

# CONTACT

The Teachers' Digest

## PROGRAMMING FUN INTO CODING

Two teachers share how they help students enjoy programming.

## FYI: THE CYBER CLASSROOM

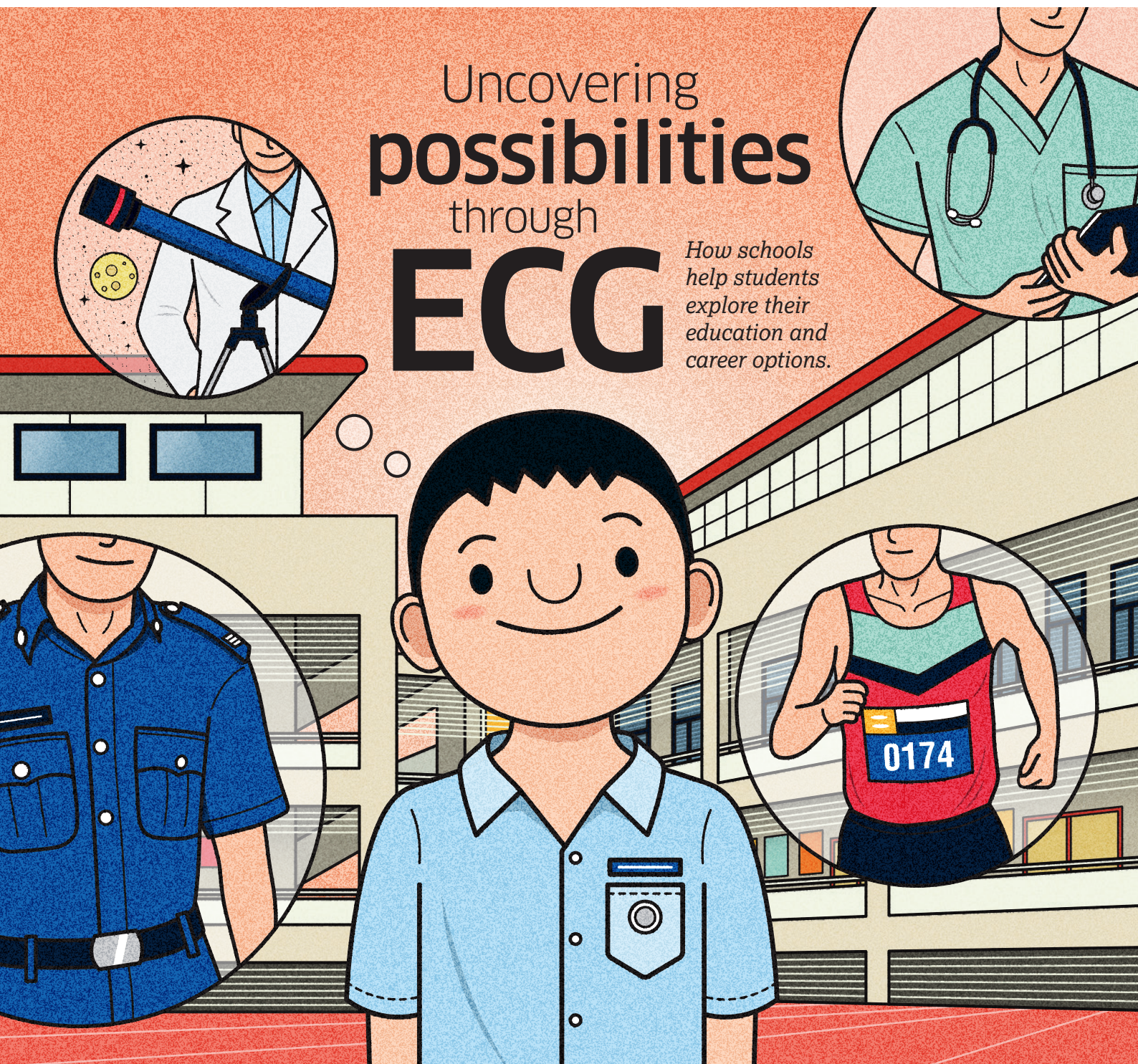
Stay safe and savvy online with these tips.

## MEETINGS WITH A TWIST

Liven up your next team gathering with a cafe visit.

## Uncovering possibilities through ECG

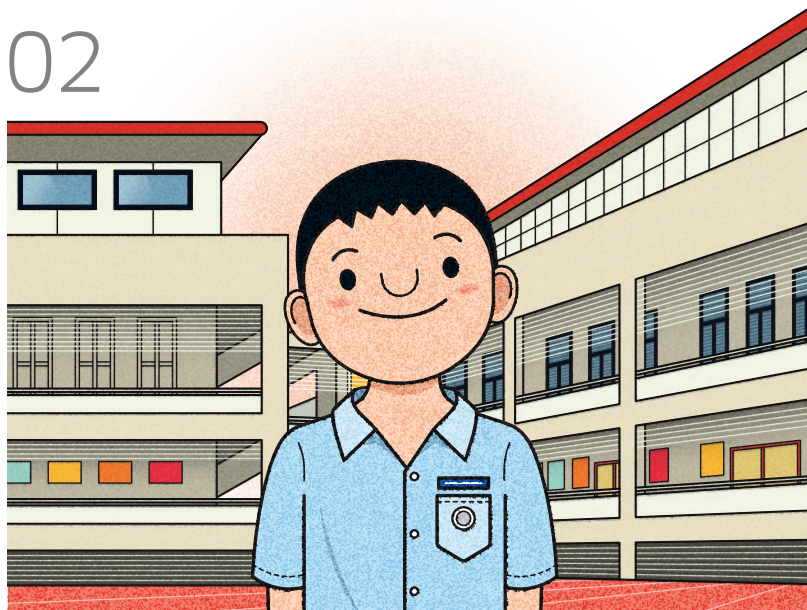
*How schools help students explore their education and career options.*





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## CONTACT

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## EDITOR'S NOTE

## THIS ISSUE...

From listening to a policeman share about his line of work to being a nurse for a day, students now get a myriad of opportunities to broaden their horizons through Education and Career Guidance (ECG). In our cover story, we find out how educators help students from all levels discover their strengths and interests, so they can make informed decisions for their future.

Besides looking into potential careers, it's also beneficial for students to develop computer programming skills to prepare for an increasingly digital workplace. In "Programming fun into coding", two teachers map out the strategies they have used to introduce their students to coding.

Confidence is also essential in one's life toolkit, says Mr Lim Chin Heng, a teacher who has spent over 40 years encouraging his deaf students to overcome obstacles. He shares more in this issue's Heart To Heart.

What does a teacher and naval officer have in common? Flip to "Proud to serve" to find out what a female Science educator who volunteers with the navy has to say about it.



Don't forget to check out FYI, which covers how you can guide students to stay safe and savvy in cyberspace. We also give you the scoop on the latest digital trends, from Pokémon Go to Bigo Live.

Lastly, perk up your next team meeting by heading out of school to one of the cafes that we've recommended in the Lifestyle section.

Happy reading!

### The *Contact* Team

## Readers' comments



Previously, we ran a readership survey to hear what *you* thought of *Contact* and the content you wanted to see more of. Thank you for sending in your comments, suggestions and encouragement. Here are some highlights.

What do you think of *Contact*? Share with us at [contact\\_online@moe.edu.sg](mailto:contact_online@moe.edu.sg)  
Get the soft copy of the magazine at [www.moe.gov.sg/teachers-digest](http://www.moe.gov.sg/teachers-digest)

"I like the magazine and have used some of your articles for English lessons. I intend to use one article for comprehension too. I have also shared past issues with my Secondary 4 class for their reading. So far, it has been well-received, so KUDOS to the team at *Contact*!"

