assessment Summary

A role model for students and teachers for speaking English at all times, and a teacher dedicated to creating an English-speaking school campus.

Mr Tony LAU has a great passion for English language teaching (ELT) and devotes most of his time and efforts to creating an English-as-a-second-language environment at Tak Sun Secondary School. Besides being a role model for students and teachers for speaking English at school at all times, as the panel head, he shares his extensive knowledge of the English language, English language teaching and curriculum changes with his colleagues and the teaching community in workshops and seminars.

Mr LAU has firm beliefs of what an effective English teacher should do. Foremost is serving as a role model for students in using only English all the time at school. Helping students acquire language skills and appreciate English-speaking cultures, providing students with lessons that are entertaining and student-friendly, and reflecting on ways to improve him/herself are equally important. Mr LAU has put all these beliefs into practice and thus stands out as a professional teacher.

Mr LAU organises a variety of activities to expose students to English and English-speaking cultures, and enable them to use the language for play and personal enrichment. For example, the annual English Week with activities like “Drink of the Day” and ruby demonstration enables students to experience the British culture; the regular activities like movie shows, Pronunciation World Cup, etc. help students develop and consolidate their language skills. Mr LAU has cultivated in students a positive attitude towards English learning, as testified by his students who told the Assessment Panel that they liked and respected Mr LAU because they learnt a lot from him and his lessons were interesting.

To promote a sharing and collaborative culture among colleagues at school, Mr LAU opens his classroom for observation and organises professional sharing sessions for colleagues to discuss ELT issues and share experiences. Mr LAU has also contributed significantly to the teaching community by presenting in workshops and conferences, giving talks to teachers at their schools, contributing articles to educational journals, and serving as a university tutor and mentor teacher. Mr LAU’s professionalism and commitment to English language learning and teaching deserve recognition.



Mr LAU adheres closely to the school motto – Joy in Duty.

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

Please contact Mr Tony LAU

## Preferred Way of Dissemination

Workshops and seminars

## Contact

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