

Tan Junyang

Maths & Science Specialist



Catholic High School

Subjects enrolled in SmartLab:

- A1 for Physics
- A1 for Chemistry
- He has been well-known among the teachers in SmartLab for being intensely inquisitive and participative in class.

SmartLab: Congratulations on your achievements. Jun Yang, which school are you studying now?

JY: I am now in National Junior College.

SmartLab: Please describe your feelings as you received your O-level results, which were excellent by the way.

JY: I was satisfied with my results.

SmartLab: So, any celebrations over your success?

JY: Not really.

SmartLab: Please share your secrets of your success with us!

JY: Prediction of all possible scenarios, just like in a battle. For example, predict and prepare for the different types of questions that could surface in the examination paper.

SmartLab: Any good advice for SmartLab students sitting for their coming O-Level examination later this year?

JY: For Physics and Chemistry, the keywords are very important when you write the answers. Confidence plays an important role as well. If a student is unconfident with the answer, there will be hesitation time which could affect the quality of the answer. Besides, lesser hesitation time means more time to check the paper.

SmartLab: In what other areas do you believe has SmartLab helped you?

JY: For Physics, SmartLab's materials provide different angles and different perspectives. As for Chemistry, the questions provided by SmartLab were thought-provoking and they complemented the notes provided. In other words, the materials were good because they covered areas which my school did not teach.

SmartLab: JunYang, thank you for your time and all the best to you!

JY: You are welcome.

Sherry Aw was known by her tutors as the girl who overcame her fear and dislike of Maths and triumphed in the 2006 O-level examination. Her discomfort in the subject was apparent since she joined SmartLab in secondary 2, but with guidance and personal determination, she was able to beat the odds and scored her best grades in her Mathematics.

Sherry is a Chung Cheng High Main alumnus. She scored six distinctions last year, netting an L1R5 of 10 points. She had enrolled for A. Maths and E. Maths classes in SmartLab, and obtained A2 and A1 respectively.

“You would do well in any subject you like, but you would also like a subject if you do well in it.”

“Practice after all makes perfect. Especially Maths, we need to practise it a lot, a lot, a lot.”

“Keep a clear head wherever you are, and everything will fall in place. If you revised enough for your paper, the answers to your questions will come naturally.”

Sherry Aw

SmartLab: Congratulations on your achievements. What are you doing now, Sherry?

Sherry: I am now in Meridian Junior College (MJC). I am reading Maths C, Economics, Chemistry and Biology.

SmartLab: How is it over there?

Sherry: It is quite fun and the friends are nice. At the same time, there is a lot of competition between us, because we want the best grades and the best testimonials from the school and the teachers. I guess it's a friendly competition or rivalry of sorts. And the homework's starting to get stressful!

SmartLab: Please describe your feelings as you received your O-level results, which were excellent by the way.

Sherry: I was happy, overall. I was however slightly disappointed that I did not score an A1 for my A. Maths because I worked very hard for it. Everything else, I'm pretty satisfied.

SmartLab: How did you celebrate your success?

Sherry: I had lunch with my friends. It was hard to have a true celebration because while I was happy with my results, some of my friends were not. We had to take care of these friends.

SmartLab: I heard that you hated Maths in the past. How did you manage to overcome this?

Sherry: Actually, I started liking Maths better and better since my grades improved. You would do well in any subject you like, but you would also like a subject if you do well in it.

SmartLab: Share your secrets of your success with us, please!

Sherry: Practise, practise, and practise makes perfect! I completed a lot of past year papers given to me. In fact, I am so used to doing a large volume of Maths questions that I don't find the Maths work given in my JC classes sufficient! Also, do not panic. Keep a clear head wherever you are, and everything will fall in place. If you revised enough for your paper, the answers to your questions will come naturally.

SmartLab: Wouldn't a bit of panic and pressure be inevitable?

Sherry: Some people work well under pressure, and some people do not. You must know which category you belong to.

SmartLab: In what other areas do you believe has SmartLab helped you?