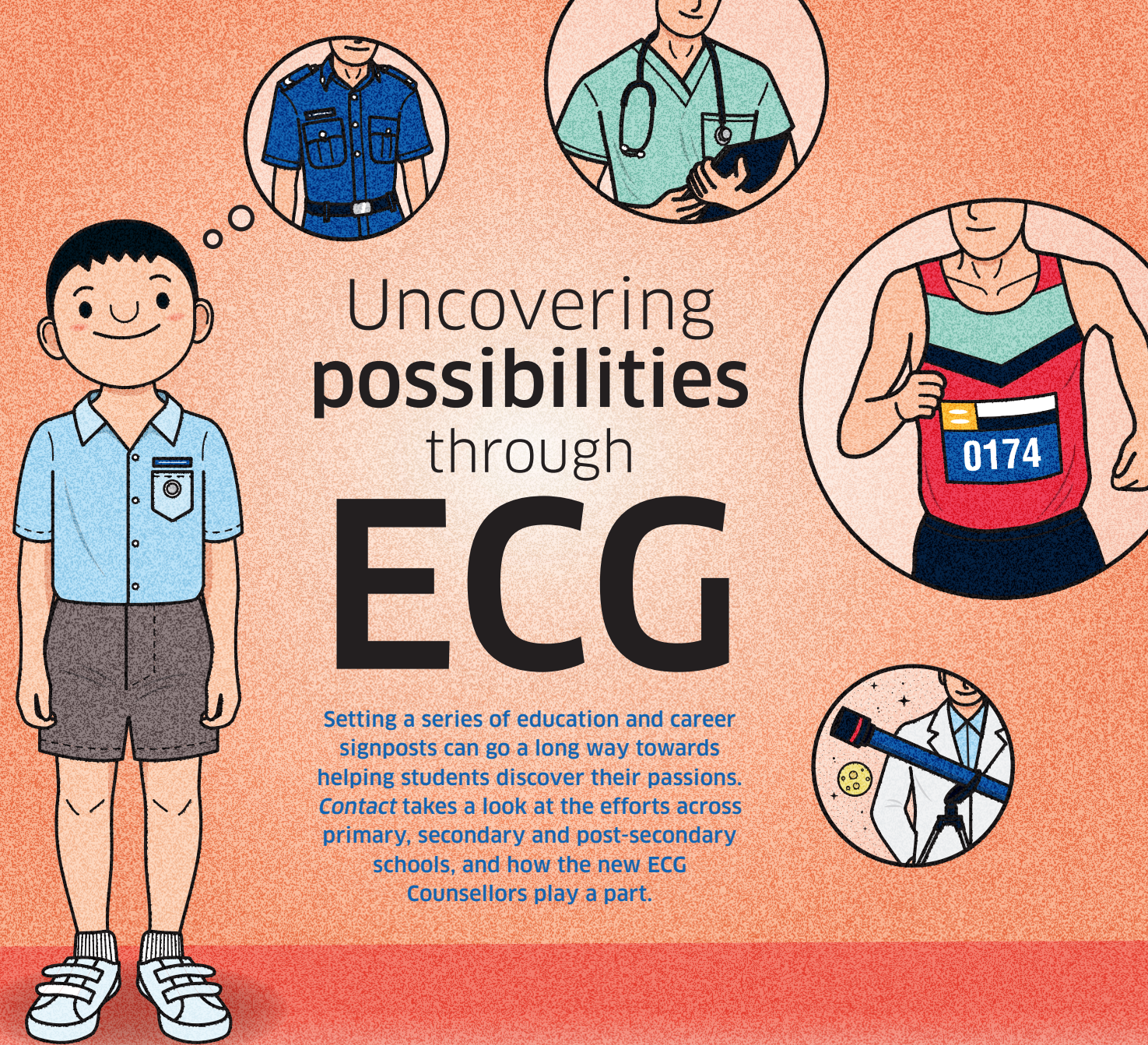
"The articles are relevant. And do continue the print version as there is too much online stuff that takes away the pleasure of reading a printed magazine."

"Do feature interesting articles of teachers making great strides in teaching challenging pupils."

"Keep up the good work! As a teacher editor for my school's annual yearbook for the past seven years, I know how difficult it is to please everyone."

"Behind every palatable idea stands a team of unsung heroes. Keep up the great work, *Contact*."





# Uncovering possibilities through ECG

Setting a series of education and career signposts can go a long way towards helping students discover their passions. *Contact* takes a look at the efforts across primary, secondary and post-secondary schools, and how the new ECG Counsellors play a part.



## 3 KEY ECG QUESTIONS

### Who am I?

The more I know about my values, interests, and abilities, the better I will be at making informed choices.

### Where am I going?

There are many pathways worth taking, and opportunities for continuous learning and recognition.

### How do I get there?

There are no dead ends. I can pursue my aspirations through different routes.

**Twice a year at Meridian Primary School**, pupils attend “mystery lessons” with a surprise speaker – ranging from a police inspector to a chef or comic artist. The guest shares stories on his or her work and answers the young audience’s eager questions.

“The idea is to expose them to choices, open up their minds to possibilities, and show them the passion that drives people – why they do what they do,” says Mrs Stefane Lee, a Meridian Primary Year Head.

After listening to UFM 100.3 DJ Chang Cheng Yao speak about his passion for music, one pupil was so inspired that he wanted to pursue that career. Other pupils have expressed interest to volunteer after hearing from people who have

volunteered on social missions in Africa and the Philippines.

These sessions, to introduce pupils to a plethora of occupations and expand their interests, are part of the school’s Education and Career Guidance (ECG) efforts.

## KNOWING ONESELF

ECG is about equipping students with the necessary knowledge, skills and values to make informed decisions at each key education stage, for successful transition from school to further education or work.

The aim is to help the young ones answer three key questions (*see sidebox “3 key ECG questions”*).

## COVER STORY

The guidance process is continuous from the primary to post-secondary years. Each stage has a different emphasis: building career awareness (primary level), career exploration (secondary) and career planning (post-secondary).

Schools can use various tools such as decision-making wheels, sharing sessions by industry experts, and workshops on industries and related careers for their ECG programmes.

To engage children as young as nine to think about the occupations out there, primary schools in Singapore often organise fun and hands-on activities.

For instance, Meridian Primary pupils get to spend a day at a relative’s workplace to observe them at work. This project serves to instil in children a sense of respect for all jobs, says Mrs Lee, who mentors the school’s ECG team. She recalls a Primary 4 pupil who wanted to go to her father’s workplace.

“Her father, a despatch rider, declined, saying that he did not want the children to do his job. The girl told her father that every job was important,” says Mrs Lee. The visit happened eventually.

Mrs Lee adds: “In her reflection, she said that during the visit, her father’s superiors came to affirm him. It was touching that the girl gave her father a chance to see that every job is important.”

These early experiences are beneficial to the children, says Mrs Lee. “When they are older, they can fall back on what they have been taught to make more informed decisions.”

## JOINING THE DOTS

In secondary schools, ECG goes beyond awareness to exploration. Schools are encouraged to give students even more opportunities to learn about different industries and discover various education and career choices.

Hillgrove Secondary School, for instance, has an annual Career Day event where industry partners are invited to set up booths and hold talks for students. In 2016, students were introduced to organisations such as the Health Promotion Board, port operator PSA International and local media *The New Paper*.

The variety of career options available could overwhelm or confuse students, says Mr S. Thiruselvan, Hillgrove Secondary’s Head of Department (HOD) of Character and Citizenship Education (CCE). He believes educators should remind their students “not to miss the forest for the trees” when exploring their career pathways.

“When you ask students what they want to be, they may say, ‘I want to make a lot of money’ or ‘I want to be famous’,” says Mr Thiru. “The teacher’s role is to help them discover their core strengths and interests. If these are aligned to their career aspirations, they will experience a more fulfilling career.”

One way Hillgrove Secondary helps students to uncover their interests is by letting them try out activities from a wide range of industries, which include aerospace, nursing and geriatric healthcare, and engineering. This exposure can help students broaden their horizons, and give them something to aim for, says Mr Thiru.



**Mrs Stefane Lee**  
Year Head  
Meridian Primary School

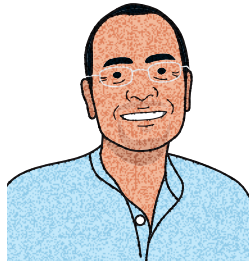
**“The idea is to ... open up their minds to possibilities.”**

## Career awareness

In primary schools, ECG focuses on sparking pupils’ interests and awareness of different occupations.







**Mr S. Thiruselvan**  
HOD of CCE  
Hillgrove Secondary School

**“The teacher’s role is to help them discover their core strengths and interests.”**

He recalls a student, Nisha Ardila Binte Khairudin, who discovered her interest in nursing after the school arranged for her and her peers to sit in for nursing lessons at the Institute of Technical Education (ITE) College East.

Before Nisha went for the programme, she was unsure about pursuing a medical-related career and thought the lessons would be “boring and technical”. After trying hands-on activities such as CPR and hearing more about nursing from the lecturers, the 16-year-old found herself drawn to the profession as it is “interesting and meaningful”.

The Secondary 4 student shares: “I realised that nursing is not just about making sure patients get the right kind of medication. Interacting with the patients and showing care for them are also important.”

This experience has given Nisha a little more direction – she intends to apply for nursing at ITE College East after her Normal (Academic) exams.

### GETTING A BOOST FROM HELPING HANDS

To help more students benefit from ECG activities, Mr Thiru and his Hillgrove Secondary colleagues work closely with their ECG Counsellor, Mr Paul Sum, to develop the school’s ECG programme.

Mr Sum is part of the pilot batch of trained ECG Counsellors that the Ministry of Education introduced to secondary and post-secondary schools, ITE and Polytechnics in 2015. By end-2017, ECG Counsellors will be deployed to all secondary and post-secondary schools. This is part of the Ministry’s effort to boost ECG in schools, which is in line with the national SkillsFuture movement.

Mr Sum is attached to four schools on a roving model. He supports Dunearn Secondary, Swiss Cottage Secondary, Yusof Ishak Secondary and Hillgrove Secondary, as well as the Ministry’s ECG Unit.

He spends his time supporting parents and school staff – from teachers to school leaders – and counselling students over their education and career choices.

These counselling sessions provide more than just information for the students. Mr Sum remembers how he helped a 16-year-old realise he could achieve anything he set his heart on.

Mr Sum recalls that the Secondary 4 student had relatively good grades but was unsure of his future education and career choices.

Through their conversation in April 2016, the ECG Counsellor discovered that the Hillgrove Secondary student enjoys playing baseball and football, and is skilled in four schools of martial arts – silat, judo, kendo and mixed martial arts.

“So I told him, ‘Why not look at courses that can train you to be a sports instructor?’ His eyes lit up when he saw that his hobbies could guide him to a career,” says Mr Sum. He then recommended the Normal (Technical) student to consider pursuing a Nitec in Fitness Training at the ITE, which could pave the way for him to become a sports coach.

Besides counselling students, Mr Sum has held roadshows in school canteens, using flyers and posters to raise awareness of the importance of ECG. He has also conducted workshops for both students and teachers.

Importantly, he keeps abreast of industry news, so he can update teachers about hiring trends, growth sectors and skills needed for the future via emails, talks and workshops. He also follows business news closely to understand changes in various industries as well as economic trends, so he can give students up-to-date advice.

