

Interviewing Jason Kucker

For our team, this was not just another grade for ESL.



Jason Kucker, an IB Coordinator English Language from New York. “We never thought we could ask these questions, until the opportunity for this interview came.” writes Jolana Irinkova, a student from 5.AG.



By Jolana Irinkova, Nikita Runushkin and Vojtěch Pitr
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The unexpected happened and three ordinary students from Nový PORG had the opportunity to talk with the one and only IB Coordinator Jason Kucker. At first, everyone thought it was just a joke, but then we got an email with possible times when the interview can be conducted. We celebrated and prepared the interview. Then the big day came and three students were standing in front of an IB Office – B310 three minutes after the big break began.

Soon a voice from the inside said “Come in.” and Mr. Kucker, teacher, CAS coordinator, programme coordinator and examiner from New York, welcomed us in his office.

It was the interview we were hoping for but never really thought it could happen. Mr. Kucker is a foreign teacher from Nový PORG, who taught English in many public and private schools, including the very famous Charles University. He has joined Nový PORG, a very respected private school, in 2014 and now is indispensable for this prestigious school.

Despite our questions being very personal, Mr. Kucker was willing to answer every single one of them and soon he revealed to us his horrifying childhood memories...

“My parents had to call the fire department to come and open up the couch to get me out.”

Mr. Kucker enlightened us with a traumatic but indeed very humorous event from when he was three years old after we asked him if he had experienced any traumatic moment when he was a child. He explained they used to have a convertible sofa that opened up into a bed and he had been jumping on it. Then he had fallen and had gotten stuck between the mattress and the frame of the bed.

That was not the only memory from his youth, he also shared an incident from high school.

“This was stupid.” he started his story after a moment of silence. “I was in drama class and it was before the teacher arrived. It was in the morning and we were trying to do handstands against the wall.”

The story started to get very interesting as Mr. Kucker mentioned “I didn’t notice there was a hook on the wall.” He continued by saying that as he was coming down, the pocket of his jeans had gotten stuck on the hook and they had ripped. He was smiling when telling us about this experience.

“It wasn’t tragic, but it was bad so I had to quickly run to meet the school nurse and she had safety pins, so I was able to patch it up.”

He finished this story by explaining that it could have been worse, but it had been embarrassing since his classmates were laughing at him.

As we were talking about his childhood, a brilliant question came into our minds. So, moments later, we asked Mr. Kucker if he knew he wanted to be teacher all along.

“No, there were times in my life when I really thought this is not the way to go.” Mr. Kucker then clarified he came from a family of teachers, so he didn’t always want to be a teacher, but he knew since elementary school that he wanted to do something with language.

Midway through our interview, when we got to questions about identity, we asked Mr. Kucker what best advice he had received.

He didn't have to think at all and answered that when he was in high school, his English teacher in twelfth grade said:

“Never marry someone that you would not share a toothbrush with.”

He explained why he thought it was such a memorable advice.

“When you're married to someone, it will happen at some point that you go away somewhere and only one of you will remember to have the toothbrush.”

He told us that he thinks it's like a sign that you are so comfortable with the other person and that you made a good choice.

It was one of the most extraordinary conversations we have ever had with a teacher and it was the first interview we organized. Mr. Kucker revealed fascinating experiences and moments from his life and even with more personal questions, his smile and kindness did not disappear. By pausing before replying to the questions, Mr. Kucker made it clear he answered them honestly and truthfully. It was a reminder that even teachers have their own personal lives and not only their job.



Resources:

<https://www.porg.cz/kucker-jason/>

Interview with Mr. Kucker