

Foreword

More than a job, more than a profession, teaching is a calling – a calling that shapes minds, touches hearts and transforms lives. The influence of a teacher knows no bounds. Through his actions and words, he plants the seeds of curiosity in the minds of his students and instils in them values that will serve as their moral anchors in challenging times.

The twelve finalists of the President's Award for Teachers show how they realise their calling through their stories in this 9th issue of "Teach to Inspire, Inspire to Teach". Believing that every child can learn, these caring teachers go the extra mile to reach out to their students, inspiring them to achieve their best each day and to reach for their dreams. Guided by the Ethos of the Teaching Profession, they place the child at the centre of all that they do and work tirelessly at building up the confidence and character of their students by being their mentors, guides and counsellors, imparting lessons of life to them.

I would like to congratulate the finalists and awardees of the President's Award for Teachers 2012 for their dedication and commitment to the profession. The fruits of teaching are often not seen in a day or year but are harvested over a lifetime. I hope their heart-warming stories will inspire fellow teachers to continue shaping minds, touching hearts and transforming lives as they answer the call of their profession.

Lead, care and inspire – for the future of the nation passes through our hands

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ho Peng", is written over a long, thin diagonal line that extends from the bottom left towards the right.

Ms Ho Peng
Director-General of Education
Ministry of Education, Singapore

Teachers' Vision

Singapore Teachers: Lead • Care • Inspire •

By word and deed, through the care we give,
we touch the lives of our students.
We make a difference - leading and inspiring our students
to believe in themselves and to be the best they can be.

As individuals and as a community of professionals,
we seek continually to deepen our expertise.
Respectful of fellow educators, we collaborate to build a strong fraternity,
taking pride in our work and profession.

We forge trusting partnerships with families and the community
for the growth and well-being of each student.

**We Lead, Care, Inspire,
For the Future of the Nation Passes
through Our Hands.**



Teachers' Pledge

We, the teachers of Singapore, pledge that:

We will be true to our mission
to bring out the best in our students.

We will be exemplary in the discharge
of our duties and responsibilities.

We will guide our students to be good
and useful citizens of Singapore.

We will continue to learn and pass on the love
of learning to our students.

We will win the trust, support and co-operation
of parents and the community
so as to enable us to achieve our mission.



President's Award for Teachers Award Winners 2012



Left to Right

Mr Yap Boon Chien Tanjong Katong Girls' School

Mr Gejendran s/o V Krishnan Geylang Methodist School (Secondary)

Mdm Tan Ying Fong Irene Telok Kurau Primary School

Mdm Anwara Khatun d/o Moklis Khan Haig Girls' School (Primary)

Ms Koh Su-Cheng Da Qiao Primary School

President's Award for Teachers Finalists 2012



Front Row (Left to Right)

Mdm Norsinah Bte Suadi Townsville Primary School

Mdm Anwara Khatun d/o Moklis Khan Haig Girls' School (Primary)

Mdm Leong Pui Wan Pioneer Secondary School

Ms Lucy Sim Guangyang Primary School

Ms Sujeetha Margarita Brampy Kent Ridge Secondary School

Mr Muslim Hanafiah Yusof Ishak Secondary School

Back Row (Left to Right)

Mr Yap Boon Chien Tanjong Katong Girls' School

Mr Gejendran s/o V Krishnan Geylang Methodist School (Secondary)

Mdm Tan Ying Fong Irene Telok Kurau Primary School

Mr Ng Wee Nghee Bendemeer Secondary School

Ms Koh Su-Cheng Da Qiao Primary School

Mdm Chan May Ling Clementi Primary School

Lead

Care

Inspire

Lead



*"Go to the people. Learn from them.
Live with them. Start with what they know.
Build with what they have.
The best of leaders when the job is done,
when the task is accomplished,
the people will say we have done it ourselves."*

Lao Tzu



Ms Lucy Sim

Guangyang Primary School

“教师之为教，不在全盘授予，
而在相机诱导。”

—— 叶圣陶

*“The art of teaching is not about
cramming the students with knowledge,
but how to foster their interest
in learning at the appropriate time.”*

—— Ye Shengtao (Chinese Educator, 1894-1988)



Educating the Young

Teaching is my calling. After teaching for 25 years, I am still passionate about teaching Chinese Language and educating the young. I see it as my duty and responsibility to impart in every pupil the appropriate values and equip them with the skills to meet the challenges of the 21st century. I believe that every child is talented in his own ways and it is my duty as a teacher to help the child discover, grow and develop his potential.

Igniting Passion and Interest in Chinese Language

The main driving force behind my innovative teaching pedagogies has always been the pupils. I saw a need to design innovative teaching and learning strategies to ignite pupils' interest in the Chinese Language as most of them come from English speaking

families. I want my pupils to discover the treasure embedded in the language and fall in love with it.

Together with teachers in my department, we designed a customised curriculum that encompasses teaching approaches, support structures, activities and differentiated worksheets to cater to the different readiness and ability levels of learners. We have successfully initiated and implemented innovative teaching pedagogies such as the News Reporting Programme, Chinese Character Aerobics, 2-2-3 Word Pattern KaraOK and From Reading to Writing. The Chinese Character Aerobics involves the use of body movements to engage learners kinesthetically while learning the Chinese characters. Implemented at the Primary 1 and Primary 2 levels, these lessons enable learners to learn simple strokes through movement and drama rather than through memorization. Outcomes have been encouraging with pupils showing enjoyment in the lessons. The impact of the innovative pedagogies was seen when the pupils performed better than national and comparable schools in their Mother Tongue Primary School Leaving Examination (PSLE).

I remember a Primary 6 pupil whom I taught in 2010. She had been failing Chinese Language from Primary 3 to Primary 5 and she disliked the subject. She even gave up hope that she would pass Chinese Language in PSLE. I encouraged her to persevere and with the innovative learning experiences that she had in my Chinese Language class, her attitude towards the subject changed. Her essay writing skills improved greatly after going through the 'From Reading to Writing' strategy. She told me she could appreciate the beauty of the language after attending my lessons and began to love the Chinese language. She obtained an 'A' for Chinese at the PSLE.

Learning through Community Involvement

I believe that it is important to nurture the young to be appreciative and kind towards others in the community. Our school has been collaborating with Bishan East Community Club on a community involvement programme for the benefit of elderly residents in Bishan. They come to Guangyang Primary School for exercise every Tuesday, and our pupils mingle, interact and exercise with them. This project provides a platform for our pupils to learn more about respecting the elderly and relating with them.