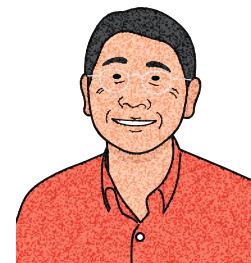
### MAPPING OUT A PLAN

ECG continues at the post-secondary level with a focus on career planning. This involves guiding students to take steps to achieve their career goals.

One point to note, says Mr Joshua Yeo, Serangoon JC’s Subject Head of ECG, is that most students may not have given sufficient thought to what they hope to pursue or how they plan to reach their goals, as they typically focus on scoring better grades.

“When a decision needs to be made, they find themselves in a rush to decide which education pathways would suit them in relation to future career opportunities,” says Mr Yeo. “If we can help students explore their career aspirations early, the chances of education and career mismatches can be minimised.”

Serangoon JC’s ECG programme is structured as a two-year continuum, with the second year building on the first. Students are guided on the eight traits of a career decision wheel, which covers how they need to factor in their skills, interests and values against the labour market when making career decisions.



**Mr Paul Sum**  
ECG Counsellor

**“His eyes lit up when he saw that his hobbies could guide him to a career.”**

## ABOUT ECG

ECG aims to groom people of tomorrow, who own their education and career journeys (proactive), can navigate through challenges in life (resilient), and flex their abilities in workplace dynamics (adaptive).

ECG has a different emphasis at each phase



**Primary**  
Career awareness



**Secondary**  
Career exploration



**Post-secondary**  
Career planning

ECG for students (and how teachers can play a part)

**Discover who you are**



**Teachers can:**

- Guide students to understand and develop their interests, abilities and passion, which can help them make good education and career choices, while contributing meaningfully to society.

**Navigate pathways with confidence**



**Teachers can:**

- Help students understand education and career options, and encourage them to explore the many possible pathways.
- Show students that they can add value to and take pride in any job.

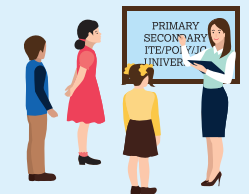
**Keep learning; be resilient**



**Teachers can:**

- Guide students to establish sound values.
- Give students opportunities to develop workplace readiness skills, as well as transferable soft skills (e.g., problem-solving, teamwork) necessary for all jobs. Remind them to learn throughout life.

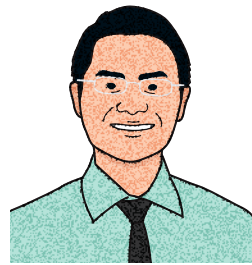
**Make informed decisions and own them**



**Teachers can:**

- Advise students to make decisions based on their interests, attributes and aspirations, while considering current and future career opportunities.
- Support students to take ownership of their goals and take steps toward fulfilling them.





**Mr Joshua Yeo**  
Subject Head of ECG  
Serangoon Junior College

**“We encourage students ... to take proactive steps to address [potential challenges].”**


Says Mr Yeo: “We encourage students to think about the potential challenges that they would face in their exploration and to take proactive steps to address them.”

His former student Wong Yew Hoe, who is now completing his National Service, wanted to become an astronomer but was unsure if he should take a risk by pursuing a niche field.

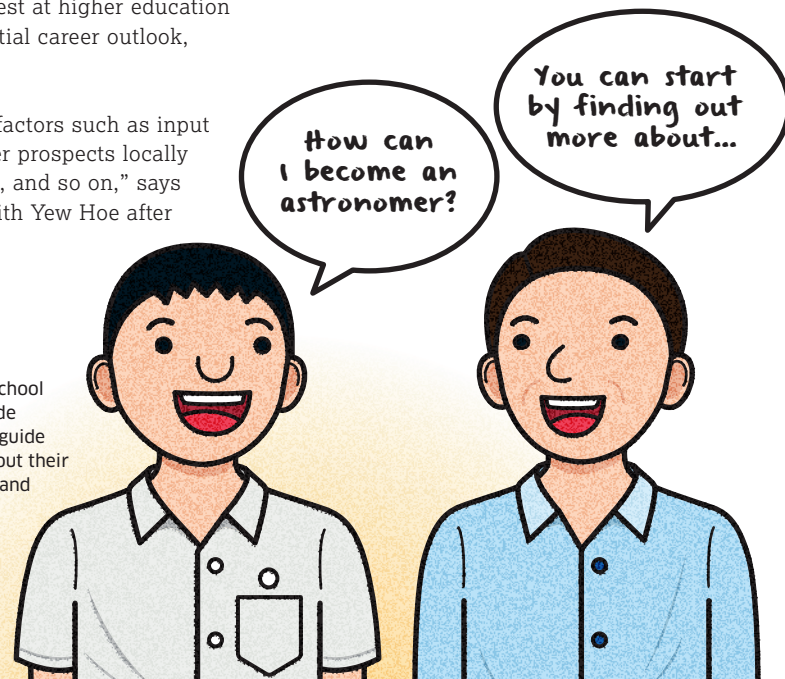
He had many questions and concerns, such as whether to pursue his interest at higher education locally or abroad and potential career outlook, recalls Mr Yeo.

“I advised him to consider factors such as input from family members, career prospects locally and overseas, living abroad, and so on,” says Mr Yeo, who followed up with Yew Hoe after the initial session.

The now 20-year-old decided to pursue a local undergraduate degree that will allow him to study astrophysics at the post-graduate level. He is thankful for his former teacher’s advice.

“Mr Yeo helped me realise that it is not an impossible dream and that you won’t know unless you try,” says Yew Hoe. “Having guidance from school allowed me to make an informed decision, which has led me to my current path today.” 

**Career planning**  
Post-secondary school teachers, alongside ECG Counsellors, guide students to map out their future education and career pathways.



## BUILDING AN ECG COMMUNITY

So convinced is Mr S. Thiruselvan about ECG that he does not want to keep it to himself.

In April 2016, the Hillgrove Secondary Head of CCE started an ECG Network Learning Community (NLC) for the West Zone W2 cluster, with five secondary schools on board. The NLC is supported by MOE’s ECG Unit.

Representatives from each school would read up on one career development theory and meet to discuss the best practices from each theory. They then pass down that information to teachers in their own schools. The sharing of these learnings, in turn, benefits students.

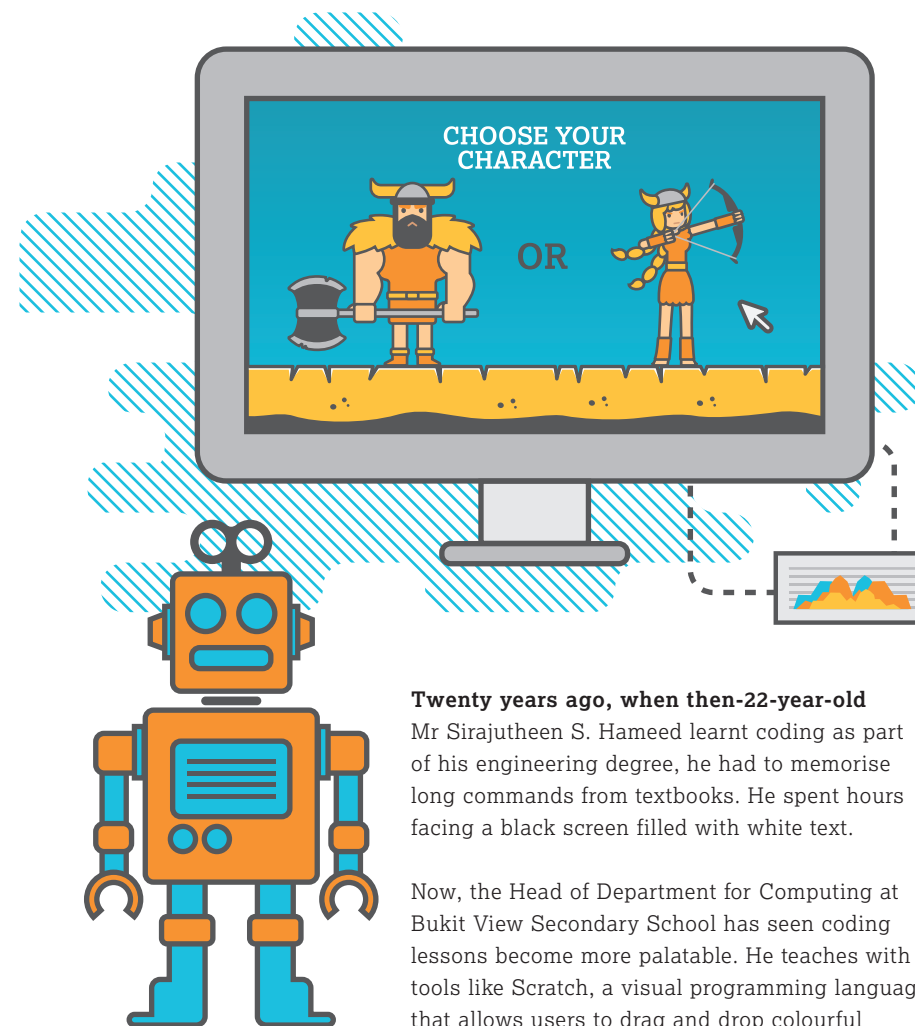
Says Mr Thiru: “It’s important to better understand the theoretical underpinnings of ECG ... so we can transfer the learning to our teacher colleagues.”

At Hillgrove, teachers have started using one such theory – vocational theorist Donald Super’s “Life-Career Rainbow” – for their ECG classes. This theory explains how a person’s different roles in life affect his or her career, and vice versa. For instance, a young mother may opt for part-time jobs to fit in time with her child, while a worker who is thriving in his day job may be able to volunteer more regularly in his community.

