

## Team Talk

### Tanglin's new Head of Technology for Learning Kayzad Byramjee explains how he's helping to prepare the school for a post-pandemic world



Months before COVID-19 formed part of everyday vernacular, Kayzad Byramjee was engaged in one of his faculty's main projects: moving the school's learning ecosystem into the Microsoft Cloud, and using Microsoft Teams as its "hub". But while the use of Teams formed only one part of the Senior School's development plan for the year, from March, suddenly it was a lynchpin: needed to facilitate the learning of more than 1,300 students as part of Remote Learning.

It's clear, though, that Kayzad wasn't fazed by this fact. "It was on our trajectory of what we were planning to do for the year anyway," he tells. "Teams has been something we've looked at for supporting teachers to work 'smarter' and more collaboratively. That was the always the end goal."

Originally from the UK, Kayzad first joined Tanglin in 2010 as a supply teacher, before resuming the role he had previously held in Wembley, London – that of a Teacher of Physics. His is a Tanglin family – his wife, Tanaz, is a Music Specialist working across the Infant and Junior Schools, and his children attend also. Over the last five years, Kayzad has worked alongside his predecessor, Stephen Morgan, to improve the use of technology within classrooms in the Senior School as part of the Technology for Learning faculty.

He has been using Microsoft Teams since 2017, when the company integrated OneNote into its software. In the years since, he has qualified as a Microsoft Innovative Educator (MIE) Expert, MIE Trainer and MIE Fellow. Each year, he is invited to the company's annual E<sup>2</sup> (Education Exchange) and delivers training to Microsoft Partners in Singapore.

When the Tanglin campus closed on March 19, Stephen and Kayzad began remotely training staff to become proficient with Teams, enabling teachers to organise and



manage online lessons for their students, at a rapid pace. “Teachers were learning by doing – which is the best way of learning anyway,” he points out.

One function of Teams that Kayzad particularly likes is that it can give users the ability to create breakout rooms within each class that students can be assigned to, allowing them to work collaboratively in small groups as they would do in a “live” classroom. “We would try these functions out, take videos of ourselves doing so and share those with other teachers,” Kayzad says. He credits his fellow teachers in the Senior School for making the remote learning period a success. “They have been very willing to experiment,” he tells. “The reason we had such an amazing uptake is because teachers would try out the software and share their practice within their faculties. Ideas spread via a ‘virtual’ word of mouth.”

When the Tanglin campus reopened to all students at the end of June, the Technology for Learning faculty set about preparing Teams for any future periods of remote learning, “so if we did go into lockdown again, or even start the year in lockdown, it was ready for use.” The next step for the team will be to explore the apps and bots that can be used within Teams.



“It borders on an LMS – a Learning Management System,” says Kayzad. “Tanglin Senior School previously used an LMS called Moodle, but it was very much static content – it’s time-intensive to curate and manage content on a platform like that. Teams allows you to do that more easily and you can incorporate other elements within your lesson while having them all in one place.”

The ambitious plans – designed to “future proof” learning – are not something that daunt Kayzad. Prior to teaching, he spent four years designing, building and testing new tech – specifically, making optical amplifiers for a telecoms equipment manufacturer. “Basically, the nuts and bolts of the internet,” he explains.

When the company moved its manufacturing base to China, Kayzad went also, to aid the transfer of manufacturing and testing technology, training the engineers and technicians there to build and test amplifiers. He explored the idea of teaching as a career, as a way of keeping connected to the physics that had originally drawn him into engineering. Today, he applies his experimental approach in the classroom and in his new role as Head of Technology for Learning.

One of the areas he is keen to explore is the positive feedback from Sixth Form students regarding remote learning. While it’s agreed nothing can replace a “live” classroom, the greater autonomy in studying at home was one aspect many students enjoyed. “Obviously, everything is slower when you’re teaching online; it just takes time. But, I found it interesting that the A Level and IB Diploma students grabbed that independence, and were able to adapt their learning and incorporate that into it. It would be great if we could somehow harness that further.”

