

# PASSING ON VALUES THAT STICK!

HOW CAN WE BETTER  
ENGAGE STUDENTS IN  
CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT?



## CONTACT

THE TEACHERS' DIGEST

ISSUE 07  
JULY 2012

---

### Telling tales with heart

Teachers share stories to  
impart values, and more.

---

### Let the games begin

Board games that make you  
laugh and learn

---

### Acronyms you must know

Need we say more?



**PUBLISHER**  
Corporate Communications Division  
Ministry of Education  
1 North Buona Vista Drive, Singapore 138675  
www.moe.gov.sg

For enquiries or feedback on *Contact*,  
please write to the *Contact* Editorial Team  
at [contact\\_online@moe.edu.sg](mailto:contact_online@moe.edu.sg)

**Editorial Advisers**  
Han Liang Yuan & Aileen Lim

**Editor-in-chief**  
Lee Hong Leng

**Editors**  
Jeremiah Chua  
Vanitha Murugan

Tuber Productions Pte Ltd  
298 River Valley Road Level 2  
Singapore 238339  
Tel : 6836-4030  
Fax : 6836-4029  
Email : [info@tuberproductions.com](mailto:info@tuberproductions.com)  
Web : [www.tuberproductions.com](http://www.tuberproductions.com)

**MANAGEMENT**  
**Director**  
Lee Han Shih

**Project Director**  
Liew Wei Ping

**Senior Project Manager**  
Cathy Foong

**EDITORIAL**  
**Contributing Editor**  
Chen Jingting

**Sub-editor**  
Jennifer Schoon

**Contributors**  
Joanna Hor, M. Daniel

**Intern**  
Muhammad Irwan Shah

**CREATIVE**  
**Creative Director**  
Ashik

**Art Director**  
Yip Siew Fei

**Graphic Designer**  
Ng Shi Wei

**Photographers**  
Amaranthine Photos



Passing on values that stick!

# Contents issue 07

**2 COVER STORY**  
**Passing on values that stick!**  
Pilot schools pave the way for  
closer partnerships with the  
ministry to design their own  
values education curricula.



**6 SPEAK**  
**A work in progress**  
Ms Liew Wei Li, Director of  
Student Development Curriculum,  
explains the renewed emphasis on  
imparting values.



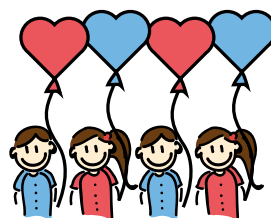
**10 INFOGRAPHICS**  
**Valued players**  
Educators take on different roles  
and responsibilities in Character  
and Citizenship Education.



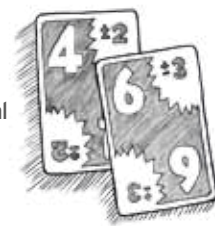
**12 FEATURE**  
**Setting the Arts alight**  
Award-winning schools  
get students, and other  
schools, fired up about  
the Arts.



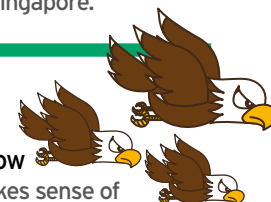
**14 FEATURE**  
**Finding allies in work**  
Allied Educators in  
Learning  
Communities  
receive much  
needed  
support.



**16 FEATURE**  
**Let the  
games begin**  
Play hard and learn  
more with educational  
board games.



**18 LIFESTYLE**  
**Nature escapades**  
Nature rambles right here in  
urban jungle Singapore.



**20 IN FOCUS**  
**Acronyms  
you must know**  
This guide makes sense of  
the letters that have stumped  
many a teacher.

**IBC PHOTO WINNERS AND  
INVITE FOR OCTOBER**  
Next theme: A New Adventure

**OBC WHAT SAY YOU?**  
Readers give their feedback  
on *Contact*.



Lee Hong Leng  
Editor-in-chief

## Editor's note

Is there a better way to teach values? Some of us might wonder if values can be taught. Are they not caught? I am certain these and other questions abound when MOE announced the emphasis on values-driven student-centric education.