“One student said the approach helped her understand career in relation to other roles she will need to play in life, and the importance of balancing both professional and personal roles,” shares Mr Thiru.

# Programming fun into coding

With coding increasingly becoming a crucial skill for the workplace, *Contact* finds out how teachers make it engaging, easy and relevant for students.



**Twenty years ago, when then-22-year-old** Mr Sirajutheen S. Hameed learnt coding as part of his engineering degree, he had to memorise long commands from textbooks. He spent hours facing a black screen filled with white text.

Now, the Head of Department for Computing at Bukit View Secondary School has seen coding lessons become more palatable. He teaches with tools like Scratch, a visual programming language that allows users to drag and drop colourful

blocks of instructions to create a chain of actions. Students can create animations and games without dealing with complicated lines of code.

## SCRATCH THAT

At Bukit View Secondary, all lower secondary students learn coding through after-school enrichment lessons, as the school believes the skill is crucial in a technologically-driven world.

Secondary 1 students are taught to code with Scratch over five sessions. They first learn to control the appearance, motion, sound and other special effects of an on-screen character. They do this by stacking coloured blocks of instructions such as “when clicked”, “move 10 steps” and “play sound” – when a character is clicked, it will move 10 steps and a sound will be heard.

Once students understand the basics, they can create more complicated animations based on themes such as national education. For example, one of the students created a game where players have to pick out Singapore icons, such as the Merlion, from among different images.

## GAME ON

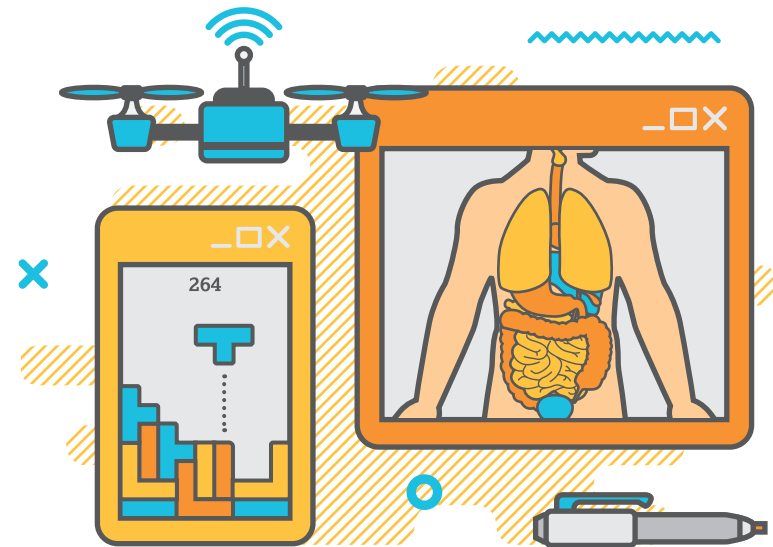
At Bedok North Secondary, Computer Applications (CPA) teacher Scott Ng teaches coding with a game-based platform called Zondle. Students familiarise themselves with the concepts through engaging mini-games and quizzes.

Multiple-choice questions are interspersed between games – if a student answers a question on coding correctly, his on-screen avatar can kick a ball into a net to earn points, for instance. These points are reflected on a live leaderboard that provides friendly competition and motivation for students to do well, explains Mr Ng.

The gamification approach has been introduced to the school’s Secondary 1 to 4 CPA students since 2015. It has improved their understanding and, in turn, test results. “Quite a number of students improved by at least two grades in CPA, for example from a C to an A,” says Mr Ng.

To apply the coding concepts learnt through Zondle, Mr Ng’s students also use Scratch to create interactive puzzle games similar to Tetris or a simplified version of Super Mario.





These hands-on activities have raised interest and motivation in class. “Some students are inspired to become Computing teachers,” shares Mr Ng.

### PRACTICAL USE

Even if students are not considering a career in the field, Mr Ng believes they can benefit from learning coding as it develops computational thinking – the ability to break down problems into smaller parts and solve them logically. When they code an animation frame by frame, they have to analyse the task and figure out the steps needed. These problem-solving skills are useful in situations beyond coding, says Mr Ng.

Similarly, Mr Siraj believes it is essential to show students how coding can be relevant in everyday life. He and his team of Computing teachers work with colleagues from various departments to integrate it into different subjects. After Bukit View’s Secondary 1 students learn the basics, they are tasked to code an animation on a Science topic, such as the digestive system.

Mr Siraj observed that when students animate the digestive system to show how food is broken down, they hone not just their coding skills, but also reinforce their Science knowledge.

The Computing department has also partnered with the Design and Technology staff to let students build drones. Likewise, students get to code underwater robots that test the drinkability of water for the school’s Applied Learning Programme on clean energy and environment technology.

Bukit View’s Secondary 2 student Ian Wong says such projects encourage his interest and give him greater insight into how coding is used practically. He adds: “I enjoy creating something tangible. The more I learn, the more I am able to create. This gives me a thirst for coding knowledge.”

The teachers, too, are encouraged by the interdisciplinary projects. “We want to show students how intricately woven computing is in their schoolwork and, by extension, our society,” says Mr Siraj.

This aim to make coding relevant, fun and easy drives both Mr Siraj and Mr Ng. Mr Siraj plans to introduce new activities by working with Computer Science lecturers from the National University of Singapore, while Mr Ng hopes to further engage his students. Mr Ng shares: “I am looking for more gamification portals to give students a different experience, so they can have even more fun while learning coding.”

## TIPS ON INTRODUCING CODING

### GET OTHER TEACHERS ON BOARD

Use real-life examples to convince colleagues of the benefits. “I shared with the Science teachers the things that students can do with programming tools, like Scratch,” says Mr Siraj. His colleagues became convinced after seeing how students enjoyed the activities.

### IDENTIFY KEY OUTCOMES

State the objective you want to achieve, then plan a programme around it, suggests Mr Ng. “For us, the end product is a project that will benefit the students,” he says. For example, his students get to code something related to their daily lives, such as a game on cyber wellness.

### EXPOSURE TO TECH FIRMS

To boost students’ interest, Bukit View Secondary invited industry partners such as tech giant Google and cloud computing firm Salesforce to conduct talks and workshops. Students also get to visit the companies and interact with experts. These experiences show students that coding can be relevant and exciting, says Mr Siraj.



# THE CYBER CLASSROOM

Tips for students to navigate and make sense of the digital world.



## NEWS YOU CAN USE

Try these ways to help students become savvy at separating misinformation online from the real news.

**1. DOWNLOAD RESOURCES ON INFORMATION LITERACY**  
To promote information literacy, the National Library Board’s (NLB) S.U.R.E. microsite offers colourful infographics covering Google search tips and ways to identify a hoax website. Use their content packages on topics like alternative medicine and climate change to show students what a well-researched presentation could look like.

► [bit.ly/suresg](http://bit.ly/suresg)

### PARTNER THE PROS

American non-profit group, The News Literacy Project, gets journalists to run workshops on ways to fact-check or assess the credibility of sources. Consider collaborating with local reporters and editors, or journalism students from Nanyang Technological University to conduct similar workshops for your own students.

► [bit.ly/wkwnews](http://bit.ly/wkwnews)

### DIY CHECKS

Get students to check the veracity of online stories on [snopes.com](http://snopes.com) or [truthorfiction.com](http://truthorfiction.com). For photos, check the source via a reverse image search on [www.google.com/imghp](http://www.google.com/imghp). A similar tool for videos is YouTube DataViewer ([bit.ly/citizenev](http://bit.ly/citizenev)), which lets you extract a clip’s uploaded time and screenshots to see if it is an original or a repost.

► [bit.ly/viralhoax](http://bit.ly/viralhoax)

## 3 CYBER WELLNESS CHATS

Some ways to broach these topics with your students.



### PRIVACY

Broadcasting their lives online can make students vulnerable to scammers and other predators. Discuss the consequences of oversharing with everyday examples: “What if someone followed you home using your location on social media?” Guide them to identify what’s okay to share and with whom, and what’s not.

► [bit.ly/cwprivacy](http://bit.ly/cwprivacy)



### PORNOGRAPHY

Smutty films can give a distorted view of sex and relationships. Chances are students might stumble upon a few of such flicks unintentionally. Be non-judgmental and do not shame their curiosity about sex. Emphasise that pornography is often staged, divorce emotions from intimacy and wrongly depict individuals as objects.

► [bit.ly/cw\\_tip](http://bit.ly/cw_tip)



### CYBER BULLYING

Hell hath no fury like the online flame squad. Teach students to remove offensive posts (by referencing the site’s community guidelines) and encourage them to record evidence of bullying. Reassure that they can confide in you, and remind them that respecting others means accepting opinions they might not agree with.

► [bit.ly/cwbully](http://bit.ly/cwbully)



# IF YOU CAN'T BEAT 'EM, JOIN 'EM

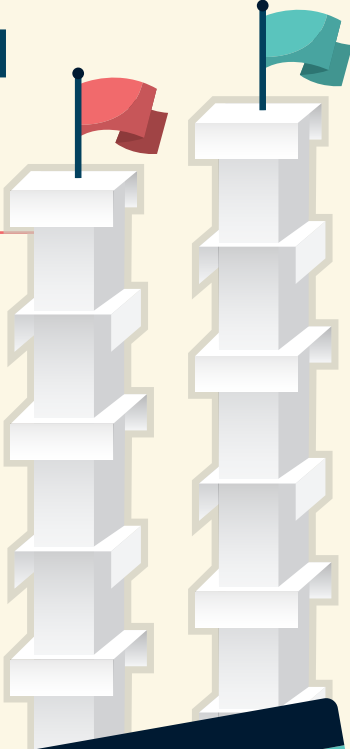
Don't beat the wave; learn to ride it. Here's how you can turn popular social media and digital tools to your advantage in school.