Sherry: I like the way SmartLab goes through practice papers; intensive and repetitive in a good way. Practice after all makes perfect. Especially Maths, we need to practise it a lot, a lot, a lot. By the way, I might as well thank Mr Bobby Chia and Mr Chua Wee Chong, both my tutors for being so helpful, so nice, and so willing to fulfill our requests to the best of their abilities.

SmartLab: Sherry, all the best to you in your next phase of life!

Sherry: Thank you!



Ng Jing Cheng is as playful and down-to-earth as he is intelligent and hardworking. He has constantly stood out in his classes by being inquisitive and meticulous in his work but yet knowing how to keep a sunny disposition even in the middle of a brain-warping lesson.

Jing Cheng is a Catholic High alumnus. He scored a perfect eight distinctions in his 2006 O-level examinations, netting an L1R5 of 7 points. He had enrolled for A. Maths, E. Maths and Chemistry classes in SmartLab, and obtained A2 for A. Maths and A1s for the other two.

Jing Cheng

“SmartLab’s laboratory sessions are unique because most other tuition centres do not offer them. They gave me good practice.”

“Anything is possible, depending on how badly you want it.”

SmartLab: Congratulations on your achievements. What are you doing now, Jing Cheng?

Jing Cheng: I am now in Victoria Junior College (VJC). I am reading Maths C, Economics, Chemistry and Biology. VJC’s a really cool and fun place, but students here are at the same time serious about our work.

SmartLab: How are your friends over there?

Jing Cheng: As I mentioned, they play hard, and they work hard. I have been having a good time.

SmartLab: Please describe your feelings as you received your O-level results, which were excellent by the way.

Jing Cheng: Thanks. I was elated that I did very well and could easily stay in VJC with my results, though I felt some of my A2s could have been A1s. But a distinction is a distinction; anyways, I’m still very satisfied.

SmartLab: How did you celebrate your success?

Jing Cheng: I didn’t party or anything! Just the satisfaction and the relief were enough! I am so busy in VJC right now. In a good way.

SmartLab: Share your secrets of your success with us, please!

Jing Cheng: Well, you know it already but... hard work! I was self-motivated; I wanted to get into a good JC. I also had an effective study group composed of a bunch of extremely motivated friends who also wish to get into a good JC. Most of them did! Mixing with the right friends can be extremely effective!

SmartLab: I noticed that while you’ve been showing undivided concentration in class and consistent work, deep inside you’re simply a fun-loving and cheesy guy like the rest of us mortals. How’d you balance both work and play?

Jing Cheng: By the simple motto: work hard and play hard! In between our intensive studying me and my friends would play soccer in the classroom and share lame stories with one another. Play is important for de-stressing. But once the fun is over, we’d force one another to come back and start studying again. It’s all about balance.

SmartLab: Not afraid of going overboard with the fun?

Jing Cheng: Here’s my tip: High intensity and short-duration fun is the key to balancing work and play. Like sports. It doesn’t take a long time, but it is physically very refreshing. It helps save a lot of time and is thus highly efficient.

SmartLab: In what areas do you believe has SmartLab helped you?

Jing Cheng: Teachers! SmartLab has given me very good teachers in Ms Kin Peishan, Ms Hazel Poa and Mr Aldo Teng, who have offered me countless support and help. I got to ask them many questions regarding my work; they were always willing to stay back and help even after tuition hours. I love how approachable they are and how they’d always be around.

SmartLab: *Blush* How else had the teachers made tuition effective?

Jing Cheng: <not noticing the red cheeks> I was also given many exam practice papers, of which I have done so many; the exam paper has become second nature to me. SmartLab’s laboratory sessions are unique because most other tuition centres do not offer them. They gave me good practice.

SmartLab: Is there any other advice you’d like to offer to your fellow students?

Jing Cheng: Anything is possible, depending on how badly you want it.

SmartLab: Jing Cheng, all the best to you in your next phase of life!

Jing Cheng: Thank you!



Benedict Ho

Benedict Ho is another example of a playful youth who values the importance of hard work and does set out to achieve his goals. In class, he stood out both for his unabashed humour and his unfaltering diligence.

