

President's Award for Teachers <sup>20</sup>**15**

Teach  
to Inspire  
Inspire  
to Teach



*Stories by PAT Finalists*



# Teach to Inspire Inspire to Teach

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LEAD  
CARE  
INSPIRE



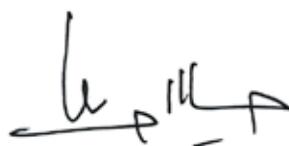
## Foreword

Teaching is a noble profession and as teachers, we are in a very privileged position to influence many young lives. Through the work that we do and our daily interactions with the students, we build strong professional relationship with our students and in the process motivate our students to learn and support their growth and development. In that way, teachers are integrally involved in the holistic development of all our students. We help in their cognitive, socio-emotional, moral, aesthetic and physical growth.

Despite these heavy responsibilities, year after year, we find our teachers responding positively to this call of duty. These teachers are passionate about our vocation. They devote themselves fully to their work, many of them often going beyond the call of duty to support our students and guide them to find their successes. These teachers are proud of their professional work and embrace continual learning, share their learning and build strong networks for professional learning within the fraternity. As a result, they have left an indelible mark in the lives of students and peers.

In this 12<sup>th</sup> issue of "Teach to Inspire, Inspire to Teach", we celebrate the heart work of 13 exceptional teachers in the teaching fraternity. These teachers – winners and finalists of the President's Award for Teachers 2015 – share their stories of passion and dedication that have impacted the lives of students and colleagues. Being student-centric, inspiring our students and colleagues, and leading the fraternity to greater heights in teaching and learning, they exemplify the ethos of the teaching profession.

I would like to congratulate the finalists and award winners of the President's Award for Teachers 2015 for showing the way. I believe their stories will inspire others in the fraternity to do likewise in leading, caring and inspiring, so as to make a difference to the young lives we are entrusted with. Together, we can make a difference.



**Mr Wong Siew Hoong**  
Director-General of Education  
*Ministry of Education, Singapore*

# President's Award for Teachers

The President's Award for Teachers was introduced in 1998 to recognise excellent teachers for their role in moulding the future of our nation. The Award is conferred by the President of the Republic of Singapore on Teachers' Day.

These teachers inspire their students and peers, through their words and deeds. Since its inception, 72 outstanding teachers, including this year's winners, have been recognised. These teachers are caring and nurturing teachers dedicated to the holistic development of their students. They are committed to develop their students to the fullest potential. They are also passionate in adopting innovative approaches in their lessons. They are life-long learners and mentors to their peers.

These teachers are role models that exemplify the Ethos of the Teaching Profession.

# President's Award for Teachers Winners 2015

opportunities for teachers who want to make teaching excellence in the classrooms the primary focus.

The Lead Teacher is a practitioner & leads Senior Teachers in professional expertise & mentoring

The Principal Master Teacher drives innovations & improvements in pedagogy at the national level



(From left to right)

**Mdm Halimah Bte Jumahah,**  
*Bedok South Secondary School*

**Mdm Tan Dai Hwee,**  
*Anderson Junior College*

**Mdm Tauled Tunisha Bte Mohd Paser,**  
*CHIJ (Kellock) Primary School*

**Mdm Safidah Bte Samsudin,**  
*Da Qiao Primary School*

**Mr Muhamad Salahuddin B Ibrahim,**  
*Serangoon Junior College*

**Dr Tay Lee Yong,**  
*Beacon Primary School*

# President's Award for Teachers Finalists 2015



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*Anderson Junior College*  
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*Beacon Primary School*  
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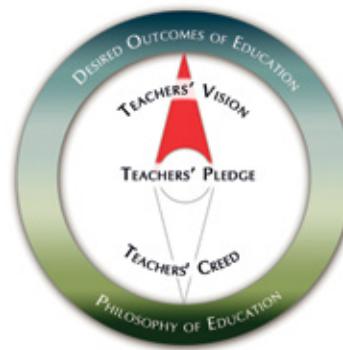
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# Ethos of the Teaching Profession

The Ethos of the Teaching Profession is expressed in Our Singapore Educators' Philosophy of Education, the Teachers' Vision, the Teachers' Pledge, the Teachers' Creed, and the Desired Outcomes of Education. Each of the above is an important facet of an integrated Ethos of the Teaching Profession.

The compass has been chosen to depict the facets of the Ethos of the Teaching Profession. Pointing to the true north, it symbolises the constancy of values in the lives of educators. New entrants to the profession are presented with a compass at the Teachers' Compass Ceremony.



- Our Singapore Educators' Philosophy of Education captures the **core beliefs** and tenets of the teaching profession and serves as the foundation of teachers' professional practice.
- The Desired Outcomes of Education establishes a **common purpose** for the teaching fraternity, guiding educational and school policies, programmes and practices.
- The Teachers' Vision articulates the **aspirations and roles** of the teaching profession, helping teachers to focus on what to do in pursuit of professional excellence.
- The Teachers' Pledge constitutes an **act of public undertaking** that each teacher takes to uphold the highest standards in professional practice.
- The Teachers' Creed codifies the practices of retired and present educators and makes explicit their tacit beliefs. It provides a **guide** for teachers to fulfil our responsibilities and obligations, and to honour the promise of attaining professional excellence.

# Teachers' Vision

**Singapore Teachers**  
Lead • Care • Inspire

**B**y word and deed, through the care we give, we touch the lives of our students. We make a difference – leading and inspiring our students to believe in themselves and to be the best they can be.

As individuals and as a community of professionals, we seek continually to deepen our expertise. Respectful of fellow educators, we collaborate to build a strong fraternity, taking pride in our work and profession.

We forge trusting partnerships with families and the community for the growth and well-being of each student.

*We Lead, Care, Inspire,  
For the Future of the Nation  
Passes through Our Hands.*



## Teachers' Pledge

*We, the teachers of Singapore, pledge that:*

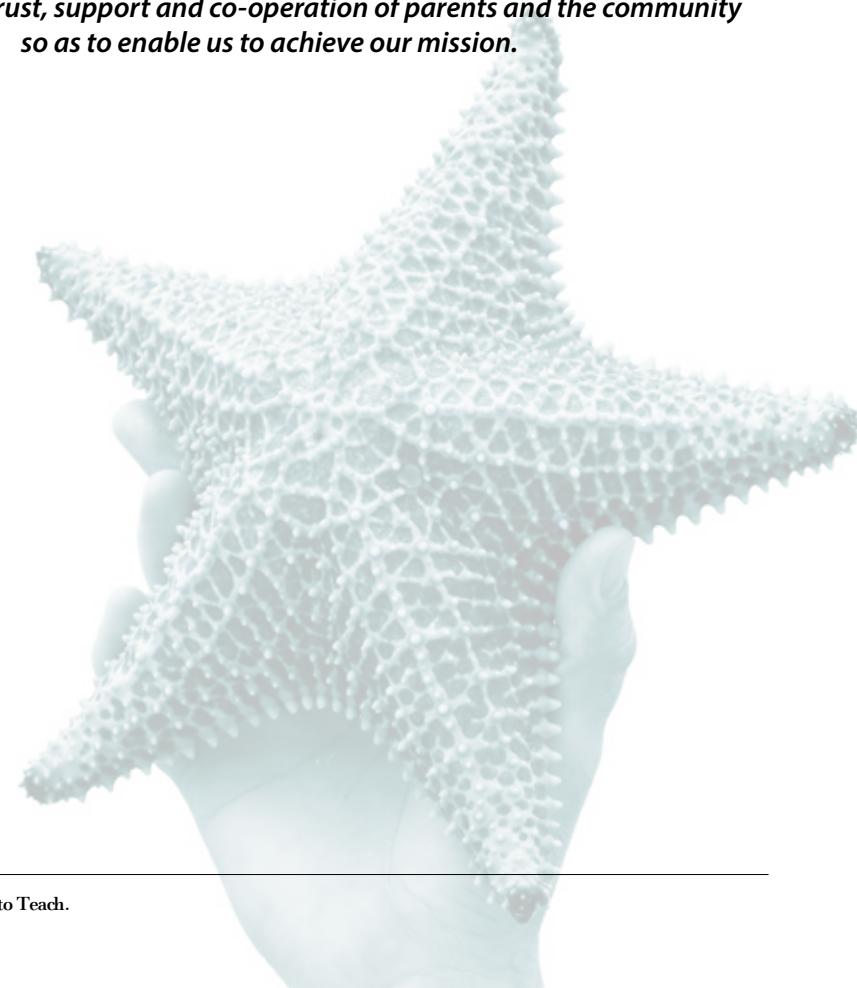
*We will be true to our mission to bring out the best in our students.*

*We will be exemplary in the discharge of our duties and responsibilities.*

*We will guide our students to be good and useful citizens of Singapore.*

*We will continue to learn and pass on the love of learning to our students.*

*We will win the trust, support and co-operation of parents and the community so as to enable us to achieve our mission.*



## Desired Outcomes of Education

The Desired Outcomes of Education are attributes that educators aspire for every Singaporean to have by the completion of his formal education. These outcomes establish a common purpose for educators, drive our policies and programmes, and allow us to determine how well our education system is doing.

The person who is schooled in the Singapore Education system embodies the Desired Outcomes of Education. He has a good sense of self-awareness, a sound moral compass, and the necessary skills and knowledge to take on challenges of the future. He is responsible to his family, community and nation. He appreciates the beauty of the world around him, possesses a healthy mind and body, and has a zest for life. In sum, he is:

- a confident person who has a strong sense of right and wrong, is adaptable and resilient, knows himself, is discerning in judgment, thinks independently and critically, and communicates effectively;
- a self-directed learner who takes responsibility for his own learning, who questions, reflects and perseveres in the pursuit of learning;
- an active contributor who is able to work effectively in teams, exercises initiative, takes calculated risks, is innovative and strives for excellence; and
- a concerned citizen who is rooted to Singapore, has a strong civic consciousness, is informed, and takes an active role in bettering the lives of others around him.



# Mdm Tan Dai Hwee

**Lead Teacher (Economics)**  
Anderson Junior College



***“Thinking and reflection are life skills... The ripples spread out and do not seem to end.”***

*To help her students think better, Mdm Tan Dai Hwee mobilised her colleagues in a concerted college-wide effort to transform teaching methods by not assigning marks to essays, and to teach Economics by equipping students with thinking skills and strategies instead of merely dispensing knowledge.*

#### **THINKING IS HARD WORK**

“Discuss the likely effects on Singapore’s national income and its components when its exchange rate appreciates.”

This is the kind of essay question which Junior College (JC) Economics students have to answer in their ‘A’ level examinations. Before stepping into JC, most of my students would have no idea what Economics was all about. Foreign exchange, fiscal policy, national income and other economics topics would have been alien to them. However, that is not the biggest challenge.

