

FORMAL LETTER

Tan Yew Sheng Ethan
Class Chairman, 3 Thanksgiving
St Andrew's Secondary School
15 Francis Thomas Drive
Singapore 359342

28 April 2022

Mr Lum Wai Leong
Form Teacher, 3 Thanksgiving
St Andrew's Secondary School
15 Francis Thomas Drive
Singapore 359342

Dear Sir,

Feedback on Home-Based Learning (HBL) and recommendation on ways to deepen students' learning

As the Class Chairman of Secondary 3 Thanksgiving, I would like to thank you on behalf of my peers for giving us the opportunity to share our ideas and recommendations on ways to enrich students' online learning. Our teachers have, without a doubt helped students transit into this period of "crisis schooling" with an arsenal of digital tools and lessons. However, having carefully reviewed the feedback from my classmates and teachers, I have concluded that there are areas for improvement. Hence, I would like to pitch the following to you: moderating the number of video conferencing lessons per day, incorporating collaborative work into HBL, and extending students' learning into real-world experiences.

Firstly, the frequency and length of video conferencing sessions should be moderated. Although such sessions have gifted students with opportunities to share ideas and clarify doubts directly with our teachers, **students have highlighted that having many video conferences in a row puts a palpable strain on their eyes.** At the same time, attending too many video conferences **leaves lesser time for them to consolidate their thoughts during each lesson.** Hence, what I would like to put forward is that video conferencing lessons be limited to half of the lesson duration. Videos and pre-recorded material should be up to 5 minutes in length, which is the optimal duration for capturing the attention of students and ensuring better retention of knowledge. Thus, I hold the opinion that coming up with the right balance of video conferences and pre-recorded lessons is the way forward for teachers during the HBL period.

Secondly, during this season of social distancing, teachers and students alike have more acutely grasped the value of working together. Currently, students are by and large completing their HBL lessons individually. As such, **what I would like to propose is that teachers implement a series of collaborative learning tasks to provide more opportunities for interaction and communication.** This would, undoubtedly, ensure that the class remains strong as a community of learners looking out for one another. Furthermore, studies have shown that working together heightens cognitive ability, as team members challenge each other to improve, improvise, and impress. Considering the abovementioned points, I am confident that infusing group work into HBL lessons will enhance students' learning.

Last but not least, teachers should help our students make real world connections during HBL, especially while they are limited to the confines of their home. As put forth by, Mr Wayne Proust, an American educator: learning is a consequence of thinking and when students apply what they learn to real-world scenarios. Students would grasp concepts relatively quicker than those who go through rote learning. Hence, what I would recommend is that teachers include more activities that encourage students to extend their knowledge to the world around them. Doing so would expand students' breadth of cross-disciplinary knowledge too. For instance, during biology lessons, our teacher had leveraged on the educational game, Plague. Inc, to vividly illustrate how diseases can travel the interconnected networks of the world. The game encouraged us to extend our knowledge of microorganisms to global pandemics. By drawing such comparisons between textbook knowledge and the real world, I am confident that our students' learning will be significantly enriched.

In conclusion, I sincerely hope that you would adopt the above suggestions, to bolster students' learning during HBL. Thank you for taking the time to consider our feedback. I eagerly await your response.

Yours faithfully,

Ethan

Tan Yew Sheng, Ethan
3 Thanksgiving Class Chairman