Fostering Positive Values and Attitudes through Puppetry

Our journey of HOPE to convey the message of HOPE in the making of our puppetry production "HOPEFUL HOLLY"

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Please watch our production first! HOPE you will enjoy it!

- https://drive.google.com/file/d/172TF4uEzd1sESjrQLM1HismWS6hBYciw/view

Background (1)

2021/2022 was a very special school year…

These were our feelings! Maybe they were yours too!

September to the end of 2021

- Successfully joined the competition
- **HOPE** things will return to a semblance of normalcy soon. Worst of the Covid-19 pandemic must be over.
- **HOPE** we can travel soon! Video submission? No problem.
- **HOPE** we can make something awesome like in "Sesame Street". Half day school to continue for a long time! Online training? How do we train students to perform together when they are not even together in the training? We can only see the students in super short recesses in school. There isn't even enough time for us to go to the toilet!
- **HOPE** we can see the students for longer periods in the afternoon soon.

January to March 2022 – Omicron strain spreading fast and has reached Hong Kong.

- Colleagues getting infected – Students getting infected.
- HOPE we don't get infected too! Students stay home. Back to Google "Meet" for everything again!
- How are we going to finish by the April deadline for video submission??!!! HOPE there is an extension!
- Phew! Deadline moved to July!

March-April 2022

- Early “summer” holiday was announced
- Well, let’s start again after the holiday! Actually, more time to make a better script.
- **HOPE** we can come up with some new ideas for a better script.
- We did! We not only improved the script but adapted the script to be even more social-distancing friendly.
- Can’t have the students packed like sardines behind the tent for too long with all this Omicron around!

April–June 2022

- Finally, students are back to school. Running out of time! Let's give the students the new script and let's get on with it.

- **HOPE** we have enough time. My goodness, where is the time for training or even filming? Loads of other work to do! The puppetry students have so many other commitments and other teachers booking them!

- Tests! Exams! Putonghua competitions! Even a School Picnic online and having to make videos for an online Open Day!

July 2022

- Running out of time! Let's hand the thing in ! We've done our best! HOPE we could get a good result.

As you all know, It was a tough year. Ironically, **HOPE** was the thing that we relied upon to give us the strength to convey the message of **HOPE** in our production! Let us show you our journey.

A) Selecting the right students and finding out their interest (1)

- One of the first steps to any success in our puppetry production about HOPE is to find **talented** and **interested students** with **good English language and puppetry skills and also loud and expressive voices**. Especially when they need to speak through a mask.

- We were lucky to have access to such a pool of students interested in puppetry.

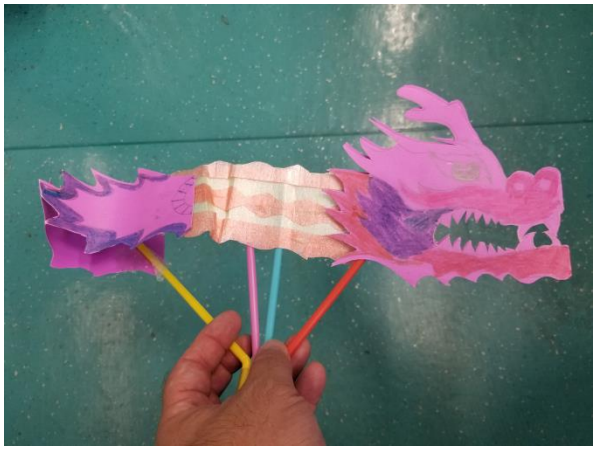
- Despite the pandemic, our school continued **with Extra Curricula Activities** (ECA) online in 2020 and the ECA course was completely redesigned by us to suit online teaching needs.

- The ECA gave us:

- 1) Some **experience** of conducting training online.
- 2) Students who were not complete novices and have some rudimentary **knowledge** of puppetry.
- 3) Knowledge of more students, their characters and their hidden talents.
- 4) **Hope**

(A) Selecting the right students and finding out their interest(2)

- Here are some of the puppets made by the talented students at home in the online ECA.



B) Finding Inspiration (1)

- **We use the word HOPE a lot but what exactly is it?**
- **Need to do some research.**

a) Hong Kong's classic government HOPE advert

- This is where we started. We thought back and remembered how HOPE was promoted to us when we were younger. If you were in Hong Kong in the 1990s, this advert came out and it has been running endlessly for years. It is influential simply because it has been around for so long.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EdU9E72vAZ0 (Cantonese)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KdsaeWeFO24 (English)

A good start to illustrate HOPE, this advert uses a character who is **lost** and a friend that can **help** and show him the way to hope.