Having taught JC Economics for 15 years, I realised that even if students tirelessly study their notes and memorise information, they do not score because they need to think. To some, thinking is taxing and difficult, but critical thinking is an important competency.

It pains me when my students are demoralised by their results. To help them, I have researched and adapted many thinking strategies over the years in my classroom. Even now, I make it a point to learn by reading up on my own, and am currently pursuing my doctoral studies, which focuses on the best type of feedback teachers can give to stimulate thinking.

What I enjoy most is distilling the best of what I learn and sharing it with all the Economics teachers in my college. To develop thinking students, it starts with thinking teachers. One of my greatest professional achievements has been to convince and inspire my colleagues to adopt a college-wide skills-based programme which focuses on helping students to think critically.

#### **HIGHER-ORDER QUESTIONING**

Asking the right questions to stimulate the students’ thinking skills is crucial. It would be easy for me to ask, “Can you tell me what this is?” and it would be just as easy for students to parrot from the lecture notes. This only requires simple recall.

However, if I asked, “Can you tell me whether A or B is better and why?”, the student has to think, present perspectives and make a judgement. One such question can take up an entire tutorial discussion. I throw in cues and use prompts to lead them such as, “Let’s look at A first, why would you choose A?” I also want students to ask their own questions in class when trying to understand a concept.

At first, it was difficult getting some of my colleagues to prompt the students. I went



around observing lessons, and I realised that they were flashing the answers on screen! I shared with them why we should not be spoon-feeding the students.

When I speak to the teachers in and outside of my college about how to use such questioning techniques, I admit that I am still learning to perfect the craft of questioning. Even experienced teachers like me do lapse from time to time into asking too many close-ended questions, as we want to complete planned topics during lessons.

#### LEAVE OUT THE GRADES

When marking, the comments we write are meant for our students to think about their strengths and weaknesses. However, I realised that most of the students do not always read our comments. I have seen students shoving their test papers into their bags without even looking at them the moment they saw that they did not pass.

To improve my craft, I read up a lot. What I have seen was mirrored in the findings of a study by researcher Dylan Wiliam who found that students who received assignments with grades and comments performed just as poorly as students who did not get any comments at all. This meant that once students receive a grade to their

test, the teachers' comments might as well be invisible.

This got me thinking and I advocated for Economics teachers in my school to hold off on grades for routine assignments, which was implemented in early 2014. Instead, we let our students know how they fared by assigning levels 1, 2 or 3 to their work, so they knew where they stood without feeling crushed by a number grade. Surprisingly, the students took it well. Early signs showed that without grades, our students seemed to be doing better in their promotional examination.

Taking a step further, I came up with acronyms for five broad types of comments, which the rest of the Economics teachers have adopted. This helped students to easily classify the type of comments they get and, at-a-glance, identify areas they are weak in. For instance, if they see a whole bunch of "QAs" in their work, they know their area of weakness is in question analysis, whereas "CKs" would mean that they were lacking in content knowledge.

#### CAN STUDENTS OWN THEIR LEARNING?

Ideally, students should take complete ownership of their learning. Thinking plays a crucial role in learning. To help scaffold their thinking, it is important to equip them with a toolkit of skills and strategies which can help them deconstruct complex questions. Right now, in their toolkit are two books which I wrote in 2012 and 2013. Called *The Little White Book* and *The Big Black Book*, these texts are used by every Economics student in the college to tackle essays and case studies. Each time they encounter a question, they can refer to the books to find out the category the question falls under,



and they are guided by the appropriate strategies listed down.

Even the title of *The Little White Book – The A to E of Essay Writing* – is a thinking tool. Students learn that they first have to Analyse a question, come up with a Blueprint, know which Concepts to use, flesh out the Detail and then Evaluate. Once these skills have been internalised, they can leave the books behind.

Self-directed learning requires reflection, a high-level skill which can be taught. Take comments-only marking. For all that has been done to get students to read the teachers' comments for their work, how do I know if they are reflecting and acting on them? Every student now keeps a tracking sheet whereby they note down the areas they are weak in based on their teachers' comments, list down the actions they will take to rectify it, and then review if they improved in their next assignment.

#### RIPPLES FROM A PEBBLE

Thinking and reflection are life skills. JC is the last stage of formal schooling before students leave for university, and focusing on these skills is like throwing a pebble into a lake. The ripples spread out and do not seem to end.

Likewise, when I galvanised the Economics teachers in my college to align our teaching, the momentum of response from what I shared surged beyond my expectations. Teachers took the initiative to invent their own ways of responding to students' essays. One started a personal project to catalogue all the essay questions, and I managed to persuade him to share his project with the rest of us. Another conceptualised the Criteria Method which complements the A to E essay skills framework nicely.

These ripples – teachers picking up and students doing well in life – tell me that I am getting back more than I gave.

*"The moment she stepped into class, it was clear that Mrs Ho's approach was unique."*

Tan Jun Yang, 18  
JC 2, Anderson Junior College



# Dr Tay Lee Yong

**Dean (Development, Research and Technology)**  
*Beacon Primary School*



***"To convince parents who think a computer is just for entertainment, I ask them if it is easier to do online banking or queue up at a bank."***

*When Dr Tay Lee Yong's Principal suggested he learn more about Information and Communication Technology (ICT) as the school needed expertise in the area, he pushed aside his fear of the subject and plunged straight into night classes in Singapore Polytechnic. The Social Science graduate began without an interest in ICT, but now has a PhD in Educational Technology.*

### **TEACH THEM TO LOVE WHAT THEY FEAR**

I was in Henderson Primary School when the first ICT Masterplan came about in 1997, a nationwide effort to increase technology use in classrooms. The school needed someone to work on this, and I was assigned the job – even though I knew nothing about ICT. The only ICT skill I had was that I could type very well!

Then, I did not yet have an interest in technology. In fact, I was quite afraid of it, but the school needed someone, so I decided to dive into it. My Principal told me, "Young people should learn more things, you go do some self-learning." I signed up for night classes at Singapore Polytechnic and learnt to use computer programs like Dreamweaver and Flash, and even how to assemble computers. This was the incidental start to my ICT journey.

One thing led to another. Along the way, I took up a Master of Arts in Instructional Design Technology, because I could use what I learned to impact more students school-wide. It turned out that my Masters supervisor had a project about using computer games to engage academically at-risk students. I was interested and helped him with it. He suggested I do a PhD on

it and I did. Four years later, in 2008, I got my PhD.

### **A LOVE FOR LEARNING**

Reflecting on the journey, I learnt that if you learn to love what you fear and grab opportunities that come along the way, it will eventually pay off some day. My former Principal's wise words stayed with me. She had always encouraged me to continue learning and developing my skills, telling me, "If you can afford the time, do it. Don't wait till everything is ready for you. Pave your own way."

I have taken these words to heart and have not stopped learning. In fact, if I could turn back time, I would have learnt more about programming so that I can simplify software today to make it easier for teachers dealing with educational statistics.

I am passionate about teachers recording their good practices so that we have a wide repertoire of knowledge to share with future generations of educators. It can be done simply through writing or videos. I also share my knowledge through publications in international journals so that we can improve how technology is used in education.

## **OVERTCOME FEAR OF THE UNKNOWN**

ICT can be an effective tool to enhance learning in the classroom and I support the teachers to love what they fear. It is an arduous journey but I am hopeful that we will get there one day.

A case in point is a study we did on composition writing, to compare the use of a digital format with pen and paper. We thought students might do better using technology but found that there was no difference in the quality of work produced using either formats. The only difference was in the submission rate, which was much lower online than on paper. Then we realised it was because teachers found it harder to chase for online work. They also found it more cumbersome to mark work online – you have to start up the computer and cannot mark while waiting.

So, we concluded that teachers themselves must be prepared to change their mind set. If teachers do not chase for online work, students will not deem it as equally important. My aim is for teachers to change

their mind set so that using ICT comes naturally to them. The same applies to students. Many of them see learning as a chore and fear Mathematics and Science. As a teacher, I hope to help them cultivate a love for the subjects.

I try my best to help them overcome their fear by making Mathematics relevant to their lives, and helping them to visualise problems. For example, I got them to use the corner of a sheet of paper to check if their school field was a rectangle (surprisingly, it is a trapezium!). Similarly, I told them to think about how to calculate the number of tiles needed for all the classrooms in the school. They would first have to estimate the tiles needed per classroom, then extrapolate for the entire building. Such real-life examples grab their attention and help them see the relevance of the subject.

I also try to give them quick feedback – to show them that with technology, help is just a few clicks away. I ensure that I am available to help them if they need it, be it face-to-face or via technology such as



the subject. They can sense when you are passionate and that is important for good teaching and learning.

Two teachers with the same content knowledge and qualifications may have different levels of passion and this makes all the difference. Our job as teachers is to believe in our students, encourage and inspire them to learn. You do not need a PhD to do that.

*"He has helped me discover I can reach my goals if I put my heart to what I want. Now I have faith in myself."*

*Marcus Chay, 12  
Pri 6, Beacon Primary*

## **TECHNOLOGY CANNOT REPLACE HUMAN TOUCH**

The computer is just a tool. What matters is how you use it and whether you use it well. Technology, when used well, works wonders. To convince parents who think a computer is just for entertainment, I ask them if it is easier to do online banking or queue up at a bank. My point is that technology allows you to do the same thing in a much more efficient way. A good example would be helping students with mathematical problems when I am not in the classroom.

Ultimately, technology is just a means to an end. No matter how useful it may be, technology cannot replace the human touch, like genuine praise and encouragement. The computer is mechanical and can only say 'try harder' or 'good try'. A student you interact with can feel your care and when you talk to them and encourage them, they know you believe in them.

As teachers, we need to connect with our students and infect them with a passion for



# Mdm Halimah Bte Jumaha

**Senior Teacher (Mathematics)**

*Bedok South Secondary School*

**"If your dad gave you \$600 to design a bedroom that was 5m by 5m, what furniture would you choose?"**



*Mdm Halimah Bte Jumaha meets many students who hate Mathematics. To get her students interested, she shows them how the subject relates to the real world, and builds up their self-confidence.*

## **MAKING SENSE OF MATHS**

My Mathematics classroom is Giant. IKEA. Changi Airport.

In the Giant hypermarket, students round off prices and do mental calculations to keep within a budget for a party. At Changi Airport Terminal 3, they use their feet to work out the area and circumference of a big fan structure. Studying the flight schedules, they mentally calculate flight durations. At IKEA, their task is this: If your dad gave you \$600 to design a bedroom that was 5m by 5m, what furniture would you choose?

I started these learning journeys in 2010 because my students, who are all from the Normal (Academic) (N(A)) or Normal (Technical) (N(T)) streams, need to connect numbers with the real world to be motivated. They learn that Mathematics is not just a subject, but a daily affair.