Benedict is a St. Andrews Secondary School alumnus. Having shown tremendous improvement in his academic performance, he achieved an O-level L1R5 of 14, which was a solid 10 points off from his Prelim L1R5 of 24. He had enrolled for A. Maths, E. Maths and Science (Chemistry) classes in SmartLab, and obtained B3 for A. Maths and A1s for the other two.

SmartLab has the wonderful opportunity to obtain insight from Benedict's mother.

 ***"Never conclude what your child is."***

SmartLab: Congratulations on your son's achievements. Are you happy with his results?

Mother: Very happy. Benedict's strength lies in artistic creativity, not hard academics, and he has to maintain consistency and hard work to achieve good results. Benedict actually has struggled a lot in the past few years. He didn't do well at all before and was in fact on the borderline stratum between the Normal and the Express streams. I thought of giving him a shot at the Express stream to see how hard he could work and how well he could achieve. The decision had absolutely paid off.

SmartLab: How have you guided Benedict in his preparation for his O-level examinations?

Mother: I couldn't do much besides watching over his activities and how he managed his time. I played the role of the supportive mother assisting him from behind, while his dad constantly gave him challenges and pressure. I believe it was through this two-way approach that we managed to push him forward.

SmartLab: It says here that Benedict has an elder brother who has been with SmartLab for numerous years?

Mother: Yes, Benedict's brother has been with SmartLab from Secondary School to Junior College. He is of great influence to Benedict, who has expressed interest in doing the exact same thing.

SmartLab: Is there any other advice you'd like to offer to fellow parents?

Mother: Never conclude what your child is, no matter how bad you might think it is. Always be positive. Always have faith that your child's potential will be realised with constant encouragement and support. It took a lot for Benedict to realise his own potential and other students deserve the right to do the same.

SmartLab: Thank you very much for your time. We too hope to speak to Benedict.

Mother: Thank you very much too.

- ◆ "I completed five Ten-Year Series books!"
- ◆ "I spent more time on group studying than alone. I had both lazy and hardworking friends; we have to be careful about distinguishing between the two."
- ◆ "Some of my school teachers are so lousy that I felt getting outside help was necessary, so I decided to enrol in SmartLab. In school I was one of the very few who obtained a distinction in Combined Science."

SmartLab: Congratulations on your achievements. What are you doing now, Benedict?

Benedict: I am now in Jurong Junior College (JJC). I am reading Maths C, Economics, Physics and Chemistry. As I read Combined Science in O-level, other JCs wouldn't allow me to read Science subjects at H2 level, but JJC gave me this opportunity and I am very thankful for that.

SmartLab: How is your time over there?

Benedict: My new friends are quite nice. I am finding it a bit of a challenge to cope due to my Combined Science background and that most of my classmates have read Pure Science subjects, but I believe through hard work, I will prevail.

SmartLab: Please describe your feelings as you received your O-level results, which were excellent by the way.

Benedict: I was surprised, and happy because I finally managed to realise my dream of entering a JC. I scored 24 points for my Prelims and couldn't get into one, so I had to enrol in a Centralized Institute for the first few months of 2007.

SmartLab: How did you celebrate your success?

Benedict: I had some small celebrations with my friends. It was also bittersweet, because all the good friends I made in the Centralized Institute were separated after the first few months.

SmartLab: Share your secrets of your success with us, please!

Benedict: Repetition helps. I completed five Ten-Year Series books! I finished Prelim exam papers provided by SmartLab. I believe the latter is important, because Ten-Year Series questions are usually not challenging enough to prepare us for the O-level examinations.

SmartLab: In class you used to often mention that you plan to go the library after lesson.

Benedict: Yeah! I would study in the Bishan Library everyday from 9 AM to 9 PM. I spent more time on group studying than alone. I had both lazy and hardworking friends; we have to be careful about distinguishing between the two.

SmartLab: In what areas do you believe has SmartLab helped you?

Benedict: Are you fishing for praises? Heh. I got good teachers from SmartLab in Ms Kin Peishan, Ms Hazel Poa and Mr Aldo Teng who had helped me in more ways than one. The notes have been helpful especially when there are no teachers around to consult. The laboratory sessions have also certainly been of help. But it's really about the teachers.