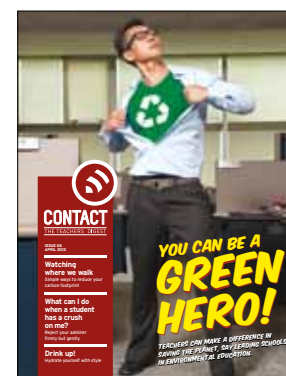
In this issue, we feature some schools that are piloting the co-construction of the Character and Citizenship Education (CCE) curriculum, sharing on their takeaways from the partnership with MOE. In the cover story "Passing on values that stick!", the schools show how the values curricula are tailored to the needs of their students, in instilling the right character and values. In *Speak*, Director of Student Development Curriculum Liew Wei Li gives her take on why the CCE syllabus can improve values education and how teachers will know if the CCE programme is effective.

In "Setting the Arts alight", we suss out how schools use Art to engage and influence children positively, while in "Finding allies in work," we check out the AED Learning Communities that are providing AEDs with support and resource ideas.

Game for some fun in the classroom? We suggest some educational board games in "Let the games begin," to help you do just that. Plus, return to nature over the weekend and unwind, with helpful ideas in our Lifestyle feature "Nature escapades".

Enjoy!

## Readers' comments



"I think *Contact* has really come of age with its interesting layouts and articles. I found the design for the story on ICT mentors with the teachers each holding a light sabre particularly entertaining. May the force be with the *Contact* team."

Miss Mishon Lew,  
Yew Tee Primary School

"*Contact* has really grown to become something witty, entertaining and yet informative for educators to keep in touch with some of the latest trends, both in education and lifestyle. The graphics, layout and design really add to the light-hearted feel which helps to take our minds off the hustle and bustle of hectic school schedules. Continue to share the cheer!"

Mr Kuang Kim Chun  
Catholic Junior College

"I refer to the article 'What can I do when a student has a crush on me?' and I would like to commend the various school counsellors for their advice. There are more young teachers joining the profession and students these days are more mature and open in their thinking. With the explicit tips and advice given by the professionals, I'm sure teachers can easily handle students who have a crush on them."

Miss Hoo Lee Pin  
Qifa Primary School

**Contact makes a splash on  
the international scene!**

At the 2012 Magnum Opus Awards, which recognise the best in editorial and design content all over the world, *Contact* scores in:

- Most Improved Design (Bronze)
- Best Use of Illustration - Single Feature (Honourable Mention) for TEACH Infographics, July 2011 issue

A big thank you to our readers for your support and feedback! We're going to get better, so watch this space!

What do you think of *Contact*? Share it with us at [contact\\_online@moe.edu.sg](mailto:contact_online@moe.edu.sg)





# PASSING ON VALUES THAT STICK!

As values education gets a makeover, schools join forces with the ministry to craft curricula that better suit the needs of their students.

By Chen Jingting

Gone are the days when students are singled out only for good results or naughty behaviour.

Now, school leaders and teachers at MacPherson Primary keep their eyes peeled for pupils who exhibit good character, whether it is handing a wallet they found to the school authorities or helping their classmates with difficult assignments. Pupils are then commended during assembly periods.

This pro-active effort to look out for and applaud pupils with good values is what the school calls its "positive behaviour support approach". Mdm Rostinah Mohamad Said, Principal of MacPherson Primary, sees this as key to cultivating an environment where the character development of pupils is prioritised.

Having an effective values education, she says, "is not just about getting pupils to

follow rules with punishment meted out to those who break them. It's about building a culture of positivity that permeates the school with teachers as role models, and where pupils are expected to exhibit the positive behaviour they learn from the teachers."

