

# Happy Teachers' Day!



A RAFFLES PRESS SPECIAL

## TEACHERS' DAY 2022

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Flip to learn  
from your tutors  
yet again:  
this time about  
their lives!



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# FOREWORD

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By Anamika Ragu (23A01A), Chairperson

## TEACHING SEEMS TO BE QUITE THE ENDEAVOUR.

Like every job, it must have its own ups and downs; marking a legible paper with precise terminology you spent weeks drilling into students' minds and a (highly flattering) moment of fame whilst opening your inbox and finding— sandwiched between consult requests— an email from a Raffles Press reporter hounding you for an interview about your life. Or perhaps, taking a question mid-tutorial only to end up beginning your response with, “As mentioned in the lecture...”

Despite this, teaching can hardly be classified as just a job. It is by far the only one I have observed with such an overwhelmingly large proportion of highly qualified individuals driven by passion and very little regret for what they do. As unwavering pillars of support, our tutors consistently go above and beyond for us with the sort of dedication (and sometimes, sacrifice) that is not something that comes from just doing a job. Rather, they take real pride and care in everything they do.

What then culminates in elaborate and engaging lesson plans, memes squeezed into lecture slides, and relatable anecdotes in between content explanations, also leads students to wonder: what are our teachers like when they are not teaching?

Hence, what follows is yet another learning opportunity from our tutors— this time, about who they are outside the classroom and perhaps even some conversation starters for in between tutorials.

From introductions (“New Teachers”) to a scoop on their social lives (“Teachers’ Pets”) and fashion sense (“Teachers’ Drip”) to big ‘what-if’s (“Alternative Careers”), this Special hopes to satiate your curiosity and offer you a lighthearted break from studying, even for a little while. *[Click on the titles to be linked to a web version of the article.]*

Dear teachers, this is Raffles Press’s letter of thanks to you: a series of articles offering the school populace a window to your lives, to your multidimensional hobbies and fascinations, and more. You likely get this a lot— and yet not enough at all— but thank you; you are indispensable to this school, to who we are, and to who we will become.

And so, fellow students, join us in wishing the only learning resource from Raffles Institution you cannot sell on Carousell a very Happy Teachers’ Day!



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# JUST JOINED

By Lim Zhi Qi Victoria (23S06B), Saara Katyal (23S05A),  
and Tang Lanyun (23S05A)



## MS JUNIPER THANG

*Chemistry*

Y5 Chemistry teacher Ms Juniper Thang has more than a few tricks up her sleeve. Apart from being a proud Chemistry enthusiast, she also loves to immerse herself in the wonders of music and theatre. Apart from that, she has a passion for sport, and as the Soccer (Girls) teacher-in-charge, she will often join them in friendly matches.

Ms Thang's passion for music began as a young child when she took part in piano lessons, a common beginning for many of us in the music world. As she got older, her love for music grew, and she started playing for her church. During university, a time of growth and exploration, she picked up the saxophone and began to pen her thoughts down to turn into song lyrics. She wound up writing about all sorts of eclectic topics—according to her, “that’s what makes music fun!”

Ms Thang beams with pride as she describes releasing two songs just last year. As a musician, she draws inspiration from ‘the oldies’, such as Elton John, Billy Joel and Michael Jackson. When asked on whether she shares her hobby with her students, Ms Thang laughs, saying that she tends not to bring the subject up. Nevertheless, her intrepid students have managed to uncover her discography, going so far as to jokingly quote her lyrics to her face.

When Ms Thang isn’t teaching or playing music, she likes to pick up her skates and practise inline skating. Though she calls herself an amateur, after seeing a video of her displaying her skills, Raffles Press can confirm that Ms Thang does indeed have some sick moves. Ms Thang’s cool factor doesn’t stop there—perhaps due to her relative youth, she is definitely in with the times. In her short time here, she has identified and sometimes (ironically?) adopts elements of the RI lexicon like “mad gas”.

As a relatively new teacher without previous career experience, Ms Thang is on a constant quest to improve. For now, she just wants to make sure that she can deliver effective and enjoyable lessons, such that her students can walk away feeling like they’ve understood everything (a tall order for H2 Chemistry!).

Ultimately, Ms Thang, who says she’s never met a student she couldn’t love, advises her young charges to remember to love and be true to themselves.

**"Breaking out of other people’s expectations of you... it’s such a freeing way to live your life."**

# MS LIYANA TAHIR

*General Paper*



RI's newest GP teacher as of September 2022, Ms Liyana Tahir has had more than her fair share of unique experiences. A self-described "pursuer of knowledge for knowledge's sake", she completed a degree in sociology before finding her calling as a teacher. As someone with a variety of interests, she has previously worked in the local theatre scene, as well as doing odd jobs in the music scene.

These days, when she isn't busy with teaching, her favourite pastime is "Netflix and unconsciousness". Aside from that, she enjoys crafting and doing things with her hands, including dress-making, crocheting and metal-working. As an avid gamer, she is currently enjoying *Subnautica: Below Zero*, and is midway through *Legend of Zelda: Breath of the Wild*.

