

SPAM: Sum-Pah, All of Me

Three online classrooms to teach expressiveness
through art, writing and comics

Presented by Serene Goh, SAMH Creative MINDSET Hub

April 2020

Admin

Name: Serene Goh Jin-Hong

Email: serene_goh@samhealth.org.sg

Designation: Senior Programme Executive

Company name: Singapore Association for Mental Health

Business Registration Number: UEN S68SS0038A

Design Discipline: Education, Art and Writing

Company based in: Singapore

Individual or team project: Team

Submit here: <https://designforgood.dbcsingapore.org/submit/>

Design Challenge

#3: How might we learn from COVID-19 to reimagine our future for life, work, learning and play?

Idea Title: Sum-Pah, All of Me (aka SPAM)

Brief Overview of Project: Safe distancing is more prominent these days due to COVID-19 community outbreak. But people safe-distance all the time. Even though we distance ourselves, due to lack of trust or sense of danger, we still need to express ourselves. This project offers three online classrooms where three guest artistes teach participants how to make art, writing and comics as a way of sharing life's big and small joys and pains. Designed to be publicly shared, selected works will be posted on SAMH social media pages.

Criteria #1 - Value

Value - Demonstrating ability to understand and identify users' needs. Solving problems and improving lives in specific ways that relieve the challenges of target audience. (max. 100 words)

Some people are safe distancing to protect their physical health, others do the same to protect their emotional and psychological health. Worlds are also being created online, on social media and other networking platforms. But do people have a safe space online to learn and to experiment with expressing themselves, before broadcasting their thoughts, feelings, opinions, lives, to the general public? Our online classrooms provide this safe and nurturing space to ease newcomers into expressing themselves confidently online.

Criteria #2 - Inspiration

Inspiration - Possessing a stroke of ingenuity in its approach to problem solving, aptly applied to the local context. (max. 100 words)

Most people love SPAM (the ham), that meaty taste. We dislike people spamming us, but we often "spam" (aka express to) the ones we feel comfortable with (dare I say, love). Online the world wide web, there's a sense of "sum-pah", a local Malay phrase commonly used to say "I swear I didn't do it." What this means is most online interactions often feel weightless, transient, untrustworthy. How can we boost the communicativeness of the online environment? By teaching others how to create effective art, writing and comics for personal expression.

Criteria #3 - Impact

Impact - Benefitting target audience in specific ways that are meaningful and significant to them. Enhancing or adding meaningful value to their experience during the COVID-19 pandemic. (max. 100 words)

As an online learning opportunity with a classroom setting, participants who sign up can benefit through group pollination and learning from artistes well-versed in their respective fields. Participants can work on their art, writing or comics before publishing them online to encourage, resonate, comfort others during these COVID-19 pandemic times. During the registration process, we will target both newbie artists who have not yet gone on social media, and people who work or move around in social circles where voices need to be amplified.

Criteria #4 - Timeliness

Timeliness - The proposed idea has the potential to be launched in the market within 3 to 6 months. (max. 100 words)

As this is part of a team effort by creative team at Singapore Association for Mental Health (SAMH), we have resources to launch this within 3 to 6 months. There are also ready online resources such as Google Classrooms that we can use as a prototype for this first phase, before developing our own platform, if necessary, in future. We could also engage 3-6 artistes in art, writing and comics fields to help supplement their incomes during these difficult times and put their expertise to good use. Our team can participate to provide mental health advisory, education and support.

