

Conversation Club

REVIEW OF 2022



HAPPIER, HEALTHIER,
INSPIRED COMMUNITIES

Community
Organisers

Department for
Digital, Culture
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COMMUNITY
FUND



Lincoln City
Foundation



Working and Connecting
Communities

Registered Charity Number: 1128464

Conversation Club



Come along and learn English

FREE OF CHARGE

BEGINNERS WELCOME

Various groups available in Sincil Bank area Lincoln

Email: community@lincolncityfoundation.co.uk

**SEPT 2021 -
AUG 2022**



561

PARTICIPANTS



10

VOLUNTEERS



100

**HOURS OF
VOLUNTEERING**



2825

**ATTENDANCES
BY LEARNERS**



INTRODUCTION

Who thought an English Conversation Class could be so much fun here at the LNER stadium?

Over the last 6 months, we have seen excellent progress in the students' English levels as well as enjoying some lovely social events, which have really been the icing on the cake. We have seen new families in Lincoln become positively linked in their new City and homes.

Our original school-based classes have really developed and grown into an outstanding programme. People from all over the world have taken up this great opportunity. We offer you a good look at what has been going on, showcasing some of the people involved, along with their interesting stories.

The new ESOL course with Babs has delivered a new layer of quality and opportunity for those looking to be more professional and dedicated in their studies. As we look forward to seeing how the students go from strength to strength in their studies and progress to find new opportunities in local events and activities

As always, if you feel that you can offer input, ideas or assistance, in any shape or form, please contact us; we would love to hear from you.

neville.coupland@lincolncityfoundation.co.uk



CONVERSATION = FRIENDSHIP

We teach English for free but we are most happy to see people from different backgrounds coming together every week to share moments together and to build life long friendships.

Lincoln City Foundation's aim is to support happier and healthier communities. If you wish to support or follow our work please connect with us via

www.lincolncityfoundation.co.uk

Cathedral Culture



Lincoln Cathedral is the iconic image we all know and love, so what better place to go on a student trip with people from all over the world who live and study English with us here. We again had a sunny day on our side with low wintery temperatures making the cold stonework crisper and more appealing. The excitement of the students entering the famous building was noticeable. Many of the students who have lived in Lincoln for a long time had not visited, so it was great to encourage them to explore more of their local culture and surroundings. We explored all the ground floor areas admiring the beauty and craftsmanship of the ancient stoneworks. The stained-glass windows looked incredible in the winter sun, and many photos were taken on the inside and outside. All the students were impressed and enjoyed the time together exploring and learning. Sometimes the most obvious things are missed, but having an encouraging team of friends with you can make new experiences easier to access. Building confidence and relationships, as well as English skill, is essential to this programme, so we will keep supporting new adventures like these in and around our tremendous City.

Storming the Castle



One windy day in February, the conversation class went on tour to Lincoln Castle. The weather was fresh and clear, so the views were breathtaking. As a local person, it was a pleasure to host the group up onto the walls to take in Lincoln's fine scenery. The students were very excited to scramble up the ancient stairwells and get a taste of the history which is so readily available to absorb. They were interested to know that part of the castle is still used officially, which ties in the present with the past really nicely. The Magna Carta exhibition and movie were a nice break from the breeze outside before we also visited the intriguing jail and pulpit area, learning about the gruel, or lack of it which was served to the inmates. We did feel a little guilty but had to dive into the coffee shop to rest and reflect on all the great things we had seen and learnt. Thank you to Alan from Lincoln Rotary, who volunteers on the programme as he attended and had lots of interesting local knowledge to gift to the students.

//INSIDE STORY//

ESOL - English for Speakers of Other Languages Course

From February to July, I was lucky enough to teach English courses to nearly 50 students. The students came from over 25 different countries, some shared a common language, such as Arabic or Russian, but others were the sole speaker of their mother tongue. All of them were eager to either learn or improve their English. We had two groups of Beginners and a group each of Intermediate and Higher students.

