

# **Project Ulu Pandan Star (7-19)**

## **Single Year Project**

### **Particulars of Project Members:**

	<b>Name</b>	<b>Class &amp; Index Number</b>
1	Hu Chenwei (L)	4O1 (09)
2	Lim Rui Xiang	4O1 (12)
3	Yang Hanming	4O1 (22)
4	Lee Ding Feng Ron	4P1 (11)
5	Tan Hao Xuan	4P1 (23)

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## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Sincere gratitude to all the supervisors, fellow tutors, students at UPSTARS, as well as our project mentor for their unwavering support and guidance.

## **SECTION 1: OVERVIEW**

### **Area of Concern**

There has been growing public concern about educational inequality in Singapore<sup>1</sup>. Some have pointed out that amongst children placed in lower educational tracks, there are disproportionate numbers of students from lower income households<sup>2</sup>, while others found that children from families at the bottom 20 percent of the income scale receive less social and financial resources for education compared to their wealthier peers<sup>3</sup>. This issue is significant as education inequality could compromise underprivileged children's future studies and impair upward social mobility<sup>4</sup>.

### **Challenges Identified**

With this in mind, our project works with the Ulu Pandan Stars Programme (UPSTARS), which collaborates with youth volunteers to serve underprivileged children in Ulu Pandan.

Though the Ministry of Education has implemented policies (such as UPLIFT programme) to address this issue<sup>5</sup>, there is still a need for volunteers to provide a conducive learning environment and meaningful education resources for underserved children at UPSTARS, some of whom are disengaged and uninterested in studies, according to our interview with the director of UPSTARS and our own observations.

### **Underlying Problem**

Given the current situation shows that students in UPSTARS have weak academic abilities due to low engagement and interest in studies, how might we guide and support them in their academics, make classes more engaging and meaningful, and help them find joy in their learning so that they can experience higher levels of academic success and self-confidence in the year of 2020 and beyond?

## **SECTION 2: ACTION PLAN**

Due to COVID-19, our scheduled physical workshops were cancelled. However, we have closely worked with UPSTARS to shift our activities online.

### **Action Plan**

We adopted a 4-pronged approach to address the Underlying Problem:

<b>Approach</b>	<b>Rationale</b>	<b>Initiatives</b>
<b>Engagement</b>	Make tuition sessions effective and interesting so students can be better engaged and improve academically.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Conduct <b>Virtual Science Experiments</b> via Zoom during Monday Science classes;</li> <li>2. <b>Gamification</b>: utilise simulation games from education websites in our tuitions;</li> <li>3. Create <b>Fun Quizzes</b> as a regular mode of assessment and consolidation of concepts taught;</li> <li>4. Conduct <b>Digital Literacy Courses</b> in the form of games to impart essential digital skills.</li> </ol>
<b>Emotional Rapport</b>	Establish meaningful tutor-student relationships so students can acquire confidence.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Adopt <b>strength-based approach</b><sup>6</sup> in teaching and consciously commend students for improvements;</li> <li>2. Conduct regular <b>journaling exercises</b> where students reflect on their studies together with tutors.</li> </ol>
<b>Outreach</b>	Raise awareness about education inequality.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Regular postings on <b>Instagram</b> on (a) education inequality (b) false stereotypes of underprivileged children (c) publicity of our activities (d) volunteer recruitment.</li> </ol>

<b>Continuity</b>	Ensure the sustainability of the project.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Create <b>additional education resources</b> (slides and notes) for various topics, which are interactive and engaging with the aims of heightening online participation;</li><li>2. Create a <b>resource platform</b> as a repository of communal resources shared with other tutors.</li></ol>
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## Outcomes to Date

Timeframe	Initiatives	Goals
<b>Pre-COVID-19</b>		
January	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Interviewed supervisors from UPSTARS</li> <li>● Conducted research of area of concern</li> </ul>	Identification of problem
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Attended trial voluntary sessions to observe and to learn from senior tutors</li> </ul>	Engagement
February - March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Conducted face-to-face voluntary sessions</li> </ul>	Engagement
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Strength-based approach</li> <li>● Journaling exercises</li> </ul>	Emotional
<b>Circuit Breaker</b>		
April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Started Instagram postings</li> </ul>	Outreach
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Additional resources*</li> </ul>	Continuity
May - June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Online tuition</li> <li>● Virtual Science Experiments</li> <li>● Gamification</li> <li>● Fun quizzes</li> </ul>	Engagement
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Strength-based approach</li> </ul>	Emotional
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Instagram postings</li> </ul>	Outreach
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Additional resources</li> <li>● Set up resource platform</li> </ul>	Continuity
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Virtual Science Experiments</li> <li>● Gamification</li> <li>● Fun quizzes</li> </ul>	Engagement
July	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Virtual Science Experiments</li> <li>● Gamification</li> <li>● Fun quizzes</li> </ul>	Engagement

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Digital Literacy Course</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Strength-based approach</li> </ul>	Emotional
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Instagram postings</li> </ul>	Outreach
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Update resource platform</li> </ul>	Continuity
**August - December	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Gamification</li> <li>● Fun quizzes</li> <li>● Digital Literacy Course</li> </ul>	Engagement
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Strength-based approach</li> <li>● Journaling Exercise</li> </ul>	Emotional
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Instagram postings</li> <li>● Recruit volunteers</li> </ul>	Outreach
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Work with supervisors and fellow tutors to improve resource platform</li> <li>● Collaborate with junior team and ensure project handover</li> </ul>	Continuity

\*Resources created can be accessed via the link in Appendix D.