## GREATER AUTONOMY

Values education has always been important, but recently it has taken centre stage in the ministry's plans when the Character and Citizenship Education (CCE) framework was announced last year. Schools are called to reassess and strengthen their efforts in this area. "Values and character development must form the core of our student-centric, holistic education," said Education Minister Heng Swee Keat.

According to the *Character and Citizenship Education: A Toolkit for Singapore Schools* given to schools earlier this year, CCE

emphasises the interconnectedness of programmes such as the core values, social and emotional competencies, and other 21st century competencies that are critical for character and citizenship development. The ministry hopes that schools can shift their focus from specific programmes to the common purpose that these programmes are supposed to achieve.

The purpose is encapsulated in eight learning outcomes of CCE. "The outcomes are non-negotiable, but schools can decide how they want to achieve the outcomes," says Director of the Student Development Curriculum Division, Ms Liew Wei Li.

Schools will not be alone in the planning of CCE. The CCE Branch helps them map their school values to the ministry's core values so that their school-based CCE will be aligned to the learning outcomes set by the ministry.

Schools also work closely with the ministry in a co-construction process to identify specific areas of CCE they want to improve in. Officers from the Branch will then share tools, knowledge and expertise to help them plan and implement CCE.

## TRAINING FOR TEACHERS

In Zhenghua Secondary's case, the focus is on developing teachers' ability to impart CCE.

"No matter how well the lessons are crafted, teachers need to be competent in teaching CCE to improve students' learning," says Mdm Chong Lin Lin, the school's HOD, Professional Development. The school has always taken a whole-school approach when it comes to character development. For instance, school leaders, not just teachers, engage in one-on-one dialogues with students every week. These dialogues are arranged during curriculum time and many teachers even go beyond the curriculum to continue the conversations. Topics during the dialogues, based on the needs of the individual students, can range from handling family relations to developing leadership skills.

Despite having already invested a fair bit in character development, the school has identified an area they can improve on – teachers need to better facilitate students' understanding of moral dilemmas, and guide them in making morally-sound decisions.

"When we discuss values and life skills, it requires a different set of strategies and approaches from teaching normal subjects," says Mrs Fiona Tan, Principal of Zhenghua Secondary. In addition to cultivating knowledge, teachers need to be skilled in "surfacing assumptions, ideals and value systems of the students."

Since February, officers from the CCE and Guidance Branches have been sharing with the school pedagogical theories

and implementation practices in CCE. Workshops were also conducted for teachers in June to train them in moral reasoning and facilitation skills. The school then designed a set of questioning techniques to help students develop their moral reasoning skills.

In addition, CCE officers observe teachers during CCE lessons and provide feedback on how they can teach the subject better.

## ASKING THE RIGHT QUESTIONS

Even with the ministry's help, schools still need to overcome a key challenge – making CCE interesting and relevant to students of all levels. After all, there is no one-size-fits-all curriculum when it comes to CCE, says Ms Liew.

"No matter how well the lessons are crafted, teachers need to be competent in teaching CCE to improve students' learning."

Getting pupils to reflect on their actions and decisions is important, so teachers need to learn to ask the right reflection questions, says Mdm Rostinah.

## COMPONENTS OF THE CCE CURRICULUM

- Civics and Moral Education
- National Education
- Values In Action (reframed from Community Involvement Programme)
- Social and Emotional Learning
- Education and Career Guidance
- Sexuality Education
- Cyber Wellnes





MacPherson Primary tries to tackle this challenge by designing engaging assembly programmes. Teachers play the roles of samsui women and National Service men to share National Education messages and values. Bearing in mind that most pupils come from less well-off families, the school also shares stories to inspire the pupils.

But these efforts are not enough.

“Pupils are not able to internalise these messages on values and character building as there is no time for reflection during the assembly periods,” says Mdm Rostinah. Hence, when pupils return to their classrooms, teachers get them to reflect on the messages delivered during the assembly programme. The school has taken extra effort to craft reflection questions according to the children’s maturity.

Seeing how important reflection is to the learning of values, the school works with CCE officers to sharpen the questioning skills of teachers.