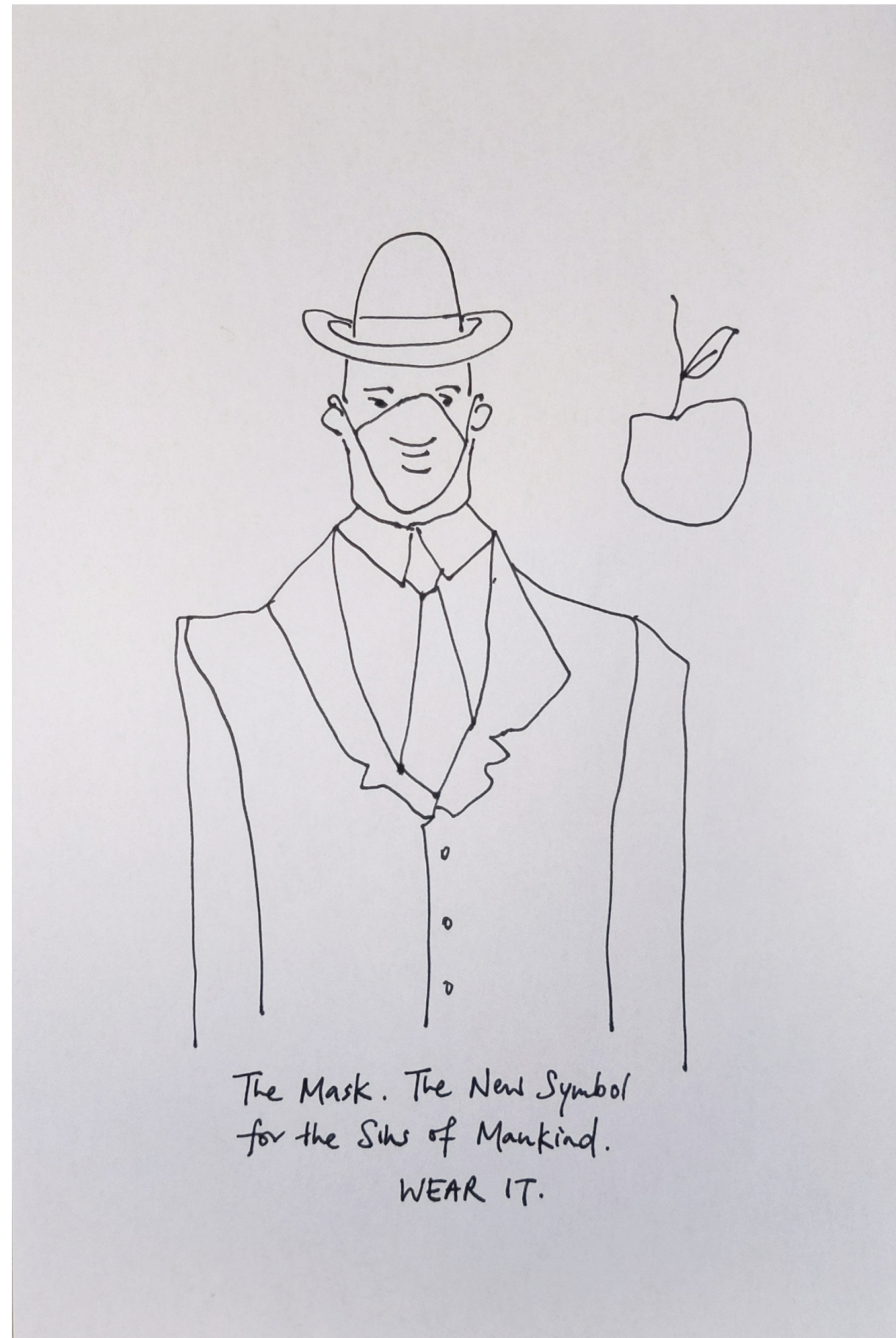
Criteria #5 - Systems Thinking

Systems thinking - How the idea/project works in tandem with the rest of the mechanisms in the ecosystem; how it coordinates with other efforts currently in place. (max. 100 words)

Firstly, the online world is becoming more and more a way and fact of life for everyone. This project begins to think about how we can teach people to express themselves effectively and powerfully online. Secondly, we have a lot of freelance artists in Singapore with a lot of talent that should be more widely publicized, should teach and pass on their knowledge to others. This project encourages new artists and artists new to social media as participants, and engages experienced artists during unemployment to teach others. Thirdly, we are a mental health organization that can sense and observe any new distress trends suggested by participant expressions.

Images to support my idea

Art



Writing

Letters to a higher power.

The air is thin and dry. I'm not sure if it rained today, or yesterday, but I remember how fierce the wind was, and how adamant the rain in washing my part of the world clean. Staying home as much as I have this past week, you'd think I've gotten to know my flat a little better, the nooks and crannies... in fact all my attention has been on the outside of these off-white, nearly cream walls. Maybe that's why I'm on the internet so much.

You see everything. Can I really trust that you are in control?

