



August Newsletter

2014

RESULTS OF THE EXTERNAL VALIDATION EXERCISE 2014

MOE conducted the External Validation Exercise for SJC for the 2009 to 2014 cycle in early July. Results were revealed in early September. SJC has made a significant improvement. Of the 5 Best Practices available, SJC has been recognized for having **3 Best Practices in the areas of Teaching and Learning, Character and Citizenship Education, and Staff Well-being and Development**. This achievement is testimony of the hard work and dedication of all SJC Staff, Students and Stakeholders. *Congratulations and a Big Thank you to All of You!* This would not have been possible without you. Together, let us all leverage this achievement to further help our girls realise their potential.

SINGAPORE NATIONAL SCHOOLS' LITERATURE FESTIVAL 2014



On Saturday, 12 July, 2 teams of Sec 3 Pure Literature students represented SJC to compete in 2 debate competition in 2 categories--the Unseen Poem and the Set Text (Miller's "Death of A Salesman"). The motions and text for both debates were only revealed 2 weeks before the event, thus we had to work intensively with our literature teacher, Ms Amanda Lim, in the days leading up to the event, spending hours after school analysing the text and constructing arguments. We defeated St Anthony's Canossian in the Unseen Poem category, but narrowly lost to Nan Chiau High School in the Set Text category. Here are our reflections:

We prepared for the debate by researching the definitions of words in the poem, annotating our ideas and discussed them with one another. Initially, I felt that the poem was rather difficult and complex, but after the preparation I understood the poem better. During the debate, I was rather nervous as I was afraid that I could not come up with questions needed for rebuttals. I tried my best to be confident and eventually managed to do so. When the results were announced, I felt so happy and thankful to God and to my teacher and friends who have been through this journey with me. From this experience, I learnt that I could link information very quickly while listening to the opponents' points, and I could think quickly on the spot to find their loopholes. Even though it was a challenging process, we all persevered and overcame our difficulties to give it our best shot. --Gabrielle Er, 3F (Unseen Poem debate)

We met up after school to prepare. As Sec 3s who had been assigned by the organizers to debate Sec 4s, we were stressed as we had to learn the rest of the play in a short time and I was intimidated by our opponents. I was the first speaker of the team, and I was very nervous as I did not want to disappoint my teammates. During the debate, I had to believe in myself and be confident, and to also think on the spot for rebuttals. When we heard the results of the debate, I was disappointed. However, because we had done our best for the debate, I felt consoled. My teammates and I put in a lot of effort for this competition and we did not regret the experience. We are confident we will do better if we compete once more next year. -



Preetha Raman, 3F (Set text debate)



**“SIAPALAH
AKU
TANPAMU?”**

**- LEARNING
MOTHER
TONGUE
THROUGH
THEATRE, A
LOWER
SECONDARY
EXPERIENCE**

On 16 August 2014, 17 lower secondary students who study the Malay Language, performed at Raffles Hotel Jubilee Hall for an N1 Cluster Musical, alongside students from other N1 Cluster schools like North Vista Secondary, Hougang Secondary and Xinmin Primary. The students had to perform 2 shows, a 3pm matinee show and an 8pm gala show. Entitled “*Siapalah Aku Tanpamu?*” (“Who am I without you?”), the musical explores the dilemma of Hawa, a young Singaporean woman who has just attained a medical degree from a university in London and how she struggles between staying on to pursue a career opportunity in London and returning to serve out her bond in Singapore. This musical revisits the ideas of patriotism, national identity and rootedness towards Singapore. The guest-of-honour was Senior Parliamentary Secretary Mr Hawazi Daipi. Here are some reflections from our 4 young Malay Language teachers who helmed the project and our gung-ho Sec 1 and 2 student performers who have grown through this experience:

As challenging as it was managing CCAs, lesson prep and rehearsals, I do not doubt that this journey has helped me develop professionally as a teacher. This musical enabled me to interact with colleagues, students and parents. I have learnt that clear communication with all parties is essential to ensure that everything goes as planned. One of the more important communication skills that I have picked up is the facilitating of debriefs to students after each rehearsal. It is essential to give feedback on the day's training; what is good and what can be improved so that students are aware of what they are doing. It is also a way for students and teachers to keep track of their progress. On the event day itself, I learnt that words of encouragement were important to our performers since few of them were students in the performing arts CCAs so this was their first time performing on a professional stage in front of a crowd of strangers. I am truly proud of our girls because they overcame their fear and proved to themselves that they are capable of success. I hope this success will serve as motivation and a stepping stone for more successes to come! – Ms Nur Izzati Bte Jasni.

When I heard we had to participate in the Cluster Musical, I quickly volunteered to be part of it. I used to be involved in theatre productions in JC and when I was in KL. I wanted to pass my knowledge to the students and to let them discover their hidden talents. It has been enjoyable contributing back to the scene. For SJC's Scene 12, we had to come out with a contemporary dance as well as sing. Truthfully, my expertise has largely been in acting not dance. Fortunately, one of our colleagues, Izzati, used to be part of Malay dance as a student. Working closely with the choreographer, Mr Syed, our girls choreographed the whole performance and taught themselves to sing really well without a vocal coach! All in all, it has been a rewarding experience watching our girls grow and succeed. I am very proud of how much they've grown. – Mr Mohd Dinie Shaifullah

The musical, which highlights the idea of living global but staying local, was very much in line with the theme of this year's National Day - Our People, Our Home. Training started during the June holidays. Rehearsals were most challenging during the fasting period. After a long school day, we still had to focus and channel our energy for rehearsals. Sometimes I felt like giving up but I kept telling myself to continue. It paid off on performance day. We learnt the meaning of teamwork, and the importance of encouraging one another to lift up the spirit of our team members and to improve our overall performance. This invaluable experience has value-added to my SJC journey and I hope to be given more opportunities to make SJC proud. - Lynn Zuhrah Bte Mohammad Zali (1F)