She loves to immerse herself in books of all different genres, ranging from speculative fiction and sci-fi to fantasy and historical fiction. However, she also empathises with the reading habits of the younger generation (or lack thereof), as she sees them as living in a world that is, at all times, inundated with information. Hence, she finds the ability to extract the essential from the superfluous to be of utmost importance.

Before she decided on teaching, Ms Liyana already knew that she wanted to work with young people, as she had hoped to connect with young people who represent a "completely different reality" from her. As a teacher, she aspires to give her students a bit more perspective on life in the "real world".

Ultimately, her advice to all students is to be kind. She understands that showing kindness in an unkind world is difficult, but believes all students need to live by this virtue, especially when they enter adulthood.

Ms Liyana recognises that right now, we are all going through a period of identity-searching, which can make us confused and vulnerable. Thus, she thinks that it is all the more vital for us to seek out emotional connection with those around us over the course of this journey. So be kind to everyone that you meet, because who knows how that person may help you grow!

"You need to become a good person who is able to go out and do good for others."

# MR ZACHARY LOW

## Literature

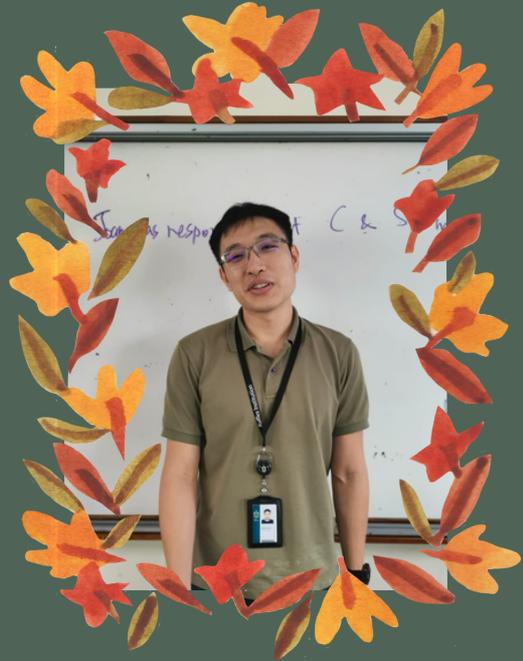
Mr Zachary Low is an unmissable presence along the RI corridors. His nondescript appearance belies his exuberant personality and easy familiarity with his students. Even in the days of the state-mandated face mask, his permanently amused expression was visible all the same.

A self-proclaimed “nerd”, Mr Low regularly plays the popular tabletop role-playing game Dungeons and Dragons (DND for short) together with his friends. It has become a routine social event, during which his old RI buddies get to “hang out and have dinner”, in his words. The game itself he finds to be a particularly compelling bonding activity, with a good balance between serious storytelling and joking around, as well as a tight-knit fan community to boot.

As a literature teacher, Mr Low is fascinated by narratives, seeing them as the “primary means through which mankind communicates”. DND ties neatly into this, with it being essentially a choose-your-own-adventure game wherein players roleplay as epic characters and create a story in real time. To Mr Low, the exploratory feeling of playing DND is able to resurrect his sense of childlike wonder — a core element of what it means to be a nerd.

Additionally, Mr Low, in his infinite nerd pride, will not hesitate to prove his “nerd cred” to you. He will talk your ear off while watching Peter Jackson’s Lord of the Rings movies (only the extended version, of course!), and can rattle off a list of must-read sci-fi books without hesitation.

Apart from that, Mr Low is an Old Boy of RI, a fact that draws a lot of interest. His old literature teacher, Ms Veera, is now his boss, something that he seems to feel no awkwardness about. “We have a very professional relationship... and I still call her Ms Veera!”



His past days at RI have granted him a unique perspective on its students of today. When asked about the difference between RI students then and now, his expression changes into a thoughtful one, and the conversation takes on a philosophical twist. He shares that over the years, he has noticed a shift in the way students cope with the batterings of life: whereas students in his time retreated into anger and sarcasm, students now tend to laugh and resign themselves to fate.

However, Mr Low is hopeful. He offers us an unforgettable piece of advice: we can always retreat to absurdism and humour as a way of coping, but at the end of the day we must continue actively searching for hope.

As a teacher, his greatest wish is to be able to impart this message unto his students. He hopes that his students will do justice to their potential, and selflessly love the people around them.

“Optimism can coexist with realism, but hope is something that must not be lost.”

# Teachers' Pets!

By Hsiao Jia Ying (23A01C), Nicolle Yeo Minh (23A01D),  
and Jolene Yee Xin Yi (23S03A)

No, not that kind of “teachers’ pet”. We’re referring to the literal furry household companions here. In this Teachers’ Day special, we explore the difficult (but rewarding!) journey into pet ownership by three enthusiastic educators: Mr Derek Tan (Bio), Ms Evangeline Tan (GP), and Mr Patrick Wong (GP).