“In the past, our reflection questions were too general. Teachers need to learn to ask more probing questions. With the help of our colleagues from the CCE Branch, who provided reflection case studies and templates for our reference, we now know what kind of questions to ask,” says Mdm Rostinah. The design of the reflection questions is based on the CCE structure – “Think back, Learn from it, Do it better” – that encourages students to practise values they have learnt from the assembly programme in their daily lives.

#### DESIGNING THE RIGHT PLAN

Meanwhile, Pasir Ris Secondary is

collaborating with the ministry to design more structured lesson templates for CCE.

“How do we draw up proper lesson objectives? How can we incorporate solid theoretical foundations into our plans?” were some questions Mr Joshua Tan, Subject Head of Character Education, had to grapple with.

With the support of the CCE Branch, the school formulated theoretically-supported lesson templates that do not just inform students of values, but also encourage them to reflect and take action based on what they have learnt. Teachers will then follow up with the students on how they are progressing.

To gauge how successful the CCE lessons are, focus group discussions will

be conducted to gather feedback from students and teachers. Through surveys done by students, the school will know how students grade their experiences in CCE lessons.

And though there is a need for a more structured CCE curriculum, the lesson templates are not set in stone, says Mr Tan. Teachers may adapt from the proposed lesson plans if they think that students in their classes would learn better using other pedagogical approaches. They could then inform the school’s CCE committee of the changes and keep them updated on the students’ progress.

The school is giving teachers such autonomy because they “are at the forefront of CCE. They should plan and conduct CCE lessons based on the needs

►  
Mdm Chong helps to train teachers in delivering CCE lessons effectively.



## STUDENT LEADERS SHOW VALUES IN ACTION (VIA)

As many as 250 student leaders exchanged ideas on solutions to community issues at the first National Secondary School Student Leaders Conference (NSSSLC) on VIA, held in April this year. Think of VIA as an enhanced version of the Community Involvement Programme, which aims to get students more interested in community issues and more focused on learning values from community work. The National Youth Council, a co-organiser of the conference, pledged S\$1 million over the next three years to support students in executing community projects. All secondary school students can apply for the grant.

and dynamics of their students,” explains Mr Tan.

At this point, he takes a reality check: no matter how hard the school and teachers try to impress upon students the right values and attitudes, students may still pick up negative behaviour from other influences. Also, teachable moments – moments that teachers should seize to impart values spontaneously – can be hard to capture when the teachers are not observant or are simply not at the right place at the right time.

Character development may have its challenges, “but we should not give up

[pursuing it] just because it’s difficult. We just have to do our best to make sure students grow up with the right values.”

The CCE syllabus is scheduled to be rolled out to all schools by end 2012. Every educator will be better equipped to join Mr Tan on this worthwhile journey. However the important question is: will you rise to the challenge? ➤

For more details on the eight learning outcomes of CCE or information about the NSSSLC, you can go to [www.edumall.sg](http://www.edumall.sg)

What do you think about CCE ?  
Share your views on My Forum!

“[Having an effective values education] is not just about getting pupils to follow rules with punishment meted out to those who break them. It’s about building a culture of positivity that permeates the school.”



◀  
CCE lesson templates need to be built on sound pedagogical theories, says Mr Tan.





# A work in progress

Ms Liew Wei Li, Director of Student Development Curriculum, shares with Chen Jingting what the ongoing revamp of values education means for teachers.

Outdoor activities play a big part in Ms Liew's life, especially when it comes to imparting values.

She recalls a memorable incident during her junior college days as an instructor in the outdoor activities club. The Co-Curricular Activities (CCA) teacher-in-charge was unhappy with the way the student instructors were running the camp – he felt that they were too harsh on the trainees when they should have been more encouraging.

“During a meeting, he shared his thoughts and views. But what shook us was not his words but his disappointment with us. His walking away with his head down spoke volumes about how he expected better of us,” shares Ms Liew. “That was the turning point which made us rethink how we should be running the camp.” They changed their philosophy and methods, making the camp more motivational.