Now, they go on such trips once a semester. What is unique about these learning journeys is that they are not nice-to-have, but conducted during curriculum time, and are just as important as classroom lessons.

I know how they feel. I failed Mathematics when I was in secondary school and I want my students to believe that they can do well in the subject.

In the last few years, I have been teaching only the N(A) and N(T) classes. I volunteer to teach the low progress learners because I can see the potential in this group of students. I feel good when my students do well and I can add value to their learning. They might have been failing the subject and if I can help them, I would have made a big difference in their learning.

## **SETTING A HIGH BAR**

Many of them come to secondary school hating Mathematics.

Then they meet me and they realise: here is a teacher who believes I can do it. I set high expectations for them. They can feel my conviction, that every single one of them can make it to a tertiary institution.

I once taught an N(T) class which I had been teaching since they were in Secondary One. Three quarters of them had failed the PSLE Mathematics. At Secondary Four, I said, "We are going to set a target of 100 percent passes, and 50 percent distinctions."

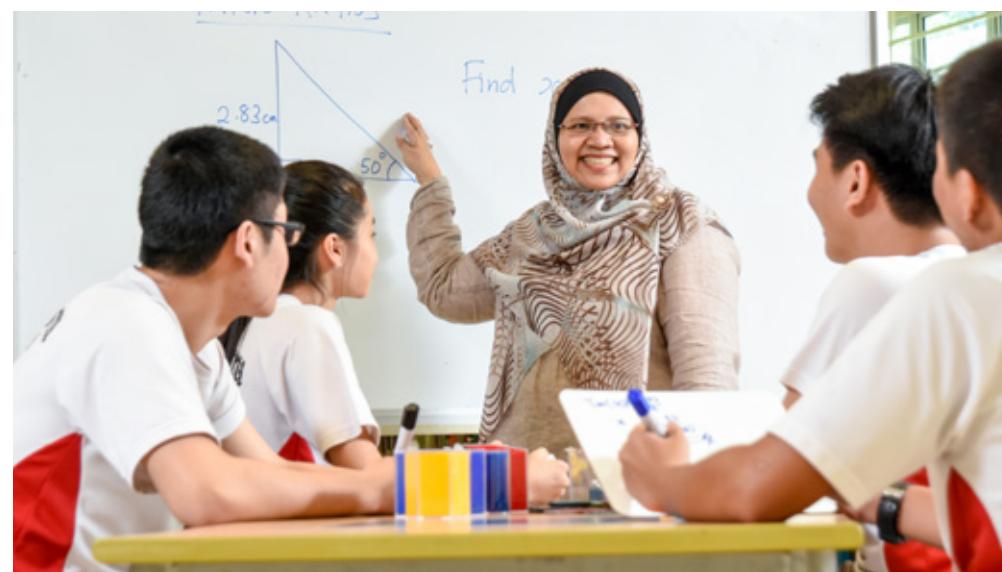
They laughed at me! I said, "OK. Let's work together to make history." When the results came out, we had 80 percent passes, and 11.4 percent distinctions. To me, that was an achievement.

I also share a personal story about one of my ex-students who, like them, hated Mathematics. I built up her confidence and through her own hard work, she made it to university. The best part is when they discover that this ex-student of mine is now a teacher whom they see in school. Yes, she is now my colleague!

#### SLOW AND STEADY

To help my students make sense of the subject, I go through the concepts slowly in class to build a firm foundation, especially since many topics are connected. If you do not know ratio, you will not be able to do percentages. If I know one or two students are not catching up, I will teach and re-teach after school until they get it.

How do I know if my students get it? I use a mini whiteboard during my lessons for an instant diagnosis. There was some disbelief at first, as they had all used these mini whiteboards for spelling and dictation in primary school and they think the whiteboards are for kids. Once they



see how this tool can help me gauge their understanding in 10 seconds, they buy in. They are also very proud when they do well in the mini tests which I set for them. These are the small successes which build up their confidence, step-by-step, towards the major examination.

#### CONVINCING TEACHERS

It is not just the students who need convincing. For teachers to effectively teach students weak at Mathematics, they themselves need to believe these students can learn, and know how to adapt their teaching for them.

I work hard to mentor teachers and convince them that students weak in Mathematics can learn if we use the right methods. There are several mentoring schemes which I am a part of. Essentially, I help the teachers to plan their lessons, observe their classes and give them ideas to help their students make sense of the subject. This is important because I find that it is harder to teach students now. Their attention spans are



very short and we have to find new ways of engaging them.

However, teachers are sometimes resistant to change as they are used to their old ways. This is why I open up my classroom to any teacher who wants to observe my lessons.

#### PARTNERSHIPS IN TEACHING

It is not just me and my classroom. That cannot be! Teachers need to work together as a team to support our students.

Just look at our learning journeys. Started for Mathematics, they have since expanded to include other subjects because teachers who heard me sharing it at our year-end seminar felt it was a good idea to join in. They come along for the recce to design interesting and complementary activities.

At the airport, for instance, the English teachers told the students, "Approach some tourists and interview them to find out why they chose to come to Singapore." The Chinese teachers got the students to translate a Chinese saying on the wall of a restaurant into English, and pass it on to students taking Malay who then had to translate the saying into Malay!

I also work with teachers from other schools to come up with better ways of teaching

N(A) and N(T) students. I noticed that in these classes, some students learn faster when they carry out physical activities or touch something, while others like to see and hear. I needed to find a way to let each child learn in a way best for him or her, while conducting a lesson for 30 students. There were no ready resources for my group of students, so I worked with teachers from Bedok View and Bedok Town Secondary School to design a learning package on calculating the surface area of a pyramid. Some students were given a physical pyramid to work with, while others learnt through the use of videos.

I am lucky to have met many teachers who share my passion for teaching N(A) and N(T) students. By working hand-in-hand, we can do more together than we can individually. I like to think that we help our students make sense of Mathematics, and they help us make sense of teaching.

*"When I came to Bedok South I thought I would fail Maths again but Mdm Halimah pulled my grades up. She doesn't just stand there and talk but she gives us hands-on work."*

Taryn Tan, 17  
Sec 5, Bedok South Secondary



# Ms Lum Kit Kuan Melanie

**Senior Teacher (Geography)**  
Catholic Junior College

***"When I was lecturing them about P waves and S waves... I made them stand up and wiggle like waves."***



*Ms Melanie Lum uses unusual methods to jolt her students into awareness about themselves and deepen their understanding of Geographical ideas. It is her way of showing them that the world is full of wonders – if they only know how to look at it.*

## GEOGRAPHY SURPRISE

The lesson was on volcanoes. I walked into the lecture theatre and dimmed the lights as the screen exploded with a dramatic scene from Dante's Peak showing Pierce Brosnan in a car racing across a lava stream. I asked the 70 students – Based on what you know about volcanoes, do you think this is possible?

They did not expect that. And they thought it was incredibly funny, especially after I stated very matter-of-factly that even if the 800 degree Celsius lava did not melt the car's tyres, it would not have been able to escape the hot blast of gas and materials racing down the slopes at 100km per hour, technically called a pyroclastic flow. This, I said, is a Hollywood movie.

I do not think they would forget that lesson. My students like it when I spring unexpected surprises in class and I believe surprises help them to remember things. On another occasion, I brought a balloon to class and got a student to pop it to demonstrate air pressure. When I was lecturing them about P waves and S waves – these are waves which move through the earth and are relevant to earthquakes – I made them stand up and wiggle like waves.

## LESSONS WITH A TWIST

I also do things differently to get the students really thinking about their work. Sometimes, students would come for consultations and they say they cannot remember anything! I realised that these students did not develop deep learning about the concepts. To do this, I ask questions to scaffold conceptual understanding.

It is tough coming up with good geographical questions which prompt learning, so I work with other educators in the fraternity. This January, I got together with some colleagues from National Junior College (JC) and Pioneer JC to come up with a detailed framework of subject-specific questions to frame the teaching of Tropical Environments. This framework was subsequently shared with other Geography teachers in an Instructional Programme Support Group session in April.

I have also observed that most students also do not pay attention to the comments we painstakingly write in their essays, so I brainstormed with my colleagues and we came up with some ideas which we implemented this year. One is to get students to compare different samples of work, on aspects such as introductory

paragraph, quality of evaluation and paragraph structure against a rubric and get them to articulate which band the work seems to fall under. This helps them understand what quality work is.

### SURPRISINGLY PERSONAL

The element of surprise is surprisingly effective too, when I want to jolt students to look at their personal problems with a new perspective. Of course, it also means that I must improvise because their responses may be unexpected!

I once handed a lump of plasticine to a girl who felt troubled and was missing school because her mother had been diagnosed with a medical condition. I just thought I would give her something to do, and respond off-the-cuff to whatever she did, which was to knead it into Charlie Brown's face. I asked, "Do you know what I'm trying to tell you?" Fortunately, her conclusion was: to look on the bright side of things – an attitude which that famous cartoon strip character is well-known for. Eventually, she

was emotionally stabilised and she did well enough to go to university.

I told another student to literally step away from a pillar while counselling him. He had numerous interpersonal problems and could not get along with his friends. I spotted him hanging around and shuffling about nervously one day. When I asked him what was troubling him, he shared about his problems and got quite emotional. To snap him out of it, I asked him to lift his head and tell me what he saw. He said he saw a wall. I asked him to take three steps back and asked him again what he saw. This time, he said, "People". That was how I got him to see that he had to stop driving himself into a corner, which blinds him from seeing what he has – people who cared about him. It is all about perspective.

After that, I worked closely with his counsellor and got his mother involved to support him at home. When he went to university, both he and his mother thanked me for what I had done, and I was touched



when I saw that he had managed to make some friends who cared for him.

The students find my own story remarkable, too. They do not expect to hear that I did not do well enough at 'A' levels to make it to the university and had to retake my 'A's as a private candidate. I was taking a subject combination which I did not like, and struggling with poor health, which made it hard to study effectively. Through this, I hope they realise that if their teacher could overcome setbacks, so could they.

### A DIFFERENT LENS

Above all, the one revelation I want them to leave my class with is that Geography is not a boring subject about landforms and distant ideas like globalisation. No, I want them to see that it is a subject which can help them make sense of the world. Geography is real, and it is everywhere.

An understanding of water cycle and the management of water resources will enable a Geography student to understand why there are water tensions between countries. Knowledge of weather patterns will help them make an argument about why global warming will affect other Earth's spheres and how this will eventually affect everyone. A grasp of the concept of globalisation will lead the Geography student to read an article about friendly ties between

Singapore and Australia and say, I know why this is happening.

