



NAME OF RECIPIENT:

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Designed to break away from the rigid, and at times, regimental way in which Mandarin classes are conducted, and deciding to inject a sense of fun and play into learning, EduGrove Mandarin Enrichment Centre aims to improve their students' standard of Mandarin.

Believing in doing things differently, the centre has been teaching Mandarin to students through games and drama, as they believe that students will be able to retain vocabularies learnt in their long term memory when they actually enjoy their lessons as supposed to using memorisation and drilling methods.

Founder Jerry Luke Theseira says that he used to struggle at Mandarin in school, as he was brought up in a non-Mandarin speaking family. Furthermore, he said: "Lessons then were taught in a very rigid and authoritative manner where there was very little student participation in class."

In addition, by observing the industry, Jerry saw that many teachers in the industry did not speak much English, much less do marketing campaigns in English to promote their services. This has effectively alienated non-Mandarin speaking families, whose children are more likely to require help with their Mandarin.

Thankfully, Jerry's wife is a Mandarin teacher who is able to engage students in a nurturing and fun manner. She believes in using drama and games, putting the emphasis on learning through play and conversation. This is the perfect combination that Jerry was looking for, as he is able to provide students with a Mandarin lesson that is fun, engaging, and effective.

As such, Jerry decided to set up EduGrove to create a new pedagogical style for Mandarin lessons and also provide students with lessons that are accessible and fun.

However, Jerry also highlights the problem of finding the suitable candidates. He said: "Most Chinese teachers are trained to teach or have learnt the language through very traditional methods." To Jerry, these traditional methods are the very reason students develop a sense of dread when going for Mandarin classes, as teachers tend to prioritise rote learning over actual acquisition of knowledge.

However, through much time and hard work, EduGrove managed to locate suitable teachers who are effectively bilingual in English as well as Mandarin, and train them to teach in the EduGrove way.

Company Profile:

Believing in a new pedagogical stance in education, the centre teaches Mandarin to their students not through rote learning, but through interactive games and drama.



When asked about the ways in which EduGrove remains distinct in the industry, Jerry says that the curriculum is not only designed to allow students to have fun while learning Mandarin, it is also tailor-made to better suit the language level, personalities and dynamics of each and every class. He further elaborates that through the use of games, drama, and other interactive activities, students who used to dislike Mandarin classes learnt to appreciate the intricacies of the language and the culture behind it.

Moreover, EduGrove also features a "Language in Action" programme, where they provide students from international schools with a specially designed Mandarin curriculum that is based on their school's Mandarin syllabus.

EduGrove has also received multiple awards, such as the Singapore Top Quality Brand 2015, Singapore Top SME 2015, and the Singapore's Outstanding Enterprise 2014 award.

Shedding light on the name of the company, Jerry said: "The 'Edu' being an abbreviation for education, while 'Grove' was because we wanted to metaphorically known as a place where weak seedlings grow into big, strong and sturdy trees, full of colour and life. Another reason was because of the neighbouring mangrove nature walk which serves as me and my wife's source of relaxation and inspiration." On top of that, the centre's logo features a brain developing into a

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strong tree that is full of life and colour. The colours of the leaves are the colours of the rainbow, as EduGrove believes in diversity in culture and people.

Equally passionate about entrepreneurialism, Jerry said: "Being an entrepreneur takes dedication, drive, hard work, passion, creativity, risk taking, and bravado." He adds that an entrepreneur is an individual who is willing to immerse himself/herself into the work and "live and breathe" the business.

Needless to say, EduGrove's best years are still ahead, and the Singapore's Outstanding Enterprise award will add to their closet of trophies, as the centre looks set to change public perception on how Mandarin lessons are conducted across the island.