B) Finding Inspiration (2)

- Worth a mention is this bespectacled young boy in the advert who looked like a nerdy boy with little confidence is now a confident looking bodybuilder.

- Perhaps he is a living example of the power of hope in transforming a person and a good idea for a story or part of the story.

- We also thought about using **4 of the puppet characters as different friends to point a lost puppet character towards hope like in this advert.**

B) Finding Inspiration (3)

- b) Covid 19
- Impossible not to include this in the considerations as it was (and still is) a hot topic that really affected our daily lives.
- There are many stories of hope and just like the HK government, many governments around the world also had adverts to promote HOPE. This also gave us ideas. Here's one example out of many from Scotland:
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DBsGXX54Jhw

B) Finding Inspiration (4)

c) Personal experiences and the experiences of others

- It is good to draw on personal experiences of HOPE but when talking to FRIENDS, RELATIVES and COLLEAGUES, one could also find some good examples of the power of HOPE too.

- Stories like overcoming an illness, succeeded in their dieting or how they saved their business from failing could come up.

- The experience of the STUDENTS in the puppetry team is very important because it gives them a bigger sense of ownership in the project and they deserve to be included in this journey of Hope.

- When appropriate, their experiences must also be incorporated into the story. We asked the students questions like if they experienced an unhappy situation before and if they used HOPE to make themselves happy.

- Stories like being bullied by other students or being disappointed about doing badly in exams and how they overcame their disappointment could come up. I would like to say to the local teachers that you should feel free to use Cantonese if necessary to find out more from the student if the student wants to say more about their experiences of Hope but can't express it in English well. Giving the students more ownership is important.

B) Finding Inspiration (5)

d) Religion –

We found that hope is a big in all of the major religions. Plenty of ideas stories and definitions of hope to inspire our own story.

e) Same thing with Proverbs, Sayings (SOW!), Quotes,

Plenty of ideas.

C) Brainstorming

- **Too many ideas** and so many aspects of hope.
- Motivation, Success, happiness, gratitude etc…….

- Like in an alphabet soup, can we fish out four aspects which form the letters H.O.P.E? We had one character to represent the lost soul in the Hong Kong government advert so the four others could have names starting with H.O.P and E. Bingo!

- H – Happiness
- O – Optimism
- P – Positivity
- E – Enthusiasm

- These four aspects are also very relevant to HOPE and cover much of what Hope actually is.

- What about the name of the lost main character? Found a solution -- Name can change from Hopeless in the introduction and Hopeful in the Conclusion

D) Naming the characters

- Humourous and catchy names and nicknames are the key features in puppetry.
- Tried to think of names with the same first 2 letters as the 5 words of HOpe, HAppy, OPtimistic, POsitive, and ENthusiastic.
- HOpeful Holly/HOpeless HOlly, HAppy HArry, OPtimstic OPrah, POsitive POlly, ENthusiastic ENola.

E) The Puppets

- Early decision was made to buy the puppets and not make them. There was generally a lack of time and face-to-face interaction for everything.
- Animals were an obvious choice. Easier to find and children like animal puppets.
- Basically found whatever animal puppets that were available in Toy shops.
- The five chosen were a cow, a rhino, an alligator, a frog and a dog.
- The cow was very distinctive with its pink colour so it had to be the main character.
- I then had more fun making nicknames and assigning the animal puppets to the names.

The Puppets (2)

Hopeless/Hopeful Holly --Cow (Holly cow!)

Happy Harry -- Alligator (Harrygator)

Optimistic Oprah -- Dog (Dogtimistic)

Positive Polly -- Frog (Jumping Joy)

Enthusiastic Enola -- Rhino (Ripped Rhinola)

F) Storyline and Script Writing (1)

- A well designed Storyline and Script is a crucial element for a production to convey hope successfully.
- We considered the purpose first

a) Designed mainly for **children**– Message has to be **simple to understand**.

b) With a Values education theme like HOPE we thought that perhaps we need a slightly **more educational focus** compared to an entertainment focus.

c) Theme of Hope is hard to express without using slightly **more difficult English vocabulary** that students won't be using much in their lives but it is also a good opportunity to teach new words to students.

d) More scenes with **dialogues** would be better than too many in a crowd for every scene. So we only had a short scene in the end with just the cow talking and with all 5 characters together.

e) Don't forget the **adults** – There must be something to interest the adults. Could be scenarios in HOPE that are common for adults too and not just for children. Perhaps pop music could be used in scenes to keep adults interested.