Developing Teacher Competencies

As a Lead Teacher, I find fulfillment in inspiring and motivating my Chinese Language teachers to explore new and innovative pedagogies to excite our young pupils in the learning of Chinese Language. I am glad to have the opportunities to build teacher competency by mentoring teachers and conducting workshops at the cluster level. In addition, I worked closely with my school teachers on Lesson Study research and we attained the Gold Award in 2008, 2009 and 2010 at the National Innovation and Quality Circles Assessment. We shared our work and best practices at various school, cluster, national and international platforms.

Passing on the Torch of Learning

As a fraternity, we need to continue to work at building the professional capacity of teachers as they are the key to the learning and development of pupils and to passing on the torch of learning to the next generation.



Mr Gejendran s/o V Krishnan

Geylang Methodist School (Secondary)

"I am not a teacher, but an awakener."

-- Robert Frost



A Meaningful Journey

My ten years as an educator has been a fulfilling and uplifting experience. The scores of students whom I have had the privilege of teaching over the years have helped broaden my repertoire of knowledge and skills that enabled me to become a more effective teacher. Hard work, convictions and reflection have been critical in my growth and development as a professional.

My Philosophy

My belief that every child can succeed with guidance and opportunity motivates me to spend time counselling, coaching and mentoring students. To me, educating a child involves moulding his character and inculcating in him, a set of appropriate values. It is also essential for teachers to empower students to set goals in order to encourage ownership and commitment.

Life Transformation

One bright sunny afternoon, the hall was abuzz with the excitement of students eager to receive their O-level examination results. A promising gem realised that she had qualified for the course of her choice. Amanda told me that she would be back to see me when she had achieved her dream. Looking at her brought back

memories of the challenges that I had to overcome to guide this mischievous girl from the time I entered her class in Secondary 1 to the day she left to sit for her national examinations. Coming late, skipping lessons and playing truant were some of the misdeeds that she had been embroiled in. Being the one with the unyielding voice of reason, motivation, care and firmness over the years, I helped Amanda realise her potential. She is currently in her final year pursuing an accounting programme at Ngee Ann Polytechnic with a plan to complete the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants examination thereafter. Such transformation in students has given me the impetus to remain committed to my role as a caring and concerned teacher.

Service Learning

My strong conviction on the value of Service Learning led me to conceptualise a Pupil Development framework to help students see that they could make a positive difference to their community and themselves when they are committed to serving others. The students have since undertaken fund-raising and community service projects in Malacca and Cambodia. These projects have instilled a greater sense of civic responsibility in the students, enhanced their social and emotional development and enabled them to better appreciate their homeland, Singapore.

Teacher Development

Besides working with teachers to refine the Normal Technical coursework to engage students through school-based professional sharing, I also mentor teachers in pedagogy and classroom management. Being a member of the school's mentoring team, I was able to gain insights into the teaching strategies adopted by teachers in the school through the '3-minute walk-throughs'.

These are brief, focussed, informal classroom observations implemented in the school. This approach has paved the way for greater reflective conversations on teaching and learning amongst beginning teachers, experienced teachers and heads of departments. Fellow teachers became more confident in managing their classes with the guidance of their colleagues. Beginning teachers found their roles and responsibilities more manageable, meaningful and enjoyable. Heads of department developed a greater awareness of strategies used by the teachers. Such an approach has helped the school enhance the professional development of teachers, thus enabling them to move to a higher level of proficiency.

Commitment to Students

It is my firm belief that every teacher can be outstanding as long as they are committed to helping students achieve the best that they can. Although there is no silver bullet to address the myriad of concerns teachers face, responding with patience, compassion and resilience will certainly win the day.



Ms Sujeetha Margarita Brampy

Kent Ridge Secondary School

*“Education must inspire the faith
that each of us has both the power
and the responsibility to effect positive
change on a global scale.”*

--- Daisaku Ikeda



Our Beliefs Count

My role as a teacher is to help each and every student develop and achieve his full potential by providing the necessary scaffolding needed to enhance learning in the context of real life experiences. I also see developing the younger teachers I work with as my responsibility. This sense of mission is attributed to the influence of my mother who was a teacher, my mentor in life, Daisaku Ikeda as well as my teacher mentors at Seletar Institute, where I first started my journey as an educator. They demonstrated by their words and actions how one can make a difference in the lives of others.

Every Student Counts

I think of creative strategies to make the Principles of Accounts (POA) come alive for my students during lessons and motivate them to give of their best. I take pride in doing whatever it takes to help each and every student work towards their goals.

When Tom, a bright student in my graduating class started dozing off during lessons, missing school and doing badly for his

Preliminary Examinations, I knew something was wrong. Calls to his home and pep talks given by concerned teachers whenever he was present in school did not improve things. Finally, my home visit shocked him and surfaced his addiction to computer games. This was compounded by his belief that he was not able to improve the outcome of the upcoming National Examinations. I spent many sessions counselling him to boost his confidence and countless afternoons guiding him and other students in their revision with the use of self-designed teaching and learning resources. It was all worth it when he came specially to show me the POA distinction on his result slip on the day the 'O' level results were released.

Every Learning Opportunity for Shared Responsibility Counts

As the Head of Department for Student Development, I have the opportunity to lead my team to think of creative strategies to build a caring school culture which caters to the different needs and holistic development of students. Along with this focus, I was aware of the need to put in place structures to support teachers as they work with students.

I take on the roles of an advisor, a facilitator, a problem solver, a coach, a decision maker and a friend with my committee members. In working with new, inexperienced officers, my approach has been to empower and guide them individually or in teams to build their confidence. I would involve myself, to varying degrees, in the planning, organising, execution and evaluation of the various activities. This has helped to minimise their anxieties in managing Student Development (SD) programmes. I also demonstrate to colleagues how things can be done better and facilitate learning through observations.

This mentoring approach has been adopted for all major SD committee activities from the Secondary 1 Orientation camp by the Student Council, to the 1 day whole-school Values-In-Action (VIA) Day, as well as the organising of the inaugural Nepal Service Learning Overseas Trip.

Affirmation of my mentoring efforts from team members helped me realise that some teachers need the personal guidance, experiential learning opportunities and role-modelling to develop professionally.