I was quite scared at first when the choreographer asked me to do a solo dance. However, I decided to take that opportunity because I thought that there may not be another chance for me to do so. Moreover, it was my first time performing on stage. For my solo, I had to do a backflip and some other contemporary dance moves. I had to repeat countless times to get my backflip right. After many attempts, I found a huge bruise on my right shoulder. It was painful. But I told myself not to give up because I know that practice makes perfect. Eventually, I managed to get my backflip right. I was happy because I had accepted my choreographer's challenge. I succeeded in doing the backflip and my solo part well. I was so proud of myself. If not for the motivation from my teachers and friends, I do not think I could have succeeded in doing the backflip. One thing that I have learnt from this is to never give up! To me, giving up can bring you down; giving up is like throwing away an opportunity that could spark a change in your life. - Darwisyah Bte Atnan (2C)



I have gained precious experiences from the experience. We did a great job for both shows and I must say that my instructors and teachers never stopped motivating us since day one. We often got scolded for the mistakes that we made but I took the scolding as a form of motivation for us to improve on our performance. I am truly blessed to be part of the musical because this musical is not just

about us dancing, singing or acting but more importantly, it had taught me perseverance, determination and how to work as a team and to manage my time well since we were in the midst of our CT3. On top of that, I felt the SJCian spirit, especially when we stood together in a circle, reached out our hands and shouted the school name in unison. This musical really brought us together. - Nurul Ain Bte Hisham (1G)



On the first day of rehearsals, I was nervous because I did not know most of the Sec 2s and Sec 1s. That day, we played some games so that we got to know each other better. The teacher also chose me to be the singer on that day. So from the next training session onwards, I practiced singing until I had memorised the lyrics. During some of the rehearsals, I had a really bad sore throat but I kept pushing myself to sing. On the 14th August, the final rehearsal in school, I had to make some changes to the singing arrangement, I was worried I might mess

things up. But after the matinee performance-cum-rehearsal, I showed myself that I could do it, so I got ready for the evening show. I felt nervous as my parents were coming to watch me. I put in my best and showed that I could do it. I realised that that was my third time performing on stage. I really want to thank my friends, especially Cikgu Izzati, for encouraging me and pushing me. - Nikkol Sage Anwaralli (1A)

During the very first rehearsal, when the teachers selected singers for the musical, my team chose me. I was not really over the moon as I knew that I could not sing as well as my 2 other friends who were selected too. But that did not stop me from agreeing to sing for the musical as I had decided to try to overcome my fears. My team and I had several arguments about the style of performance but we persevered. I practised on my own and also asked a friend, Afiqah, for help since she is in Choir. On 16 August, I was very excited yet nervous. However, my teachers and fellow performers supported one another. I am truly blessed to have them. I really hope there will be similar musicals in the future. - Fatin Elisya Bte Md Ashik (2A)

During rehearsals, I had to overcome the challenge of memorising many dance steps but that did not stop me from working hard. I was quite nervous back stage when I saw the audience but I felt calm when my friends assured me that it was going to be alright. Even though I was calm, I still felt uncomfortable with the clothing and the thick make-up. When it was our turn to perform, I brushed off all uncomfortable feelings and danced with all my might, showing my expression and following the beat. After performing, I felt no regret as my hard work had paid off and I had showed the audience my best. This experience was a fruitful one as I learnt to always keep calm and to work as a team. - Nurul Kamyliya Bte Noorhan (1B)

DANCE ENSEMBLE LEARNING JOURNEY: A NIGHT OF BALLET UNDER THE STARS

For our 2014 annual LJ, our Modern Dance Ensemble, chaperoned by our teachers, attended the Singapore Dance Theatre's *Ballet Under The Stars* on 25 July 2014. On a balmy, beautiful Friday evening at Fort Canning, we had a picnic dinner under the beautiful night sky while watching four different ballet performances. It was definitely a wonderful experience as we were treated to a mixture of traditional, fusion and modern dance genres.

We observed the dancers carefully and paid special attention to their delivery of dance in terms of their control of their movements, and the elements of showmanship like posture and the ability to maintain eye contact with the audience. We then reflected on how we can use these pointers to improve our performances on stage. For many of us who had participated previously at the SYF performances or in school productions, we found ourselves recognizing dance moves and gestures that we ourselves had performed and we were glad that our training in school had given us a much stronger eye and appreciation for the beauty, execution and complexity of dance patterns and choreography. Furthermore, having recently started increasing the rigour of our physical conditioning preparation for SYF 2015, we knew that this attention to detail and this engagement of mind and body was important in helping us improve and reflect on our own performance as dancers and student-artists. Here are some reflections from our peers about what we learnt:

My favourite work was Opus 25. During the many moments of pair work in this dance, both partners had to trust each other and were always light on their feet. In our current SYF piece being choreographed, there is also much use of pair work which requires us to fall elegantly and swiftly into our partner's arms. We are always afraid that our partners will not be able to handle our weight and as such our movement often tends to be very unnatural and stiff. Watching and analysing tonight's performers gave me insight into how I can improve myself and co-ordinate better with my partner during rehearsals. - *Cheryl Lee, 3F*



I observed how they coordinated as a team and thought about how much effort is required for such close synchrony. I learnt how to control my movements better by watching and analysing how gracefully the dancers moved. - *Joie Tan, 1B*

When I dance, my mood and movement should match the music. When practising, I should make the effort to analyse and appreciate the genre of the music, and the moods conveyed by the music so that I can prepare my body and emotions to better portray the ideas in the dance.

- *Vania Jang, 2F*