## TWITTER

### CREATING A GLOBAL CLASSROOM

At Agnor-Hurt Elementary School in Virginia, United States, 11-year-old students are learning how Twitter can extend their classroom beyond four walls. Their teacher Michael Thornton regularly tweets his students' questions (e.g.: "Can you see the night and day line from space?" or "Would the straw be an example of one of the six simple machines?") and has drawn responses from scientists and even NASA astronauts, to his students' excitement. After challenging his students to build towers using only sheets of paper, he tweeted their progress and invited other schools in the US to run their own "paper tower challenge".

► [bit.ly/twithorn](https://bit.ly/twithorn)

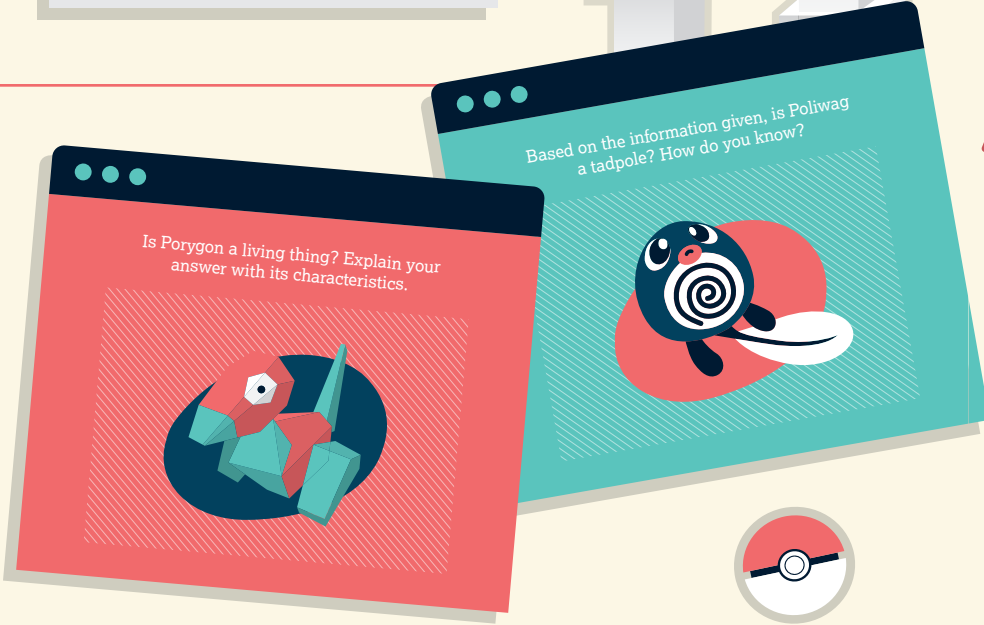


## POKÉMON GO

### LESSONS INSPIRED BY TRENDS

Riding on the Pokémon Go trend, Ms Lye Sze Yee from Teck Whye Primary School has issued her Primary 6 students Science quizzes based on the fictional creatures, linking Science concepts (such as adaptations of animals) and scientific reasoning skills to Pokémon. Hosted on Google forms, each question shows a screenshot of a Pokémon's description, followed by a relevant question like "Based on the information, is Venonat an insect?" There are no right or wrong answers, so pupils must explain their claims. Some pupils deduced that Venonat is not an insect as it does not have six legs, despite its "Insect Pokémon" description, for example. Referencing the game gets her pupils excited and more interested, says Ms Lye.

► [bit.ly/pokesci](https://bit.ly/pokesci)



## INSTAGRAM

### ARTS APPRECIATION

To encourage a culture of the arts, Regent Secondary School set up an Instagram account (@rgtartspace) to showcase the students' paintings, sketches, photography and more. Doing so "boosts their morale when their artworks are recognised", says Subject Head (Art), Ms Nadiah Nasir. The entries are usually curated by teachers and posted onto the feed by Secondary 3 art representatives. The school has observed improvements in art awareness and appreciation, with a rising number of followers on Instagram and more students coming forward to contribute their artwork. To extend the benefits, Ms Nadiah and her team hope to encourage students to hone their art analysis skills too, by leaving comments on their peers' work.



### LEARNING THROUGH THEIR IDOLS

As part of a class on online identities and multimodality (the use of images in text), Catholic Junior College's English Language and Linguistics teacher, Ms Aprilene Goh, got students to pick their favourite influencer on Instagram to analyse the language and photos they post. "Because they chose their own examples, such as food blogger Miss Tam Chiak, they became very invested in the activity," she says. Ms Goh chose to centre the activity around Instagram after observing that her class uses the app "pervasively" – take a leaf out of her book and tailor the use of social media for teaching and learning to suit your students' habits and preferences.

# STAY SAFE WHILE POKÉ-HUNTING!

The augmented reality game, Pokémon Go, has encapsulated the world in its red-and-white ball. Here are some cyber wellness tips on gaming in general that you can pass on to your students.



1

#### WATCH FOR ADDICTION

Is the game interfering with students' lives or schoolwork? Something's wrong if they're losing sleep or getting fretful when they can't play. Advise them on ways to control their gaming – perhaps cutting down playtime incrementally – and distract them with an offline project, like planning a class outing.

2

#### PROTECT YOUR IDENTITY

Encourage your students to reconsider using their real names or revealing personal information. Niantic's "Pokémon Go Trainer guidelines" ([bit.ly/pokeGuide](https://bit.ly/pokeGuide)) caution against this for privacy reasons.

3

#### BEWARE OF STRANGER DANGER

It's easy for fellow Poké-hunters and gamers to strike up a conversation. Without instilling paranoia, remind students to stay safe in situations with strangers. Encourage them to head out with a friend or alert someone of their whereabouts.

4

#### KEEP A LID ON SPENDING

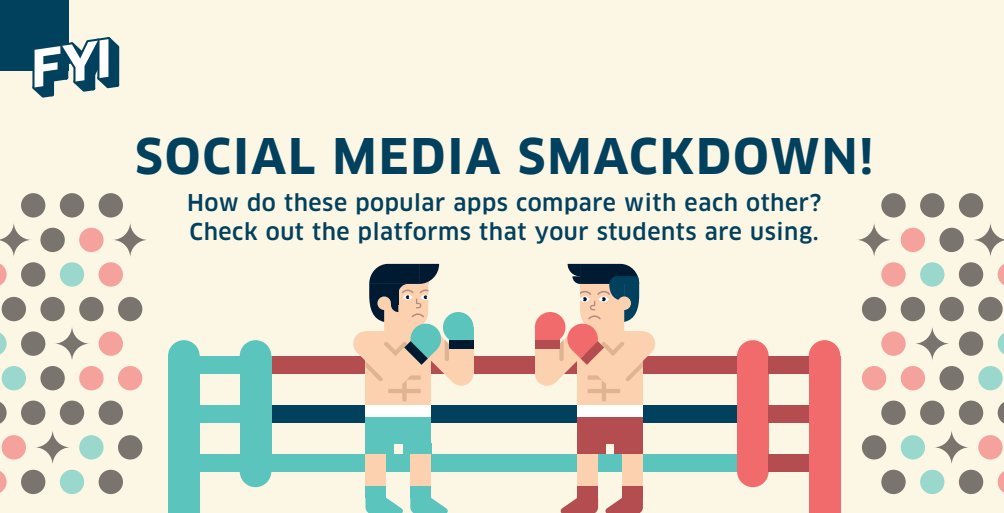
Few things are scarier than a staggering phone bill. Remind your students to keep their data usage and in-app spending on things like Pokécoins from getting out of hand.

5

#### LOOK OUT FOR DEEPER PROBLEMS

Compulsive gaming can be a way for kids to escape real-world issues like stress, depression or family strife. If you suspect this, address the root of the problem. Read this booklet on excessive internet use by the National Addictions Management Service for tips: [bit.ly/namstips](https://bit.ly/namstips)





## SOCIAL MEDIA SMACKDOWN!

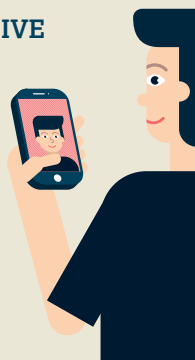
How do these popular apps compare with each other? Check out the platforms that your students are using.

### LIVE STREAMING

These let you do live broadcasts and respond to real-time messages from followers (“Tell us about your weekend!”). Life in all its quotidian glory – brushing their teeth, spontaneously breaking out into song... you name it.

### BIGO LIVE **VS** FACEBOOK LIVE

**Winner:** Bigo Live for taking Southeast Asia by storm in a matter of months. It’s tailor-made for millennials right down to the ego-stroking virtual gifts and feature to exchange gifts for cash. Plus, word has it that Facebook is considered old-fashioned among youths – ouch. [▶ bit.ly/abtbigo](http://bit.ly/abtbigo)



### MESSAGING

WhatsApp remains the big player in Singapore, but Telegram is fast catching up. While WhatsApp only introduced encrypted messages in 2016, Telegram had that feature from day one back in 2013. Telegram also lets you send animated gifs and larger file sizes (up to 1.5GB) compared to WhatsApp’s 100MB.