Every Ripple Effect Counts

To date, the Service Learning Overseas Trips that I initiated have gone beyond Nepal to Hanoi and Surabaya. Numerous VIA projects with MINDS Lee Kong Chian Gardens School that I initiated since 2010 have led to a sustained partnership and an invitation to co-organise their 50th Anniversary Challenge this year. These platforms have presented students with greater opportunities to be concerned citizens and active participants in making a difference to the lives of others. It is heartening to see more staff members taking the initiative to explore possible collaborations with our external partners.

My journey in being a catalyst for change has been at times exhausting, but deep down in my heart, I know that my mission brings me to places that require my contribution. Seeing students and teachers doing things from the heart has been satisfying and it is my way of repaying my debt of gratitude to my mentors.



Mdm Leong Pui Wan

Pioneer Secondary School

*"A teacher affects eternity; he can never
tell where his influence stops."*

-- Henry Brooks Adams



Connecting with Students

I strongly believe that every child can learn and achieve. Every child has his own strengths and develops at his own pace. In order to foster growth, the teacher needs to reach out and connect with students and build strong, positive relationships with them.

Teaching with Passion

My definition of "TEACH" extends beyond the academics to helping each child grow and become a person of good character. **TEACH** - **T**ouching lives, **E**ngaging hearts, **A**ffirming behaviour, **C**onnecting knowledge with real life and **H**olistic development – is the compass that guides my role as a teacher. It is this passion to "TEACH" that has kept me in the service for 20 years. While the progress made by students may seem slow, I feel that all the hard work is worth it even when just one student shows some improvement in his behaviour or academic work. I believe that the passion to teach will enable me to overcome the obstacles and challenges that I will face in the years to come.

Believing in Students

I strongly believe that every student can learn and excel, with

encouragement and support. When John joined my class in Secondary 3, he was struggling to understand Science concepts and was on the verge of dropping the subject. He was not receptive to my initial encouragement as he deemed himself a failure in the subject. I worked hard to gain his trust and gradually, I was able to influence him to change his mindset. I helped him believe in himself and encouraged him to work at overcoming the challenges ahead. John gradually showed improvement in Science, and did well in his GCE 'O' Level Examinations. He is currently pursuing a Diploma in Electrical and Electronic Engineering at the Singapore Polytechnic.

As a Head of Department for Character Building, I have the privilege of working with many students in the school. The Special Individualised Character Education (SPICE) programme is deliberately designed with lesson plans to address the social and emotional learning needs of the students. The small group setting enables the students to share their thoughts and life stories openly. It is particularly rewarding when students express their gratitude to me for teaching them important life skills and spurring them on to overcome challenges in life.

Mentoring Teachers

I strongly believe that it is crucial to build good rapport with the staff under my charge. That includes winning their trust and creating a safe environment for them to share their aspirations and problems. Mary was an enthusiastic beginning teacher who has taught for two years. She was overwhelmed by her teaching responsibilities and personal commitments. I spent time with her and understood the difficulties that she was facing. With some support and encouragement, she was able to press on. I am heartened to see her passion for teaching reignited over the years.

Collaborating with Parents

I see the need to work in close partnership with parents as they are our key stakeholders. I work at building relationships with parents and garnering their support for school programmes as I believe that parents play a crucial role in the growing years of their children. Workshops on parenting skills are conducted based on the needs of the parents, and support groups are formed to provide them with continued support in this area. It has been gratifying to see a few of these parents improving in the way they communicate with their children.

Making a Difference

Teachers who believe they can make a difference in the lives of their students do make a difference. My fellow educators, you can make a difference too!

Lead

Care

Inspire

Care



*"They may forget what you said
but they will never forget
how you made them feel."*

Carol Buchner



Mdm Chan May Ling

Clementi Primary School

*"If a child can't learn the way we teach,
maybe we should teach the way they learn."*

-- Ignacio Estrada



Understanding a Teacher's Role

Before I joined the teaching profession, my perception of a teacher was someone who focuses solely on imparting academic knowledge. Indeed, I had little idea of how a teacher could touch a child's heart and transform his life until I set foot in the classroom ten years ago.

Witnessing Transformation

I always encourage my students to pursue academic excellence as having good qualifications paves the way for opportunities that might help fulfil their aspirations. I would make a conscious effort to inspire and motivate my students by praising them for their good effort, sharing success stories of my former students to motivate them and working closely with their parents to support their learning. I also constantly remind my students that success is not dependent on academic results alone as good character and values are equally important in life. Through sharing true stories of other role models, I lead them to redefine success and recognise that their self-worth goes beyond achieving outstanding grades.

On several instances, I was pleasantly surprised that even after they have left the school, a few of my students still have treasured memories of how I had motivated and encouraged them.

I recall receiving a forwarded email from my Administrative Manager the year before. To my surprise, it was sent by a student whom I had taught in 2004 and have not kept in touch with since her graduation. In the email, she had attached a completed form to nominate me for an award for teachers. It was not until I read her write-up that I realised how much impact my words had on her then. We communicated through email again and she promptly accepted my invitation to conduct a personal sharing and motivational talk for my class. It was hard to believe that a girl who used to be so shy could speak so confidently in front of a class of strangers.

In class that day, she took out her Primary 6 journal and shared our written exchanges on the visualiser. From her journal entries and my responses, I realised how my words of encouragement had boosted the confidence of a withdrawn child. She went on to secondary school to become an outstanding National Cadet Corps leader who achieved an equally stellar performance in her studies. Today, she is a happy and promising undergraduate. How glad I was to witness her transformation, knowing that I have played a role in it.

Growing as a Teacher

Believing in the value of continual self-improvement, I try to develop my professional competencies whenever there are suitable opportunities for professional development. Peer sharing sessions, workshops, reflective thinking practices, collaborative learning in interest groups and work attachments are the various modes which I use to develop my professional competencies. The useful pedagogical and content-based skills, knowledge and strategies which I acquired through these learning platforms have enabled me to create collaborative and challenging assignments that nurture creativity and critical thinking skills in my students.

I have had many opportunities to facilitate and engage colleagues in professional development. Through peer mentoring, lesson observations and professional sharing sessions, I am glad to learn that a few colleagues have developed stronger subject mastery and pedagogical skills. Most importantly, the invaluable feedback which I gathered through these sharing platforms has enabled me to develop the competencies required of a teacher.