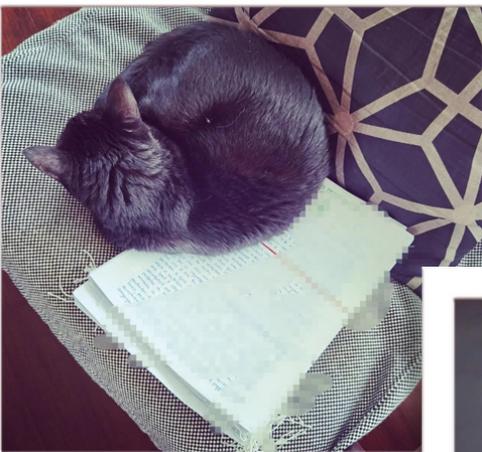
## Mr Derek Tan

An avid ailurophile, Mr Tan is parent to two cats – Mimi (female) and Schmokey (female), both of which belong to the same breed of *Singapura cats*, also known as the fabled “*longkang cats*”. He previously had a third cat, Ginger (male), though unfortunately he passed on some time ago.

When asked about the inspiration behind his cats’ names, Mr Tan jokingly replied, “[I named her] Schmokey because she looks like smoke; [As for] Mimi, it’s because every other ‘longkang cat’ is called Mimi; Ginger because it’s ginger-coloured, haha!”

As for why he chose cats over other kinds of pets, Mr Tan cited the affectionate nature of cats, and their penchant for wandering about as two reasons. “Cats are very affectionate! They are ready to be cuddled anytime, so they provide quality company [...] they are nice mobile decorative pieces too! On the couch, piano, etc.”

But perhaps the most hilarious reason of all is Mr Tan’s self-proclaimed resemblance to a cat. “I have a ‘kitty’ personality [...] I have different moods – I am very affectionate but I can be aloof when I feel like it,” he said. Seems like Mr Tan and his cats are a *purr-fect* match!



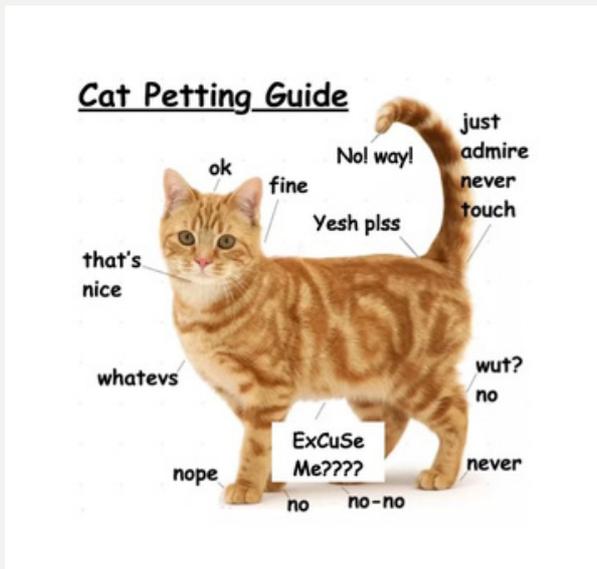
Mimi



Schmokey



Ginger



Speaking of cats, here are some fascinating facts about your feline friend you might not have heard of, courtesy of Mr Tan:

Firstly, exposing their bellies means exposing their vulnerabilities – so if a cat allows you to stroke its tummy, it means that they really trust and love you loads (hence, beware of where you pet a cat!)

Secondly, cat years are different from human years – a one-year-old cat is of equivalent age to that of a fifteen-year-old human; a two-year-old cat corresponding to that of a twenty-four-year-old human; and subsequently, every additional cat year is proportional to four human years.

While the above trivia are applicable to cats in general, each cat no doubt has a unique and distinct set of personality traits and behavioural characteristics. Here's what Mr Tan has to say about his own cats: "All of them have an in-built calendar and body clock, or an alarm system of some sort."

He then explained that every day at 6.15 am, they sit on his chest or next to him to wake him up. And what's more, at 11.30 am during the weekends, they would be waiting for him to feed them canned food. "My cats are very clever – just like me, haha," he quipped.

On a serious note, however, Mr Tan has some words of advice for all prospective pet owners out there: "Pet ownership is a lifelong commitment [...] Once you have a pet, you have to be committed to it for life and not put it up for adoption or ship it to someone else when you become tired of it."

He also emphasised the importance of having unconditional love for your pet, and being able to not only revel in the good times, but also being ready to face the difficult times, such as coping with the grief and loss of a pet, as "saying goodbye when your pets get sick and pass away is very, very difficult".

Indeed, nothing beats this fur-ever special bond between human-animal companions, as evidenced in how pets have become an indispensable part of our teachers' lives.



Mr Tan's favourites: canned food from Fussie Cat

"If I can reincarnate, I would like to come back as a cat in my next life – specifically, a house cat (I want to be Derek Tan's cat!)"

Mr Derek Tan



# Ms Evangeline Tan



5-year-old Coco is a mix of the Jack Russell Terrier and Beagle, described by Ms Tan as “the sweetest, most gentle dog [she] know[s]”. But despite this glowing review and the clear fondness Ms Tan has for her canine companion, she admitted that things were not all smooth-sailing from the start.