### WHATSAPP **VS** TELEGRAM

**Winner:** Tie. Telegram’s Secret Chat function notifies you if someone has taken a screenshot and prevents people from forwarding messages – great if you value privacy. But we’re less likely to use a messaging app if few of our friends are on it and that’s where WhatsApp stands out with its 1 billion userbase, compared to Telegram’s 100 million. Given time, Telegram could catch up, but we’ll call it even for now. [▶ bit.ly/whatsgram](http://bit.ly/whatsgram)

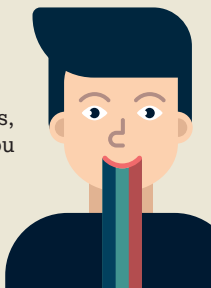


### “STORIES”

Instagram released its “Stories” function in August 2016, which some say is a close competitor of Snapchat. Both allow you to post and add filters, captions or drawings to temporary stories (comprising photos or videos) that vanish after 24 hours.

### SNAPCHAT **VS** INSTAGRAM STORIES

**Winner:** Close tie. Snapchat may be the reigning app among kids, but Instagram is leagues more user-friendly – for one, you can actually search for users, key words, hashtags and so on (in contrast, you need to know someone’s Snapchat username to track them down). [▶ bit.ly/instaSnap](http://bit.ly/instaSnap)



#### DID YOU KNOW?

The minimum age to open an account on Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram, Twitter and WhatsApp is 13.

## SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES... AND WHAT THEY REALLY MEAN

Our tongue-in-cheek interpretation of the rulebook for educators.

### “Online behaviour reflects professional behaviour”

**What the rulebook says:** As public officers, teachers should demonstrate “honesty, respect and consideration” online as in real life.

**In other words:** You represent the establishment.

### “Raise issues via internal channels”

**What the rulebook says:** There are official avenues for teachers to give “feedback” and “concerns”.

**In other words:** Don’t wash your dirty linen on Facebook or Twitter.

### “Be constructive”

**What the rulebook says:** New media is an evolving tool; stay abreast of trends and tap your colleagues’ “expertise”.

**In other words:** Insisting on using ‘80s technology when your students’ communication MO is WhatsApp doesn’t make you a lovable “eccentric”. Grab lunch with tech-savvy colleagues for updates!

### “Use the right tool for the right purpose”

**What the rulebook says:** Consider your intentions for using social media and pick the most appropriate tool.

**In other words:** Remember how your parents started dropping slang like “Hey, Wassuuuup”? Trying too hard isn’t cool. Consider why you want to show your class that video of cute corgis – does it have teaching value? Does it suit that particular lesson?



MY 2 CENTS

## The most engaging teacher you know

Educators pay tribute to colleagues who have a knack for building rapport with students.

### ★★ Best entry ★★

**Ms Lee Suan Rebecca**  
HOD (Humanities)  
Northbrooks  
Secondary School

My colleague Taufiq Bin Sanusi’s PE lessons are awesome! He manages the students well and has very well-established routines. All his students know what to do at the start, during and at the end of the lessons. For one of his badminton lessons, the students immediately picked up their rackets and started their warm-ups. Taufiq has also gotten students to use iPads to analyse their peers’ badminton smashes. The students are engaged and on task, self-directed and have learnt a great deal. Taufiq is truly a teacher’s role model for student engagement!

**Mr Tan Tze How, Kelvin**  
Subject Head (English Language)  
Holy Innocents’ High School

When Ms Siti Aisyah teaches her class, her students would participate fully during the lesson. The chief reason is the trust between them. Students know that Ms Aisyah cares for them and their development, and works tirelessly to facilitate their growth. She uses a plethora of ICT tools for her lessons, organises study groups and, most importantly, gives students her time. She sets high expectations for all her students and helps them realise their potential. From Ms Aisyah, I’ve learnt that engagement goes beyond showmanship. It’s about genuine care and love for students, and gaining their trust.

**Ms Bay Gui Fang, Malisa**  
Pre-school Education Officer  
Education Services Division

Ms Carol Tay from Methodist Girls’ School is an energetic and dedicated teacher who is approachable and patient with all her students. As a Secondary 4 Year Head, she makes a point to get to know every student. Knowing that Secondary 4 students have a tough and stressful year ahead, she would use various ways like level briefings and learning journeys to inspire and motivate them to work hard. What touches me most is that she takes time to write a note of encouragement for each student just before they sit for their first O-level paper. It is no surprise that students have voted her one of the “Most Caring Teachers” in school!





# Proud to serve

Being a teacher and a soldier are two sides of the same coin for Ms Arlene Pang, one of the first volunteers with the SAF Volunteer Corps.

**Whenever Ms Arlene Pang needs** to be away from school for more than a day, her students will ask: “Teacher, are you going for NS (National Service)?”

Chances are she is off attending a professional development course, but her students have good reason to wonder, as they know she

sometimes sails out to sea with the Republic of Singapore Navy.

For about seven days every year, the Physics and Biology teacher at Pioneer Secondary School serves in the Singapore Armed Forces Volunteer Corps (SAFVC). Trading her books for binoculars, she spends her time on a large warship as a Bridge Watchkeeper. Her role requires sharp eyes and a high level of vigilance, as she has to watch out for vessels or objects on the water that might endanger the ship.

Ms Pang’s interest in serving in the armed forces began when the Ministry of Defence announced that it was looking into proposals for a volunteer corps. The 33-year-old was so eager to volunteer that she signed up the very night applications opened in October 2014.

“I think it’s very meaningful ... to be able to contribute to your country in this way,” she says.

While being out at sea seems the farthest one could be from a classroom, teaching is never far from Ms Pang’s mind. Besides keeping her eyes peeled to keep her ship safe, she also takes note of experiences or lessons to share with her students.

## WHEN THE GOING GETS TOUGH

To motivate students to persevere through challenges and difficult times, Ms Pang reminds them of how “tough times don’t last; tough people do”. She also shares her mantra “Every step that you take, you’re one step closer to your goal” and how it helped her to get through the arduous SAFVC training.

During the two-week basic training, Ms Pang and her peers had endured gruelling drills, obstacle courses, weapons handling sessions and 5am roll calls – no mean feat, considering that some of the volunteers were in their early forties.

## EVERYONE CAN DO IT

Along the way of becoming a trained army volunteer, Ms Pang has developed a greater appreciation of the sacrifices that NSmen make to keep Singapore safe. Being able to play her part in protecting the nation embodies her deeply-held belief about women in society.

“We shouldn’t limit the kind of roles women can play,” says the outdoor activities enthusiast, referring to public debates over how women can contribute to Singapore’s defence.

Ms Pang has fond childhood memories of seeing her father smartly dressed in his Navy uniform every time he headed off for reservist duty. But he once discouraged her from following in his footsteps.

Today, he has no complaints about her decision to volunteer in the Navy. Ms Pang attributes this to a change in perception, as it is no longer uncommon to hear of women serving in the military forces.


She’s glad that her service in the volunteer corps is often met with curiosity more than shock or

disapproval – and in the case of her students, strong interest. By riding on their enthusiasm and curiosity, she often shares her stories at sea with them. Her aim is to show the younger generation that “everyone can play a part in defending the nation, whether or not they feel they can do so”.

## GETTING IT RIGHT

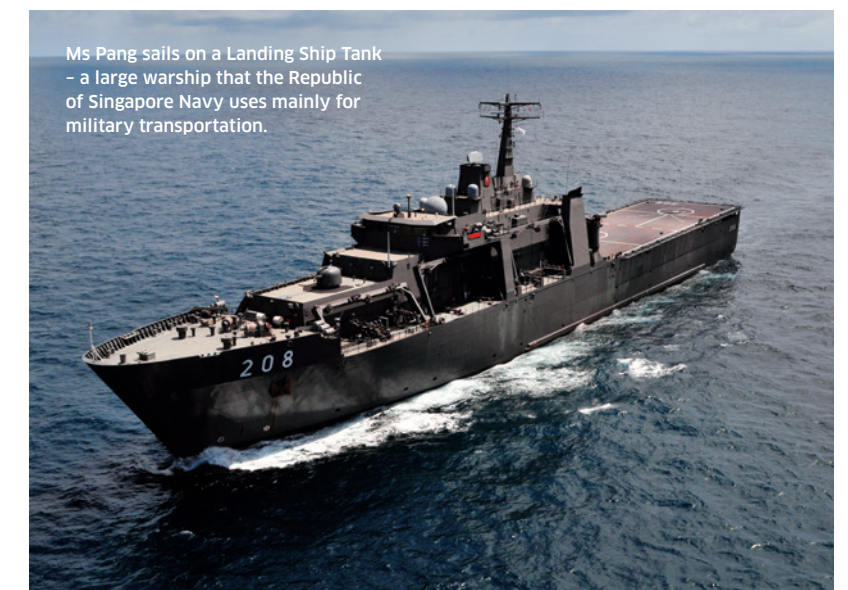
Having looked out for students under her charge for the past nine years, it is second nature for Ms Pang to care for her fellow SAFVC volunteers. She would watch over her section mates to make sure they are well and regularly remind them to stay hydrated. She does the same with her students, often checking in with them over the school year and making house visits when any of them are absent for an extended period.

“You’re caring for different people, but the value of care is the same,” she says.

Whether teaching in class or serving the nation, Ms Pang feels the same “responsibility to do things well”. Just as how educators’ actions have a direct impact on their students’ lives, much is at stake in national defence. “There’s no room for error and we must get it right the first time,” she says. Spoken like a trooper indeed. 



“Tough  
times don’t  
last; tough  
people do.”



Ms Pang sails on a Landing Ship Tank – a large warship that the Republic of Singapore Navy uses mainly for military transportation.