Passing it On

I am thankful for the many experienced colleagues, mentors and school leaders who have patiently guided me. As a mid-career teacher, my learning curve was steep. Without their kind support, I would not have picked up the necessary skills and knowledge within the short time frame. In the same spirit, I hope to share the knowledge, skills and experiences I have accumulated with fellow teachers so that they too may positively impact their students.



*"It takes a deep commitment to change
and an even deeper commitment to grow."*

-- Ralph Ellison



Making a Difference

In my journey as an educator, two things have shaped my beliefs — the first is that change is necessary for progress. The second is that every child can learn, regardless of his or her ability.

In school, pupils in the Learning Support Programme (LSP) for English Language (EL) find it challenging to learn in their regular classrooms as they struggle with basic literacy skills. I agreed to be the Learning Support Coordinator (LSC) as it is my personal conviction that by reaching out to these pupils, I can make a difference in their lives and ensure that no child is left behind.

Imparting Values

In the LSP lessons, I consciously instil in my pupils the love for reading and values such as respect for others and perseverance. My LSP classroom is stocked with interesting books which are easily accessible to the pupils. Time is structured during LSP lessons for their independent reading. I would move around helping pupils with reading difficulties. I would then guide them to apply the strategies they have learnt in the lessons. To sustain their interest, I would read to the pupils and pay careful attention to sounds and rhythm. Pupils would share about the books they

have read and I would utilise our interaction time to communicate appropriate values and reinforce them.

Impacting Children

Liang Tong, then a Primary 2 foreign pupil, could not speak English and did not look forward to LSP lessons. He was older than his classmates and felt uncomfortable around the younger children. I encouraged Liang Tong and provided him with the much needed support. During LSP lessons, I helped him adjust to the new environment and cope with his learning challenges. I rendered timely support whenever he sought help in English Language, assigned him tasks that required him to interact with the class and praised him when he did well to boost his confidence.

Gradually, he demonstrated remarkable improvement in his reading skills and became more skilful at decoding and recognising words. A turning point came when I entered him for the National LSP Reading Competition. He attended training sessions regularly even as he grappled with texts of increasing difficulty. I communicated regularly with his mother to ensure that he got home directly after each training session and kept track of his ability to cope with his schoolwork. Appreciative of my efforts, Liang Tong would offer his help in the classroom. He started smiling more often and expressing his thoughts more readily as he participated in class activities. He eventually emerged the winner in the competition to the delight of the school and his family. His mother was grateful that I had made a difference in her child. He is now a well-adjusted and confident Primary 5 pupil.

Mentoring Teachers

As a Senior Teacher, I mentor beginning teachers and Allied Educators (AEDs) to help them ease into the school and support their professional development. Jaime was a beginning AED for Learning and Behavioural Support and I was her mentor. She expressed a strong interest in supporting pupils with special educational needs. I guided and encouraged her as she worked with the pupils. In addition to my sharing of literacy intervention strategies, we spent time discussing lesson ideas and she also gained insights through observing my lessons. Jaime is now pursuing further studies in Early Childhood Education. I am glad to have made a positive influence on her professional development.

Keeping Spirits High

Working with teachers, AEDs and parents has made my journey as a teacher more meaningful. I am very grateful to my school leaders and colleagues for their unstinting guidance and support. The daily exchanges with pupils, colleagues, school attendants and parents keep my spirits high. Each encounter reminds me that teachers can make a difference in the lives of people around us.



Mdm Tan Ying Fong Irene

Telok Kurau Primary School

*"It is the responsibility of every adult...
to make sure that children hear
what we have learned from the lessons of life
and to hear over and over that we love them
and that they are not alone."*

– Marian Wright Edelman



My Beliefs

I used to think that teaching was just about developing student's knowledge and skills. However, after reading 'Appreciation Education' by Chinese educator, Zhou Hong, two years ago, my perspective of teaching changed. The central focus of Appreciation Education is building on a child's strengths and instilling in him the mentality that "I am a good child". Such a focus would emphasise the potential within every child and with that, every failure is seen as a stepping stone to future success.

I help children develop self-confidence as I believe that it is critical for greater learning and achievement. This is done through an inviting and positive learning environment coupled with the frequent display of pupils' work. Establishing close relationships with parents firmly strengthens this foundation.

'Heart' Work to 'Hard' Work

When educators reach out to their pupils and touch their hearts, it will motivate them to work hard. In order to touch

their hearts, a teacher needs to understand the pupils' needs. I also believe in creating an open class culture where positive acts are acknowledged and encouraged. Newspaper articles on controversial issues are used as debate topics with an emphasis on citizenship and character development.

Hassan, a quiet boy who was underperforming in class, refused to complete his homework and failed every assessment. During one of our counselling sessions, he confided that his parents were divorced and his father had remarried. He confessed that he sorely missed his father but refused to meet him as he felt abandoned and neglected. I arranged for a meeting in school with his father. Their strained relationship was restored amidst tears and both father and son affirmed their love for each other. Hassan's behaviour changed for the better and his grades gradually improved. Afraid of being distracted at home, he even requested that I keep his PlayStation in school. He is now the top scorer for Science in his class.

Through working closely with the pupils and their parents, I have helped them to manage and improve their relationships through restorative sessions. The pupils have since been able to focus on their studies better and are more positive in their attitudes to school.

Curious Science Guru

My passion for Science has earned me the nickname, 'Curious Science Guru'. I often conduct Science 'Magic' shows for pupils, teachers and parents during Science workshops. In addition, I read widely and attend workshops in order to learn from the experts and share the knowledge and skills with fellow teachers. Through professional conversations and exploring strategies like Socratic Questioning and Arguments in Inquiry-

Based Learning, we work collaboratively to engage pupils in the learning of Science.

As a mentor responsible for induction, I share my passion and beliefs when guiding beginning teachers and Allied Educators (AEDs). To enhance teachers' knowledge of Science and related pedagogy, I started the Weekly Science Bulletin. I email current news on Science issues and ways they could be linked to topics in the syllabus to teachers teaching Science. They look forward to reading the articles and the resources have also created excitement among their pupils.

For pupils, the Weekly Science Blog on the school portal is updated with video clips and newspaper articles to help them appreciate the different ways Science influences them and their environment. My passion for Science and innovation has rubbed off on many of my pupils. I encouraged Ahmad who is technically inclined to construct Science toys and affirmed him whenever he completed a toy. One of his toys, a simplified coffee stirrer, was eventually shortlisted for the Tan Kah Kee Young Inventors' Competition.