I purposefully bring across these connections in my classes and I show them newspaper articles which might have a Geographical context. To make those connections even clearer, our college engages people from the wider community like lawyers, businessmen and town planners to come in and speak to students who attend our college's Ignite residential programme. The town planner could talk, for instance, about how Singapore's economic and population policies can affect urban planning. It does not just cut across space, the connections also cut across time. In physical geography, for instance, I show them that a grain of sand is not just that. It is the result of rock undergoing thousands and millions of years of erosion. Everything is interconnected.

Geography opens their minds to these connections, and once they see them, they would have adopted what I call the geographer's lens, which is a way of seeing and understanding the world, questioning the past and present, and asking about the impact that we all have on our natural environment.

*"Ms Lum likes us to have hands-on experiences. Last year, she came into class with a package of granite and limestone for us to touch and see."*

Luk Yin Man, 17  
JC 2, Catholic Junior College



# Mdm Tauled Tunisha Bte Mohd Paser

**Subject Head (Malay, Tamil)**  
CHIJ (Kellock) Primary School



**"You may be surprised that when it comes to lessons, I am very strict, but they know that when it comes to problems, I will listen."**

*Mdm Tauled Tunisha knows that to get kids to care about learning, they first have to know that she cares about them. To do that, she came up with different ways to connect with them, from short chats before school to getting them to share their problems with her by writing notes.*

## BUILD RAPPORT BEFORE CONTENT

To me, teaching is not just about literacy and numeracy, it is about teaching my students values. If I were to just concentrate on pen and paper, I think I would have lost a lot of students on this journey. If you ask me what I have gained, I have learnt from my students. They tell me I am strict but they can talk to me about things that they cannot share with their parents. That alone makes it worthwhile and keeps me going.

I started having 5-10 minute chats with my students nine years ago when I found them waiting to talk to me at the gate in the morning. Students sign up for this and I meet them three times a week to chat about anything except studies. I found out some students have problems at home and tried to help them.

I reach out to my form class in another way. I get them to write down their problems and place the paper in a box. I pick three to read each week during FTGP lessons and get the class to suggest solutions for their friends. I also put in my problems. Once, I shared that I wish I had more than 24 hours in the day so I could clear my work. I told them, "I don't only have work in school. I'm a teacher, mother, daughter, daughter-in-law as well. What would you suggest I do?" They

asked if I got enough rest, and I told them that is sometimes a challenge. One of them told me, "Sleep more, then you can do more things." This was actually what I had told them before! Small things like these make them bond with you more.

I have also conducted surveys with my students to find out what they like about my lessons. I asked them how they would like me to improve because I wanted to reflect on my teaching. For example, after their feedback, I included more video clips and visuals in my lessons and we created a shelf for their Tamil storybooks.

Because of these bonds that I have developed with them, they give me their 100 percent attention during lessons. You may be surprised that when it comes to lessons, I am very strict, but they know that when it comes to problems, I will listen.

## MY INSPIRATION

My parents taught me the values that I pass on to my students. Even though my dad had minimal education, he was the man who gave me the foundation for literacy because he encouraged me to read. My mum was a cleaner. Every weekend she would bring me to the place she was cleaning, leave me outside and give me a book to read as she



cleaned. As a child, I told myself that when I started earning money, I would free her from cleaning and give her a rest.

When I had to go to the extended stream in Primary Five because I missed being promoted by one point, I thought that was the end of the world. The boys in the extended stream would hide or throw my books and school bag because I was studious. My dad would encourage me, "With every failure, you need the courage to pick yourself up. If you don't, then you can't succeed in life."

My parents, husband and colleagues have taught me resilience and showed me the importance of learning from mistakes. These are some of the lessons I pass on to my students. I tell them, "When you fall down, take it as a lesson and carry on with your life."

#### FOR THE LOVE OF LANGUAGE

Both my parents learned Malay as their Mother Tongue language and could not

help me with Tamil in school. I failed Tamil in lower primary. After the PSLE, I was offered a choice between the Express and Normal (Academic) (N(A)) streams. I chose N(A) because I realised I was more suited to a slower pace of studying.

In secondary school, I had a wonderful Tamil teacher, Ms Manomani, who, if we did something wrong, would tell us a proverb instead of scolding us. For example, she said, "Don't throw sand on your head after you bathe, like an elephant." She was trying to tell us in an indirect way that while we might think we were doing our friends a favour, we were actually causing them more trouble. She made us love the language. I ended up being one of the top students in my school for Tamil at the 'O' levels. It is this same teacher who encouraged me to teach – and so I did.

I try to do the same for my students to get them to fall in love with the language, but it is a challenge to teach Mother Tongue because many students do not speak the

language at home. We have 247 letters to teach in Primary One and Two so it can be tough if they do not use the language at home. I want my students to see Mother Tongue as a living language.

#### BRINGING TAMIL TO LIFE

To entice them, I tell my students stories from storybooks but ask them to read the endings themselves. I read them newspaper articles and teach them about the Indian culture. I have brought them on local immersion trips to the publication house *Tamil Murasu*. There, they saw for themselves the value of learning Tamil when the reporters shared how the language helped in their profession. I tell them if they study Tamil, they can also be a translator in court.



Nurturing children is not just putting a seed there and letting it grow. You have to be there to check if there is enough water or sunlight. Every seed that comes to me, I want to see it bloom.

*"She tells us about the importance of Mother Tongue and why we should speak it. If we don't speak it and it goes extinct, we would not be able to pass it on to the next generation."*

S. Janani, 12  
Pri 6, CHIJ (Kellock)



# Mdm Yehidaah Beevi d/o Shaik A

**Head of Department (Humanities)**  
Clementi Town Secondary School



***"If they know you are willing to work with them, they can surpass our expectations."***

*Mdm Yehidaah Beevi helps her students see that the Humanities remain relevant to life today. They have interviewed residents in the neighbourhood, become photojournalists, and even had the chance to meet war survivors.*

#### **SHAPE THINKERS THROUGH HUMANITIES**

There is nothing like meeting a survivor of the Vietnam War to understand its terrible effects. This is what our students did when we brought them to the Reconciliation Village in Vietnam to meet war veterans, including those affected by Agent Orange, a herbicide used in the war. They interviewed a Vietnamese lady and found out that she did not get married because she did not want her future children to suffer the effects of Agent Orange. Instead, she treated the children with Down's Syndrome in the village like her own.

The children found it amazing to hear someone put her country before herself and they told me they felt lucky to be born in Singapore. Hearing an account from a primary source, a war veteran, was powerful for the students. This is especially important because our students have not experienced political turbulence or social instability. The experience made them more appreciative of Singapore, and the trip was a reflective experience for them.

I constantly think of ways to create such real-life experiences for students so that they can have a deeper understanding of issues, develop empathy for others, and be thankful for their own circumstances. I prefer them to construct knowledge on

issues rather than spoon-feed them.

Through a photojournalism project, they built their awareness of global issues. They learnt that photographs when correctly chosen, can be powerful in conveying a message; they learnt to pick the right materials for their research, analyse evidence and draw conclusions to create products such as photo stories. This project also helped them deal with examination questions on case studies not covered in the textbooks through exposure to a wide range of global issues ranging from the environment to poverty to terrorism.

#### **HISTORY AT OUR DOORSTEP**

Even as we try to teach our students about what is going on around the world, I want them to see that there is a lot to learn in Singapore as well. They may read about racial and religious intolerance around the world but many do not realise the efforts and progress Singapore has made in building social cohesion. To get them to see this, we came up with a trail to see how common spaces in the neighbourhood build social defence and bond the ethnic groups. We got them to take videos, photos and look for information as they went round stations like Community Centres (CC) and food centres in the neighbourhood.

In the CC, they collected data from posters, found out about different courses offered, and noted how events involved the whole community, bonding different generations and races together. They interviewed people and found out that the role of the CC is one that integrates residents through various activities. Some students were inspired by what they saw and went back to volunteer at the CC.

I am happy when the subject comes alive for my students and they no longer find Humanities dry and boring but start enjoying the learning process. The best thing is when they take ownership of their learning.

After the teachers came up with the neighbourhood trail, the National Education student ambassadors from the Normal (Academic) (N(A)) stream suggested doing a smartphone trail about the history and heritage of Clementi. We tapped on the SG50 funding and the students took ownership of the project

and worked with the alumni for its launch in August.

The documentation of the rich heritage of Clementi is a good way for them to give back to society. They produced two versions, one for fellow students and one for the residents. Through this, they saw their role in preserving the past. They gained understanding of the Singapore story through their neighbourhood, and were able to apply the tools and skills they learnt from Humanities, like inference, corroboration and comparison.

In the process of collecting oral histories, they connected with the older residents of Clementi. First-hand accounts of the residents' trials and tribulations are one of the most powerful ways to bring the Humanities alive to students and motivate them in the subject.

#### BELIEF IN A CHILD

To motivate students, I believe in relationship building. A teacher has to believe in the



when they do better than how you might have done, that is your greatest reward as a teacher.

*"She makes me feel that I'm not alone on the journey to score better. That makes me want to work harder for the subject, not just for myself but to make her proud."*

Nurfatin Ilyya Bte Abdul Rahim, 16  
Sec 4, Clementi Town Secondary

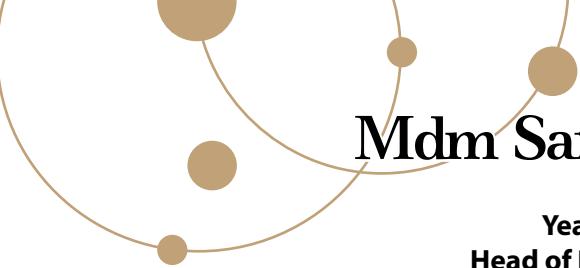
child and the child has to know that. The power of belief is something that cannot be underestimated. If they know you are willing to work with them, they can surpass our expectations.

A strong teacher-student relationship is necessary to help a child. Sometimes a child who is not doing well academically could be facing other problems like anxiety or low self-esteem.

I enjoy working with at-risk students to help turn them around. We partnered the National University of Singapore (NUS) Angsana College to help students in the N(A) stream with disciplinary issues. Dr Tan Lai Yong, Singapore's "barefoot" doctor, motivated them during a talk, while a mentorship programme with NUS undergraduates inspired them. They learnt good study strategies like mind mapping and that helped them.

As a Humanities teacher, my aim is to develop discerning, empathetic citizens with the humility to serve. Humanities is a lens for them to better understand the world we live in today – I hope they learn from past events and strive for a better future.

When students grow and develop not only in academics but also in character,



# Mdm Safidah Bte Samsudin

**Year Head (Upper Primary)  
Head of Department (Mother Tongue)**  
*Da Qiao Primary School*

***"The hunger which drove me to greater heights is a value I pass on to my students."***



*Squeals of delight from playing basketball, Snap and Jenga games are not the usual sounds one would hear from a Primary Six class, but Mdm Safidah Binte Samsudin wants her Malay Language students to play games so they enjoy their learning of the language better. Beyond the fun and games, she also finds ways to transmit life values through her classes.*

## **FUN WITH MALAY**

I once asked my students to come for my Malay lesson in sports attire. I also told them to study their composition phrases the night before.

