

**Mr Terry Tan Chee Liang, 51
Anglo-Chinese School (Primary)**

For Mr Terry Tan, technology may be continuously transforming the world we live in but he relishes it and stays ahead of the game by mixing his long-time interest in computer programming with his passion in teaching.

Mr Tan designs his own simple computer games to make Mathematics come to life for his pupils, as he believes that much more can be achieved when learning is combined with play. Taking inspiration from the popular animated movie *Finding Nemo*, Mr Tan designed a maze puzzle game where students had to engage in logical thinking to help a fish swim out of a maze while avoiding the shark adversary.

“These games proved to be very popular with my pupils,” shared Mr Tan, the Head of Department for the Gifted Education Programme in Anglo Chinese School (Primary). “They often request to play these games after they had completed their work, even though it was actually more practice!”

These games help his pupils become excited and curious about Mathematics. Mr Tan noticed that one of his pupils, who used to be quiet and unmotivated, became livelier whenever the class was engaged in a Mathematics game. In fact, after emerging victorious in one of them, the pupil’s confidence soared and his results improved dramatically.

Mr Tan believes that it is his passion for Mathematics and technology that makes his lessons effective and inspiring. “I am grateful to be in a profession that not only allows me to do what I do best, but also to inspire my pupils to soar above their limitations and encourage the spirit of adventure,” said Mr Tan. He holds the philosophy that every child can learn and he is always willing to put aside time for his pupils.

Besides playing the role as an innovator and an educator, Mr Tan also focuses much on the character development of his pupils. He personally guides and mentors pupils who have behavioural or social problems as he believes that these need to be addressed before a child is able to learn.

Mr Tan also contributes to the professional growth of teachers. He has collaborated with teachers at school and cluster level in the development of teaching materials for an enriched Mathematics curriculum. His numerous workshops via school, cluster, national and international platforms have been well received by his peers.

Above all, Mr Tan’s commitment to develop his pupils as creative thinkers and lifelong learners with strong values makes him a truly inspiring teacher.

Miss Cardoza Sharon Ann, 38
Farrer Park Primary School

As the Subject Head for Pupil Development in Farrer Park Primary School, Miss Cardoza conceptualises, implements and monitors differentiated character development and social-emotional learning programmes in her school. Her personal philosophy that every child matters and is special is the driving force behind the impact and influence she has had in the school.

Miss Cardoza believes in knowing her pupils better. She introduced journal writing in class via an e-portal and this allowed her less vocal students to express themselves. She responds to their journal entries and she has built strong bonds with them through this interactive exchange. She also spends time with her pupils during recess and after school hours assuring them that she is always there for them.

“I believe strongly that we should always give our children hope. That’s one thing we must never take away from them no matter their performance,” said Miss Cardoza. To motivate them, she would personally make a paper crane for each child, a reminder for them to stay strong and believe in themselves.

As a trained counsellor, Miss Cardoza provides emotional support to her pupils whenever necessary. Last year, she had a listless boy in class who was academically weak and had poor social skills. When she found out that he had to go without food on some days as his mother had lost her job, she bought food for the family. When the boy fractured his leg some time later, she fetched him to school everyday in a taxi so that he would not miss school. Slowly but surely, she began to earn his trust and saw his behaviour improve. Teaching him had awakened Miss Cardoza to what it means to be a teacher. “Even till this day, he still calls me from time to time and updates me on the highlights of his life”, said Miss Cardoza.

Miss Cardoza believes that family plays an important and influential role in the well-being of a child. She works in close partnership with her pupils’ parents and guardians. She also works closely with the Family Service Centre to customise the ‘Step-up’ programme that caters to pupils’ social and emotional learning needs in school.

Miss Cardoza has strong interpersonal skills, and connects easily with everyone she works with. Like many of her pupils, her colleagues would freely go to her to share their problems and concerns and she would not fail to give them a listening ear. Her enthusiasm, passion and commitment in teaching and learning, and her dedication to her students’ development make her an excellent teacher.

Miss Lucy Oliver Fernandez, 42
Catholic High School (Secondary)

A self-professed “nerd at heart”, Miss Lucy Oliver Fernandez loves studying and believes in passing on this passion to the students she teaches at Catholic High School. “I always tell them that there’s a great adventure in the books,” shares Miss Fernandez.

