Reflective journal of the LET Programme

Group members

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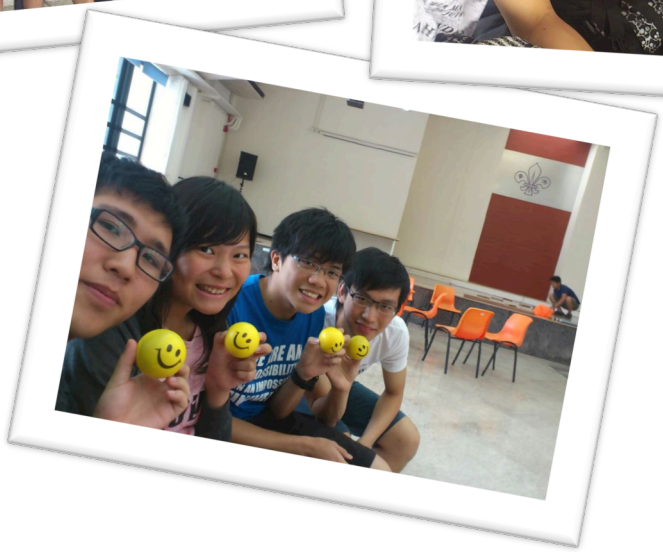

Science Academy for Young Talent

This course basically served to provide some more advanced lessons for the young talents from secondary form 1-4. They are interested in science and are doing quite well in the school.

Whenever there are classes, they first attended a lecture in the morning first. They learned some theoretical basis of mechanisms, like how birds prevent getting their body wet or how they can glide or fly in the sky. During the lectures, we will accompany them to have the lesson. In the afternoon, they had several laboratory sessions to help them understand the theories learnt during the lectures. As the class was quite big, the young students were separated into a few groups, each group had 5~6 of them. During the lab session, they worked with their lab-mates to complete their targets.

As a demonstrator, we encouraged them to communicate more with their lab-mates, and at the same time, of course, assist them to achieve their targets. Provide help whenever it's needed.

Difficulties & Solutions

Insufficient manpower

Since the class size was quite big and we had only 5 demonstrators helping in the class, which means one demonstrator had to take care of about 10 students. Therefore, sometimes it was difficult for us to help them and answer their questions at the same time. And we were not managed to control them and students might not focus on their experiment and become noisy at the very beginning.

And we have learnt how to cooperate with each other to control the situation. Since students were divided into groups in five and did their experiments in their own benches. Therefore, demonstrators could also help to take care of another demonstrator's groups when his group had no questions about the experiment or finished their experiment. And we tried our best to get familiar with the students,

tried to have more communication with them and ask them to concentrate on the experiment. We also assign a group leader in their group so that the leader could guide the other group mates to do the experiment. And therefore students started to behave themselves without relying on demonstrators too much and had a better progress when doing their experiments.

Unfamiliarity

The students were not active to work with their group mates. Since the students were from different high schools, they were not familiar with others at the beginning. Therefore, we demonstrators, as the leader in the groups, had to be initiative and talkative to encourage them to discuss more and start their experiments. Communication was very important during this process. We had to think more in their ways to understand their thoughts. Maybe some of them were too shy or quiet, we had to encourage them to give more opinions or to participate more.

Majority of demonstrators are not familiar with each other before the class start. However, communication is very important to work as a team and to work efficiently. Therefore, we grouped and discussed the work distribution together before the experimental part to ensure that the program can run smoothly by our help.

Teaching difficulties

It is hard to explain something really difficult as they don't have enough basic knowledge to understand the things taught in the lecture or lab session. We demonstrators needed to try to simplify the terms to help them acquire the knowledge. We needed to think in their way to understand their difficulties. They are also younger and theoretically have lower analytical skills as they have fewer experiences. We have to be patient enough as sometimes it could take you quite a long time to teach them.

Everyone has their own weakness and strength, even demonstrator our-self may encounter some questions asked by the student that we

don’t know the answers. The answers can be found out through discussion among us and even the participants. Leader is not all-rounder, what they should do is providing a direction to finish the task. Therefore, demonstrators can actually direct the student to find out the answers on their own like where can they find the relevant information and how should they analyze the information.

Relation to LET Programme

As mentioned above, being a demonstrator would face a lot of problems. Besides the hard skills, lab technique and lab knowledge, some soft skills are also needed. As we need to handle the students and ensure them to learn in a happy manner.

In the training courses offered by LET Programme, the staffs teach us how to be a leader though a series of games and team works. During the training, as being one of the team, we were first embarrassed as we did not know each other. However, just after the warm up session, we knew each other more and tend to exchange our ideas in order to finish the missions. This is important for us as we also need to get rid of the students’ problems during lab session as soon as possible. Thus, in the warm up sessions, we learnt how to make friends with some strangers.

However, just become friends with the students is not enough, we also need to cheer them up in order to let them learn the most things. Therefore, we need to know how to keep their passion in learning. Their happiness is the most important thing so as to keep learning. In order to raise their happiness, the staff in the LET Programme told us to cheer them up by clapping hands and praising them after the suggestion given by them. During the training, we kept encouraging each other and not to say something discouraging. As a result, we felt lot more comfortable and more engaged in the games and missions.

In the training camp, as we need to solve many different problems which cannot be solved by individual. For example, we all get only a

piece of information but we did not know what the other got. Thus, we needed to exchange our information by discussing. Discussion is a must for a team especially being a team leader. Discussion is not just about talking, but it also includes listening. Not just giving out ideas, but we also need to receive others ideas and problems. Being a leader in a team, we need to focus on the teammates' problems. This is the same as being a demonstrator, as we need to know what do the students get and what they do not understand.

At the end of the training camp, we need to finish the final mission which was ringing the bell hanging just below the ceiling. All of us needed to ring the bell once. This mission touches my heart the most as we must make our most effort in order the push each of us to the top. The successful of the team cannot without anyone of us. As working as a team, each of the teammates is equally important. We cannot give up anyone. Put this idea into the lab session, any students that willing to join the lab would expect to learn something in this class. Although their abilities are not the same, some may be weaker and some are stronger, we should ensure all of them take some away in the lab. This is not the technique that could be learnt from any lessons, tutorials or lectures. This mindset was planted in our heart deeply after the training camp

Photos taken from the Science Academy for Young Talent Activities