Each class made great progress with their English. We concentrated on four skills at each level, reading, listening, speaking and writing, with lots of vocabulary work and discussions of British culture and social norms.

The Intermediate group surpassed all expectations in speaking by talking at all times about anything and everything; the noise level was intense, and the laughter quotient huge. Their sense of fun defied any known grammar, but each class saw every student say something, often at the same time as someone else!

The Higher class's skills with English would put a local to shame. Their awareness of the English language led to frequent challenges as I carefully explained "the rules" of some grammatical aspects, only to hear the phrase "yes, but English people say..." Their overall ability meant I had to really raise my game to meet their needs. Though I just wanted to prove that I did know more about the English language than them, and consequently, my knowledge has improved no end!

The group that deserved the most respect was the Beginners. We English rarely bother to learn more than "two beers, please" in any foreign language, so to see students starting out in a new country without the language skill but with an immense desire to learn, was humbling. Bizarrely, the course book introduces the possessive apostrophe in the third lesson. My students got it, used it correctly and in one fell swoop, put hundreds of UK grocers to shame. They regularly attended even though Covid and childcare issues combined to make life difficult. Added to these negatives was employers' unthinking and casual re-assignment of work shifts, which meant some came straight off a night shift or were mortified to have to cancel at the last minute. Homework was always completed, and our classes progressed from self-conscious mumblings to cheerful chatter, a triumph for any language teacher.

Everybody hated writing!

It's been a fantastic opportunity to teach such a diverse group of people. They all want to speak to English people more but find it hard to engage with first-language speakers. So, if you get a chance, practise your own language skills with a passing student, and see what you can learn from them.

Babs Free
Course Leader



Spring Picnic



No cooking smells quite as good as outdoor BBQ, so this Spring, we were treated to a fun time in St Andrews Garden with all the senses on fire. A few of the Bangladesh students have great culinary experience, and the speed and skill with which they cooked up various dishes were fabulous. Many students pre-prepared dishes from their home nation's cuisine, which sent our taste buds in a spin. The fresh colours and flavours were super bright and fresh. Having a fun social time outdoors in the early days of spring shook off the cobwebs. We had a little shower for a few minutes, but it soon blew over, and we all settled down to enjoy each other's company and cooking.

Delicious.

Italian Style



Everyone loves a good lasagne! Sammy, one of the students, made a huge dish for everyone to share as we all headed to The Blest Curry restaurant for a great social opportunity as well as a good meal.

We all studied first at the LNER stadium, then walked over to the High Street en masse to check out Sammy's recipe. We were all impressed by the bright modern restaurant and, of course, the lovely aroma of cooking food as we walked in. We had time to chat and meet up with other students we hadn't seen for a while then we got stuck into the eating. To be honest it was the biggest lasagne tray I have ever seen and taste wise it was top of the class. Sammy's English is great, and his chef skills are incredible too. I think it is nice to eat food with friends as the cooking comes straight from the heart, which is probably why it was so tasty.

If you fancy helping out at one of our classes or events, please contact us at, community@lincolncityfoundation.co.uk

//INSIDE STORY//

Hong Kong to Lincoln



Hello, my name is Alan. I am a Hongkonger who has moved to the UK since last June. Some people asked me why don't I move to those preferred destinations for Hongkongers, like London, Manchester or Birmingham, but Lincoln? The reason is that I love Lincoln, it is because I graduated from the University of Lincoln. Although I'm not a campus-based student, I still remember everything I felt, I saw in this city during my graduation trip in 2017, especially for the flag displayed by the university near Rope Walk at that period. It stated "Wherever you are from. You Are Home". It's so touching, and I can't believe that I'll be back after I finished the trip. I'm incredibly living in Lincoln now! I'm home now!