Getting outside help from the school was necessary, so I decided to enrol in SmartLab. In school I was one of the very few who obtained a distinction in Combined Science. Thank you once again, Ms Kin, Ms Poa and Mr Teng, for helping me even when I was lazy.

SmartLab: Benedict, all the best to you in your next phase of life!

Benedict: Thank you, you too!

Amir bin Yusof's performance in the 2006 O-level examinations was a far cry from his school examinations. In the span of a few months, his A. Maths grade jumped from an F9 to an A2, whilst his other subjects all enjoyed improvements of their own.

Amir is a Temasek Secondary School alumnus. He scored five distinctions in his examinations, netting an L1R5 of 12. He had enrolled for Physics and A. Maths classes in SmartLab, and obtained B3 and A2 respectively.

SmartLab has the wonderful opportunity to chat with Amir's mother.

“Time management is very important since we are talking about holistic education nowadays.”

SmartLab: Congratulations on your son's achievements. Are you happy with his results?

Mother: I feel happy for him because he generally did well. We did expect more from his Mathematics, but the significant improvement was indeed a good thing.

SmartLab: How do you think had Amir achieved such a fantastic improvement from his school examinations?

Mother: Amir was very active in his CCAs and that distracted him from his studies, so he was weaker during secondary 3. This had resulted in a weak foundation for his studies, which naturally would create a lot of problems during secondary 4. It was good that we hurriedly enrolled him in SmartLab tuition, because he did work hard in the end and produced good results.

SmartLab: How have you guided Amir in his preparation for his O-level examinations?

Mother: On top of SmartLab tuition, Amir's father helped him every Sunday with his school work. In this new year and new school, Amir has yet to approach him for help, but he would certainly be there when his help is needed.

SmartLab: Is there any other advice you'd like to offer to fellow parents?

Mother: Time management is very important since we are talking about holistic education nowadays. A balanced approach is necessary when excellence in both academics and CCAs are our goals, but students may get so carried away with their CCAs that they lose focus. Because the O-level exams cover two years of work, students must learn how to manage their time well from day 1, before it is too late.

SmartLab: Thank you very much for your time.

Mother: You are welcome.

“I understand that not everyone is able to maintain perfect attention in class from day one, but I think it is imperative to commit full attention in any class as we approach our exams.”

“I felt the (SmartLab) notes were especially helpful, because they went into details and helped in the application of knowledge that the textbooks did not.”

“Perseverance!”

Amir

SmartLab: Congratulations on your achievements. What are you doing now, Amir?

Amir: I am now in Meridian Junior College (MJC) and reading Maths C, Economics, Chemistry and Physics.

SmartLab: How is it over there?

Amir: It is a good learning environment. I am having fun with my friends.

SmartLab: Please describe your feelings as you received your O-level results, which were excellent by the way.

Amir: I was definitely relieved; I had expected worse grades. However, I believe that there is still room for improvement.

SmartLab: Good; may you perform even better for your A-level exams. How did you celebrate your success?

Amir: I did not have any major celebration, but I had a good dinner with my family. My family's pretty close.

SmartLab: Share your secrets of your success with us, please!

Amir: I was diligent in finishing my Ten-Year Series (TYS) books. In fact, I completed the WHOLE TYS set TWICE for all my subjects. Also, listening to teachers and tutors is of great importance. I understand that not everyone is able to maintain perfect attention in class from day one, but I think it is imperative to commit full attention in any class as we approach our exams. It helps that I was blessed with SmartLab teachers like the very good Mr. Chua Wee Chong and the committed Mr. Ivan See-Toh.

SmartLab: In what other areas do you believe has SmartLab helped you?

Amir: I felt the notes were especially helpful, because they went into details and helped in the application of knowledge that the textbooks did not. Textbooks tend to be too basic in content.

SmartLab: Is there any other advice you'd like to offer to your fellow students?

Amir: Perseverance! It can get you to anywhere.

SmartLab: Amir, all the best to you in your next phase of life!

Amir: Thank you!

Ooi Yong Ann has deeply impressed the teachers in SmartLab with a spectacular turnaround of academic performance. Through sheer diligence, this previous F9 student in school went on to score an impressive six distinctions out of seven in his 2006 O-level examinations. Over the phone, Yong Ann maintained his humble and unpretentious nature, answering our questions warmly with no hesitation.

