

Bukit View Secondary School nurtures holistic learners with help from Google for Education



School at a glance

A co-educational government secondary school with over 900 students and 84 teachers, Bukit View Secondary School (BVSS) focuses on student-centric, values-driven education that cultivates the joy of learning and builds character. The school opened in 1986 and has seen its enrolment double over the years.

Background

In 2015, BVSS implemented the use of [Google Workspace for Education](#) and ensured that every student had their own Google ID. Two years later, BVSS began procuring [Chromebooks](#) for all Secondary 1 students. By 2020, the entire student population had their own Chromebooks. All Chromebooks are managed with the [Chrome Education Upgrade](#), which provides IT administrators with powerful controls to supercharge deployment and onboarding. Administrators have access to advanced security settings, can control device usage and access settings, and can also streamline ongoing management.

According to Koh Hui Min, Subject Head of Education Technology (EdTech), Chromebooks were chosen as the ideal device of choice due to their “cost, durability and familiarity of use”, especially as students and teachers were already accustomed to using Google Workspace for Education in class.

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit in 2020, the school’s familiarity with [Google for Education](#) helped it transition quickly to home-based learning (HBL). “Still,” said Koh, “when I first heard that everything was moving online, my first reaction was: What’s going to happen to our students now?”

Challenge

Engaged learners, empathetic citizens and ethical advocates — these are the qualities the school envisions for their students, anchoring the school’s approach to education. Upholding this vision during HBL, however, required teachers to innovate how they used Google for Education to overcome the unique challenges that HBL presented.

“One of the greatest challenges facing teachers is keeping students engaged,” said Koh. Providing timely feedback was another difficulty faced by teachers — many reported facing “steep learning curves” in adopting new digital skills and moving their teaching fully online.

Another pertinent challenge was ensuring the holistic development of the students. “Beyond academic learning, we want to develop independent learning,” said Koh. Positive education plays a big role in BVSS, and helping students develop their own interests outside the classroom was something the school wanted to ensure.

Solution

Google for Education was crucial in upkeeping the standards of holistic education during HBL. While Chromebooks provided an all-in-one, easy-to-use platform that apps could be pushed out on, Google Workspace for Education’s ecosystem provided every teacher with a wide range of tools to adapt and improve their lessons with.

Enhancing student engagement

Keeping students engaged online was the first challenge to tackle. “How can teachers facilitate lessons beyond just giving, marking and returning assignments?” Koh reflected.

“Beyond using [Google Meet](#) for synchronous lessons, [Google Classroom](#) to streamline classroom management, and Google Slides and Google Docs

for collaboration, Koh and the teachers in her school also explored other apps from the [Chromebook App Hub](#) like Kahoot, Quizziz and Padlet to create simple but fun quizzes and interactive Q&A sessions for students to engage in during online and in-person lessons. The immediate results generated from the apps also provide students with direct feedback during lessons.

“A lot of these can be pushed directly into Google Classroom, so it’s seamless for teachers and students,” said Koh.

“It helps that the Chromebooks are always up to date and easy to use, so it’s easier for students to adopt,” added Koh. With its faster boot-up times and longer battery life, students can rely on their Chromebooks to attend online lessons without disruption.

Upskilling teachers in digital literacy

To alleviate the steep learning curve that some teachers faced, Koh and her EdTech committee created educational how-to videos and hosted demo sessions over Google Meet, providing teachers with step-by-step instructions on how to use various Google Workspace for Education tools.



It’s quite amazing what students can do, given the opportunity and tools to explore their own interests.”

Koh Hui Min,
Subject Head of EdTech,
History and Social Studies Teacher,
Bukit View Secondary School





Developing students holistically

BVSS also launched new initiatives that empowered students to develop holistically. One such example is Project Zest — a student-initiated programme that helps students discover more about their interests and aspirations. One hour is set aside during HBL sessions for students to engage in their own individual projects. Students then document their reflections and learnings on Google Slides, before congregating on Google Meet to present these projects to the class.

Hazima d/o Salaudeen, a Secondary 3 student and self-taught pianist through Project Zest, shared: “I’m grateful the school gives us time to explore some of the interests we have outside of school subjects.”

These interests might one day develop into passions, and eventually form the basis of their careers. “These are 21st century skills that are important for future jobs,” said Koh.

Summary

With blended learning a mainstay of the school curriculum in Singapore, tech-supported education is now all the more important for the future. Beyond being a place for synchronous and academic learning, school is now a place where asynchronous lessons, home-based and in-school activities can, with the help of Google for Education, complement each other to give students a holistic learning experience.



I’ve always seen school as a second home, and that still stands true to me. It has just evolved so that learning can transcend the boundaries of physical space that we once knew it to be.”

Koh Hui Min,

Subject Head of EdTech, History and Social Studies Teacher, Bukit View Secondary School



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