

INSPIRING CHANGE

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"Teaching is more than imparting knowledge, it is inspiring change. Learning is more than absorbing facts, it is acquiring understanding."

- William Arthur Ward

A Teacher's Belief

Teaching, to me, is more than a career. I enjoy creating opportunities for students to exercise their creativity, as well as leverage their life experiences to internalise the valuable knowledge, skills and values they have learnt. As the saying goes, "Tell me, and I'll forget. Show me, and I'll remember. Involve me, and I'll learn." I believe that by involving students in their learning and immersing them in authentic and meaningful learning contexts, they internalise their learning and enjoy the process of knowledge and skill acquisition.

I strongly believe that learning goes beyond the curriculum and that every student possesses the ability to learn and has the potential to contribute to our society in different ways. Thus, I strive to boost my students' self-confidence by engaging them in meaningful learning activities.

I was inspired to join the profession by my auntie who is both a teacher and my mentor. When I started relief teaching, I was apprehensive about not being able to handle the students. However, I soon realised that my interactions with the students left me constantly energised. I look forward to exploring creative pedagogies and creating new learning opportunities for them.

Every child can make a difference

'Education should be about individuals who are well integrated, free and independent in their thinking, concerned about improving and enhancing the world, and eager to participate in making life more meaningful and worthwhile for all' (Barsky 1997: 11).

I believe that every child can make a difference despite his age and my job as a teacher is to help him discover how he can contribute to the community. This strong conviction has led me to design learning programmes which incorporate real-life issues and experiences. One such programme that I have spearheaded in school is the Integrated Project Work @ Haig Girls' School (IPW@HGS). It incorporates real-life experiences and innovation, provides students with an opportunity to make a difference to the community, and develops them into 21st century ready learners. It was heartening to know about the values and personal benefits my students gained from the projects. I still remember my students' reactions when they were told that they had to visit selected community organisations. They had never heard of such organisations and were not sure of how they could contribute to the various organisations.

Through the projects, I witnessed how my students worked on and discovered possible solutions to the problems faced by others at the organisations. The students felt a sense of accomplishment when they realised that they had made a difference to others in the

community through the solutions they came up with. This further affirmed my belief that every child can contribute to the community.

By persevering in their projects, the children also learned values like empathy, concern and commitment. To me, that is very important as it develops life-long learning in students whilst sharpening their 21st century skills.

Forging Partnerships

As the saying goes, it takes a village to raise a child. Raising a child is not just the job of teachers. Through collaborating with various stakeholders such as community organisations and parents, students are provided with the support and opportunities to enhance their learning through exposure to authentic real life experiences which in turn motivates them to contribute to the society.

I also work very closely with my colleagues to develop this programme. Working closely together with IPW champions at different levels enables us to form a strong and effective team. We gained an appreciation of the pedagogical skills of every team member and this has allowed us to deepen the learning in each IPW project. We are constantly refining the processes so as to make the learning meaningful for students.

My Learning Journey

"Your life as a teacher begins the day you realise that you are always a learner."

- Robert John Meehan

The quote resonates with me because I must continually hone my skills and knowledge as a teacher in order to maximise the learning outcomes of my students. To do so, I take ownership of my learning by engaging in professional learning development and involving myself in professional learning communities. These help me to remain current in my subject area and hone my skills as an effective practitioner. I also believe in the importance of constantly reflecting on my teaching practices and strategies. By engaging in continual learning and reflecting practices, I hope to be a good role model to my students.