Instead of the usual classroom lesson that day, they played basketball. When they scored a goal, they had to give me a relevant phrase – about sweat trickling from their head for instance – before I gave them the points. This lesson took place from 12.30pm to 1.30pm and it was when most of them would normally start to switch off. This time, I got them moving! It was amazing how they kept asking me, when are we playing again?

Children love games! They play, they laugh, they learn. So even though my Primary Six students are in the final lap leading up to the PSLE, I let them play games in class whenever possible. Once, they got to play Snap. The difference was that they had to shout 'Snap!' when they saw a matching Malay proverb, rather than a matching picture. They also had to create towers of wooden blocks in our own classroom version of Jenga, and then carefully remove blocks one by one without causing its collapse. In our game, I wrote half-sentences on the blocks and they had to extract the ones which made up the second half of the sentence.

I created all these resources on my own because in general, there are fewer Malay language materials available. Most of the games in the stores are English-medium games, which I buy and then improvise on.

## **MAKING AN IMPACT ON PEERS**

The opportunity to speak at an international conference in Brunei back in 2010 allowed me to share about comprehension skills to teachers from different parts of the world. It is important that we share new ways of teaching with the community. At a time where even Malay families are beginning to use English as the main language of communication, it has become increasingly challenging for Mother Tongue teachers to engage their students, and we have to work together.

I lead a group of Malay Language teachers from our cluster schools. We were concerned why Malay children were not doing well in comprehension and we went to each other's schools to observe lessons, exchanged ideas and came up with a reading strategy for comprehension using symbols, which has been adopted in our school. Students are better able to extract comprehension answers by referring to symbols such as a heart next to a feeling expressed in a



passage. Other symbols are used to identify characters, cause and effect, the moral of the story, etc.

I have also helped my peers to do their work better by shining a spotlight on what they are good at rather than on what they are lacking in. To understand positive education, I travelled to Sydney for a conference, and was later sent to Melbourne for a school attachment. When I returned, I helped the school staff to identify their strengths. It made a huge difference, because in just one instance, someone found to be strong in social intelligence was put in charge of forming partnerships with people outside of school.

#### **IMPARTING LIFE VALUES**

Likewise, my students feel good when I praise them for something they do well in. It is nice to start the day with good stories, especially if the story is about a boy from class whom I saw picking up a piece of litter the day before. Usually, these stories are about students who have displayed good behaviour.

I have many opportunities to shape values and character in the classroom. Students get to exercise integrity, as I keep a stack of about 100 Malay books which I call my 'Honesty Library' because there is no check-in, check-out system. Students can simply pick a book off the shelf if it catches their attention, without having to think about checking it out. They are expected to put the book back once they are done reading.

Even helping them to choose the right words to say at the right time to the right person builds up self-awareness. When asking for help from friends, for instance, I teach my students to not just say, "Let me have it" but to use polite phrases like, "May I have it, please?" I constantly remind them of this as habits are built from the things we do and say every single day.

Some students tell me what is most encouraging to them is my humble beginnings, to which they can relate. When I say that I grew up in a one-room flat where a curtain separated our living room and bedroom, they sit up because they may be living the same way. However, their biggest

take-away is when they find out that I worked my way to a better life.

Having come from a background where my family depended on my father's single income, I knew that education was the key to success. Even though I did not do well enough in my 'A' levels to go to university, I tried again as a private candidate in my early 20s when I was already working as a teacher, and I did well. My dream was to go to the National University of Singapore, but again, my plans were foiled when I was not accepted. It was a blessing in disguise for I later found a place at the University of Malaya, which had a much stronger Malay Language programme. What I studied there fuelled my love for the Malay language, which led me down this career path.

The hunger which drove me to greater heights is a value I pass on to my students. I tell them my story with a purpose. I want them to know: only you can change things and break the vicious cycle. You must have the hunger to want it. If I can do it, you can do it too.

They also feel proud when I create opportunities for them to give back to the community, through their grasp of the Malay language. One of our most meaningful out-of-school engagements was when I partnered the Hwi Yoh Community Centre (CC). During the CC's Malay Language event, our students manned two booths on Malay culture and traditional games like *chapteh* and *batuselumbat* (five stones).

These are the values and opportunities which I would want my own children's teachers to provide. I have four children aged 9 to 15, and I must be the teacher I



want my children's teachers to be. There is a Malay term – *Amanah* – which aptly describes my duty to see that the students reach their potential, so I can safely hand them over after Primary Six to run the next lap.

*"How Mdm Safidah worked hard to achieve her goals is inspiring to me, and I want to do the same. Right now my goal is to score an A for Malay in my PSLE."*

*Alden Malabanan, 12  
Pri 6, Da Qiao Primary*



# Mdm Ang Siew Theng

**School Staff Developer**  
*Haig Girls' School*

*"To do this, I listen to my students not just with the ears, but with my heart."*



*Psychology-trained Mdm Ang Siew Theng, better known as Mrs Grace Chia, believes that children learn well in a happy environment. She strives to boost the feel-good factor in her class by engineering a positive classroom climate, giving her girls opportunities to prove themselves, caring for them and teaching them to reflect on their blessings.*

## THE DIFFERENCE HAPPINESS MAKES

Perhaps happiness is under-rated. In the pursuit of results and material success, I think people – even children – sometimes forget how to be happy.

As a psychology-trained teacher, I want my students to be happy learners. Research has shown that when children are in a classroom with a positive climate, it reinforces their sense of well-being and development, and they learn better as a result. It would be very sad if I taught students who did well on paper but who were not happy children.

## EXCITED TO LEARN

I try to engineer classroom experiences which will keep the students joyful and excited.

From the time I step in, I do not just say, "Good morning, class." I will include extra words, adjectives, phrases or nouns which will give a hint of what the lesson is about. For instance, before I begin a lesson on commitment, I say to the class, "Good morning, committed Six Joy!" All it takes is a few extra words, but first impressions count and my enthusiasm and positivity set the tone for the rest of the lesson. This is what my students remember me for, and if I forget my special greeting, they will remind me to say it!

Giving the students control of the class also makes them light up. Instead of standing there teaching and telling them what to do, I empower them by giving them specific roles to take on. Once, I got them to pretend to be English examiners. I gave them newspaper articles and asked them to set cloze passage questions for their friends. This forced them to think about which words to blank out, and how an examiner would set questions. They ended up much more aware of what goes into the setting of a cloze passage, and some even asked their friends, "Why did you blank this word out? It doesn't make sense."

They like to boast too and say, "I was an examiner today! I set a question for my friend!" When I asked if they wanted more passages, they said yes. I might add that they are usually not as enthusiastic as cloze passages are difficult to do. In the process, they learn about graciousness, because they realise that being an examiner and setting a cloze passage is not easy. I find that the exercise is good for character-building as they put themselves in the shoes of others. I also want them to take these 'careers' out into the real world, as far as possible. So, when I asked them to become writers when writing their essays, I found platforms for their writing to be put up in the public domain. I encouraged them to write letters

to the *What's Up* newsletter, and submit entries to the Post Office Savings Bank KidsWrite Campaign. Getting a good essay grade is one thing, but a child who sees her work in a published book or magazine is an ecstatic child!

#### CARING FOR GOOD

Happy learners care for others, and they know they are cared for too. To do this, I listen to my students not just with the ears, but with my heart.

When I started out as a Beginning Teacher, I had a student who had low self-esteem and was very shy. Her mother died some time ago and I wanted to reach out to her, to see how I could help her. I gave her and a few other students extra lessons after school. Now, she is in her 20s and is an air stewardess. Every year – for 15 years – she has sent me a message on my birthday, to let me know that I have made a difference in her life.



Then there was another student whom I noticed was very tired in class. I called her mother up, and found out that she slept late waiting for her mother to come home from work. Her mother made a conscious effort to come home earlier after that, and the student was very appreciative of what I did. In caring for the students, one of the things I do which the students sometimes find

puzzling is that I am willing to say sorry. It is my way of showing that I care about how they feel. There could have been a day where I felt a little frustrated, and may have scolded a student more than she deserved. I will then apologise to the student and explain why. This is also my way of showing them that it is all right to admit that we make mistakes.

#### GRATEFUL AND HAPPY

A character trait which studies have shown to be closely linked to happiness is the ability to be grateful. Sometimes, people are unhappy because they compare themselves to others. It is also very easy nowadays, even for children, to complain on social media. Being thankful and grateful is therefore a gift, a trait which we can try to nurture in school.

This has personal resonance. My parents were hawkers who sold fish balls and raw food in the wet market, and I am therefore very thankful for the education system, which allowed the daughter of parents who do not speak a word of English to obtain a Masters in Developmental Psychology.

To help the students exercise what I call their 'gratitude muscle', I started the Gratitude Project in Haig Girls' School this year with two other teachers. Instead of having weekly assembly in the hall, the girls start their day in the classroom with a set of questions which prompts them to think about the privileges they enjoy: What do you like about your room? What do you like about your school? What do you appreciate about your country?

We print 'gratitude vouchers' for them, so they can give it to someone every time



they want to show their appreciation. Even teachers and parents who volunteer in the school can grab one of these vouchers to give thanks. We have noticed that the girls complain less since the Gratitude Project started.

As they reflect on their blessings, my hope is that it will blossom into a habit, and I would have played some part in helping them to grow up to be happy adults.

*"I am always happy in her class. Not only does she always have a smile on her face, she listens to what I have to say."*

Vanesse Ng, 12  
Pri 6, Haig Girls' School



# Mdm Ong Siew Har

**Year Head (Upper Secondary)**

Juying Secondary School

**"We were eating in Texas Chicken in Vivo City one day when I asked the manager if I could bring 40 students for a visit..."**



*Mdm Ong Siew Har turns family outings into an impromptu recce session for learning journeys, and shopping trips become a way for her to make contact with business owners who can inspire her students. She is resourceful and always on the lookout for ways to help her students learn.*

## OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL

I know the difference education can make in my students' lives because I came from a poor family. I got to where I am today because I seized the opportunities in life, and I would like to do the same for my students.

When I was ten, my father suddenly lost his job as a butcher. I have five other siblings and we all pitched in to help earn money, either by selling Christmas cards or working in a fruit stall. I had to consider if it would cost my mother more money to switch on the light or increase the fan speed. So, I fully understand how hard it is to sustain interest and motivation to come to school when things at home are difficult.