Open Learning Culture

Through the collaborative efforts of my peers and colleagues, an open learning culture is established in my school. We collaborate on inquiry-based learning through Lesson Study and participate actively in peer observations, reflections on pedagogical approaches and discussions on ways to improve our teaching practices. I believe that promoting this culture of professional sharing will raise the professional standards of teachers in the fraternity.



Mdm Norsinah Bte Suadi

Townsville Primary School

*"Coming together is a beginning;
keeping together is progress;
working together is success."*

– Henry Ford



My Philosophy

As an educator, I believe collaboration is the key to success. I believe firmly in anchoring the child in values to bring about compassion, integrity, resilience and a sense of responsibility towards himself, his family and his community. I truly support MOE's recent move towards a values-driven education for I believe that success is without merit when a person lacks character.

Collaboration with Teachers

There is power in teamwork. Through collaboration, we can make a difference in the lives of our charges.

In 2005, I was entrusted with the responsibility of improving the writing skills of the pupils. It was observed that our pupils were not keen writers. Together with my team of teachers, we worked at designing a narrative writing package for teachers to be used in the classroom despite our limited knowledge of curriculum design. In the first few years of our journey together, the teachers and I struggled to review our writing package and made attempts to address the gaps together. The writing package would not have been possible without teamwork.

After attending the Management in Leadership in Schools Programme at the National Institute of Education in 2009, I finally found a way to improve on the writing package. Upon returning to school, I introduced strategies to improve the delivery of lessons in the classroom. Teachers became excited about teaching the strategies and pupils were more engaged in class. Pupils' writing became more systematic and creative. They began to apply the skills that were taught to them and their writing showed an improvement over time.

Collaboration among Pupils

Collaboration is also a powerful tool of learning in the classroom. Together, pupils and teachers can overcome any hurdle that comes their way as they strive towards a common goal. Every pupil in my class is accountable not only for his own learning, but also his group's success. Each group works towards a common goal and they celebrate success together. Peer coaching is a common strategy in my classroom and pupils are encouraged to learn from one another. Over time, the pupils have come to appreciate and build on one another's strengths.

Jenny was very weak in Mathematics and she had a phobia for the subject. Upon noticing that she preferred to approach her classmates for help, I assigned a Mathematics buddy to coach her. Together with her buddy, we helped Jenny develop a love for the subject. Gradually, her skills in Mathematics improved. My proudest moment came when she visited me during Teachers' Day and told me that she was a Mathematics buddy to one of her secondary classmates.

Collaboration with Parents

I also work at collaborating with parents by making a conscious effort to maintain two-way communication with them. At the beginning of the year, I shared my vision of having the pupils excel in both the academic and non-academic areas during the school's Get-to-Know Session with parents. The purpose of the session was to establish a common understanding of our expectations of the children in my class.

Hence, when Raj developed a nonchalant attitude towards his work, I wondered if it was time to communicate with his parents. He did not hand in his work and refused to explain anything when questioned. I was completely baffled by his behaviour. Despite reminders, he did not make any effort to hand in his work. Finally, I decided to get his parents to work closely with me. He promised to be a more responsible pupil from then on. He was fully aware of the consequences of his action should he fail to comply with my instructions. His parents and I did our part by monitoring him closely, both at home and in school. A few months later, I saw a great change in Raj's attitude. He started handing in his homework on time and gave reasons when he could not hand in his work.

Collaboration in the Fraternity

In order to raise the standard of teaching, collaboration among teachers is the way forward. As Henry Ford once said, "If everyone is moving together, then success takes care of itself".

Lead

Care

Inspire

Inspire



*"It is the supreme art
of the teacher to awaken joy in creative
expression and knowledge."*

Albert Einstein



Mdm Anwara Khatun d/o Moklis Khan

Haig Girls' School (Primary)

"There are painters who transform the sun to a yellow spot, but there are others who with the help of their art and their intelligence transform a yellow spot into the sun."

-- Pablo Picasso



Changing for the Better

I started off as a teacher teaching English, Mathematics and Science. However, Art has always been an integral part of my life and my interest in the subject has grown progressively over the years. I was spurred to pursue my interest in Art and contribute to a subject that I have always been passionate about. With support from my school, I obtained a Diploma in Art Education in 2011 and became a specialised Art teacher.

Igniting the Passion for Art

Teachers have the opportunity to inspire students, lead them to the threshold of their minds, open a door of possibilities, and instil in them a desire to learn. However, we need to be able to connect with our students to make a difference in their lives.

After returning from my teacher work attachment in 2010, a student with a flair for art wanted to quit the Art Club as she had lost confidence in doing well in art. Recognising her talent and her dream of going to the School of the Arts (SOTA), I encouraged her to remain in the Club. I shared success stories with her on the resilience and perseverance of artists like Henri Matisse to spur her on and guided her closely in her art work. She slowly gained

confidence in herself and eventually obtained a Gold award in the Singapore Youth Festival Art and Crafts Exhibition in 2011. She applied to SOTA through the Direct School Admission and succeeded in getting a place to pursue Visual Arts. On Teachers' Day, she made a card for me, to thank me for believing in her and helping her realise her dream. It is indeed very heartening to be able to make a difference in the lives of our students. I strongly believe that we can help our students realise their potential and achieve success in their areas of passion if we believe in them and take the effort to motivate them.

Once, a few of my students approached me to share about their difficulty of sketching a landscape. Armed with boards and pencils, I led the students out of the classroom to do outdoor sketching with me. Each student brought along a window viewer which they had previously made from cardboard. We settled ourselves in the school garden and I demonstrated how to observe nature through the window viewer before making quick sketches. I showed them how drawing can be easy and fun through making close observations of the objects studied. Half an hour later, they completed their sketches and were impressed by their own ability to draw the school landscape. It was a meaningful learning experience for them. Since then, they would always ask me, "Are we going out sketching today?" My timeless reply was and still is, "Keep a pocket-sized sketch book or a blank note-pad with you all the time and make drawings of what you notice in your everyday life." A sketchbook is a form of visual diary that allows the child to take charge of his own learning as it offers space for idea development and reflection. As the sketchbook contains traces of success and failure, it allows the child to grow and learn with it.