Photos from Ministry of Defence, Singapore



# Losing herself in music

Ms Chew Wei Shan's passion for music and experience as an indie songstress makes her a better teacher in school.

Photo by Jensen Ching

“Being a musician makes me more attuned and sensitive to the rhythms and musicality of words.”

As 13,000 music fans stared, Ms Chew Wei Shan felt her heart pounding and palms sweating as she put her hands on her synthesizer. Better known as “weish” in the local music scene, the lead singer of indie band .gif (pronounced “dot gif”) was about to kick-start her biggest gig yet at the 2015 Laneway Festival. Only after she started singing did her apprehension disappear, as she immersed herself in the pounding electronic beats.

At Zhenghua Secondary School, Ms Chew commands another stage: teaching English and English Literature. Her lessons feature various genres of music, from rap to jazz.

“Being a musician makes me more attuned and sensitive to the rhythms and musicality of words,” says Ms Chew, who pens her own music and lyrics. She would use lyrics from popular songs to demonstrate literary devices to her students.



Photo by Benjamin Nwaneampem


The 26-year-old has used American rapper Eminem’s “Lose Yourself” to teach poetry. A line in the song goes: “His palms are sweaty, knees weak, arms are heavy”.

“My students always think rhymes are just end rhymes. I’ve used Eminem to teach them about internal rhymes – such as rhyming ‘sweaty’ with ‘heavy’,” says Ms Chew. Pop culture references make poetry more relevant to the teens, she adds.

In her five years as a musician, Ms Chew has released four albums with two local bands and has even performed in Brisbane, London and China.

Her experience in vocal performance comes in handy when she mentors students in her choir CCA. Besides ensuring that they sing in key, she also focuses on building their stage presence.

“Students tend to stick out their tongues or flash a guilty smile when they’ve made a mistake,” says Ms Chew with a laugh. She shares strategies gathered from her numerous singing gigs to help boost the students’ confidence and overcome their nerves. For instance, she teaches them to “maintain a confident posture and never waver even when they’re unsure”.

These chances to bring music to the classroom and use her performance experience to benefit students energise Ms Chew and keep her going as an educator. 

# Overcoming the odds

By sharing his own stories of tackling hurdles, Mathematics Resource teacher Lim Chin Heng helps deaf students at Balestier Hill Secondary School build their confidence.



## DEAR COLLEAGUES,

How do you encourage students who are unsure if they can achieve their potential?

This is a question I have often faced, having taught more than 500 deaf students in mainstream Secondary schools for over 40 years.

My Secondary 1 to 5 deaf students attend lessons together with their hearing classmates – I use sign language to explain concepts to the deaf students while another teacher speaks to the class.

Beyond the teaching of content, I have realised that it is much more crucial to build my students’ confidence and inspire them to dream big.

A former student, Arthur\*, did relatively well in his exams but confided in me that he felt lost about his future. The Secondary 4 teen felt different from classmates who had no hearing difficulties and was unsure whether he could handle further education or have career prospects.

To motivate Arthur, I knew I had to help him build on his strengths and confidence – just as my own teachers did for me. When I was in my teens and unsure of what I wanted, my teachers spent time answering my questions and encouraging me to deal with the obstacles in my life.

I understood the doubts that Arthur had, and could relate to his insecurities and concerns because I, too, have been deaf from birth.

## SPURRING CONFIDENCE

With the same spirit of care that my teachers showed me, I spent hours after lessons counselling Arthur. I listened to his worries and shared stories of deaf individuals who have excelled in different fields. I also reassured him that it was natural to feel lost – I related how I got over similar challenges and fears.

To broaden his horizons, I encouraged him to attend international events such as the World Federation of the Deaf Congress, where he met deaf leaders and individuals from all over the world. These encounters inspired him to believe that he can achieve just as much as they have.

Slowly, Arthur gained confidence and clarity on what he wanted. He decided to become a teacher for deaf children, so that he, too, can make an impact on them just as I had influenced him.


Since making that decision, Arthur has been teaching for over 20 years. I find it heart-warming whenever he tells me that he motivates his students the same way I had supported him.

## TAKING THE INITIATIVE

It is also important to encourage students to be more proactive. To be able to take charge of any situation is a crucial life skill that benefits even those who do not have special needs.

With all my deaf students, for example, I show them how I overcome communication barriers even though I cannot hear, lip-read or speak. I explain that I am always armed with a pen and notepad so I can communicate with those who do not know sign language, and I will always take the initiative to inform others that I am deaf.

After four decades, the moments that give me the greatest satisfaction are when I see my deaf students break out of their comfort zone to initiate conversations with their classmates or contribute more during group discussions.

These moments motivate me to keep going each year, and they remind me that giving students the confidence and opportunities to take the first step and confront their fears is the most crucial factor in any equation. 

“The moments that give me the greatest satisfaction are when I see my deaf students break out of their comfort zone.”

\*not his real name



# Meetings with a twist

Feel like going somewhere different for your team meetings? Try one of these spaces to help you relax, refresh or get your ideas flowing.

## CENTRAL

### ➔ COFFEEMIN

If you worry about hogging tables during discussions, Coffeemin is the place for you! This cafe goes by a time-based system – you pay per hour (\$6 for the first hour) or get a day pass (\$30) and enjoy free coffee, snacks and Wi-Fi. So make yourself comfortable on the sofa seats and take as long as you need to brew your ideas. If your team needs a breather between brainstorming sessions, use the pool table, board games or video games to break the monotony. Head down between 11am-6pm on weekdays, when they are least crowded.

📍 Clarke Quay Central, 6 Eu Tong Sen Street, #02-33, Singapore 059817  
🕒 Mon to Sun: 11am-10pm  
🌐 coffeemin.sg

Other option: .....

### Lepark

📍 1 Park Road, Level 6, People's Park Complex, Singapore 059108  
🌐 lepark.co

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## EAST

### ➔ TABLE MANNERS

Some days what it takes to get a jolt of creativity is getting close to nature – and Table Manners is just the place. Its timbre-decked pavilion is set against a backdrop of greenery, with a koi pond for those who enjoy the meditative ripples of water. And if anyone is distracted by the pull of technology, one of the quotes on the restaurant walls – “It is impolite to text at the dinner table unless you are sharing TM’s food on Facebook” – serves as a reminder to keep the conversation in real life. We recommend swinging by at 5pm, when it’s quieter and cooler outdoors.

📍 5 Changi Business Park Central 1, Changi City Point, #01-68/69, Singapore 486038  
🕒 Mon to Sun: 11am-3pm, 5pm-11pm  
🌐 tablemanners.com.sg

Other options: .....

### Refuel Cafe

📍 Blk 744 Bedok Reservoir Rd, #01-3029, Singapore 470744  
🌐 fb.com/refuelcafesg

### Chock Full Of Beans

📍 Blk 4 Changi Village Road, #01-2090, Singapore 500004  
🌐 chockfullofbeans.com.sg

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## SOUTH

### ➔ RED BARON

For a little teatime brainwork, pop over to the Red Baron at Gillman Barracks. Located just around the corner from the Academy of Singapore Teachers, it is a cosy cafe tucked away from the hustle and bustle of the city. The space, decorated with red brick and glass, offers a minimalist vibe that could help to clear the clutter in your head. There is also a small edible garden that you can explore to take your mind off work. Visit the art galleries nearby for an extra creativity boost, before settling down with a slice of cake and coffee – best enjoyed as a set between 2pm-5pm, when the space is usually quiet.

📍 45 Malan Road, Singapore 109455  
🌐 www.redbaronsg.com  
🕒 Tue, Wed & Sun: 11am-6pm  
Thurs to Sat: 11am-10pm

Other option: .....

### Old Habits

📍 38 Telok Blangah Rise, #01-315, Singapore 090038  
🌐 fb.com/habitssg

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## NORTH

### ➔ C.A.N. CAFE

With movie posters adorning the walls and vintage items scattered across its interior, C.A.N. Cafe offers a step back into time. The memorabilia and artefacts that make up the décor might just spark off ideas for your next lesson plan. Everyone will be fed well during the discussions as the cafe offers generous portions in its western, local and Japanese bento sets. Visit from 3pm-6pm, when the cafe is least crowded, or book a private room (minimum spend of \$250).

📍 730 Upper Serangoon Road, #01-01, Yeley Building, Singapore 534613  
🕒 Mon to Sun: 3pm-1am  
🌐 bit.ly/CANcafe

Other options: .....

### Soek Seng 1954 Bicycle Cafe

📍 80 Seletar Aerospace View, MAJ Aviation Building, Singapore 797563  
🌐 bit.ly/seokseng

### Whisk & Paddle

📍 10 Tebing Lane, #01-01, Singapore 828836  
🌐 whiskandpaddle.com.sg

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## WEST

### ➔ W39 BISTRO AND BAKERY

Step through the yellow-framed doors of W39 Bistro and Bakery and you'll be welcomed by the brightly coloured décor, an abundance of natural light and shelves filled with jars of childhood sweets and toys. The warm and nostalgic vibe might just jog your memory and inspire you to see things from a different angle – useful for tackling familiar issues from school. Set in a peaceful neighbourhood, the cafe has long tables that allow large groups to snack on a variety of finger food, desserts and mains during brainstorming sessions. Drop by from 3pm-6pm for a teatime respite.

📍 39 Jalan Mas Puteh, Singapore 128637  
🌐 www.w39bistro.com  
🕒 Tue to Fri: 11am-10pm  
Sat, Sun & Public Holidays: 9am-10pm

Other option: .....