Her first steps into pet ownership started four months ago in April, as Ms Tan and her husband began looking for opportunities to foster a furry friend. Although they were turned away from many adoption centres and shelters (on the grounds that they were first-time owners lacking the preferred level of experience), Ms Tan staunchly stood by her personal belief of “Adopt, Don’t Shop”.

When asked more about this topic, Ms Tan elaborated that “adopting or rehoming would be ideal”, as it was “very sad to think about dogs, who genuinely like being around people, no longer [having] a family to take care of them”. Additionally, she explained her practical reasons for rehoming Coco, as the starting cost of buying a dog is very expensive in Singapore.

Eventually, Ms Tan came across the opportunity to rehome Coco in the form of a Whatsapp message advertisement, forwarded to her by a friend. Coco’s previous family was moving houses and weren’t keen on retraining her to a new environment, hence the call for volunteers to take her in. Ms Tan and her husband reached out instantly, and that was the start of a lively friendship with Coco.

However, it still took a while for Coco to settle into their new home. “She was very anxious and reactive at the beginning”, Ms Tan confessed, as she had to weigh the pros and cons of different “schools of thought” when it came to house-training. Her initial approach of strict discipline was unproductive, but a carefully-considered change to positive reinforcement training quickly reaped results in getting Coco to open up.

“We’ve really come a long way since then,” she reflected, elaborating on how her own daily routine has improved due to Coco’s needs. From being more mindful about her working hours so as to spend more time with Coco, to her weekend plans “revolving” around bringing Coco along for outdoor activities, it truly appears that Ms Tan has fully settled into life as a proud pet owner.



“

The best thing about having dogs [is that] they’re always so happy to see you home :)

”

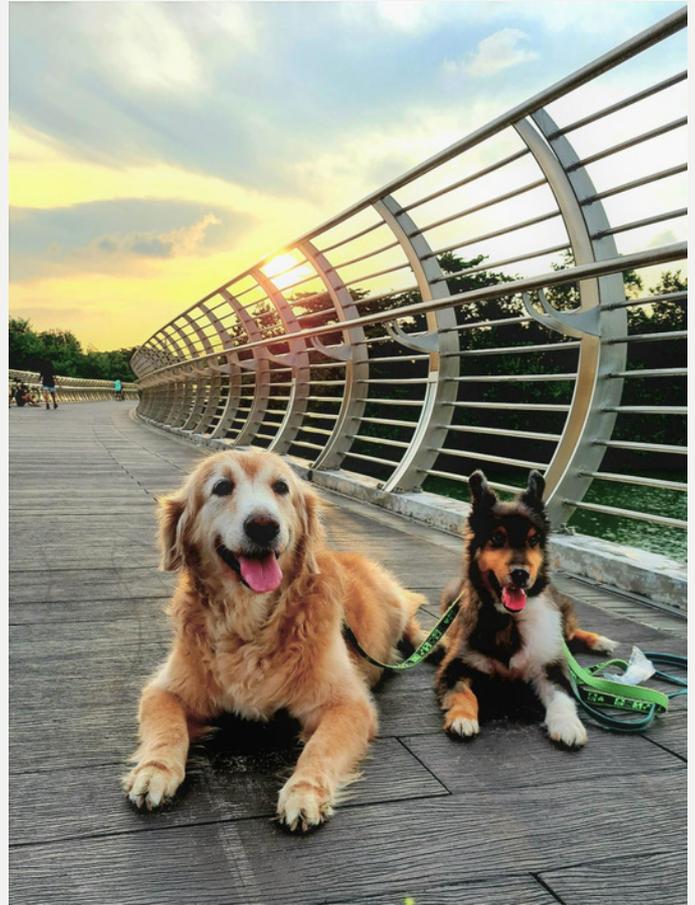
# Mr Patrick Wong

Mr Wong never actually *wanted* to be a dog-owner - all his life, he'd been 'very much a cat person', and had even thought dogs were too noisy and rambunctious. Yet today, he's the proud owner of two dogs...and zero cats.

Explaining this perplexing turn of events, Mr Wong shared that the decision to bring a dog into the family had not been his. "It was not me; it was my boss—my wife!", he insisted vehemently. His wife's long-standing love for dogs and empathetic nature had meant the Wong household had quickly expanded to include Sugar and Tyler, who had both been given up by their previous owners.

Of course, Mr Wong had not been without apprehension while facing the daunting task of being a first-time dog owner. "I clearly remember the day we brought Sugar home, I thought it was going to be so much trouble," he admitted candidly, even comparing the task ahead of raising Sugar to that of raising another child.

"But while I was putting on a jazz record that day, she came and looked at me and just fell asleep on the floor (listening)," Mr Wong recounted fondly, with a growing smile. "And then I realised, this is my dog."