After I moved to Lincoln, I found that my English is not enough to survive in the UK, it is because I am not native in English. When I communicate with local British, I'll be quite nervous, especially for the phone conversation. I always afraid that people don't understand what I'm saying and of course I'm not fully understand what they're saying either. Some of them speaking quite fast and some of them speaking in colloquial, it's really a disaster for me. In order to adapt my life in the UK, I decided to seek for an English course to improve and upgrade my English skills. Fortunately, I discovered that there was a free English course offering by Conversation Club at Lincoln City Foundation. Yes, it's FREE! It's unbelievable! That's why I went to have a trial?

During my first day in the class, it was Neville's birthday. One of the classmates prepared a birthday cake for him and the whole class were joyfully celebrated with him. This is a very warm picture indeed! I can see that most of the classmates are nice and friendly, and I believed that it'd be a good place for me to make friends and practice my English with them.

Right now, I've already joined Conversation Club nearly 6 months, what did I learn from the class? Generally, Neville will separate those classmates into a different small group according to our English standard, therefore it is easier for us to communicate with each other. At the beginning, I usually be assigned to a group with 6-8 people to discuss some certain topics. Due to we are similar level in English, we understood each other, so that we feel comfortable to speak. Meanwhile, English is the only common language between us, whenever we want to share our opinion, we must use English. Thus, it pushes us to speak more and listen more, only if you keep silent during the whole discussion, but I believed that you'll not.

From time to time, the size of the class kept growing. Occasionally, Neville will assign me to teach some English beginners, which is a big challenge for me. He'll give me some materials for guiding people to learn, and I'll base on the topic to find something related to their daily life for stimulating their interest and then interact with them. I'm not sure if I'm good at teaching, at least they became more willing to speak. Although it is not the easy job for me, I learnt a lot and it helped me to build up my confident, especially when they give me positive feedback after class.

Apart from the regular class, Conversation Club also arranged some events for us, such as lunch gathering, picnic, boat trip and so on. These events helped us to build up friendship with each other. Before I moved to the UK, I never imagine that I'll have a lot of friends from many different countries, such as Korea, Algeria, Poland, Spain, Iran and Turkey, etc. I'm really enjoy making new friends and I hope that we can improve our English skills together.

If you are new in the UK or you are struggling how to improve your English, I can tell you that you're not the only one. Please join us at Conversation Club and learn English together, we have so many friends right here waiting for you. Your never walk alone!

Finally, thanks Conversation Club for offering us a good environment and good atmosphere to learn English, and I would like to special thanks Neville who provided me with a chance to being different roles in the class.

Alan

//INSIDE STORY//

Students Learning To Teach English in China



I appreciate the Nottingham Advantage award module and the Lincoln City Foundation for offering me such a valuable teaching internship opportunity. Throughout the period of the internship, I assisted EFL teacher Neville every Thursday in teaching English to intermediate-upper-level students in the Lincoln region. Neville is a responsible and competent instructor who always sent the class materials he had prepared and asked for and valued my opinions on the appropriateness of the lesson's content. The class atmosphere was always joyful and lively. Students who have different cultural contexts are always actively participating in the teaching process and actively expressing their opinions during the discussion. Especially in one-on-one teaching processes, learners were always being so supportive and willing to actively express their own opinions on a certain topic with the incorporation of their own life experiences actively. The accepting and enjoyable communication processes with loveable pupils in the classroom transformed the teaching processes into caring and life-sharing conversations between friends. It made me feel so warm.

This internship was a two-way street for me; not only did I support the students in acquiring English proficiency, but through conversing and interacting with students from various cultural backgrounds in class, the students also introduced me to their local foods, customs, and beliefs. On the basis of a deeper understanding of learners' diverse cultural contexts, I gradually recognise the necessity and significance of respecting learners' cultural differences in order to organise the teaching method and adapt the teaching to better suit learners' learning habits, thus also laying the groundwork

for my next step in teaching and developing empathy.

