

RELATING LITERATURE TO LIFE

MRS KAMALA CUMAR
Teacher, Paya Lebar MGS

Mrs Judy Wong, my Literature teacher in Upper Secondary had interesting lessons which she related to life experiences and I found them to be relevant and meaningful in our growing years. We did a number of role plays especially for Macbeth which was engaging.

For me, teaching English / Literature is like being part of the life of the students under our care as the subject provides opportunities for students to voice their feelings or thoughts about issues which are discussed during the lessons. I believe the consistency we have had has determined the standards for the students to adhere to and thus excel. Our past learning experience may have been more rote learning than today; however, we are receptive to new ideas and prepared to use the digital techniques to kindle students' interest in reading and creating awareness about the current events across the world.



MY TEACHERS, AND HOW I TEACH

MRS KOH EE LIN
Teacher, Paya Lebar MGS

I have always enjoyed English and Literature lessons as the lessons brought to me, a whole new world. This was especially so in Literature classes. It was, however, in English lessons where I had many opportunities for the learning of basic grammar rules that gave me a strong foundation in English.

Mrs Cumar was my Secondary 2 English teacher who believed very strongly in going through many grammar exercises using the school textbook and we, the students under her, spent many hours, both in school and at home, filling in the blanks and completing the drills.

In particular, I enjoyed the spelling and dictation sessions that Mrs Cumar would spring on the classes unannounced to sharpen our skills and to keep us on our toes.

In fact, both Mrs Winnie Tan and Mrs Judy Wong were also my English and Literature teachers respectively, when I was in Secondary 4 and from them, I grew to love the two subjects even more!

As I gained experience through the years as a teacher, I introduced different strategies to help students learn. For example, I used music to generate interest in the book 'I'm the King of the Castle'. I also used the strategy of 'hot seat', whereby I got the students to take on the role of the character and the rest of the students to ask the 'character' questions.

To meet the needs of the present generation of students, I try to engage them using a medium that they are used to, for example, the use of social media such as YouTube.

I feel extremely privileged to be part of the succession of English teachers in PLMGS. I am very proud to be able to help carry on the tradition of teaching English and English Literature to the younger generations of PL-Lites (a term the school uses for the students of PLMGS) and to inculcate a love for English.



PL Teachers

(L to R) : Mrs Claudette Poulter → Mrs Winnie Tan → Mrs Judy Wong → Mrs Kamala Cumar → Mrs Koh Ee Lin → Ms Chong See Hwei.

THE TORCH IS PASSED

MS CHONG SEE HWEI
Teacher, Paya Lebar MGS

My best memory was annotating my Literature texts with my many colour pens, and engaging class discussions in class, where I heard more from my teacher and friends, and learned different perspectives and views on the text, challenging my own perceptions of the text.

I love looking at words, analysing their nuances, and piecing together the themes, that opened my eyes to the world. Literature excited me so I want to pass on that excitement to my students as a teacher. I also enjoyed class discussions on my literature text, and I want to continue to have those discussions in my own classes.

My fondest memory was teaching similes and metaphors through the use of a pop song. The girls already knew the song so I could use what they knew and added on more learning points to it, and made them appreciate it more, in a literary sense.

From Mrs Koh Ee Lin, I learned new words to describe characters in Julius Caesar. Words I had never heard before such as 'obsequious', 'subservient' and 'Machiavellian'. Through that, I learned to appreciate words more, and also to improve in my

style of writing. As such, currently, I also try to teach my students new adjectives to help them describe characters more aptly.

I feel privileged and honoured, especially since I am the youngest teacher in the six generations of teachers. I feel I'm part of a heritage, a culture in PL, where we have committed and inspiring English / Literature teachers. All the teachers who have gone before taught not only the subject, but also character and values through the subjects. I hope to continue in a small way what I have learned from the teachers for the next generation.