Working Together

In 2011, I led a team of Primary Four (P4) teachers in 'The Inspired Museum Explorers – Our Unique Travels' (TIMEOUT), an inter-disciplinary museum-based programme. This was a

collaboration between the school and the National Art Gallery. Together, we re-designed and integrated the Primary 4 English, Art and Social Studies curriculum around the themes and art works of Liu Kang. The purpose of TIMEOUT programme is to stimulate creativity, develop 21st century competencies in our pupils, and deepen their appreciation for visual art and their sense of pride in Singapore's cultural heritage. All P4 pupils are involved in integrated learning, creative writing and sketching at the Singapore Art Museum for 2 hours a week during curriculum time over four to six weeks. Through the enriching experience, pupils have demonstrated more creativity in their writing and artwork and expressed greater interest in Social Studies.

Working on this Programme together enabled us to build a stronger working relationship, helped us appreciate the pedagogical skills of team members and provided us insight into the artistic dimension. I believe my fellow teachers came out of this experience enriched and definitely more appreciative of what Art brings to the teaching arena.

Learning Continually

As teachers are at the forefront of educating our youth, I strongly believe that they must prepare themselves adequately for the challenges in the 21st century in order to maximise the learning outcomes of students. To achieve this, teachers need to take ownership of their learning and engage in ongoing professional development to remain relevant in their subject areas and the pedagogies of teaching. Adopting a positive outlook on professional and personal development will culminate in a learning culture that encourages continual learning, reflective practice and collaboration.



Mr Ng Wee Nghee

Bendemeer Secondary School

*"Too often we underestimate the power
of a touch, a smile, a kind word, a listening ear,
an honest compliment, or the smallest act
of caring, all of which have the potential
to turn a life around."*

-- Leo Buscaglia



Discovery and Growth

I believe that every student has unique talents and teachers are instrumental in helping students discover their talents. Seeing students transform and grow has motivated me to uphold my belief, instil hope in them and continue to build their confidence.

As the Head of Department (Normal Technical), one of the signature programmes under my charge is the NTcipate Life Programme. It is a weekly programme that sets out to discover the hidden talents of all our lower secondary Normal Technical (NT) students. Through this programme, students learn to respect others and value their friendship with one another. They also discover their interests and strengths in the performing arts and sports.

Ronnie was an active student with behavioural problems during his first year in school. As a Discipline Master then, I had to counsel him when he misbehaved. I discovered that he was actually a lonely boy who needed a listening ear and wanted to be acknowledged, just like the other students. He chose

to take up photography during the NTcipate Life Programme. Harnessing his flair for photography, I worked with him to hone his photography skills and provided platforms for him to capture school events. Positive results started to show. He became more patient and focused in his work. He even helped to take pictures for major events such as the South Zone Seminar and school events. The programme spurred him to develop his interest in photography and gave him the aspiration to study photography in his postgraduate years!

Chin Meng is another example of a student who was often caught misbehaving in class. However, after participating in Science Club activities, he became interested in astronomy and volunteered to set up the equipment for the night observations. Noting his diligence, I involved him as a member of the backstage crew during our school's first outdoor musical. The following year, he volunteered his services backstage and coached his juniors in the school concert. During his final year, he received the Singa Award for his exceptional performance in school. He is currently a student councillor in Ngee Ann Polytechnic.

Seeing the transformation in Ronnie and Chin Meng motivated me to continue making a difference in the lives of my students. It dawned on me that students appreciate it when teachers truly care for them and they will change for the better to meet the positive expectations placed on them.

Innovative Learning Programmes

One platform for innovations to take root in my school is the 'N' Level Post Examinations Programme for the Secondary 4 Normal Course students. I created a Service Learning programme to provide opportunities for students to give back to the community. Some projects for our students included creating and installing

posters on school staircases, working with a primary school to conduct a solar observation session for primary school students, and organizing a used textbook collection from the community. Through Service Learning, we are able to engage the students and create in them a sense of belonging to the school.

Teachers are the key to the success of any programme. I am privileged to be able to lead a team of committed teachers, allied educators and a school counsellor. Our team conducted a customized module named 'Horse Care and Management' for the NT students to inculcate responsibility and care for others. The team spent their holidays working with the trainer to ensure that the content was relevant. During the module, we saw students stepping out of their comfort zone, to clean stables, groom horses and overcome their fear of heights. We were very encouraged by the positive feedback received from students and the trainers. This has created more excitement and enthusiasm within the team to work on other innovative modules in the future.

I was gratified when my school received the Lee Hsien Loong Award for Innovations in the Normal Course in 2010, in recognition for enhancing the teaching and learning practices in innovative ways.

Transformation of Lives

The journey leading to the transformation of a child is not always smooth but with determination and our belief in them, half the battle is won. Let us strive together to touch the lives of those we teach.



Mr Yap Boon Chien

Tanjong Katong Girls' School

*"Learning begets identity,
and identity begets learning.
Being precedes doing,
and doing shapes the being."*

-- Dr Charles Chew Ming Kheng



Teaching, My Heartbeat

Teaching is not just a career to me; it is my life. I enjoy spending hours investigating various modes of teaching and designing representative models for use in teaching Physics. Driven by passion for what I am doing, I am constantly energised and I look forward to going into the classroom to explore new learning opportunities with my students. The sparks in my students' eyes tell me they share the same enthusiasm for learning. This passion for teaching is reaffirmed in my interactions with fellow educators.

Servant Leadership

Daniel was a secondary one member of the Robotics Club, eager to learn and excel. Confident and high-spirited, he expressed his ambition to be the President of the Robotics Club. My main concern for Daniel then was his relationship with the other members of the Robotics Club. So, I used teachable moments to help him understand that being a leader is not about fame and popularity but serving others.

Over the next two years, I assigned him the role of a sectional leader, exposed him to leadership opportunities, and inculcated in him the values of servant leadership and humility. He made mistakes along the way and learnt from his experiences. His relationship with members of the Robotics Club gradually grew stronger and he was voted as President of the Robotics Club. He served as President of the CCA for two years and won the respect of his members as a competent leader.

Last year, Daniel sent me a nomination form for the President's Award for Teachers. I was heartened to read about his strong convictions regarding humility for those in leadership positions and his expression of gratitude towards me for inculcating moral values in him.

Long after his graduation from secondary school, he still calls me to share about the joy and challenges in his life. Each time I think of him, I am reminded of the impact of inculcating the appropriate values in students. It was a great privilege to have been there to shape his values and help him become a leader of sound character.