During this internship, I received a great deal of assistance from this teaching group, particularly Neville. After each lesson, he would review the day's teaching scenario with the whole teaching team and summarise the day's teaching experience. For example, I remember Neville suggested that inquiry methods should be adapted and changed when facing learners with different English proficiency levels. For our intermediate-upper level students who are capable of communicating with others relatively fluently, teachers should offer learners additional guidance and the opportunity to voice their thoughts, rather than providing closed-ended questions that restrict learners' communication.

Although the internship only lasted a few months, it had a profound impact on me. The class that impressed me the most was the one that met near Christmas. Neville encouraged teachers to design courses with Christmas-themed subjects, and for Chinese teachers, as students had shown an interest in the Chinese zodiac signs, I collected and prepared a great deal of traditional Chinese cultural information on the twelve zodiac signs for teaching. Everyone in front of a screen was infected with a jovial, festival celebratory mood as a result of all the teachers' well-arranged online lessons. This is also the primary reason why I appreciate this internship so much. Although online, our genuine emotions and respect for other people's cultures transcend geographical restrictions and Internet obstacles, producing indelible memories for each student and teacher participating in the teaching.

Daiwei Shi
Student, Nottingham University

Messing about on the river



“Messing about on the river” would have been the song of the day for this sunny July social trip, but everyone was very well behaved, to be honest. A group of around 30 students took the opportunity to see Lincoln from the water on the Brayford Belle. We are lucky to have a good variety of tourist attractions here, and so we were pleased to support this fun activity. Most of the students got on the top deck as we cruised out of the Brayford Pool, taking in the fresh vantage point. It does bring a new perspective that most had not experienced before. It was revealing to see where Lincoln had grown and developed from this significant area. Students were surprised to see so many people living on and around the waterway, which is quite hidden generally from the roads.

Two of our longstanding members, Astor and John, joined the group it was great to see the older and newer students connecting across the years. They are featured in the picture afterwards taken in the Odeon’s Costa coffee area with Neville and Rainbow, another group member from Hong Kong.



//INSIDE STORY//

BGU at The Foundation



Trainee teachers taking BA (hons) TESOL and Linguistics at Bishop Grosseteste University (BGU) first started visiting the Conversation Club to observe Neville teaching back in February as part of their 'teaching in practice' module at BGU. For each observation, our trainees needed to complete an entry within their guided observation journal which asked them to reflect on the lesson structure, classroom management and the teachers communication to students. This was a valuable experience as at the end of each observation students identified which qualities they would like to take forward into their own future teaching.

After the journals were complete, the group began to volunteer at the club to gain experience towards their undergraduate degree, and for some, to work towards completing the Trinity CertTESOL qualification. For the majority of our trainees, this was their first time teaching English to speakers of other language and so they were very nervous. To ease the trainees into the experience they taught their first two lessons in small groups, teaching in 20 - 30 minute segments. This meant the trainees were able to work together when designing the first few lessons and were there for each other during the teaching practice to offer support and words of encouragement.

As their confidence grew, the trainees began teaching for 1 hour individually from April to August. Each trainee was given the opportunity to experience working with beginners, intermediate and advance level students and to design lessons based on each of the four skills (reading, speaking, listening and writing). After each teaching practice, the observing tutor from BGU gave the trainee feedback and encourage them to reflect on the session by identifying areas for improvement which they could

prioritise for their next teaching practice.

The trainees quickly built a good rapport with the students at the Conversation Club and were keen to design lessons based on the students interests. The students have been extremely supportive towards our trainees, offering words of encouragement and positive feedback throughout. As our trainees developed their skills they were often keen to show Neville their lesson plans and feed back to Neville at the end of each session. It has been a pleasure to support the trainees with their teaching and see them develop their teaching skills and confidence throughout the semester. Our trainees have found supporting the students with their English to be a highly rewarding experience and they are keen to volunteer for the Conversation Club again.