For instance, I have a student in Secondary Four who has to send her younger sister to childcare and take care of her needs because their mother no longer lives with them. I empathise with her and try to apply for bursaries for her. As a parent, I know how hard it is to look after a child. How much more having to play mother at 16 and juggle studying for the 'O' levels!

For four years, I ran a programme for students with a lack of motivation to excel, called the 'Success Programme'. The aim

was to build character and competencies like resilience and self-confidence through talks on study skills and motivation, as well as team bonding outings to the Singapore Flyer and West Coast Park. We talked about the definition of success, what they wanted to achieve and how they might be able to get there. I wanted my students to reflect on their own lives and expand their horizons.

Last year, I realised we had a number of students from non-intact families who had problems in school and I wanted to reach out to them. My Vice-Principal and I decided to invite teachers from the school management committee to "adopt" a child. The aim is to love and engage the students, so we meet them, talk to them and have meals with them. Through this, I hope they can see that someone cares for them and be motivated to try harder in school.

I know the challenges they will face if they do not learn well. I was the only one among my siblings from the Normal (Academic) stream but I managed to make it to the National University of Singapore. I am thankful for the pathways we have created.

## ALWAYS ON THE LOOKOUT

I keep an eye for opportunities for my students, even when I am out with my

family. We were eating in Texas Chicken in Vivo City one day when I asked the manager if I could bring 40 students for a visit because I wanted to teach them about customer service in a food and beverage outlet. It is easier to establish networks face-to-face while I am there at the restaurant than to send a cold email and wait for a reply.

When I went to Universal Studios, I got in touch with the manager and it paved the way for me to bring my students there. When I conduct field trips, I find it more effective to do it on my own rather than to engage a vendor as I am able to extend my students' learning from the field trips into the classroom.

For those who need extra help with their studies, I have worked with the Chinese Development Assistance Council and Mendaki to start a class on Saturday. I also linked up with Nanyang Technological University's student union and their undergraduates come in on Saturdays to teach and inspire our students.

When I go for meetings with external organisations like the South West Community Development Council, I find out about meals and transport allowances, and student bursaries. I had a friend who was moving house, and he did not want many things, so I moved a television for playing Xbox games, two iPads and movie DVDs to our Students' Centre. The students are rewarded with a visit to the centre when they have collected enough stickers for good behaviour.

On another occasion, I got to know a gentleman who overcame adversity, and I invited him to share his story with my

students. Mr Hong Chee Joo is a part-time polytechnic lecturer who has completed 42 online courses. He had a spine problem since young, yet in spite of this, he continued to learn and became successful. He motivated my students and coached them in their Direct Polytechnic Admission interviews. My students were inspired to be the best learners that they could be.

#### AUTHENTIC LEARNING AT ITS BEST

The work with external partners provides the students with an opportunity to learn in authentic settings. My students are excited about learning and they can see that learning is beyond doing well for examinations.



When I taught Elements of Office Administration, I brought students to visit SingPost and they saw for themselves how to sort out mail and be good receptionists. I also coordinated with my Administration Manager to let my students handle office work such as taking phone calls, messages and filing of documents.

As for Elements of Business Skills which I am teaching now, I wanted my students to understand how customer service is practised in real-life. So the subject came alive for them the day I brought them to Texas Chicken in Vivo City and Mel's Drive-in in Universal Studios where they experienced for themselves the hospitality shown to diners.



I notice that students become more interested in their studies when they are able to relate what they learn to real life. That is why I continually make the effort to link up with these external agencies. At the same time, these are good learning opportunities for my students as part of their education and career guidance programme.

Learning takes place throughout life. I am currently taking a part-time Master's degree because the knowledge and skills will further help me to be a better teacher.

I believe that through purposeful education in school, students stand an equal chance to be leaders in society.

*"She's a teacher but she's like a mother to me."*

*Nurshaiffah Bte Rahmad, 17,  
Sec 5, Juying Secondary*



# Ms Ng Pei Sun

**Head of Department (Science)**  
Marsiling Secondary School



**"As for the students, it is the small things you do every day that makes them feel they are special and you care for them."**

*Ms Ng Pei Sun loves Chemistry but chose to study Engineering in university, wanting to see how the subject could be applied in life. Today, she helps her students relate textbook lessons to the real world.*

## BRINGING SCIENCE TO LIFE

What is the taste of carbon dioxide?

We tell our students that it is an acidic gas, but how many of us have actually tasted it? I recently bought a soda stream machine that carbonates water by pumping carbon dioxide into it, and brought it to school so my students could try it out for themselves. When they tasted the gassy water and realised it was sour, they realised that something bought in a supermarket could be explained by Chemistry. That is how you hook them to a subject – by showing them that Science is relevant to their daily lives.

Our school has an Applied Learning Programme in Environment Education. We have had lessons where students bring their electrical appliances from home to create a mock-up of a house. Just making the classroom look like a house helps them make a connection to their own lives! They then go from the “kitchen” to the “living room” to do a power audit, to find out for themselves how much electricity each appliance used.

In the past, our Environment Education programme was more focused on content, but now students get to investigate environmental problems through experiments. To teach students about solar

power, they built a flag-raising pulley system that was powered by the sun, and we tried it out as part of the SG50 celebrations recently. Projects like these show our students the links between various subjects like Mathematics, Science and Design & Technology. This cannot be done through textbooks alone.

## OUT AND ABOUT

Sometimes, bringing Science to life means taking the students out of school, and reaching out to external partners. For example, to help my Secondary Three students see the technology used in a green school, I linked up with Republic Polytechnic (RP) lecturers who showed my students around the campus to observe the green features such as solar panels, shields for windows, automated sensors and design of the rooftop park. These green features reduce energy and water used by the buildings. My students were very familiar with the campus, as RP is near our school and they use the library all the time, yet, they had never noticed all these green features.

They learnt to appreciate efforts made to conserve the environment and understand better the way buildings are designed. For example, full length glass panels allow maximum natural light to enter into

buildings while automated doors prevent heat from entering air-conditioned venues, thus reducing energy used for cooling the venues.

#### IT GOES BOTH WAYS

This partnership with RP is a win-win situation. Not only do our students visit their campus, we also welcome RP students to our school to investigate the environmental conditions. When they come, a small group of our students tag along with them. Our students get to use equipment from the polytechnic, such as the light sensor and air quality sensor – expensive equipment that our school does not have. Instead of litmus paper, our students use digital probes. This is authentic learning, because they are privy to specialised equipment similar to that used in the engineering industry.

As a teacher, we may have ideas and content, but we may not always have the expertise and broader industrial knowledge. This is where other external partnerships, for example, with curriculum specialists from the Science Centre, come in handy. These experts are able to give advice to us on what we can purchase to actualise a project. So, both parties work together to make the



programme enriching for the students. In this symbiotic relationship, we need them as much as they need us to further enrich our students' learning.

I know these programmes have an impact, because some students have gone into environment-related courses after graduation, like Horticulture and Landscape Management at Ngee Ann Polytechnic and Environmental Management and Water Technology at Singapore Polytechnic. Some have gone on to work in environment agencies such as National Parks. Two of my students even told me they want to embark on a recycling business! When I hear that, I feel that our efforts have paid off.

#### RELATIONSHIPS MATTER

Teaching our students well requires good working relationships with our external partners, but what matters even more to me are the internal relationships I have with my fellow teachers and my students. I set aside time to talk to younger teachers and let them know I am always here to support them. If they look for me at my table, I will put aside my work and talk to them. Making time for these chats extend beyond school hours and beyond school walls too, because building these relationships matters to me.

As for the students, it is the small things you do every day that makes them feel they are special and you care for them. I greet all students with a smile even if I do not teach them. I will make small talk with them when I see them along the corridor. These are some of the ways they feel a teacher is approachable and friendly. In the canteen, I do not mind sitting with them to talk about things that are beyond Chemistry. I enjoy listening to them. This is part of my nature



and the main reason I came to teaching is to be able to interact with them.

By building a strong and positive teacher-student relationship, I can help students draw out their innate potential. Only when you have forged a relationship can you then observe their strengths and weaknesses. You can help them overcome their weaknesses, focus on their strengths, and let them see what they are capable of doing.

#### MORE THAN GRADES

At the end of the day, what matters most to me is a student's interest in Science. Students come in with different aptitudes, and I cannot expect all of them to get As. I am more interested in whether a student can explain a Science concept, rather than whether they have managed to do well in the examination by memorising the answers. The examination is a one-off event – if you are nervous during the examination, you may not get the grade. It does not mean you have not mastered the concept.

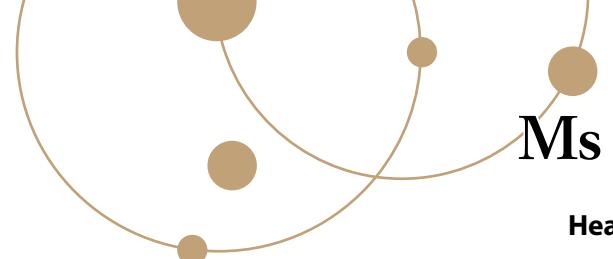
I should know – as I share with my students,

despite being a Chemistry teacher, I scored only a B for Chemistry as I was not able to manage my stress during my 'A' levels practical. However, I was very sure I wanted to teach. At the same time, my Engineering degree provided me with industrial experience that I bring to the classroom.

As a Head of Department, I have realised that teaching is not a one-man show – it involves working with external partners, strong relationships with teachers, and the students' own belief in themselves. Everyone needs to come together to bring Science to life.

*"After a while, I got myself to raise my hand. It sounds like a small thing but to me it's a big thing."*

Sophia Zahra Bte Zufri, 16  
Sec 4, Marsiling Secondary



# Ms Ng Bih Huey

**Head of Department (ICT)**  
*Mee Toh School*



**"One lesson which left many of the students squealing was when I brought in fishes from the wet market during Science class."**

*Inspired by her schooling years at her primary school, Miss Ng Bih Huey sustains a variety of innovative classroom efforts, to create special learning moments for her primary school students which they will carry with them years on.*

## LITTLE THINGS THAT COUNT

When an opportunity came up after the examinations to do something purposeful with my seven-year-olds, I decided to get them to sew their own beanbags to play Hopscotch. It is not something that many of our children get to do today. The novelty excites them.

The parents were supportive and joined the children in packing the needles, thread and cloth. Someone asked curiously, "Why do you want to do this with the class?" I explained that often, it is these little things we do as teachers that will make a difference to the children's positive experiences in school. Incidental learning can take place as the children persevere and overcome their apprehension of the task. Yes, we could choose not do this but it would be a missed opportunity for us to create a precious learning memory.