### PasarBella@TheGrandstand

📍 200 Turf Club Road, Singapore 287994  
🌐 pasarbella.com

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Photos from respective cafes

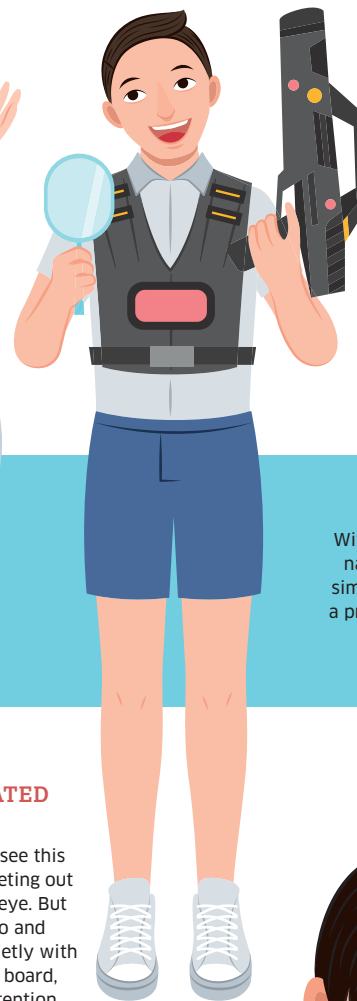


# Pupildex 2016: Gotta **spot 'em** all

The following types of students are likely found in every class. See how many you can identify!

## THE ENTERTAINER

This student loves doing impressions of the latest movie characters or belting out popular songs. Though you sometimes return home with "Let It Go" or Dory's whale calls stuck in your head, you are surprised by how pop-culture savvy you have become.



## THE HUMAN MAGNET

It's often difficult to catch a glimpse of this student when you first walk into class, but you won't be able to miss her thanks to the orbit of peers around her table. Everyone wants to be friends with her because she has the newest gadgets, coolest stories and latest news.

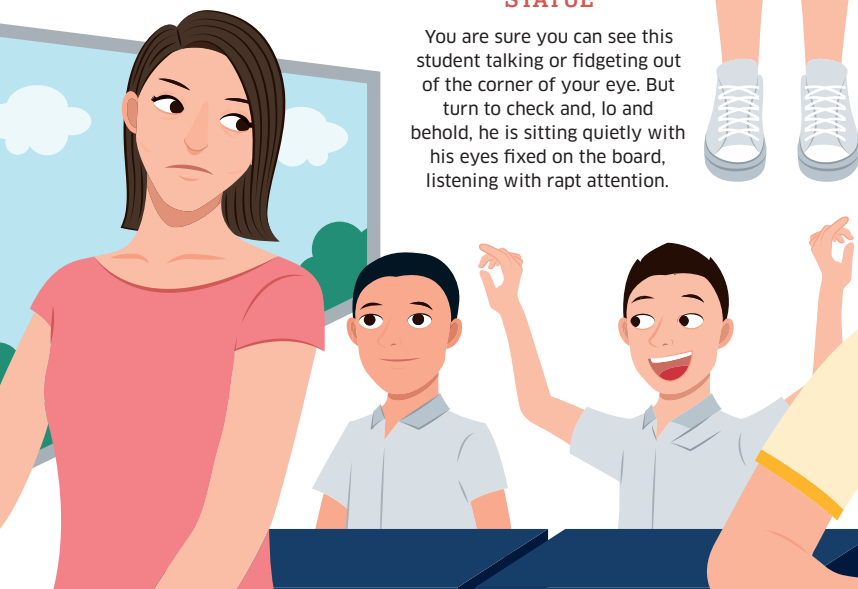


## THE YOUNG BARD

With a knack for creativity, this student is a natural storyteller who can turn even the simplest of topics into a multi-part saga. For a presentation on light and reflection, expect tales like how he used a mirror to spy around corners for a laser tag victory.

## THE RE-ANIMATED STATUE

You are sure you can see this student talking or fidgeting out of the corner of your eye. But turn to check and, lo and behold, he is sitting quietly with his eyes fixed on the board, listening with rapt attention.



## THE INVENTOR

This nifty individual can build almost anything with his bag's contents. His desk is adorned with erasers shaved into shapes, springs extracted from his pens and books leaning together to form a tent. Not to be forgotten are his magnum opuses: detailed, miniature Blu-Tack sculptures of his favourite cartoon characters.



Winning entries  
this issue

# The first person you see in school



My school's Security Officers are the first few people I meet when I step into school. Poh Kum and Anni are the most important people as they keep the pupils safe the minute they enter the school. They scan visitors and stay vigilant throughout the day. I want to honour these two ladies who give their best, come rain or shine.

**Mdm Beanes Kartara**  
Teacher  
Holy Innocents' Primary School



Unless it rains, Mr Tan Hay Lam always cleans the area twice daily with a smile, to ensure the compound is clean and conducive for teaching and learning.

**Mdm Ching Mee Yoon**  
Teacher  
National Junior College



I salute our competent and faithful unsung hero, Mr Francis Wee, who works long hours to look after our students' safety in school. Thank you so much.

**Mr Goh Choon Siong**  
Teacher  
East Spring Primary School

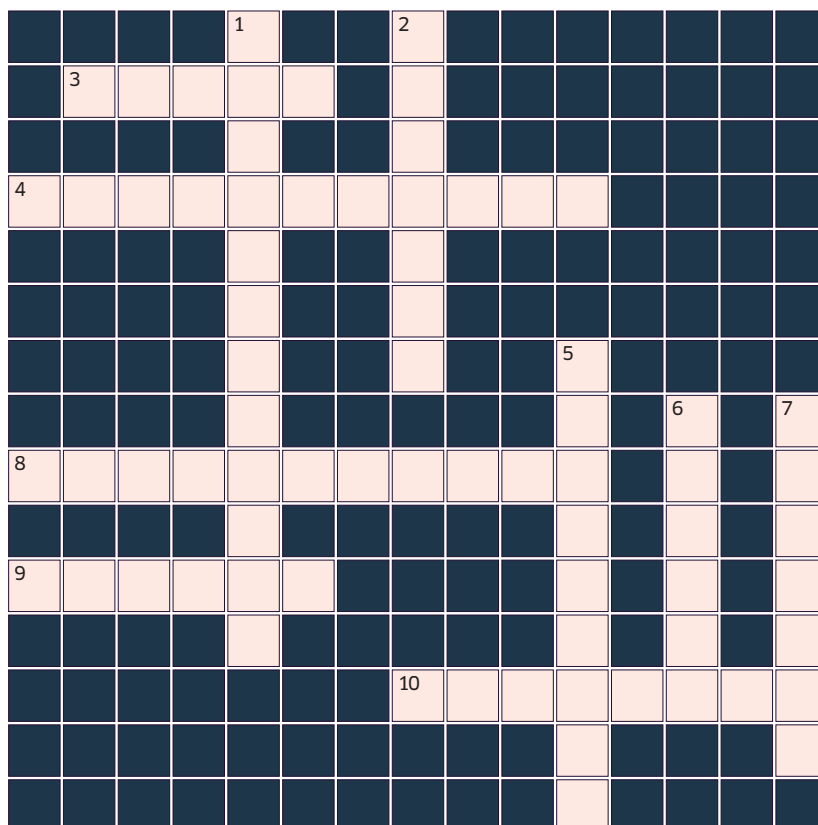
Thank you for sharing your photos!  
Each published photo wins a \$30 voucher!



ANSWER & WIN!

Can you  
solve this?

Show us how well you read *Contact* by tackling this puzzle (answers can be found within the magazine). The first three correct entries will receive an attractive prize each!



## ACROSS →

3. Red \_\_\_\_\_ is a cafe near the Academy of Singapore Teachers.
4. Which subject does Mr Lim Chin Heng from Balestier Hill Secondary teach?
8. ECG \_\_\_\_\_ like Mr Paul Sum give students advice on their education and career choices.
9. Which gamification platform does Mr Scott Ng from Bedok North Secondary use in his lessons?
10. Several social media platforms, including Facebook, Snapchat and Instagram, require users to be at least \_\_\_\_\_ years old.

## DOWN ↓

1. Which song by American rapper Eminem did Ms Chew Wei Shan use for her lessons at Zhenghua Secondary?
2. Meridian Primary has "\_\_\_\_\_ lessons" to inspire students and expose them to different interests.
5. Which digital tool does Regent Secondary use to encourage arts appreciation?
6. Ms Arlene Pang from Pioneer Secondary volunteers as a \_\_\_\_\_ Watchkeeper with the navy.
7. Hillgrove Secondary student Nisha Ardila Binte Khairudin realised her interest in \_\_\_\_\_ through her school's career guidance programme.

## Winners from last issue's puzzle



**Ms Ong Lai Wei**  
Teacher

Chung Cheng High School (Main)

**Miss Yeo Xiu Xian Redonnia**  
Allied Educator (LBS)  
St Gabriel's Primary School

**Mr Pan Jingliu**  
Subject Head (Economics)  
Anderson Junior College

**Congratulations!**

**THINK YOU HAVE  
THE ANSWERS?**

Send a clear photo of your completed entry to [contact\\_online@moe.edu.sg](mailto:contact_online@moe.edu.sg) by 30 Nov 2016. Please include your full name, institution, designation, NRIC and contact number in your email.

Answers to last issue's puzzle: 1. Undo, 2. Confidence, 3. Science, 4. (Down) Second, 4. (Across) Singapore, 5. Pigs, 6. Grangeton, 7. Freestyle, 8. Vote, 9. Nanyang