Character Moulding

A teacher has the opportunity to mould character and change lives. Bernice had never scored well in Physics. Her hard work did not result in improved grades. Some concluded that Physics was not her strength and advised her to drop the subject. I told Bernice otherwise. I believe education is not just about the subject but what you do when faced with a difficult situation. Grades are but numbers. What matters most is finding the strength to overcome challenges.

During my regular consultations with her, I taught her some study

skills and surfaced her misconceptions. That helped her establish a deeper understanding in the subject. Within a few weeks after my first consultation, I saw a renewed determination in her. She would come daily for consultations. I knew in my heart that she had taken up the challenge to do her best in the subject. Bernice graduated with a B in Physics and a 'distinction' for resilience in overcoming challenges. She is now studying in a junior college of her choice.

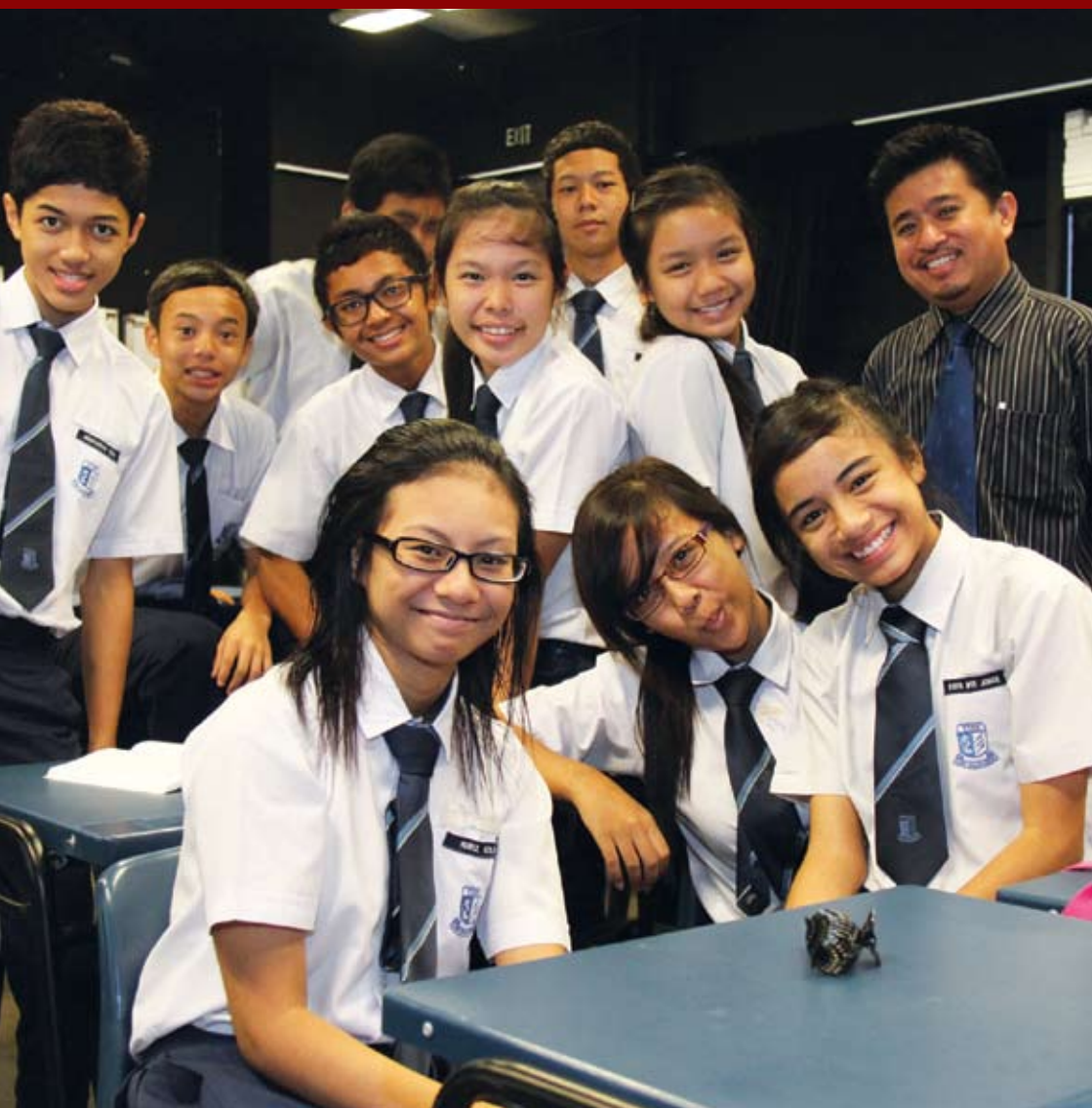
It is a joy to see how communicating positive expectations transforms individuals who lack self-confidence and direction to self-motivated young adults with clear goals and the ability to fulfil their dreams.

Teacher-Led Culture

My strong belief in teacher-led collaboration in professional development underpins my role as a Lead Teacher. I work closely with Senior Teachers to shape mentoring structures and practices to raise teaching standards. As a firm advocate of Professional Learning Communities (PLC), I facilitate professional sharing through networked learning with fellow Physics teachers in my school. I believe that this will result in the rapid propagation of new ideas or practices within the PLC.

Collaborative Efforts

Teaching is never about individual effort. The Starfish Story by Loren Eiseley, reminds us not only of our limitations as individuals but also what our collective efforts as a fraternity of highly passionate teachers and partners in education can achieve.



Mr Muslim Hanafiah

Yusof Ishak Secondary School

*“Education is not the filling of the pail
but the lighting of a fire.”*

-- William Butler Yeats



My Beliefs

I believe there is a learner in every student and each student should be empowered to take charge of his own learning. My role as a teacher is not an information giver, but a coach, facilitator and co-learner. I am a fervent advocate of self-directed learning. Students learn best when they are actively involved in their own learning through experiencing the real world as well as collaborating and making discoveries with their peers. I see the teacher-student relationship as two cogs that are interdependent. Understanding the students' needs will enable the teacher to move in tandem with them, resulting in the enrichment of learning.