This incident became the cornerstone of Ms Liew's staunch belief that teachers can share their values in ways that are non-preachy or judgemental so that the learning is deepened.

## MAKING VALUES RELEVANT

Enhancing values education is one of the top priorities of the ministry. Existing initiatives aimed at developing students holistically – Social and Emotional Learning, Civics and Moral Education and National Education, to name a few – were combined under the umbrella of Character and Citizenship Education (CCE), emphasised last year by the Education Minister.

Through well-designed and executed CCE lesson plans, students will learn to see things from different viewpoints and practise moral reasoning, says Ms Liew. They can then exercise what they have learnt in class on “authentic platforms” such as CCAs.

“A student might forget what he learns in a CCE lesson, no matter how good it is, because he is not as emotionally involved. But he is likely to remember his experiences in his CCA – the stress he goes through when preparing for competitions, and the challenge of managing his emotions and actions, and that of others when working with other students.”

## WHAT TEACHERS CAN DO

Once a Chemistry tutor and an active outdoor activities club teacher at Victoria

Junior College, Ms Liew urges all teachers to be “observant and seize teachable moments to get students to reflect on their actions.”

Every teacher, whether they teach CCE or not, can start sharing values – Biology teachers can talk about cloning and bioethics, and language teachers can expound on the meanings of proverbs rich in morals. English Literature teachers can highlight the impact of an individual's actions on others through literary works such as the play “An Inspector Calls” by J.B. Priestly. All teachers can also share local legends and inspiring stories from the newspapers.

When she was the principal of Xinmin Secondary, she continued sharing stories, some her own, with the whole school during morning assembly. Students, even those who had difficulties toeing the line, would remember the morals of the stories.

Such deliberate efforts to impart values may seem like more work for teachers, but if “it is meaningful work that can help the children”, Ms Liew believes that teachers will find it worth the extra effort.

## THE VALUE IN ASSESSMENT

Schools also need to figure out a sensible way to assess students in CCE. The CCE toolkit, launched earlier this year, features rubrics that schools may consider using.

But should students be assessed on values in the first place? And if we cannot quantify character, how can we assess students fairly?

Ms Liew replies: “We must first establish our purpose in CCE assessment. It is more important to give a child and his parents a rich picture of where he is, and how he can develop himself to the next milestone, than it is to compare one child with another. Character is also multi-dimensional. We should not measure everybody on one metric alone. That is why qualitative feedback is more important than a summative grade or mark.”

She stresses that while rubrics are useful as guidelines, qualitative feedback from the student's own reflections and teachers' observations of the student will give a clearer picture of the student's character.

## THE MEASURE OF SUCCESS

If a school is carrying out CCE effectively, in the medium to long-term, a more civic-minded culture should be evident in and outside school.

Meanwhile, there are checkpoints to evaluate the effectiveness of CCE. For instance, do teachers plan well for and facilitate CCE periods effectively with students, and are teachers actively getting students to reflect on their actions, says Ms Liew.

She also urges teachers to “strengthen your relationship with the students, and they will listen to you and learn from your actions. Give them responsibilities and they will flourish knowing you have placed your trust in them.”

Because the highest mark of success is when students not only learn values, but also feel valued. 📌

## CCE TIMELINES

By end of this year, the CCE syllabus will be rolled out to all schools. Instructional materials will be given in:

2014 – to Primary 1 and 2, Secondary 1 and 3 levels

2015 – to Primary 3 and 4, Secondary 2 and 4 levels

2016 – to Primary 5 and 6, Secondary 5 levels





# Telling tales with heart

Teachers-turned-storytellers Poh Wei Leong and Janice Ng share the stories behind their winning tales. By Joanna Hor



Once upon a time, Anderson Junior College teacher Poh Wei Leong heard a passing mention of two words - "Changi Tree". It piqued his curiosity, leading him to spin a winning story centred on the perennial woody plant.

