

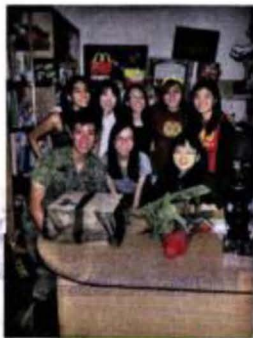
For whom her motor runs

While her head is always filled with numbers, it's her students who are at the heart of her teaching.



► Ms Rosie Ching (far left) with her students in a group shot, capping the last lesson of the semester.

"My students are for whom my motor runs," declares the indefatigable Ms Rosie Ching, Senior Lecturer of Statistics at the Singapore Management University (SMU) School of Economics. They know it, and in turn have put her on the SMU Teaching Excellence Honour Roll with two Excellent Teacher Awards and two Innovative Teacher Awards in a row—making her the first faculty to achieve the distinction. Last year, Rosie also received the CEEMAN (Central and East European Management Development Association) Champion Award for Teaching.



► A souvenir Polaroid of the World War II project, which her students dedicated to the memory of World War II heroes.

One student wrote, "I hate math but she has inspired me." It is, in fact, these very students who inspire Rosie. She affirms, "Everything starts with my students, even before the Statistics—I always have them in mind."

Playing the numbers game

Rosie uses interactive games, hands-on experiments, current affairs and history to demystify statistics, and the students have nothing but praise for her and her "exciting, off-the-charts" experiments.

Whoops and cheers often ring out from her classes as students spin roulette wheels or drop buttered toast to test Murphy's Law of Toast, meticulously collecting and analysing the data. The "Dress that Broke the Internet" also made a "live" appearance, all in the name of engaging students.

"Experience is a powerful teacher," Rosie explains, noting these experiments often have positive effects. "I have seen the most resistant and stubborn of students become engaged," she adds cheerfully. Over the years, thousands of her students have testified as to how her dedication has inspired them to improve.

In December 2015, Rosie's work was recognised with a Wharton-Quacquarelli Symonds Stars Reimagine Education Global (Bronze) Award for an original game she created based on the Customer Service Index. This proved so popular, it has now been downloaded in 54 countries. Rosie personally designs passports complete with Customs stamps for her "CSI agent" students. "The students love

it! They like how this brings them through the intricacies of their statistical work," she enthuses.

Some projects have had an enduring national impact, such as the world's first Toilet Cleanliness Index which was created last year with the World Toilet Organisation.

Some are more poignant. These include a World War II 70th anniversary project, in which the students dedicated their project work to the memory of the World War II heroes. The way Rosie sees it, "Humankind's story is one of statistics."

Every student counts

Rosie makes an effort to get to know each and every one of her students, remembering up to 225 names every semester. She also

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makes time for them outside the classroom, to "be there for the friendless, the discouraged, the distressed and disenchanting as they come". As one student says, "She is a mentor, teaching and guiding us in life."

Many of those who have long since joined the workforce keep in touch. Recently, a former student Nicholas Tan, now a trader, told her how her lessons have helped him "participate meaningfully in discussions on trends and assumptions", with a cheeky side note about being able to "stop researchers who try to pull a fast one on us with numbers!"

"I just want to awaken in my students the belief in themselves," Rosie says. For those she has taught, this teacher certainly is one-in-a-thousand.



► Rosie (centre) and her students strike a pose for the 2017 "Olympics Satisfied" Project.