

RPRYconnect

YOUR LINK TO THE STUDENTS & FACULTY OF RPRY

Volume 1, Issue 3

Featured Instructor: Mrs. Sylvia Lynn

Subject: Math

Classes: Boys and Girls Grades 6-8

Years at RPRY: 20



Mrs. Sylvia Lynn has been teaching for thirty years, 2/3 or 66% of which have been at RPRY, and her math students benefit from her wealth of experience. She views math not as an abstract concept but “an utterly practical, everyday activity,” and reinforces every class with life skills.

In her mathematics lab, Mrs. Lynn instructs the accelerated classes in sixth, seventh, and eighth grades. The sixth grade curriculum focuses heavily on critical thinking. Seventh graders study Pre-Algebra and eighth graders learn Algebra 1. She is a demanding and challenging instructor, and the results speak for themselves: 95% of Mrs. Lynn’s students enter

a tenth-grade level math class upon graduating RPRY.

Mrs. Lynn utilizes visuals and manipulatives to bring math concepts to life. Positive and negative integers are taught with poker chips, red on one side, yellow on the other. Geometric concepts such as area are reinforced by calculating wrapping paper, wallpaper, and carpeting dimensions.

Seventh and eighth graders are taught how to balance a checkbook and manage finances. Want to master percentage gains and losses? Each year, Mrs. Lynn runs a stock market game in class. Teams of students are given \$50,000 to invest in

companies listed on the NYSE, AMEX, or NASDAQ, and trades are allowed each Friday. After eight weeks, gains and losses are calculated, and the winning team earns a prize.

Mrs. Lynn's "brain" - or a foam version thereof - is tossed around the class during quick practice activities: whoever catches it must provide the answer, and then tosses it to the next student. Game shows are played to rehearse math word definitions. And students especially enjoy their handouts of logic problems, puzzles, and decoding activities. And yes, of course there is homework every night, to practice concepts mastered in class.

Mrs. Lynn checks for her students' understanding by having them become the teacher: "If you can teach it, then you truly know it." Students are routinely

asked to come to the board and demonstrate math problem-solving for their peers.

"You earn your students' respect by respecting them," Mrs. Lynn observes. "Then, they will feel comfortable coming to you with their problems, without feeling a reproach."

Outside the classroom, Mrs. Lynn serves as RPRY's math department chairperson. Her duties include curriculum oversight for Grades 5-8, assisting and supporting other teachers in the math department, and providing classroom materials for the entire school. She is a purveyor of cubes, rulers, protractors, compasses, and cylinders, but also the provider of a rock-solid foundation in the world of mathematics.



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