

News

Comics make Malay come alive

Teacher uses desktop publishing software to widen students' vocabulary

REPORT & PICTURE: NAJIB SIDDIK
mdnajib@sph.com.sg

HOW do you make Malay language lessons fun? Madam Razilah Yahya uses a novel idea.

The senior teacher at Anderson Secondary School gets her students to produce comic strips of their own, using Comic Life, a comic desktop publishing application for Mac OS X and Windows.

Said Madam Razilah, 44: "Some of my students face problems in handling discus-

sion topics due to a lack of ideas and limited vocabulary.

"But with the Internet and Comic Life, students are able to research independently and present their findings in attractive comic strips.

"The lessons become interactive, engaging and fun. Most importantly, (students) are equipped with wider vocabulary and increased knowledge."

She presented her research paper, Use of Comic Life In Teaching Of Oral Skills, at the Malay Language Seminar 2011 yesterday.

Held at the Ministry of Education's (MOE) Language Centre at Bishan, the seminar aims



DIGITAL DELIGHT: Teacher Razilah Yahya says the comics application she uses helps make her classes fun.

to upgrade Malay language teachers' content knowledge and classroom teaching skills.

It also served as a platform for best teaching practices to be shared.

The seminar was organised by the Malay Language Centre of Singapore and the MOE's Malay Language Unit, Curriculum Planning and Development Division.

Presented papers

A total of 61 participants from primary and secondary schools and a junior college presented their papers.

Madam Razilah feels that some of her students are not reading enough Malay-language material, which explains why they're not as fluent as she hopes them to be.

"Students need time, proper coaching, and lots of practice to develop their language skills. With only six periods a week, it can be difficult.

"Unlike the previous generation, most parents today communicate with their children in English at home.

"And most speak only functional Malay," said Madam Razilah, who has been in the education sector for 20 years.

The resourceful teacher also relies on information and communications technology (ICT) to spice up her lessons.

This includes applications such as iMovie, and gadgets like the iPad to store and present information and the iPhone to record audio and video.

Madam Razilah said that teachers go for professional development courses, seminars and workshops.

"Teachers also enjoy the benefits of the Learning Development Scheme (LDS), where we are given funds to buy items that add value to our work.

"I use my LDS funds to buy Malay-language magazines like Dewan Siswa and Dewan Bahasa.

"And I use these magazines as part of my lesson materials and encourage my students to read them."

In her opening address, the guest-of-honour, Ms Ho Peng, MOE's director-general of education, emphasised the importance of educational research and curriculum leadership in teaching.

She also encouraged educators to make wider use of ICT to make teaching and learning meaningful and enjoyable.