\*\*As part of our commitment, we are to continue our tuition until the end of year.

## **SECTION 3: OUTCOMES**

### **Accomplishments**

Students' grades and learning attitudes have improved: Student S's Mathematics grade improved from B4 to A2, while Student F's Science grade improved from 30 to 45 (out of 100). Student S began to open up to us and actively ask questions even outside tuition time, while Student F changed from being late to asking for an extension of lesson.

We conducted interviews to garner feedback from UPSTARS, and learnt that students enjoyed our lessons, and supervisors considered our resources creative and helpful, and our lessons engaging and effective.

### **Reflections**

UPSTARS has a robust structure of 1-1 tutoring, therefore we cannot make radical changes and conduct mass lessons without pilot tests. Hence, in order to work around the constraints and serve the wider community with sustainability, we discussed and worked intensively with each other and UPSTARS to create resources and lesson models so that others tutors can replicate and build on such resources in the future.

Initially, students had difficulty understanding us because we were used to communicating Mathematics and Science concepts with technical language. However, as we adjusted our attitudes and teaching strategies with our regular reflections and advice from supervisors during weekly debriefs, we learnt to explain more clearly and consequently, students understood the concepts and performed better. From this experience, we learnt that we need to respect others' differences and put ourselves in their shoes when communicating with them.

## Scope of Impact

<b>Engagement</b>	With our initiatives to energise the lessons, students were engaged and had fun in learning. According to the Director of UPSTARS, many of the students had had a short attention span, but we engaged them very well.
<b>Emotional Rapport</b>	Our efforts in establishing emotional rapport has resulted in enhanced learning attitudes and higher confidence levels.
<b>Outreach</b>	Our Instagram account has reached out to over 300 followers.
<b>Continuity</b>	<p>Our learning materials and resource platform have had a positive impact on the wider community: supervisors and fellow tutors at UPSTARS have been able to access our resources to enhance other students' learning experiences.</p> <p>There was also an HCJC team that has decided to take on our digital literacy course. We are collaborating with them to ensure the continuity of this initiative.</p>

*Total Word Count (Page 3 to Page 8): [993]*

## **APPENDIX A: BIBLIOGRAPHY**

1. Lim, L., Pang, E.F. (02 June 2018). Commentary: Can education fix inequality in Singapore? If not, what can? Published on Channel News Asia, 2 June 2018. Retrieved from <https://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/commentary/can-education-fix-growi-ng-inequality-in-singapore-10308796>
2. Ng, C. (10 November, 2018). Commentary: A wake-up call, when a disadvantaged child gets 8 out of 100 for an exam. Published on Channel News Asia, 10 November 2018. Retrieved from <https://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/commentary/singapore-inequality-hel-ping-disadvantaged-children-task-force-10905470>.
3. Wang, L.Y., Teng, S.S. Tan, C.S. (2014) Levelling up academically low progress students (NIE Working Paper Series No.3). Singapore: National Institute of Education. Retrieved from <https://repository.nie.edu.sg/handle/10497/17710>.
4. Senin, N., Ng, I. Y. (2012). Educational aspirations of Malay youths from low-income families in Singapore. *Asia Pacific Journal of Social Work and Development* , 22 (4), 253-265. Retrieved from <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/02185385.2012.739473?src=rcsys&journalCode=rswd20>. (This report is relevant to our research because the majority of the children at UP Star are from the Malay community).
5. Ministry of Education. (2019). UPLIFT Strategies to Enhance Support for Disadvantaged Students and Strengthen Ground Coordination. Retrieved from <https://www.moe.gov.sg/news/press-releases/uplift-strategies-to-enhance-support-for-disadvantaged-students-and-strengthen-ground-coordination>
6. Chapin, R. (2011). *Social policy for effective practice: A strengths approach* (2nd ed). New York: Taylor & Francis. Retrieved from [http://www.routledgesw.com/files/spep/weblinks/Annotated\\_Web\\_Links\\_and\\_Activities.pdf](http://www.routledgesw.com/files/spep/weblinks/Annotated_Web_Links_and_Activities.pdf)

## **APPENDIX B: TUTOR ALLOCATION**

	<b>Monday (Science)</b>	<b>Wednesday (Mathematics)</b>	<b>Friday (Mathematics)</b>	<b>Saturday (Digital Literacy)</b>
	8.00pm - 9.00pm			1.00pm - 2.30pm
Student (S)	N.A.	Ron, Chenwei	Ron, Chenwei	<b>ALL</b> tutors, <b>4</b> students in total
Student (F)	Rui Xiang, Chenwei	Hao Xuan, Darryl	Hao Xuan, Darryl	

## **APPENDIX C: DUTY ALLOCATION**

<b>Chenwei (Leader):</b> Supervises all initiatives, strength-based approach, journaling exercise	<b>Ron:</b> Fun Quiz, Mind Map, Virtual Experiment	
<b>Darryl:</b> Gamification, Resource Platform	<b>Hao Xuan:</b> Outreach, Digital Literacy Course	<b>Rui Xiang:</b> Resource Creation, Continuity Plan

## **APPENDIX D: LINK TO RESOURCE PLATFORM**

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1LgnUJh8DtzhQG2MijmunG1sMWu3YeM-A?usp=sharing>