Mr Poh's tale on the elusive Changi Tree was one of the 12 stories and poems that were awarded prizes in the inaugural Stories Teachers Tell (STT) competition, launched early last year.

Jointly organised by MOE and the Academy of Principals, the competition aimed to build a Singaporean stories collection for children. The stories were selected from 200 entries submitted and are slated for use in the English Language curriculum for primary schools in 2013.

## ADDING HISTORY TO THE MIX

"I heard about the Changi Tree [from friends] some time ago, but it remained

Mr Poh, inspired by history, hopes his story can also get students interested in Singapore's past.

quite a mystery because not many people knew much about it," says the 31-year-old teacher. The decision to unravel the mystery of the majestic tree was prompted by the competition theme, which required authors to base their short stories on local customs and themes.

His story, entitled "The Last Wish at the Changi Tree", attempts to recreate life in Singapore in the early days. In his story, a group of children stumble across old memories buried at the foot of the tree while camping.

One of the difficulties Mr Poh faced in writing his story was deciding what historical details to include, and what to leave out, so as to not confuse his target audience of 11-year-olds. "I wanted the story to be rich in details to interest the readers to do their own research on some of the things they read about in the story."

Weaving evocative descriptions like 'cock fighting' and 'a small bottle with colorful designs' into the story was meant to inspire the students to find out more about a bygone Singapore, he explains.

In the story, readers unlock the memories of friendship between two characters through items discovered at the foot of the tree, and learn how one of them, influenced by bad company, made a decision to take the wrong path. The friendship was wrecked as a result.

Mr Poh hopes that readers would not only identify with the universal theme of friendship, but also see that "the environment we live in can influence us in one way or another."

He also shared the story with

"Right now, I write sample essays for my students and try to localise them if I can. If you're able to write localised stories, the students will be interested because they are able to see the stories' relevance to their lives."

his colleagues who have younger children, hoping that they, as parents, can use it to encourage their kids to find out more about Singapore's history.

## LET'S GET PERSONAL

Also exploring the dynamics of human interaction is the entry from Ms Janice Ng, a teacher from Bedok North Secondary School. The 27-year-old's story is based on her personal experiences with her family.

"When I was in university, I tended to get into arguments with my father when he attempted to give me advice. I managed to outwit and rebut him in most of our arguments and eventually he chose to remain quiet and stopped talking to me altogether," shares Ms Ng.

The desire to win is reflected in the protagonist of her story "The Fall of the Castle", a young girl eager to beat her grandfather in a game of chess. But she soon becomes aware of the elderly man's slowing cognitive abilities, a far cry from his younger days as a chess

champion. In the end, though she is tempted to make her winning move, she concedes the game to her grandfather so as not to hurt his pride.

Ms Ng hopes her story, which she first penned while doing her Masters in the United Kingdom, will encourage readers to consider the perspectives and feelings of others when making decisions in life.

She has also shared the story with her form class, knowing that some of them struggled to see things from their parents' point of view when the latter were nagging at them to study harder instead of acknowledging the efforts they had already put in. The story seemed to move her students and caused them to reflect on their own situations, says Ms Ng.

## IS IT THE END? NOT BY A LONG SHOT!

Ms Ng has just started on her quest to integrate more stories into her lessons.

"Right now, I write sample essays for my

students and try to localise them if I can. If you're able to write localised stories, the students will be interested because they are able to see the stories' relevance to their lives."

It looks like we can expect more inspiring tales from this storyteller. ✎

► Ms Ng, unafraid to share her personal experiences in her story, wants to make stories relevant to students.





# VALUED PLAYERS

Every teacher has a part to play in **Character and Citizenship Education (CCE)**, be it a rookie who just joined the teaching force or a seasoned educator well-versed in the art of teaching. **Muhammad Irwan Shah** finds out what CCE means to three teachers with different levels of experience.