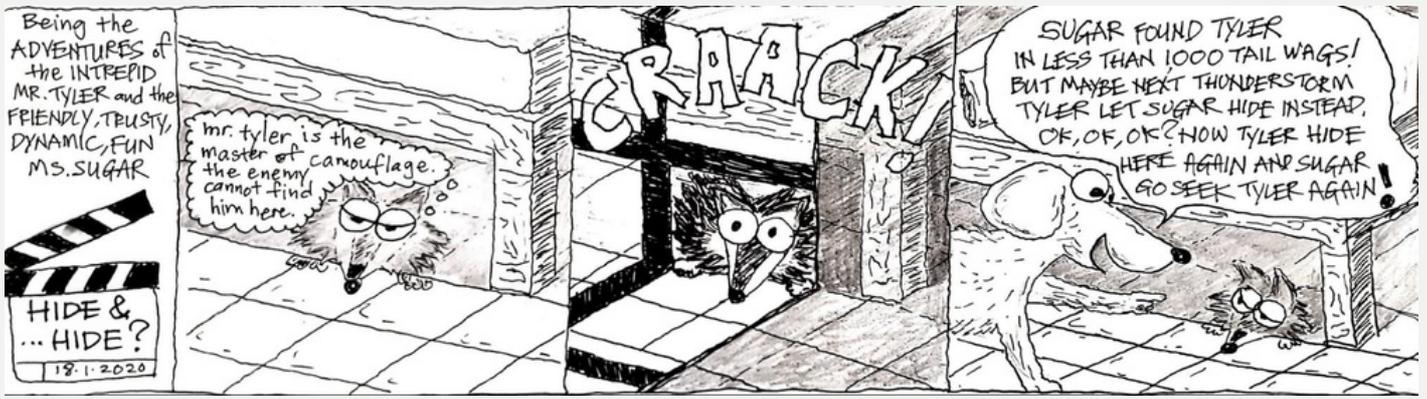


*Sugar, a female Golden Retriever and Tyler, a male Shetland Collie*



This was the moment that foregrounded the special relationship that would come to develop between him and Sugar, whom he now calls his 'nature companion'. Mr Wong and Sugar often go on long treks together, finding kindred spirits in each other while exploring the green spaces of Singapore. She has become almost like another one of his children—just that "when I come home, none of my kids will greet me, but she will come."

Mr Wong also openly acknowledges that the addition of Sugar and Tyler has benefitted his whole family. Sugar is emotionally perceptive enough to comfort the children when they're feeling upset or distressed, and walking the dogs has allowed him and his wife to reconnect by having 40 minutes of "us time" every evening. Undoubtedly, all of these added benefits were unexpected to Mr Wong: "I thought I would hate dogs, really, but I think Sugar just kind of changed my heart."



As for Tyler, the former showdog's withdrawn and reserved personality became the spark of inspiration for Mr Wong's comic strip featuring both his dogs. "I needed something to do with a pen other than marking," he quipped, "and I thought (the relationship between Tyler and Sugar) was really a very ripe thing for a comic strip."

Now, almost a seventh-year pet owner, Mr Wong has no regrets about how things have turned out, and has now even 'switched sides' to become a dog person.

When asked what advice he would give to pet enthusiasts hoping to own a pet, he shared that "you need to be able to change your life for the pet", and "there must be some level of sacrifice" for responsible and sustainable pet ownership. Pets have much propensity to enrich our lives beyond imagination - it is only right that we also take good care of them.

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Our teachers are not only dedicated caretakers (of their pets), but also devoted mentors and educators to all of us. On this special occasion, let us all take the opportunity to extend our gratitude and appreciation to our beloved teachers who have held our hands, opened our minds, and touched our hearts in the course of our educational journeys.

Wishing all teachers a very happy Teachers' Day!



# TEACHERS' DRIP

By Alison Tan (23S03A), Anamika Ragu (23A01A),  
and Nor Akmal (23S03A)



BEST ACCESSORISED

BEST COORDINATED



*DOESN'T 'DRIP' ON ITS OWN MEAN SOMETHING DIFFERENT FROM  
'DRIPPING'?*

MS CHUANG SULYNN, LITERATURE DEPARTMENT

Indeed it does, and more. With the sweltering heat of living on the equator and attire regulations looming over us every time we reach for something from the closet, having 'drip' (fashion and/or style) in Raffles Institution seems to be a mammoth task.

Despite this, our teachers make do rather impressively.



The Best Accessorised section features teachers with unique additions to their daily outfits. Whether it's through being 'iced out' (with jewellery) or supporting local businesses, even the smallest forms of self-expression can tell invaluable stories.

## MRS NICOLA PERRY

We begin with Mrs Nicola Perry from the Literature Department, who is rarely seen without iconic silver fairies adorning her ears and a silver pendant of a Chinese character around her neck. For her, jewellery can hold a great deal of personal significance.

These earrings in particular remind Mrs Perry of her late mother, who was "a wonderful storyteller".

"One of the first things my parents took me to see at the theatre was a pantomime of Peter Pan, and I was entranced at the thought that, by clapping my hands and saying that I believed in fairies, I played a part in bringing Tinkerbell back to life," she recounted.

"Years later, I bought my mother a clay sculpture of the Queen of the Fairies for the bottom of her garden, so she'd always have fairies [there].

"When she died, we claimed [the sculpture]," she explained, ensuring the fairy magic remained in the family by eventually passing it down to her own daughter. Later on, Mrs Perry found the earrings in a market in Fremantle, Australia, another sign of the 'fairy magic'; or at least that everything would be alright in the end.



