

Cool English - New Content Release and Award Presentation Ceremony

(Courtesy of Yin-Zhen Shen, at the Division of Junior High, Elementary School and Preschool Education)



"To be proficient in English speaking does not need to rely on cram schools" The K-12 Education Administration of the Ministry of Education aims to provide national elementary and junior high school students with free and high-quality English learning resources, so that the students can improve the effectiveness of their English learning through online self-directed learning. The "Cool English Online English Learning Platform" that the team led by Hao-Ran Chen, Professor at the English Department of National Taiwan Normal University, was commissioned to be launched in 2015, with more than 220,000 registered users on the platform and 1.45 million visits. At the new content release and award presentation ceremony on June 10, 2019, the Cool English team released its newly developed interactive Google speaking materials, allowing students to learn English at any time and place with their mobile phones and tablets. At the award ceremony, the winners of the "English Listening King" contest this year (2019) were invited to accept the awards at the event; these students were recognized for their efforts put into learning on the platform. Ms. Fan, Sun-Lu, Political Deputy Minister of Education, presented the certificates of merit to these students in person to motivate and support these award-winning students to keep up the good work.

In her speech, Ms. Fan said that in response to the advent of the era of science and technology, the K-12 Education Administration has particularly established a free and all-round English learning website—"Cool English Online English Learning Platform" to close the urban-rural gap, and lessen up the geographical restrictions in learning English through technology; this has enabled elementary and junior high school students in rural areas to learn English by themselves on the platform, allowing students from all over the country to enjoy the diverse and interesting courses on the platform via the Internet. Meanwhile, it can train students' listening, reading, and speaking abilities, which are the core competencies targeted by the Ministry of Education. The Ministry of Education expressed its gratitude toward the team led by Hao-Ran Chen for its professionalism and dedication to building this world-class English learning platform and recommend it to all national elementary and junior high school teachers, students, and their parents. In the future, this online English learning platform will continue to release more diverse courses, so as to become the best tool for students from all over the country to learn English. It has been estimated that not only the number of registered users and the number of visits will increase significantly, but also our elementary and junior high school students across the country will learn English on the platform in a happy manner, while improving their English learning motivation and the learning effectiveness.

The curriculum planning of the "Cool English Online English Learning Platform" is based on listening, speaking, reading, writing, vocabulary/grammar, games, basic learning contents, and the Comprehensive Assessment Program (CAP) for junior high school students, which have been designed to cultivate students' English abilities in all aspects through such diverse contents. In response to the popularization of mobile devices, recently, more and more students have used their mobile phones and tablets to learn English. Thus, digital learning is no longer limited to desktop computers and laptops. "Cool English" has also developed the latest course this year—interactive Google speaking materials; students only need to install the Google Assistant app on their phones or tablets or use Google Smart Speaker to take a voice quiz with Google Assistant and experience a specially designed interactive speaking course by Cool English.

At present, this series of interactive Google speaking materials is designed with seven different types of courses, including "Talk to Cool English Picture Lesson" (guessing words by looking at pictures), "Talk to Cool English Animal Lesson" (guessing animals by listening to sounds), "Talk to Cool English Speaking Lesson" (sentence reciting practice), "Talk to Cool

English Knowledge Lesson" (quiz games in various fields), which is exclusively for junior high school students, "Talk to Cool English Word Lesson," "Talk to Cool English Listening Test" (CAP listening tests), and "Talk to Cool English Taiwan Lesson" (Taiwan local knowledge). Users can open the "Google Assistant" app on their mobile phones or tablets and enter the English course name mentioned above, and they can experience the interactive speaking materials established by Cool English. Through this series of courses, students can actually practice English conversations, thereby improving their English speaking ability.

In addition to providing diverse online English learning resources, Cool English has also proactively organized a variety of contests to motivate elementary and junior high school students to learn English through the platform. The K-12 Education Administration organized the "English Listening King" contest this February to motivate elementary and junior high school teachers and students to learn English through "Animation Adventures" and "VOA Movie English" on the Cool English platform. The participating students needed to watch the designed movies and complete sets of test questions first; the participants who obtained a full score were the winners of the "English Listening King" award. Of the winners, 100 students were selected by drawing lots, and each of them was awarded prize money of NT\$600; the ceremony today was held to award the prize money to those students.

Through the diverse courses and contents on the platform and promotion activities through contests, more and more elementary and junior high school students are learning English on the Cool English. "The interesting animations and stories offered on this platform have enhanced my listening ability," said a student surnamed Hung from the Er Xin Primary School in Keelung City. "Participating in this contest held by Cool English is a great help for me. In addition to knowing more about the words I have learned, I know how to use them appropriately, which has greatly improved my English," said a student surnamed Su from the Chonglan Primary School in Pingtung County. "I like the reading section on Cool English because I get to learn many different words by reading, and the articles in this section are great." said a student surnamed Chen from the Chonglan Primary School. A student surnamed Luo from the Wumei Junior High School regarded "Cool English is not only a channel for attending contests, it also provides many activities in different topics for practice. It is a great website for students to improve their English abilities in their spare time." A student surnamed Chen from the Shanlin Junior High School shared "After using the Cool English website, I have learned many words and sentence

patterns. I have also enhanced my English pronunciation through "Voice Recognition" in the speaking courses and in turn learned more about many small games."

In the future, the K-12 Education Administration will continue to develop more diverse scenario-based conversation courses based on the "Google Assistant" app, so that students can learn happily through the convenient, fun, and gamified courses; as such, it will no longer be difficult for them to speak English. In addition, it will continue to develop more diverse courses on the Cool English platform, providing students with interesting and completely free English learning resources. Furthermore, the platform will continue to update more teachers and students of the course contents and functions of the platform by holding seminars, workshops, and relevant contests, so as to motivate more students to use the platform for learning. With such diverse English learning contents, we sincerely welcome teachers and students across the country to join the "Cool English Online Learning Platform" (www.coolenglish.edu.tw) to explore the fun of learning English!