

2018 MOE-NCSS Outstanding Special Education Teacher Awardees

Ms Pauline Cheng Pau Ling

Senior Teacher, AWWA School

Ms Pauline Cheng uses effective teaching approaches and behaviour management strategies in her classes. She spearheaded Information Communication Technology (ICT) projects to motivate students' learning, and conducts training for her colleagues. One example is the introduction of Kinect Technology to empower students on wheelchairs to play and exercise with physically-abled peers.

She also led a Professional Learning Team, working with Allied Health Professionals (AHPs) and her colleagues, to develop communication strategies for students and staff. Students are now better able to communicate their needs and make more friends.

She hopes that students with special needs will be given more platforms for experiential learning and learning beyond the school, as well as opportunities to participate in and contribute to the community.

Ms Gena Tan Li Xin

Teacher, Cerebral Palsy Alliance Singapore School

Ms Gena Tan creates opportunities to expose her students to new experiences, such as outings to The Artground and Splash@KidsAmaze which leverage music to develop students holistically. She also spearheaded a performing arts camp and an overseas music exchange programme to Kuala Lumpur where the students could play music together with other students with multiple disabilities. She has also led her students in performing in many external school events such as the ASEAN Para Games and National Day Parade.

Ms Tan believes in educating the community about special needs and has collaborated with corporate organisations, neighbouring schools and the community on events, outings and learning journeys. These have allowed mainstream students and organisations gain a better understanding of students with special needs and SPED in Singapore.

Ms Tan hopes for more comprehensive services to be made available to support the families and their children beyond their schooling years so that they can continue to lead a meaningful and productive life.

Ms Maria Koh Phey Serh

Senior Subject Coordinator(Sports), Rainbow Centre – Margaret Drive School

Ms Maria Koh has expanded opportunities for her students to engage in sports activities in the community, such as cycling, long-distance running and badminton. She also set up the Adventure Club for students to exercise regularly in school and at home. In addition, she plans for students with multiple disabilities to participate in the Motor Activity Training Programme (MATP) under the special olympics umbrella. As a peer coach, she equips fellow teachers with the skills to conduct physical education sessions.

Ms Koh hopes to encourage inclusion by providing multiple integration opportunities for her students and their families/caregivers and connecting with numerous partners, e.g. People's Association for kayaking. She also engages families and caregivers so that the students can apply the skills activities they learn in school within the home setting.

Ms Koh hopes that there would be more opportunities and platforms that individuals with special needs can be involved in, so that they would have the opportunities to maintain physical fitness.

Ms Caroline Tan Swee Ping

Track Head, St. Andrew's Autism School

Ms Caroline Tan leads the character and citizenship team in SAAS to develop the values education programmes. One initiative is the Walk For Rice Project where students raise funds to provide rice to needy families in the South East District. Another initiative is the positive behaviour support to help students with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) regulate their behaviour to facilitate learning. Ms Tan also heads the school-wide Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) programme which aims to enable all students to express themselves. She is a certified Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) Implementer and has coached families/caregivers and teachers in the use of PECS.

Ms Tan founded the Parents Support Group (PSG) in SAAS as she saw how engaging and supporting parents/caregivers as well as providing them with knowledge and skills can empower them in fulfilling their responsibilities in bringing up a child with ASD. One key programme initiated by Ms Tan is the annual PSG Overseas Trip for students and their parents/caregivers where she collaborates with SilkAir, travel agencies and service providers to draw up ASD-friendly itineraries for students and their parents/caregivers. Another programme she initiated is the Siblings Camp and Siblings Connect, which helped to promote understanding, support and appreciation among siblings with and without special needs.

2018 MOE-NCSS Innovation Awardees

AWWA School

Project Title: Everyday Language – Using Language Experience and Shared Book Approach to Teach Literacy to students with Special Needs

Given the diverse learning needs and interests of AWWA School's students, coupled with the barriers to access conventional reading materials, the school's language development programme provides multiple means of engagement, representation and expression for students to learn language in meaningful and engaging ways.

To facilitate this programme, the Literacy Department formed Professional Learning Teams and selected suitable reading resources such as Kidsread, Keylinks Guided Reading and Starlight books. The teams adopted the Language Experience Approach and the Shared Book Approach as the primary approaches for the programme. Through sharing and collaboration, teachers incorporate meaningful experiences centered on themes, as well as create and adapt teaching resources (e.g. word and photo cards, sensory materials and supporting story resources) into curriculum packages.

This project has not only increased students' engagement during curriculum time, it has enabled students to interpret and understand stories. While some students are physically unable to hold or turn a book independently, the sensory resources developed have allowed students to explore and experience reading a book.

Delta Senior School

Project Title: "I'm Ready for Life"

To help students manage their post-school lives and be ready and confident for the future, the school has reviewed and redesigned its curriculum to ensure a holistic and authentic experience for its students. The numeracy department adopted a multi-pronged approach to make lessons authentic, fun and experiential, reflecting real world issues such as managing personal finances (savings and expenses). Students are given opportunities to apply their knowledge and skills via platforms such as the Monday Lunch Hour activities, My Money Tracker and the Delta i-bank. This project culminates at a Year-End Carnival where students spend their "money" - to experience the implications of their "saving / spending" habits.

As part of DSS's effort to gradually expose students to the digital future, students are taught how to use SingPass to access e-government services like ActiveSG application. They are also taught how to use the DSS online shopping platform and the POSB Smart Buddy savings programme to save money and buy food. Students are more conscious of how they are using their money for various purposes, like paying for utilities and mobile phones.

Grace Orchard School

Project Title: Transdisciplinary Approach to Special Needs Workplace Education, Teacher Childcare Aide (TCCA)

For this project, Grace Orchard School (GOS) applied the Transdisciplinary (TransD) Approach in Vocational Education to facilitate inclusion in the workplace, with the intent of seeking more employment opportunities for students beyond the traditional industry clusters that employ SPED graduates (e.g. Hospitality, F&B, Horticulture, and Retail). The school first undertook a scan of societal needs, which showed great untapped employment opportunities in the care services industry.

The GOS TransD Team, comprising early childhood and special school representatives, then developed a curriculum that incorporated inclusive workplace practices in early childhood, and placed students as TCCAs to support classroom teachers in existing early childcare centres.

This project has opened up a potential career pathway for students with special educational needs in the early childhood industry and increased students' awareness of the requirements of the job.