*"IT'S ALWAYS WORTH HAVING SOMETHING (PERHAPS A LITTLE FRIVOLOUS) BUT NECESSARY TO REMIND YOU THAT THERE'S ALWAYS HOPE AND IMAGINATION THAT WILL KEEP US ALIVE REGARDLESS OF THE ODDS."*



On her neck, she dons a silver pendant of a Chinese symbol meaning 'healthy', something she found herself relying on during a difficult time in her life several years ago when she was struggling with an unexpected, personal health-challenge. A serendipitous moment occurred amid such 'insurmountable odds' when this seemingly innocuous silver charm in a jewellery shop caught her eye. On asking the jeweller to translate the character, she knew it was meant for her.

From that day onwards, the necklace became her "totem, giving hope where there had seemed to be none."

The Best Accessorised section features teachers with unique additions to their daily outfits. Whether it's through being 'iced out' (with jewellery) or supporting local businesses, even the smallest forms of self-expression can tell invaluable stories.

## MS CHUANG SULYNN

Next up is Ms Chuang, also from the Literature Department, who recently donned strikingly coloured hair which has (unfortunately) since washed out.

"I usually dye my hair either red or purple, which I've been told is better for my skin tone," says Ms Chuang. "Dyeing my hair, for me, is also a form of self-care."

*MS CHUANG AND DITTO CHARMANDER, MATCHING WITH A POKÉMON-THEMED LANYARD MADE FOR HER BY A COLLEAGUE.*



While Ms Chuang prioritises comfort, she also tries to be sustainable, especially with her accessories. "I use a reusable mask because I'm trying to be more environmentally conscious and support local brands," explains Ms Chuang. "This is from a local brand called Little Sarong."

*SUPPORT LOCAL BRANDS OR FACE MS CHUANG'S DEADLY SIDE-EYE.*



The Best Coordinated section features teachers with impeccable fashion sense; their outfits will impress students and teachers alike. Their personal styles also reflect their deeper considerations—beyond their comfort and the aesthetic—when deciding what to wear everyday.

## MS NICOLE MAGNO

Highly requested for this article and greatly admired, Ms Nicole Magno from the Knowledge Skills Department brightens every student's day with clothing that she views as a form of self-expression. For the interview, she donned a military jacket from Zara and faux leather boots, exuding "founding father vibes" (as described by one of her students.).

Exploring eye-catching yet put-together outfits is a passion of Ms Magno's. She thoroughly enjoys people's reactions to what she wears, especially when she sets out to explore various themes or colour palettes.

A key guideline she always returns to is 'OTP' - occasion, time, and purpose. With the formality and professionalism required as a teacher and Ms Magno's affinity towards bold pieces, a certain level of balance is then reached.

"It's fun to try wearing a style that would still be appropriate in a school setting because that restriction allows me to be a bit more creative," she said. "It's almost like being put in the box forces me to think outside the box."



However, Ms Magno didn't always have an interest in fashion. "It wasn't until I went to university that I met friends who were very expressive with the clothes they wear," she explained. "I had this one friend who wore steel-toed boots; it was such an interesting contrast between how feminine she looked and how masculine her boots were."

This is what inspired Ms Magno to explore new avenues of versatility in her style, such as wearing boots with formal attire (e.g. dresses) to create a comfortable yet interesting juxtaposition.

Still, such a chic sense of fashion that balances playful rebellion and professionalism does not come without much trial and error. Ms Magno admits that she has grown a lot over the years, and her idea of what is fashionable has changed as well.

In future, she hopes to incorporate more Filipino styles and cultural clothing into her daily wear: "I really want to discover more about my heritage, as well as the motifs that are used in their clothing."



## MS MOK HOI NAM

On the other hand, for Ms Mok Hoi Nam (Y5 Mathematics), her fashion choices highlight the emphasis she places on comfort and presentability.