F) Storyline and Script Writing (2)

- **Adding Puppetry Elements**

The message of hope or any values education does not need to be formal and should be delivered in an **entertaining** way for puppetry.

- Found it difficult to **adapt the script** of an existing children's story like the "The Hare and the Tortoise" or "Cinderella". Decided to adapt it from the HK government advert with 4 friends instead of just 1friend supporting the 1main character with the message of hope. The extensive research earlier gave many ideas and materials for producing 4 scenarios to portray different aspects of hope (Happiness, Optimism, Positivity and Enthusiasm). Thus we used four scenarios of being bullied due to fat shaming, being afraid of failure in an exam, suffering through a COVID lockdown and finding it hard to get fit despite a lot of effort to challenge the main character.

- **Humour** is an advantage so attempts should be made to add it but the message should still get through for both children and adults and hopefully allow for some self reflection.

- Serious thought also went into choosing **characters that are suitable for the students** in the team so that they could be more natural in their puppetry role.

F) Storyline and Script Writing (3)

- How was hope conveyed in the storyline and script?

The crying cow had no confidence and was laughed at. She meets four sympathetic new friends (the other animals) in four different scenarios that represented four aspects of Hope.

Through the conversations, it learned how to develop some Hope and to have a better life. The friends also tell the cow that they once had the same problem and were mocked with horrible nicknames and were laughed at but they overcame their problems and it could do that too. All can learn from this cow who is quick to realise her mistakes and find a way to overcome her problems.

G) Music and Dancing (1)

- For conveying hope, using meaningful music is very helpful. It livens up the puppetry show and can reflect the mood in the scene.

- I thought of adding music at the **end of every scene** as the puppets left the stage. The carefully chose music can reflect **the four aspects of Hope (Happiness, Optimism, Positivity and Enthusiasm**).

- Music is also needed for the closing scene to show that the cow has transformed from being hopeless to hopeful.

- Dancing off the stage was not part of the original plan but done as an **improvisation**. In scene1 Holly left the puppetry stage in the normal puppetry way. There was no music. The dancing off stage occurred as all the **student performers and teachers danced to the music when filming was almost over for each scene to release tension**. So the idea of getting the puppet to dance as well was tried out. We thought it added to the right atmosphere to a moment in the show when the cow was no longer crying and found a way out of her problems. So the cow would be happy and dances off the stage with the new friend.

G) Music and Dancing (2)

These were the songs chosen and they were chosen carefully to have lyrics that reflect the aspect of Hope.

- Scene 1: Introduction – No music
- Scene 2: Happiness – Pharell Williams – “Happy”
- Scene 3: Optimism–Johnny Nash –“I can see clearly now”
- Scene 4 Positivity– Bob Marley– “Positive Vibrations”
- Scene 5 Enthusiasm– Curtis Mayfield–“Move on Up”
- Scene 6 Conclusion – The 5th dimension–”Üp, up and away”

G) Music and Dancing (3)

Why did I choose these songs?

- 1) *Happy*
  The song title is perfect for the scene and the lively energetic beat reflects the carefree character of the alligator well.

- 2) *I can see clearly now*
  A song designed for optimism. The dark clouds mentioned in the song represent negativity but when the clouds go away one can see clearly or optimistically

- 3) *Positive Vibrations*
  The song title speaks for itself.

- 4) *Move on Up*
  A song about facing challenges without fear which is correct for a gym environment and the cow's desire to keep fit.

- 5) *Up, up and away*
  An uplifting song to tell everyone there's a better place to go to like a new life to go to. This is the experience of the cow character.

H) The Props and Backdrops (1)

- The backdrops and props were made to **support** the scenes and a lot of effort was made to make the backdrops look good.
- Using animal themes for the buildings like the "Moocau airport" or Bullshoi ballet academy for a bit of **humour**
- It was another area where the students could participate and help.

