

Fun-tastic Race 2017

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THURSDAY, 9 NOVEMBER - Much to the surprise of the first year students participating in the Fun-tastic race at UMS on Saturday, 4 November, learning English tenses and parts of speech actually turned out to be ‘good fun’. The students were all from UB00102 Communicative English Grammar, a foundation English course offered by the Centre for the Promotion of Knowledge and Language Learning (CPKLL).

The 35 challengers tried their level best to communicate in English as they undertook ten challenges at ten stations located in the vicinity of CPKLL. Examples of the communicative challenges were ‘describe and draw’, charades, relaying a message, and riddles. The participants also enjoyed solving clues to find ten ‘treasures’ and taking selfies with these ‘treasures’ along the way to different stations.

Many of the participants said that they learned more about the English language and teamwork from taking part in the race. When asked to comment on the event, one participant responded, “It’s really fantastic! Love it! It can improve our communication skills in English, team spirit, and problem solving skills.”

Judging from the positive responses from the participants, this event evidently transformed the shy low proficiency students into active users of English as the constraints of a formal teacher-centred classroom gave way to experiential learning and gamification.

The fastest team completed the race in 1 ½ hours and won the first prize of RM200. The Chairperson of Fun-tastic Race 2017 committee, Ms. Loh Yoke Len, pointed out that “The Fun-tastic Race made every participant a winner as they all contributed to the challenges and overcame them together as a team.”

The race was jointly organised by CPKLL ‘Say it in English’ Campaign headed by Mr. John Mark Storey in collaboration with the Chairperson of UB00102, Ms. Brenda Margaret Wright. She commented, “Having fun with English in a communicative context can spark motivation for all levels of learners.”

In addition, the collective endeavour of 29 second and third year TESL students from the Faculty of Psychology and Education was a key factor in the success of the race.

The UMS management and the Dean of CPKLL, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Jualang Azlan Gansau are very supportive of student-centred learning English activities outside the classroom. Besides the Fun-tastic race, The 'Say it in English' Campaign has also organised a public speaking course (Speech Craft) in conjunction with University Toastmasters Club, a short video competition, and a 'Wonder Wall' inspirational message competition. More activities are planned for next semester, such as a Film and Fiction Club for lovers of books and movies.

By Loh Yoke Len