

# Education

## Bridging the Education Gap

Carissa Ma

**M**any parents face a common dilemma: how to give their child the edge over other students with equally good grades, high test scores and perfect profile in a bid to secure the golden ticket to top-choice schools or universities. The answer, according to ARCH Education's founders, Jennifer Ma and Jennifer Yu, lies in bridging the "education gap" as manifested in the lack of exposure to training in essential skills, such as creativity, critical thinking and effective communication; or late and insufficient preparation for school admissions.

The inception of ARCH demonstrated incredible foresight. Back in 2009, the two Oxbridge and Ivy League-educated founders had already identified an increasing focus of world-class institutions on critical thinking skills, which quickly became apparent when the NSS Liberal Studies Curriculum was later launched with the objective of helping students develop critical thinking.

"You would have thought that given the importance parents accord to their children's education that there would be plenty of guide books on such topics as overseas boarding education," Jennifer Ma observes. But seeing a dearth of reliable and informative literature on the subject, she has amassed a wealth of information in her newly published book, *Boarding schools: All you need to know* based on her personal boarding experience, as well as more than 500 interviews with UK schools, top educational consultants, students and parents.

ARCH enrichment programs are designed to help students aged 7 to 18 develop and internalize essential skills in four areas: Thinking, Speaking, Reading and Writing. ARCH advocates small-class teaching, each typically consisting of 8 students.

"The small-class format encourages active student participation which in turn enhances their confidence in speaking, in asking questions, as well as in impromptu and creative thinking," says Jennifer Yu.

She explains that these vital skills determine a student's success or otherwise in an interview, which usually entails 60% general interview

questions and 40% thinking on your feet. "To develop the necessary poise and confidence, students must hone their skills over time through public speaking training," she emphasizes.

ARCH global team is headquartered in Hong Kong with partner offices stationed in New York (US) and London (UK). In helping students with their applications, the one-stop service encompasses making subject choice, choosing college, to writing Personal Statement, research essay and interview prep.

All enrichment programs are delivered by highly experienced teachers and instructors from top US and UK universities, including Ivy League and Oxbridge graduates, who are dedicated to providing students with individual attention and guiding them on their education pathway.

Beyond enrichment, ARCH offers consultation to help students make the right choices, and prepare for opportunities. ARCH boasts a global team of professional consultants who spare no time or effort in helping students get admitted into top boarding schools, as well as Ivy League, Oxbridge and other top universities. They also offer guidance in a wide range of disciplines from Medicine, Law to Classics. Each consultant team has their own specialties and they address applicants' specific needs.

"Our admission counselors play the critical roles of partners; they sit down with each student and probe their interests and aspirations, balanced with their particular strengths and weaknesses," says Jennifer Ma. "The ultimate goal is to help the students achieve their goals."

ARCH also provides an interactive online tutoring platform, Bridgepoint Tutors, delivered by teachers meticulously selected through a highly competitive screening process. It offers students quality one-on-one live lessons for all public examinations, including GCSE, iGCSE, A-Level, IB DP subjects through an online whiteboard and live video streaming which



Students at ARCH actively engaged in class discussion.

guarantees the flexibility to meet individual schedules and saves busy students the hassle of commuting.

For those whose HKDSE grades fall below expectations, Jennifer Yu says it is not the end of the world. In many cases, taking an alternative program, or doing a university foundation course would stand students in good stead for a future breakthrough.

carissa.ma@singtaonewscorp.com



Founders of ARCH Education: Jennifer Ma (Left) and Jennifer Yu (Right)