My own experience in primary school has taught me to value the little things that teachers do and treasure these learning moments. I vividly remember my joy when my Art teacher brought me and a classmate to take art lessons from an auntie at a neighbourhood crafts shop to recognise my efforts in Art, and how my Chinese teacher took time to praise us individually when

we took turns to read aloud in class. These little things that my teachers did provided me with a sense of accomplishment as a learner and I try to do the same for my students today.

As I seize opportunities to do the things that count, I am reminded that often, it is the many little things we do with the children – a word we say, a smile we flash, something we stop to explain – that make a difference.

## NOVEL CLASSROOM EXPERIENCES

Making lessons memorable is important to me.

One lesson which left many of the students squealing was when I brought in fishes from the wet market during Science class. The children had shared earlier that they had never been to the wet market so I decided to bring the wet market to them. It was very smelly and one Primary Three boy cried when I asked him to feel the fish scales! He has never touched them before and that experience made him braver. The children dug out the gills to learn what they really looked like. I also brought tiny frogs to class for the children to release in the garden when I taught the topic of amphibians, and I could tell from their gasps and unwillingness to let the frogs go that they would not forget the

experience soon. This was another chance to make learning memorable.

I enjoyed Art as a child – I believe most children do – and I try to marry Art with my lessons. In Science, I draw comics and diagrams to help the children make sense of the information. In English, we convert comprehension passages into comics. This deepens their understanding and I am often so proud of their creative drawings that I take photos of them and show them to other people!

#### LIFE BEYOND THE CURRICULUM

Primary school children are impressionable, and it is at this young age that I am moved to help them step forward with a confident, can-do spirit to develop positive habits and sound values, beyond the subjects I teach.

Cocola is a mascot I created seven years ago as part of a rewards system where students earn cocodollars if they are diligent and display good habits. The students love Cocola, and the cocodollars go a long way to

motivate them to write neatly or work hard. They also learn about delayed gratification and responsibility to keep their cocodollars safe, because they only get to spend their ‘money’ towards the end of the year!

‘Shopping Day’ is an exciting class event when all the students become little entrepreneurs, setting up their own stalls by bringing things from home or making handmade items to sell to one other. I was very touched when I saw how my students shared their cocodollars with their friends who did not do as well in class, and had less to spend. I saw that they were learning values for life, practising empathy, kindness and charity.

I saw another opportunity for the students to learn beyond grades when I was put in charge of designing Mee Toh School’s Heritage Centre and the school history curriculum. What better way to make the centre relevant, than to inspire students with stories of the founder and the pioneers? So, beyond a browse-and-gaze experience, I



worked with a team of teachers to plan the school history curriculum so that students who visit the centre with their teachers would learn about values like compassion and integrity that guided the school’s founder and pioneers.

I planned for the students – not just teachers – to become ambassadors under the School Heritage Ambassadors Programme and be able to present the stories in the Heritage Centre to visitors, to help build their confidence and oratorical skills, and more importantly, nurture a greater sense of school belonging.

#### POWER OF ONE

I am a teacher who believes in the fundamentals of education. I go the extra mile to create learning moments that the children can connect with to make learning meaningful and relevant. I believe many teachers do this in their own ways. Seizing opportunities to create joyful and meaningful learning experiences is invaluable, for these are the things that the children will remember individually and share collectively.

It means something to the children when we do our work well. For that reason, I make it a point to support and energise my colleagues. We work in teams and I share opportunities for learning to inspire my colleagues. It takes consistent work, but it is necessary because every time I successfully enthuse one teacher, the influence multiplies when the teacher gives back to the students. This is what I call the power of one. Like each starfish that matters to the young man in the Starfish story, every student counts and every teacher makes a difference.



I hope my students remember their learning moments in 30 years’ time, the way I remember my own primary school teachers and experiences – earning and spending cocodollars, being given a chance to speak to a Minister, visiting the 7th Storey Hotel before it was torn down, taking the old lift as a class, smelling and touching fishes during Science lesson, drawing hopscotch outlines with chalk, sewing their own beanbags, writing thankful messages to appreciate people around them, singing National Day songs with pride and drawing their own comics.

These experiences are part of the tapestry of fond childhood memories and sense of wonder that comes with learning and experiencing the world as a child, in which I have played a part in weaving.

*“Actually I didn’t really care about the cocodollars, but when Ms Ng told us we could go ‘shopping’ with her cocodollars at the end of the year, I became very motivated to write neatly and behave well in class.”*

Brina Goh, 11  
Pri 5, Mee Toh



# Mr Muhamad Salahuddin B Ibrahim

**Lead Teacher (Biology)**  
Serangoon Junior College



**“Former students still call me when they need help or a listening ear. That is why I have not changed my mobile phone number since I started teaching in 1998!”**

*As a new teacher, Mr Muhamad Salahuddin was thrown into the deep end. Through the process, he emerged stronger and is today an advocate of training and support for both new and experienced teachers. He leads the way as a tireless mentor and hopes to create communities of teachers who fearlessly share and learn from one another.*

### THE TEACHER’S TEACHER

Right after I stepped out from teacher training, my first job as a Beginning Teacher (BT) was preparing materials, lecturing, tutoring and marking the work of over 100 students across two levels! I kept this up for three years – and yes, it was a challenge. I would say I was fortunate, because this steep learning curve proved to be a career-defining moment. It made me see just how much support BTs needed. The first few years of teaching can truly make or break a teacher, and I am driven to help those I encounter find their place in the teaching service.

### A HEART FOR NEWBIES

Since 2008, I have thoroughly enjoyed mentoring about four new teachers every year by giving them advice, observing them in class and helping them to hone their craft.

A common issue they face is how to ensure that their students do not just enjoy lessons, but really understand what is being taught. Teaching teenagers requires not just classroom engagement, but also cognitive engagement. The key skill to getting there is through questioning and most BTs find this difficult. Asking students good questions and responding to their answers in a way to

help them arrive at a ‘eureka’ moment is not instinctive.

They also want to know how to connect with students. This is an area close to my heart, for I strongly believe that teachers need to emotionally connect with their students to motivate and influence them. Often, the building of these emotional bridges occurs outside the classroom.

I like to tell them a story of how I got through to a student who was lazy but reticent. She had failed her first year of college, scraped through to the second, and I was convinced that I had to gain her confidence to boost her performance. There were certainly no opportunities during school time but I seized the chance during a two-day overnight camp. I gamely joined in the activities and took the time to speak to her and understand her better.

Once I gained her trust, she revealed that she acted like she did not care because she was afraid to fail. I then knew that I had to let her savour small successes. I taught her study skills and she started doing well in tests. Imagine my pride when her ‘A’ levels results were good enough for her to get into Nanyang Technological University, where



she chose to study Biological Science!

The connections that I make with my students stay strong for years even after they leave the college. Former students still call me when they need help or a listening ear. That is why I have not changed my mobile phone number since I started teaching in 1998!

It is my hope that the teachers I help will go on to make the same sort of impact on their students. Happily, most of the Biology teachers I help do well in Practicum: three obtained Distinction grades. Another eventually became the Subject Head (Biology) in my college, went on to do her post-graduate studies and is currently with the Curriculum Planning and Development Division.

#### **GUIDANCE FOR EXPERIENCED TEACHERS**

Experienced teachers who find themselves doing something new, or who simply want to improve themselves, appreciate guidance too.

One area which I have championed is providing support for new Civics Tutors (CT), who may be experienced teachers put in charge of a class for the first time. When I was a CT, I realised that I was the first in line to help students who were grappling with emotional or family issues, and that my administrative load was doubled. Even experienced teachers need to learn how to not only take care of their students, but themselves.

So I started a Mentor CTship programme in 2012. Senior Teachers with CT experience are assigned to stand side-by-side with new CTs, helping them to manage their time, troubleshoot and anticipate problems, deal with parents, get to know the class more intimately, and even go into the new CT's class to give pep talks. All CTs in my college are also given a 48-page booklet which I wrote two years ago over the December holidays called *Winning the Hearts and Minds of your Civics Group*, which dispenses tips on how to do this, like seizing the chance to chat with and get to know students before assembly.

#### **THE MORE WE GET TOGETHER**

I enjoy sharing what I know, because there is power in collaboration.

Even in my teaching, I find that when students support and learn from one another, they can achieve more than if they studied alone. When I was trying to help one of my students to gain confidence in her academic results, I got her classmates to support her because they spend more time with her than I do. Likewise, when I had to lead the JC's Biology cohort last year in the absence of a Subject Head, I got them to motivate one another.

In helping teachers, I also create a wider support network. Once, a teacher confided in me. She was newly married, but she had problems managing her time between work and family. I brought in other teachers to work with her and the encouragement from others helped her during that difficult period.

This collaboration, if taken to a national level, can truly uplift the profession. That is why I work closely with the Academy of Singapore Teachers (AST) to run workshops at a national level, for it enables me to help teachers beyond my college. It is through these workshops that I have gotten to know teachers from other schools, who have called on me to mentor them or help them with research projects.

More importantly, these workshops empower teachers to take charge of their work and start influencing their peers in school. For instance, I helped initiate a structured two-year induction programme with a Master Teacher at AST, for new Biology



teachers in JCs and secondary schools. We used to run it together, but now other Senior Teachers have stepped up to conduct the course. They volunteered to help their peers and that is truly empowering.

Even at a personal level, teachers may sometimes think they are not good enough to 'instruct' their colleagues, but it is not about knowing everything. It is about allowing the teacher to discover things for themselves. Good mentoring, like good teaching, is all about the mentor asking the right questions. Just start the conversation.

*"He compliments us after we speak up in class, and no one is afraid to make mistakes now."*

*Jasmine Towers, 17  
JC 1, Serangoon Junior College*



# Mdm Noryatimah Bte Yunos

**Lead Teacher (Geography)**  
Woodlands Ring Secondary School



**"You need to involve them rather than dictate what they should do."**

*Mdm Noryatimah Yunos noticed her students studying for the examinations at the last minute rather than revising consistently. Her solution? To do away with mid-year examinations, and introduce bite-sized assessments instead.*

## TEST LESS, LEARN MORE

I realised my students started mugging only two weeks before the examinations and would forget everything by the time examinations were over. My aim was to get them to study more regularly. I read a study by American researchers that suggested that mini tests at regular intervals could be more useful to learning.

My Principal, Mrs Kok Chwee Kee, was supportive, so we introduced short assessments of up to ten marks each. We would tell students when and what they would be tested on. Everyone was kept on their toes because we tested them every few weeks, yet it was manageable even for the weakest students, who became more inclined to study. Doing away with the mid-year examinations did not mean life would be easier for them. They knew every test counted.

In fact, these small assessments were a way for students to taste success. Success breeds success. Once they tasted success, they became hungry for more.

To our delight, we found that it worked. Students were studying more regularly. We discovered students' weaknesses through the tests and could help them improve more immediately. Removing the mid-year

examinations also meant we did not have to set aside term time to help students prepare and sit for examinations. We could have lessons all the way until the end of May and the semester became less rushed and more enjoyable.