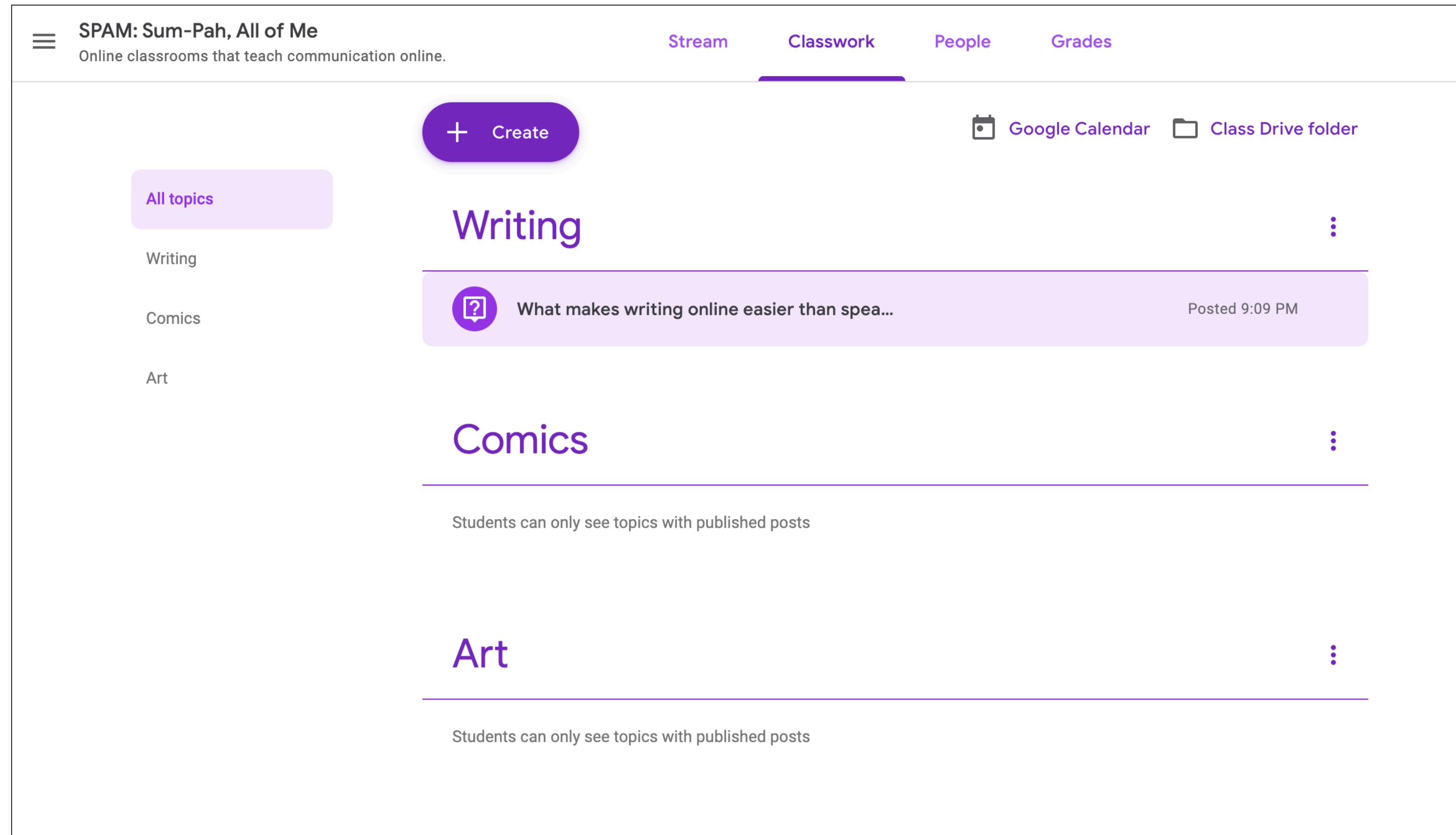
Alone @ home.

Comic



Images to support my idea

Some screenshots of a sample Google Classroom



Some tools to use:

1. Polls

Create polls/questions to invite participants to interact online, followed by a template reflection guide. Individual or group debrief afterwards.

2. Voting

Get participants to post their writing, comics and artwork online. Have them vote and comment on one another, followed by template reflection guide and debrief.