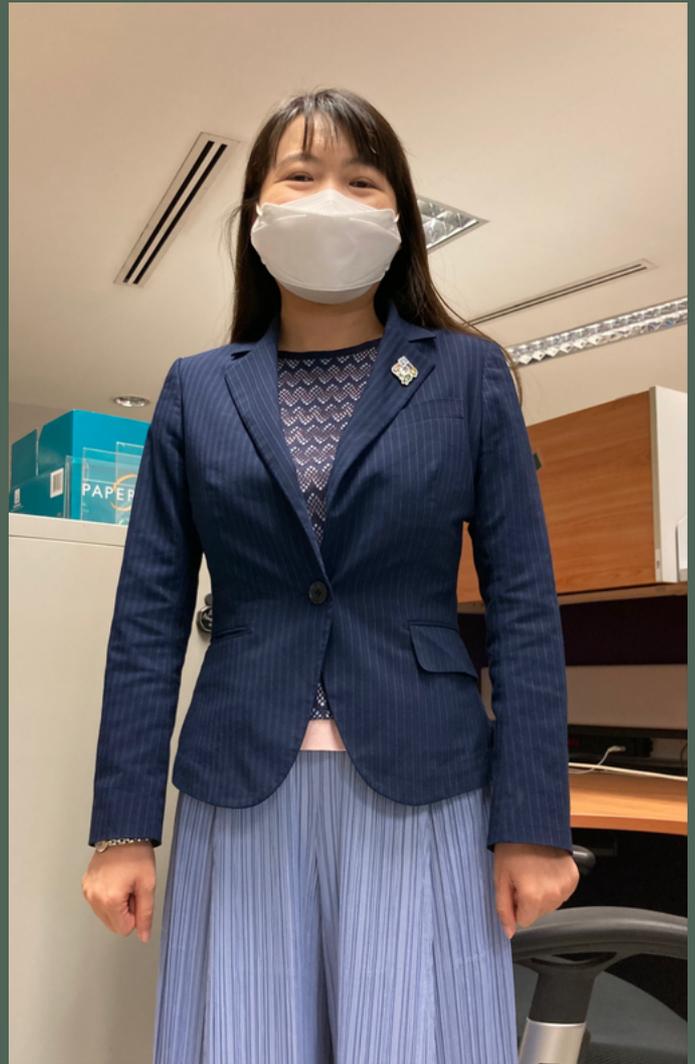
"I prefer skirts and dresses, partly because I think I look better in them, and partly because jeans are too warm," said Ms Mok. "When I do wear pants, they tend to be pleated, flowy pants that are more cooling and comfortable."

"As a teacher, you want students to pay attention to the lesson and not your clothing, so I don't like to wear things that are too distracting or too casual," explains Ms Mok. Instead, she prefers looking smart at all times, opting for blazers instead of sports jackets.

"I got this blazer from Japan, but I don't remember the name of the brand as it was quite long ago," says Ms Mok. She clarifies that she doesn't often buy new clothes, instead choosing to wear her existing pieces for as long as possible to make the most out of them.

Many of Ms Mok's views on fashion were influenced by her mother, a seamstress who taught her everything she knows about maintaining her clothing. In fact, fashion is an essential part of how she and her family communicate.

"My dad used to work in the textile trade, and my sister and I share a wardrobe because we have a similar build," Ms Mok says. "So for my family, we connect through the language of fabrics."



MS MOK IN HER BLUE BLAZER.



## MR NGIAM XING YI

Last but not least, we have the only male teacher featured in this article—Mr Ngiam Xing Yi (Y5 History), whose fashion sense centres around a personalised collection of short-sleeved batik shirts.

Mr Ngiam obtains his mandarin-collared shirts from tailors, who'll use a batik print of his choice purchased from other retailers. Although he cites comfort as a reason for wearing custom-made shirts, sustainability has also become a contributing factor.

"I used to shop from fast fashion brands like H&M. But as I grew more aware of the environmental impact that these brands have, I decided to stop, or at least buy less. Now, I'm more into tailoring clothes."

He also adores leather shoes, specifically Chelsea boots - and he'll always try to match his outfit with a fun pair of socks.

However, outside of a school setting, Mr Ngiam dresses much more casually. If he isn't running any errands, he will simply wear a singlet, shorts and everyone's favourite Asadi slippers.

"My wife likes to say that I have an uncle outfit," he admits.

Unfortunately, we were unable to obtain any photos of Mr Ngiam in said outfit. Regardless of his 'uncle' status outside of school, his iconic batik shirts cement his status as the dapperest History tutor in RI.



A PAIR OF MR NGIAM'S SOCKS THAT DEPICT ONE OF DUTCH PAINTER PIET MONDRIAN'S WORKS: "COMPOSITION WITH RED, YELLOW AND BLUE"

# If I weren't a Teacher...

By Leong Jun Wei (23A01D), Lezann Lee (23A01C), and Joy Tan (23A01D)

Ever wondered what your beloved teachers would be doing if they weren't waking up at 6am every morning and rushing to school amidst the relentless morning traffic, just to see the faces of students even more sleep-deprived than them?

This year, we interviewed some of our teachers to find out more about their alternative career paths—and if they have any regrets choosing to remain a teacher.

Ms  
Sanjeeda  
Haque



Featured 2 years ago in recognition of the sacrifices she has had to make in order to teach here in Singapore, Ms Haque, an Economics teacher well-known for the sweet snacks (i.e. Muffins, Magnum Ice Cream!) she frequently treats her students to, now offers us some insights with regards to whether or not her “dream job”, teaching, has lived up to her expectations of it.

During the interview, Ms Haque revealed with a wistful smile that she used to work as an economist at the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for a number of years.

However, she had always known deep down that her true calling was in education, and hence decided to pursue a career in teaching.

Having previously done relief teaching in ACS(I) for 3 months, she fondly recalls that those were the “most memorable” months prior to her career here in Raffles. “And that’s when I thought I would love to teach if the opportunity arises,” she explains.

From the way that Ms Haque never hesitates to organise extra classes at 8am on Wednesday Gap Days, holidays, and even Saturdays, it is evident that to her, her students will always come first.