Some teachers were worried that students would not be used to the rigour of examinations at the end of the year, so we introduced milestone tests in between. We kept the year-end examinations for both teachers and students to assess what they had learnt. We found that the mini tests allowed students to check their learning and prepared them better for the final-year examination.

In the two years that we piloted this, we have maintained our 'O' levels results. I am happy to say that the pilot run was such a success that we introduced this to all students from Secondary One to Three in 2012. It is still going strong!

## LET STUDENTS TAKE OWNERSHIP OF LEARNING

While removing the mid-year examination was a success, I knew that there was more – we had to give students more opportunities to take ownership of their learning.

Students now are different from our



generation. When I was in school more than 30 years ago, we could sit for long hours and concentrate but today, children are used to multitasking. If we were to just talk to them, we would lose their attention. You need to involve them rather than dictate what they should do.

So we started teaching in a way that actively engaged them. We had them go out of class to gather data – this gave them the opportunity to work with their friends, be resourceful and think of strategies to resolve any challenges faced. When they came back to class, I taught them to analyse the data, represent it in graphs, and provided feedback on their work before they presented it to their peers. We were co-constructing knowledge in a way that kept them engaged.

They took to this approach like fish to water and even went beyond what I imagined. I had taught them to conduct surveys and suggested they type out questions and I

would print the forms out for them. They said, "No need, we will just do the survey online." This way of learning has become second nature to them and they no longer ask me if a piece of work will be marked. They are more focused on the process of getting their work done, and doing it well, rather than on the end results alone.

#### TALENT-SPOT A CHILD'S STRENGTH

Apart from letting them take the lead when it comes to learning, I also ensure my students have opportunities to lead their friends in their areas of strength. This is important because when we focus on their strengths, they become more confident. If you focus on their weakness, it becomes a downward spiral. So I build them up and help them to improve.

I have seen enough examples over the years to know that this method works for even the most difficult child. If I have a misbehaving student, I start by tapping on his strength in simple ways, for example, getting his

assistance to help me with my books. Then, I work on other strengths.

I did not realise how deep an impact this strategy had on my students until one of them, Darius, wrote me a testimonial for this award. He said he changed for the better because I did not label him a naughty boy. And since I treated him like other students, he rose to the occasion. I was very heartened to hear that.

This encourages me to look out for a student's strengths and for opportunities in the school to harness that strength. It means spending time with them outside lessons to observe them.

Another example would be a student who came into school with a high T-score but was disengaged at the lower secondary level. When she came to my class in Secondary Three, I noticed she had leadership qualities and was good in English. I decided to tap on those strengths. Whenever the class needed to make announcements to the school for activities like fund-raising, she represented them. She is now a leader and a voice for the class. She confided in me that after I entrusted her with responsibility, she began to have a higher level of self-esteem.

I do the same thing with my teachers. We have a family-like culture and work together



for the common good of our students. I keep everyone's strengths constantly in my mind, and match strengths with opportunities.

#### EMPOWER TEENAGERS TO HELP OTHERS

I encourage students to take charge of their learning and also to use their talents to make a difference to those around them.

When they had a Values-in-Action project for the elderly, they chose to help an old lady who collects cardboard boxes. They helped her with the collection, packing and sales. I was impressed with their sincerity to help someone in need. The old lady appreciated their support and her simple stories taught my students the importance of being independent and having resilience when they are faced with challenges.

Our role as teachers is to impart the right values to our students, empower them to take ownership of their learning and make a difference to their families and society.

*"I'm now more willing to try new things because Mdm Noryatimah has taught me that trying doesn't harm me even though it might be scary."*

Darren Chua, 16  
Sec 4, Woodlands Ring Secondary

## President's Award for Teachers Finalists 2015



(From left to right)

**Ms Ng Bih Huey,**  
*Mee Toh School*

**Mdm Ang Siew Theng (Grace Chia),**  
*Haig Girls' School*

**Ms Lum Kit Kuan Melanie,**  
*Catholic Junior College*

**Mdm Safidah Bte Samsudin,**  
*Da Qiao Primary School*

**Mr Muhamad Salahuddin Bin Ibrahim,**  
*Serangoon Junior College*

**Mdm Tauled Tunisha Bte Mohd Paser,**  
*CHIJ (Kellock) Primary School*

**Dr Tay Lee Yong,**  
*Beacon Primary School*

**Mdm Yehidaah Beevi d/o Shaik A,**  
*Clementi Town Secondary School*

**Mdm Halimah Bte Jumaha,**  
*Bedok South Secondary School*

**Mdm Tan Dai Hwee,**  
*Anderson Junior College*

**Ms Ng Pei Sun,**  
*Marsiling Secondary School*

**Mdm Ong Siew Har,**  
*Juying Secondary School*

**Mdm Noryatimah Bte Yunos,**  
*Woodlands Ring Secondary School*

## President's Award for Teachers Past Winners

**1998**

**Mrs Lim Tai Foon**  
*St. Hilda's Primary School*

**Mrs Geetha Creffield**  
*Anglo-Chinese Junior College*

**1999**

**Mrs Juliana Donna Ng Chye Huat**  
*Nan Hua Primary School*

**Mr Wilfred Philips James**  
*Dunman Secondary School*

**2000**

**Mrs Ng Peng Huat**  
*Nan Hua Primary School*

**Mrs Caryn Ann Leong**  
*Ping Yi Secondary School*

**Mdm Tan Liang See**  
*The Chinese High School*

**2001**

**Mrs Chin Ngan Peng**  
*Kong Hwa School*

**Mrs Nora Teo**  
*Punggol Primary School*

**Mr Lim Chiow Huat**  
*Broadrick Secondary School*

**Mrs Audrey Ting Yee Han**  
*Nanyang Girls' High School*

**2002**

**Mdm Stefane Tan Hugue Hwan**  
*Meridian Primary School*

**Mdm Tong Wai Han**  
*Ang Mo Kio Secondary School*

**Ms Koe Heong Yin**  
*The Chinese High School*

**2003**

**Mdm Long Miaw Ying**  
*Jurong West Primary School*

**Mrs Kheng Samuel nee Chua Mui Yee**  
*Lakeside Primary School*

**Mrs Roger Teng Siok Fun**  
*North View Secondary School*

**2004**

**Ms Goh Siew Hong**  
*Admiralty Primary School*

**Mrs Pramageetha Velmurugan**  
*Huamin Primary School*

**Mr Koh Cher Hern**  
*St. Hilda's Primary School*

**Mdm Rabiathul Bazriya**  
*Compassvale Secondary School*

**Mdm Ranjit Singh**  
*Pasir Ris Secondary School*



## President's Award for Teachers Past Winners

**2005**

**Miss Lim Siew Gek**  
*Ahmad Ibrahim Primary School*

**Mdm Noorismawaty Bte Ismail**  
*Jin Tai Secondary School*

**Mr Chew Tec Heng Edwin**  
*Sembawang Secondary School*

**2006**

**Mdm Bong Fui Lian Shirley**  
*Montfort Junior School*

**Mrs Tan Swan Liang Doris**  
*Temasek Primary School*

**Mr Nur Johari Salleh**  
*Deyi Secondary School*

**Mrs Goh Hui Cheng**  
*Paya Lebar Methodist Girls' School  
(Secondary)*

**Mr Sulaiman Bin Mohd Yusof**  
*Sembawang Secondary School*

**2007**  
**Mdm Yip Jee Cheng Jessie**  
*Mayflower Primary School*

**Mdm Parameswary d/o Sundar Rajoo**  
*Montfort Junior School*

**Mr Yeo Leng Quee**  
*Peirce Secondary School*

**Mdm Norlita Binte Marsuki**  
*Sembawang Secondary School*

**2008**

**Mrs Ong-Chua Li Ling Eileen**  
*Haig Girls' School*

**Mrs Lee Kok Hong**  
*Temasek Primary School*

**Mrs Lim-Ng Yee Ping Diana**  
*Coral Secondary School*

**2009**

**Mr Terry Tan Chee Liang**  
*Anglo-Chinese School (Primary)*

**Miss Cardoza Sharon Ann**  
*Farrer Park Primary School*

**Mdm Wong Lai Fong**  
*Anderson Secondary School*

**Miss Lucy Oliver Fernandez**  
*Catholic High School (Secondary)*

**2010**

**Mdm Emelyn Soon Bee Hong**  
*CHIJ (Kellock)*

**Mr Devindra Sapai s/o Indrasapai**  
*Seng Kang Primary School*

**Miss Teh Wan**  
*Townsville Primary School*

**Mrs Mohana Eswaran**  
*Regent Secondary School*

## President's Award for Teachers Past Winners

**2011**

**Mdm Chua Mui Ling**  
*Woodlands Ring Primary School*

**Miss Serene Han Tui Kin**  
*Montfort Junior School*

**Mdm Dianaros bt Ab Majid**  
*Haig Girls' School*

**Mr Chong Jack Sheng**  
*Woodlands Ring Secondary School*

**Mr Ganesan s/o Raman**  
*Fairfield Methodist School (Secondary)*

**2012**

**Mdm Anwara Khatun d/o Moklis Khan**  
*Haig Girls' School (Primary)*

**Ms Koh Su-Cheng**  
*Da Qiao Primary School*

**Mdm Tan Ying Fong Irene**  
*Telok Kurau Primary School*

**Mr Gejendran s/o V Krishnan**  
*Geylang Methodist School (Secondary)*

**Mr Yap Boon Chien**  
*Tanjong Katong Girls' School*

**2013**

**Mdm Shakila Jamal Mohamed**  
*Da Qiao Primary School*

**Mdm Chee Mui Choo Valerie**  
*Xinghua Primary School*

**Mr Lee Beng Wah**  
*Bedok Green Secondary School*

**Mdm Lee Yee Tyng**  
*Hougang Secondary School*

**Mdm Lim Chye Ling @ Nurul Huda**  
*Kent Ridge Secondary School*

**Mdm Chan Puay San**  
*Innova Junior College*

**2014**

**Mdm Lim Yen Peng Linda,**  
*Chongzheng Primary School*

**Miss Rezia Rahumathullah,**  
*Da Qiao Primary School*

**Miss Sim Lucy,**  
*Guangyang Primary School*

**Miss Wong Yoke Chan Wendy,**  
*Geylang Methodist School (Secondary)*

**Dr Muhammad Nazir Bin Amir,**  
*Greenview Secondary School*



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**Principals**  
*For recognising and affirming inspiring role models in your schools*

**Teachers**  
*For supporting your colleagues and fuelling their passion*

**Parents**  
*For acknowledging the efforts of our teachers to bring out the best in your child*

**Students**  
*For showing appreciation to your teachers who care for you*

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