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Mr Chia Luck Yong's new peer tutoring app focuses on getting other students to answer the questions that students need help with. ST PHOTO: CHEW SENG KIM

Ang Yiying

One of the founders of free tutoring app EduSnap is back with a new peer tutoring app – AsknTeach.

Back in 2013, Mr Chia Luck Yong set up EduSnap as a social enterprise with two Singapore Management University schoolmates, Mr Anders Tan and Mr Shaun Tan, and launched the app the next year.

At the time, the free mobile platform drew attention as it positioned itself as the first of its kind helping Singapore students, and was reported about in major media outlets.

However, by end 2015, the trio parted ways and no longer actively maintained it.

Still believing that parents and students do not have to pay exorbitant fees for tuition, Mr Chia, now 30, decided to develop a new app, which has been available for free download since May.

His new product AsknTeach is similar to EduSnap – students upload questions they need help with – but it focuses on getting other students to answer the questions.

In comparison, EduSnap partnered tuition centres and private tutors to respond to students' queries. Mr Chia noted that one problem emerged then: There were more people asking questions than there were answering them.

For instance, some private tutors would "burn out" after answering 100 or so questions.

He said: "We were constantly searching for new tutors to fill in for people who had left. We kept trying to find centres that had a lot of teachers."

At the same time, he noticed that a few students on the EduSnap platform were very active in answering other students' questions even though they received no reward. He believes that with AsknTeach,

the feel-good factor of young people helping others will build a community in which older students guide younger students.

Students who prove to be good in answering questions may later be offered a nominal incentive, for instance, \$0.50 for a question answered correctly.

Since EduSnap stopped maintenance from end 2015, a number of other tuition or homework help apps have sprung up here in the past two years.

These include SnapAsk – which is active in Hong Kong and Taiwan as well – and home-grown apps such as AskManyTutors and Queri.

Asked whether there was still space in the market for AsknTeach amidst the competition, Mr Chia said he believed that there are still more students with questions than there were people who could answer them.

Eventually, Mr Chia hopes to build an extension to the app that will provide learning resources – in which it works with professional tutors with good track records to upload content, such as online lectures, that users would pay for.

Students who have used other free

educational apps said they would not mind trying out AsknTeach if it can help them.

Novia Antony, 16, a Secondary 4 student at Yuan Ching Secondary School, for one, said she liked the app's concept: "I can reply to people's questions and I can also post questions and try and get solutions."

However, she added that unless the app had enough users, it may not be efficient as answers would not be immediate.

While Mr Chia has not started marketing AsknTeach, it is now available for free download on app stores and has garnered about 100 users through word of mouth.

He has invested an undisclosed sum into the new venture, saying only that it was more than the \$100,000 to \$200,000 he had put into EduSnap.

Said Mr Chia: "Honestly, I do not even know if it's going to be successful. I'm just doing it because I truly believe that, in a certain way, education has to be disrupted... I just feel that people are paying too much for tuition and that shouldn't be the case."

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