Yong Ann is a Maris Stella High alumnus. Having shown tremendous improvement in his academic performance, he achieved an O-level L1R5 of 12 and an L1R4 of 10. He had enrolled for Physics and Chemistry classes in SmartLab, and obtained A2s for both, a far cry from his previous F9 days.

SmartLab has the wonderful opportunity to converse with Yong Ann's father.

"School teachers aren't able to (give time and attention to Yong Ann) simply due to the enormous class sizes. In school, there are always fast learners and slow learners; school teachers are unable to provide for this learner differentiation."

SmartLab: Congratulations on your son's achievements. Are you happy with his results?

Father: I am very satisfied. Yong Ann came into SmartLab without good results. In fact he didn't even manage to pass his Science subjects at all previously. His string of distinctions could do nothing but make us proud.

SmartLab: How have you guided Yong Ann in his preparation for his O-level examinations?

Father: I simply made sure he had the time to digest everything he learned from both school and tuition, since workload tended to be large. I would chat with him to keep track of his progress. I would also always remind him to read up and attend tutorial classes.

SmartLab: Is there any other advice you'd like to offer to fellow parents?

Father: As I have mentioned, Yong Ann's academic results were previously unsatisfactory. But for parents with similar children, never despair. I had decided to give SmartLab a try, and found its teachers professional and dedicated. They were able to give time and attention to Yong Ann, something school teachers aren't able to do simply due to the enormous class sizes. In school, there are always fast learners and slow learners; school teachers are unable to provide for this learner differentiation. SmartLab has come in handy because the teachers know how to prepare and guide their students for their examinations. My advice is to simply join SmartLab!

SmartLab: That's very nice of you! Is there anything else you'd like to add?

Father: Many thanks to the teachers in SmartLab for staying back to help Yong Ann and for rearranging make-up or additional classes for him when he missed some classes.

SmartLab: Thank you very much for your time. We too hope to speak to Yong Ann.

Father: You are welcome.

SmartLab: Congratulations on your achievements. What are you doing now, Yong Ann?

Yong Ann: I am now waiting for enrolment into Temasek Polytechnic (TP). I will be reading a course in Aviation Management, which starts in April. It is a very competitive course because its cut-off point is a low L1R4 of 11, so students in the course could have gone into JCs had they chosen to. Meanwhile, I am getting some experience from part-time jobs.

SmartLab: Please describe your feelings as you received your O-level results, which were excellent by the way.

Yong Ann: I was pleasantly surprised. I expected an average of As to Bs, but I definitely exceeded my expectations by getting distinctions for practically all of my subjects.

SmartLab: How did you celebrate your success?

Yong Ann: No celebrations. Just happiness.

SmartLab: Share your secrets of your success with us, please!

Yong Ann: Just studying and studying. I was not the type to do Ten-Year Series books, though I admit I might have done even better had I done them. In fact, I would be what you consider a lazy student. But tuition in SmartLab certainly helped because it forced the studying in me, whether I wanted it or not. The one-and-a-half hours of tuition were a solid one-and-a-half hours of studying and work which I otherwise would not have done. Tuition also helped during secondary 3 where the examinations were much harder.

SmartLab: You certainly think highly about tuition classes.

Yong Ann: Definitely. Also, the classes in SmartLab would also cover topics before they were taught in school. This made it so much easier to understand everything taught in class. Before I joined SmartLab, I had great difficulty understanding the lessons in school. The difference is very obvious. I would love to thank my teachers Mr Vincent Lee and Mr Soh Thin Long.

SmartLab: I will pass them the message, thanks. Is there any other advice you'd like to offer to your fellow students?

Yong Ann: Study hard! And especially before the important examinations! I don't mean last-minute studying. I have many friends who studied very hard for their Preliminary examinations but slacked off for their O-level exams since it was immediately after that. They ended up not doing so well in their O level exams.

SmartLab: Yong Ann, all the best to you in your next phase of life!

Yong Ann: Thank you!

Yong Ann

"Tuition in SmartLab certainly helped because it forced the studying in me, whether I wanted it or not."

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