Thanks to this opportunity all participating trainees have passed their university module, and we now have 5 Trinity qualified students. Our team at BGU and trainees really appreciate the flexibility and support offered by Neville, the students, and the whole team at LCF. It has been a brilliant opportunity for our trainees to gain teaching experience, to complete their Trinity qualification and to give back to their local community. We look forward to catching up with the students and working with everyone again in the future.

Jessica Vernon
Lecturer in TESOL & Linguistics

//VOLUNTEER STORY//

Volunteers Change Lives

I think this English Conversation Club is just like a resting place to me. Here in this place, I meet my lovely friends who understand me and feel comfortable. I have been volunteering for the Conversation Club at Lincoln City Foundation since last summer, 2021.

During the last year, I have spent most of my time with a lot of international friends. I mainly assisted the teacher, Neville, by leading a small group in his weekly classes, and also had extra classes with people who would like to learn English further in one-to-one meetings. I started my extra classes for the first time in Bridge café, which is in Bridge church. This café is for the community around this area, and they provide free coffee as well. I used this place for a meeting with friends. We gathered once or twice a week to study English. I used a textbook called “English grammar in use” for teaching. I remember everyone was so passionate about learning English. We also shared our daily lives or some stories about our home country and listened to each other. It was absolutely a good way of practising speaking English. I have found my joy when I am spending time with friends, and all of them are supportive for my lessons.

As time went by, we became more closer and now finally became lifelong friends. In fact, it really brightened up my life. In addition, I have had a weekly coffee meeting with friends who I met in this Conversation Club. It was a kind of social gathering. We went to many coffee shops and tea rooms in the city centre. We not only studied English together but also shared our joy and sorrow in British life as friends. This coffee meeting made us stay connected. I am so blessed to have met these amazing friends who are from various countries. Thanks to them, I could think more about cultural diversity. I must admit that interacting with people who have diverse cultures, religions and life experiences is not easy. Sometimes, we may hurt others’ feelings because we have different cultures. However, I have witnessed that most of the members in our Conversation Club are really trying to understand and love others. As internationals living in this country, we feel empathy for each other in some sense. When you have empathy, it allows us to understand the feelings of others. Truly wonderful things are happening in our Conversation Club. We study English and comfort each other. I will forever cherish my memories with the Lincoln City Foundation.

Thank you so much to all

Ha Eun
South Korea



Volunteer Shout Out



There are a vibrant range of nationalities taking part in Foundation English conversation classes, but not many from South Korea. About a year ago, Ha Eun registered for the classes to practice her English and make new connections in Lincoln. She had found her move quite challenging as there were not many opportunities for her to speak with local people at length, and felt quite isolated. As well as the English lessons, we offer social activities and events which gave her the opportunity to make fruitful friendships and lifelong memories. Her story is on page 16 where you can read for yourself her thoughts. We are happy to say Ha Eun became fully engaged in helping others feel welcome and offering her time to tutor beginners in English as well as organising social meetups in and around Lincoln. Her coffee shop outings became very popular and are now famous around here. Ha Eun attended Lincoln college and also applied for a few jobs in the local area. Although these were not successful her progress was admirable. She has now moved to California to start a new journey with her husband, where his career path has taken them in that direction. As we offer online classes, we will still be able to connect and share further great times across the globe. We are grateful that she took the community spirit on board with a happy smile and a warm welcome always. Thank you, Ha Eun.

From Neville
Course Leader

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Stand Out Lesson



2022 will surely be remembered for the extreme heat waves in July and August. Surprisingly it didn't deter all of the students as we took advantage of the stand (as seen above), which created a lot of shade and a better degree of coolness for the students to study in. We are grateful for being able to offer LNER stadium facilities here for community benefit, which ties in with the club's mission to give back to the local area and people. Thank you to the grounds and maintenance staff who work so hard day in and day out to keep the high standards of pitch and facilities, whatever the weather.

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