H) The Props and Backdrops (2)

H) The Props and Backdrops (3)

H) The Props and Backdrops (4)

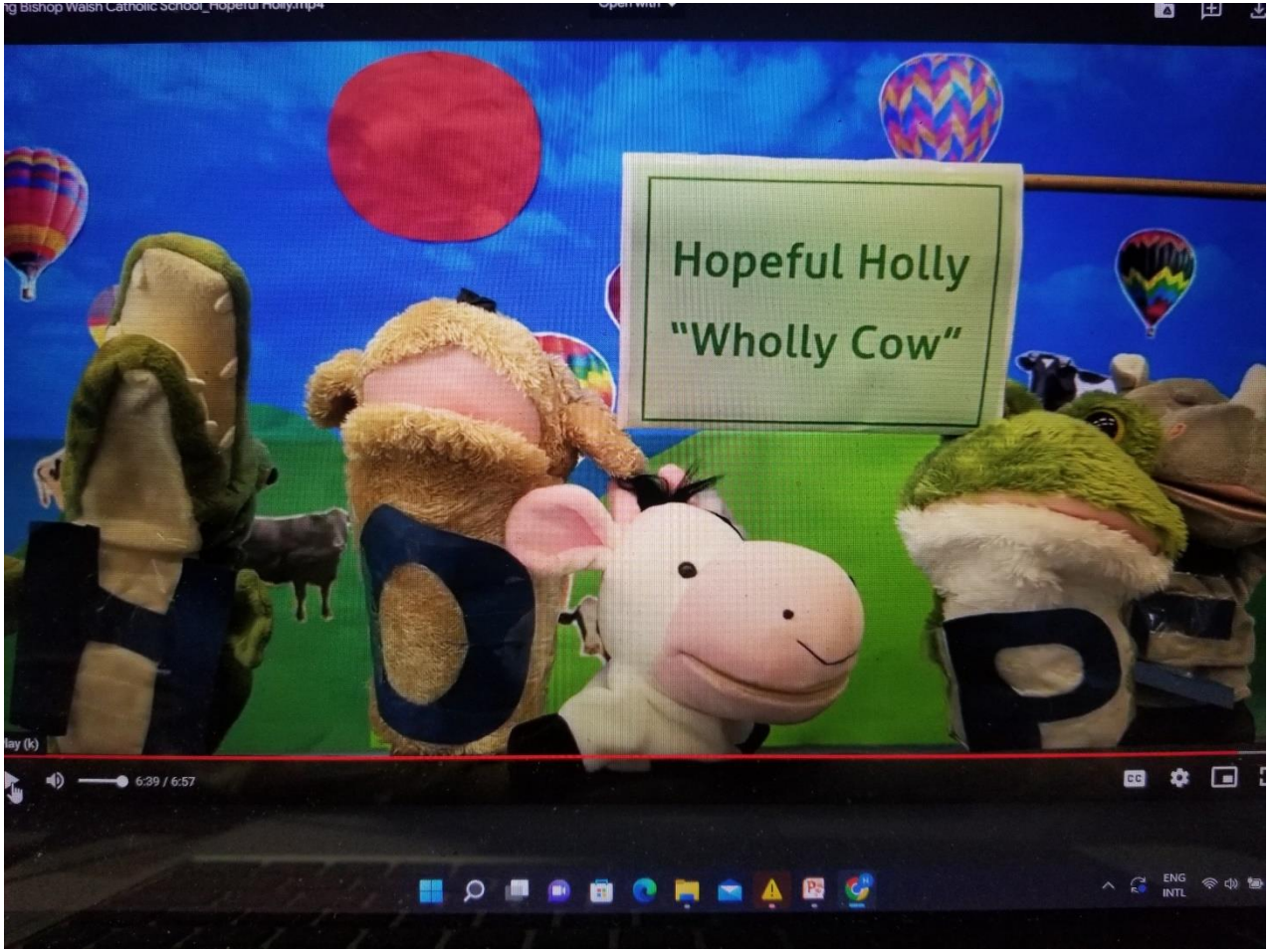
H) The Props and Backdrops (5)

H) The Props and Backdrops (6)

H) The Props and Backdrops (7)

- A stick and sign prop with names to show the wonderful names and nicknames of the characters in case anyone missed them.

- H,O,P and E letters stuck to the puppets except the cow in case anyone missed the fact that the first letter of the names of the 4 animals made up the word hope.


Hopeful Holly
"Wholly Cow"
6:39 / 6:57

Conclusion

HOPE you enjoyed our sharing!