



## Not an Influencer, but an #InfluenCHER

By Ms Chew Kai Qing

Ms Chew Kai Qing, Assistant Year Head at Serangoon Garden Secondary School, meets her students where they are – which is usually on social media. From creating Instagram Math memes and selling bubble tea to bringing in speakers like SGAG founder Xiao Ming, she does all these to make lessons fun and relatable.



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### Tell us a story that captures the kind of teacher you are.

I had a eureka moment while getting my students ready for lessons one day. Since we (me included) are almost always on social media to get updated on the latest news, wouldn't it be fun to hijack their Instagram or YouTube feed with Math?

I floated this idea to my colleagues and students, and was encouraged to embark on this exciting journey creating fun and meaningful content for students and hosting teaching resources on Instagram and YouTube.

There has not been a reason to look back since. We

sang Math formulas together, created funny Math memes, and filmed students in class working on technical topics like angles and perpendicular bisectors. Now, I am starting to outsource the content creation. Together with the students, we are also working on a project called "MATH, for students – by students" where students film themselves teaching key Math concepts and create their own Math memes to clarify common Math misconceptions.

I know this teaching method was bearing fruit when my students started asking, "Cher, are you posting what we are doing on IG?" and "when will we get featured?".

The Math department now also uses YouTube to host instructional videos and adds these videos as QR codes in our lesson materials – which is totally in line with blended learning and to promote students' self-directedness!

To reach students and connect with them is to meet them where they are – or where their interests lie. Since we can't beat them, join them!

P.S. Follow me and I won't get mad at you, if you [@getMathatChew](#).



## Describe a teaching method or tool you have found effective.

Call me *kaypoh* (or busybody), but this is what I noticed my students doing during break time -- watching local comedy skits on YouTube with their friends.

When they were laughing over a video by content house SGAG, I asked, "What if we had a chance to interview Xiao Ming (the co-founder of SGAG)? Would you be interested to know more about his entrepreneurship journey?" They were beside themselves. "'Cher, when? 'Cher, will he really come?'," to which I replied, "If you never try, you never know!"

I could not pass up on this learning opportunity for my students, and thus approached Xiao Ming and influencer Samantha, who was from another content house Night Owl Cinematics and also a preschool teacher, to share their stories on overcoming challenges, and to inspire the students to pursue their passion.



**Leveraging on students' use of social media to impart important learning**

It was an exciting day when the personalities came to our school for the chat to be filmed. Though most students could not meet them in person due to Covid-19 safe management measures, the partnership did give our Media Club students an opportunity to experience the planning, filming, and editing work that goes into such a production. The resulting video was so well-received that it was incorporated into our school's Education and Career Guidance plan for future batches of students.

As a strong believer of connecting and collaborating with the community, on top of working with entrepreneurs and social media personalities, I also work closely with school alumni for the school's Inspirational Speaker Series to inspire and uplift our students. God bless Social Media for bringing us

together easily! Through the power of collaboration, networking and giving, we are able to support one another in fulfilling our lifelong learning aspirations.

**"Through the power of collaboration, networking and giving, we are able to support one another in fulfilling our lifelong learning aspirations."**

## Which school project or initiative are you especially proud of?

A pop-up bubble tea café? Check. A nail art business? Check.



**Encouraging entrepreneurship through the setting up of a bubble tea café**

Our school partners with Halogen Foundation for their Network for Teaching Entrepreneurship (NFTE) programme, which focuses on helping underserved youths in Singapore pick up entrepreneurship skills.

As the teacher in charge, my team and I run the programme for over a hundred Sec 3N students each year. Every student comes up with business ideas and formulates business plans with mentors and corporate volunteers from UBS Bank. The programme culminates in a pitch, where top students are given the opportunity and experience to present their business ideas to a panel of judges, which includes school leaders and representatives from Halogen Foundation and UBS Bank.

While the programme ends there, I felt the need to encourage my students to turn their ideas and plans into reality. I thought about how I started my own blogshop when I was a student, selling clothes sourced from wholesalers. Though business wasn't good, I gained so much from imbibing the spirit of entrepreneurial dare – to push boundaries, to innovate and to find breakthroughs.



**“I gained so much from imbibing the spirit of entrepreneurial dare – to push boundaries, to innovate and to find breakthroughs.”**

So for one of my students, her plan was about setting up a bubble tea café, and we tried to execute some of her ideas via a bubble-tea fundraising booth at our school's National Day carnival.

Together with her English teacher, we drafted and refined persuasive emails seeking material sponsorship from bubble tea shops and suppliers. We also did things the old-fashioned way by knocking on the doors of bubble tea shops around the school district.

There were rejections, of course, but her resilience paid off. A local start-up café and a catering company were eventually inspired by her passion and sponsored brownies and bottled bubble tea. We were in business! My student also got to visit the café to pack the brownies, to speak to the staff, and to observe the business in a taste of how café operations are like.

The NFTE programme is a highlight for our Sec 3N students. One of our programme finalists, who had absenteeism issues back in school, has since graduated from her Business Management course in ITE and started her own home-based nail art business based on the plan that she developed during the programme. Her business did well enough that she went on to open a physical nail salon with a business partner.



**A ex-student benefited immensely from the NFTE programme and transitioned from being frequently absent from school to being confident enough to pursue her passion in nail art.**