Theatre in Education

These beliefs spurred me to embark on a Theatre-In-Education programme when I joined Yusof Ishak Secondary School in 2007. Theatre is a multi-sensory mode of learning which engages the body, mind, emotions and voice. Through the use of theatre, my students developed fluency in the Malay Language and grew in their self-confidence and creativity. They also learnt values such as commitment, responsibility and teamwork, and their social-emotional competencies were enhanced. My proposal to convert two classrooms into a fully functional Blackbox theatre equipped with lighting, a sound system and a smoke machine

was supported by my School Leaders and Cluster Superintendent. During Malay Language and Literature lessons, theatre techniques such as role play, pantomime, story-telling and hot seat are used to engage my students.

Since 2009, I have initiated musical productions based on the GCE 'O' Level syllabus. I selected classical short stories to be staged to help students develop a deeper understanding of the text. Through these musicals, students were able to comprehend and appreciate the text better. I invited other schools to collaborate in producing the musicals so as to introduce this learning experience to more students. As part of the preparation for the musical production, I also accompanied students to local plays and musicals by various theatre companies so they could learn from others.

Students who participated in the musicals have shown improvements both in their academic achievements and motivational levels. Besides learning life skills, their confidence levels increased tremendously. During our reflection sessions, the students shared that they have become more disciplined and more determined to achieve the targets they have set for themselves.

The Theatre-In-Education provided opportunities for me to collaborate with external organisations. These collaborations paved the way for my students to perform at international platforms as well as for the local audience. The Educational Technology Branch (ETD) has also approached my school to invite my students to act in a video for use as a resource for teachers. This video has since been made available for teachers to download from the Edumall portal.

I felt a great sense of achievement when some of my students took the initiative to put on a musical, which was truly their

own production, for an event graced by the Guest-of-Honour, Mdm Halimah Yaacob, then Minister of State for the Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Sports. It was indeed a proud moment for me as I watched my students blossoming into mature young adults.

Teacher Development

As a Lead Teacher, I believe that when we focus on teachers, our students will succeed. In 2007, I took the initiative to form the Malay Literature Schools Support Group comprising teachers from other schools. With the collective knowledge of the group, we are able to add value to each other's learning, enhance the professional development of other teachers as well as enrich the learning of our students. Through mentoring a group of Malay Language teachers from a primary school in my cluster on the usage of IT in teaching the Malay Language, I was greatly encouraged to see that it had sparked their interest to start a Lesson Study on the use of IT in teaching writing skills. It is my desire to help teachers grow as reflective professionals for in doing so, I will continue to learn and grow along with the fraternity.

President's Award for Teachers

The President's Award for Teachers was introduced in 1998 to recognise excellent teachers for their role in moulding the future of our nation. These teachers are those, who, through word and deed, inspire both their students and peers. The award is conferred by the President of the Republic of Singapore on Teachers' Day.

President's Award for Teachers – Past Award Winners

1998

Mrs Lim Tai Foon

St. Hilda's Primary School

Mrs Geetha Creffield

Anglo-Chinese Junior College

1999

Mrs Juliana Donna Ng Chye Huat

Nan Hua Primary School

Mr Wilfred Philips James

Dunman Secondary School

2000

Mrs Ng Peng Huat

Nan Hua Primary School

Mrs Caryn Ann Leong

Ping Yi Secondary School

Mdm Tan Liang See

The Chinese High School

2001

Mrs Chin Ngan Peng

Kong Hwa School

Mrs Nora Teo

Punggol Primary School

Mr Lim Chiow Huat

Broadrick Secondary School

Mrs Audrey Ting Yee Han

Nanyang Girls' High School

2002

Mdm Stefane Tan Hugue Hwan

Meridian Primary School

Mdm Tong Wai Han

Ang Mo Kio Secondary School

Ms Koe Heong Yin

The Chinese High School

2003

Mdm Long Miaw Ying

Jurong West Primary School

Mrs Kheng Samuel nee Chua Mui Yee

Lakeside Primary School

Mrs Roger Teng Siok Fun

North View Secondary School

2004

Ms Goh Siew Hong

Admiralty Primary School

Mrs Pramageetha Velmurugan

Huamin Primary School

Mr Koh Cher Hern

St. Hilda's Primary School

Mdm Rabiathul Bazriya

Compassvale Secondary School

Mdm Ranjit Singh

Pasir Ris Secondary School

2005

Miss Lim Siew Gek

Ahmad Ibrahim Primary School

Mdm Noorismawaty Bte Ismail

Jin Tai Secondary School

Mr Chew Tec Heng Edwin

Sembawang Secondary School

2006

Mdm Bong Fui Lian Shirley

Montfort Junior School

Mrs Tan Swan Liang Doris

Temasek Primary School

Mr Nur Johari Salleh

Deyi Secondary School

Mrs Goh Hui Cheng

Paya Lebar Methodist Girls' School (Secondary)

Mr Sulaiman Bin Mohd Yusof

Sembawang Secondary School

2007

Mdm Yip Jee Cheng Jessie

Mayflower Primary School

Mdm Parameswary d/o Sundar Rajoo

Montfort Junior School

Mr Yeo Leng Quee

Peirce Secondary School

Mdm Norlita Binte Marsuki

Sembawang Secondary School

2008

Mrs Ong-Chua Li Ling Eileen

Haig Girls' School

Mrs Lee Kok Hong

Temasek Primary School

Mrs Lim-Ng Yee Ping Diana

Coral Secondary School

2009

Mr Terry Tan Chee Liang

Anglo-Chinese School (Primary)

Miss Cardoza Sharon Ann

Farrer Park Primary School

Mdm Wong Lai Fong

Anderson Secondary School

Miss Lucy Oliver Fernandez

Catholic High School (Secondary)

2010

Mdm Emelyn Soon Bee Hong

CHIJ (Kellock)

Mr Devindra Sapai s/o Indrasapai

Seng Kang Primary School

Miss Teh Wan

Townsville Primary School

Mrs Mohana Eswaran

Regent Secondary School

2011

Mdm Chua Mui Ling

Woodlands Ring Primary School

Miss Serene Han Tui Kin

Montfort Junior School

Mdm Dianaros bt Ab Majid

Haig Girls' School

Mr Chong Jack Sheng

Woodlands Ring Secondary School

Mr Ganesan s/o Raman

Fairfield Methodist School (Secondary)

Acknowledgements

Our sincere appreciation for your support in making this publication possible:

Ms Ho Peng

Director-General of Education

Principals, parents, teachers and students who nominated the 12 finalists for the President's Award for Teachers 2012.