Miss Fernandez is the Subject Head (Innovative Pedagogy) in her school and teaches English as well as English Literature. She is an eloquent teacher who enjoys challenges and continual upgrading. 14 years ago, she started her career teaching science in a primary school and later took a degree course where she majored in English. Her thirst for knowledge later led her to pursue a Masters in Linguistics.

Miss Fernandez’s lessons are lively, meaningful and enjoyable. She enthuses her students during lessons by using movie clips and thought-provoking Socratic questioning. She engages her students with her storytelling ability and she challenges them to improve and excel in their English Language proficiency.

Miss Fernandez’s approachable personality and her deep concern for her students make them seek her to discuss both personal and academic issues. She is often seen having breakfast meetings with her students. For one of her Literature classes, she even organised afternoon and evening study sessions as well as study camps to bridge their literary gaps and stimulate their interest in the subject. The class had initially labelled themselves “Lit Laggards” as they did not think they had the aptitude for it. But with Miss Fernandez’s guidance, the class gradually gained confidence and grew to love the subject, and even changed their motto to “Lit for Life!” to reflect their change in attitude. Many won trophies at the school’s annual Literature Festival and went on to pursue Literature in junior colleges.

Miss Fernandez is also a strong believer in professional development and the sharing of knowledge. She has conducted workshops for her colleagues on Lesson Study and Problem-based Learning. She has also shared at the Asia-Pacific Education Research Association (APERA) conference at NIE and the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO) Quality, Equity and Equality Conference for ASEAN member countries in Bangkok. Her paper was well received and was subsequently published on the SEAMOE website. A Teacher Work Attachment experience also brought her to Vietnam, where she conducted English workshops for the teachers there. At school, she spearheads community-based service-learning projects where she uses problem-based learning for her students.

Most of all, Miss Fernandez believes in nurturing her students for the best. “I think teaching is a fascinating job. There’s nothing quite like it. You have the opportunity to not only facilitate the learning of students but also encourage them to pursue their dreams,” said Miss Fernandez.

Mdm Wong Lai Fong, 38
Anderson Secondary School

Mdm Wong Lai Fong is the Head of Department (Mathematics) in Anderson Secondary School. She is passionate about teaching and believes that every child can achieve. She hopes to develop her students into wholesome individuals who are imbued with the right values and are confident to face the challenges ahead of them.

An innovative teacher, Mdm Wong takes great effort in tailoring her lessons to the different learning needs and abilities of her students. Incorporating the school-wide pedagogy *Experiential Learning Cycle* (ELC) in her lessons, she has brought her students on learning journeys and Mathematics trails. As a skilful teacher, Mdm Wong employs a range of diverse teaching methods such as co-operative learning, reflection logs and ICT software to illustrate and reinforce Mathematics concepts in her students.

But Mdm Wong teaches beyond Mathematics. She is strongly committed to her students' character and moral development and firmly believes that education is about developing the individual and educating the citizen. "I often share with fellow teachers that students are not in school to learn just content knowledge but values which cannot possibly be taught in textbooks," said Mdm Wong.

Counselling students on their correct choice of behaviour is part of Mdm Wong's mentoring approach. She once taught a notorious class where the students were known to be rude and unmotivated. A student had openly defied and challenged her in front of the class. Instead of getting angry or sending him to the Discipline Master, Mdm Wong calmly handled the situation. She repeated her instruction calmly but firmly, and had a talk with the student after that about the choices of behaviour. After the incident, the student stopped getting into trouble – she had won him and the class over.

"Every opportunity I had, I praised them," explained Mdm Wong. "They need positive feedback. To know that a teacher has placed strong belief in them really encouraged them to work hard."

Besides her fervent belief in her students and dedication towards their development, Mdm Wong also values lifelong learning. She actively seeks out opportunities for improvement through attending workshops and courses, and shares them with her colleagues in her school. She also contributed an article on 'Mathematical Investigations of Functions' featured in the publication 'A Handbook for Mathematics Teachers in Secondary Schools'. In addition, Mdm Wong welcomes innovation and creativity in her teachers. Through her leadership, her teachers have embarked on several Action Research projects and participated in NIE projects to explore new and better ways of teaching Mathematics. Some of these projects have been featured in zonal and NIE publications.