

VALUE EVERY STUDENT

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“Impossible is Nothing”

I believe that resilience is a virtue all teachers must have. We should never give up in what we do, because our work can benefit the students under our care. When we fail, we learn from experience and refine what we do, so that we can do better next time in helping our students.

I see similarities between the fieldwork that I do as a Geographer and the teaching I do in the classroom. In fieldwork, when a hypothesis is proven wrong or inconclusive, we refine the hypothesis and seek to prove it again in the field. If proven, we explore the possibility that other hypotheses can also hold true.

In education, we work on the hypothesis, “_____ allows my students to learn well/ better/ best”, and a good educator constantly seeks to test this hypothesis inside and outside of the classroom. We do not stop at one strategy, but constantly use a myriad of tools to help our students learn. To strengthen our craft, we customise and refine our strategies to cater to students of varying profiles.

“We Teach the Whole Child”

Values form the core of what we do. To put it simply, we teach the students, and we want them to do good. Thus, every one of us has a role to play as a Character and Citizenship Education (CCE) teacher.

I subscribe to the notion that students firmly grounded in values will do well. As educators, we have an important role to play in shaping the character of our students. The foundations that we put in place in shaping students’ character will determine how they approach their responsibilities now and in future. We can help our students to develop a strong moral compass and to understand the importance of doing so by capitalizing on teachable moments to inculcate values.

“It Takes a Village to Raise a Child”

As a member of the school’s Student Development Team, I have had opportunities to coordinate programs that contribute to the all-rounded development of our students. Interacting with students and parents has enabled me to learn much about being an educator, and being a person. It has also made me understand the importance of working with others for the best of a child.

During a Co-Curricular Activity (CCA) camp a few years back, some student leaders highlighted to me that a boy named John* was not participating actively. John had just enrolled in the school and nobody really knew him. The student leaders commented that he had ‘poor attitude’, and asked me for help.

Through my observations, I realised that John was selective in the activities he participated in. He participated in activities where he could work alone, but showed reluctance when it came to group activities. To help him integrate into the school community, I read up about his case and kept in close communication with his parents to reach out to him. We customised activities for him during CCA, so that he felt like a part of the group, and could contribute to the CCA in a meaningful way. For instance, during group activities, we had individual tasks with similar outcomes designed for him. It was heartening to see John excel in some of these tasks, and his fellow CCA-mates recognised his contributions as well.

In reaching out to John, I realised the importance of building rapport with parents. There was a day when John did not attend a group enrichment activity that had been arranged after school as he was fearful of the activity. When I contacted his parents, I was told that John had told them the night before that he intended to go for the activity. Worried for his safety, I rushed to his home, and heaved a sigh of relief when I saw his pair of school shoes outside. Though he refused to open the door, I checked with his parent who confirmed that he was at home. What touched me was that John, a boy who didn't speak often, apologised to me the next day.

I learnt a lot about working with parents in my years of teaching. Through our actions and interactions with them, parents will 'feel' and realise that we truly care for the students, and working together ensures that the student is best taken care of, whether in or out of school. I always remind myself that teaching is a people-centred profession, and how we interact with people, be it students, parents or colleagues, will go a long way in determining the quality of the educational experience we provide.

**Name has been changed to protect the identity of the student.*