Thankfully, we firmly believe that Ms Haque’s efforts have not been for naught—to Lye Sze-Ann (23A01D), Ms Haque has empowered her to constantly “look forward”, guiding her students towards “personal progress”.

“Ms Haque has definitely taught me not only about Econs, but also more about how to be a student, inspiring me to put in the same amount of effort into the rest of my studies,” she adds.

In spite of the high praise undoubtedly recurrent amongst her students, we wonder if Ms Haque is truly satisfied with her choice of occupation.

In response, Ms Haque thoughtfully mused that though teaching is “harder than expected”, she is still grateful to be in her current position.

Additionally, for Ms Haque, a huge perk of the job includes “being with [her] students, even if it means spending more time with them than [she does] with [her] colleagues and family!”

Of course, there are downsides to everything - as Ms Haque commented good-naturedly, “I do not get weekends, [I] go to sleep thinking of my students, [I] dream of my students and fear that my students did not understand [what I had explained in class].”

However, despite the understandable concerns that every teacher is likely to have encountered more than once, we believe that perhaps going to sleep thinking about one’s students may not be a downside at all!



For Ms Lio, teaching was her very first job—but she came closest to being a cook.

Students of Ms Lio might find it difficult to picture her in a kitchen, donning an apron and seasoning chicken wings by the counter, considering that the only conversations they have had with her about food were in relation to “Malaysia halting its exports of chicken in June” and about whether the YED of instant noodles was <0 or between 0 and 1.

As Marianne Wang (23A01C) said, “This was quite unexpected. I think cooking is an explorational activity that is not particularly economical in its use of resources.”

As we now know, economics is not her only forte!

“I used to work part-time in casual restaurants after my A levels and break times when I was in University, and was seriously thinking of pursuing it after my studies”, Ms Lio said, fondly recollecting the time she spent dabbling in the field.

*“Actually, I am just enjoying each day, learning to be a better teacher myself every day,” Ms Haque concluded emphatically.*

*Ms  
Fiona  
Lio*

“I’m a live-to-eat person, as you can easily tell,” Ms Lio remarked. And for many of us who can say the same, we know for a fact that that in itself is a clear indicator of how much food (and eating) means to Ms Lio – or in the very terms students of Ms Lio ought to be familiar with – of the marginal private benefit she derives from her daily meals.

“I love working with food. Food preparation is rather therapeutic—and I like chopping things,” she explained.

“I can slice onions rather quickly without chopping my fingers off. Also, I like to play with fire.” Even in the humble professions of her love for cooking, Ms Lio revealed to us how adept and artful she is at the sport. After all, it is not every day that you hear a casual proclamation of someone readily armed with the skill of “chopping quickly” and “playing with fire”.

"I also like the excitement of working in a kitchen when it is super busy. We must keep an eye on multiple stoves and pans as orders come in." Even when things get heated up in the kitchen, Ms Lio does not falter – to her, the frenzy is nothing but a thrill. "And I also enjoy the fact that people actually pay for the food that I cook," she added.

But to Ms Lio, her decision to stay in teaching was far from regrettable.

"I have invested too much time in teaching to leave!" she exclaimed jokingly, claiming – in typical fashion – that she had been subjected to loss aversion and the sunk-cost fallacy.

"On a more serious note, there are many good reasons why I have stayed in teaching – there have been many lovely and appreciative students over the years who have made me feel that I may actually be good at what I do," she chuckled.

"I've come to appreciate how being a teacher is truly a privilege and something I will not take for granted. That old dream of mine has become a hobby – I still get to cook for my friends and family when I want to."

Perhaps several years down the road, we may be savouring delights prepared by Ms Lio herself! In her wise words, "A lifetime is a long time, so you never know what is going to happen in future."

“

*"I am now thinking, how about a travelling coffee truck, with the best brew ever? Will you buy my coffee?" she concluded, with a smile.*

”

Ms  
Samantha  
Prakash



Of course, Economics teachers are not the only ones who might have considered alternative careers—Ms Prakash, currently a Literature teacher, once had other unique dreams of her own.

Having always been fascinated by "the world of textiles and fabric", particularly Indian textile, Ms Prakash shares that "[she] might have taken the academic route and studied textile history, textile design or related fields."

With such a rather distinctive field of interest, it might have come as a surprise to some that Ms Prakash eventually chose to become a teacher.

However, she explains her decision reasonably, commenting, "sheer pragmatism and a worry that what is now a hobby that gives me much joy would become stressful if it were a 9-5 job."

While she might have had to make sacrifices to be where she is today, Ms Prakash is still able to derive great fulfilment from being an educator—in her very own words, "Young people are just so much fun to talk to."

"The eureka moment (for the student) when the various parts of the idea or concept that [she's] teaching suddenly amalgamates in their mind and [they] have a moment of clarity or understanding," is, to Ms Prakash, one of her favourite parts of the job. "It is very satisfying to think that I've had a small part in that," she adds humbly.

Emmanuelle Kay (23A01D) confirms this wholeheartedly, saying, "Ms Prakash is very detailed, and her comprehensive teaching style has helped me to understand the content a lot better! She is also very dedicated and carves out extra time to meet us if we need to clarify any doubts."



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