## THE ENTHUSIASTIC NEWBIE

### WHO IS HE?

Mr Huzaini bin Alwi, Beginning Teacher

### WHERE IS HE TEACHING?

Tanjong Katong Secondary School; the form teacher of a graduating class who also teaches Science.

### HIS RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Convey a lesson as interestingly as possible – Mr Huzaini plays videos for his class or organises role-play sessions at the end of lessons for students to show what they have learned. He also shares his own experiences with them.
- Make teachable moments out of boo-boos students make – for example, if a student is late for class, he will talk to the student about the importance of punctuality.

### HIS CHALLENGE:

Initially, Mr Huzaini doubted if he was capable of teaching CCE. To overcome this challenge, he went to yearly seminars that offered a range of activities he could use in the classroom. He also learnt different types of teaching pedagogies from more experienced teachers. Always on the lookout to improve his teaching skills, he values teachers' contact time when they share lesson plans with each other.

### HIS MOTIVATION:

"It's the students. They're very vibrant – they can also entertain you and make you smile. When you get appreciation from them, you feel good."



## THE MASTER PLANNER

### WHO IS SHE?

Miss Tan Pheok Wan, HOD, Character Development

### WHERE IS SHE TEACHING?

Keming Primary School. Miss Tan has been in the Civics and Moral Education unit for 7½ years. As HOD, she works with various committees from different departments to ensure that every teacher is involved in the character development of students.

### HER RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Structures various programmes and platforms such as L.O.V.E at Kemin, an event where the students learn a value each month, and the Form Teacher's Guidance Period where students talk with their form teachers on issues such as self-awareness, self-management and more.
- Uses CCAs as platforms to transmit values – Miss Tan regularly communicates with coaches and the teachers-in-charge to discuss how values can be taught in CCAs.
- Monitors and evaluates the effectiveness of CCE programmes.
- Partners with school counsellors or external organisations such as the Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Sports to help students with personal troubles or issues.
- Organises workshops during the June and December holiday to equip teachers with teaching pedagogies – topics range from facilitating co-operative learning to guiding students during reflection time in class.

### HER CHALLENGE:

Miss Tan's topmost concern is to build teachers' capacity in delivering CCE lessons effectively. Banking on her years of experience in the CME unit and skills in utilising different teaching methods in values education, Miss Tan already has plans to develop teachers in that area.

### HER MOTIVATION:

"Personally I'm very driven by purpose and mission. MOE's mission is to mould the future of the nation. Hence, moving forward, CCE is very important (in fulfilling that mission)."



## THE CARING GURU

### WHO IS SHE?

Ms Wang Pei Fen, Senior Teacher

### WHERE IS SHE TEACHING?

Siling Secondary School; a teacher for 27 years, she currently teaches Mathematics.

### HER RESPONSIBILITIES:

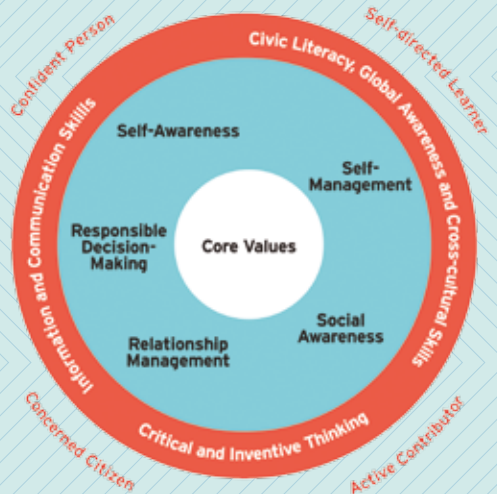
- Mentors less experienced teachers through one-on-one contact time discussing classroom challenges and teaching strategies.
- Observes and guides younger teachers on how to conduct lessons.
- Conducts workshops to share strategies on teaching and infusing values in class.

### HER CHALLENGE:

Students come from different backgrounds. Some are able to easily accept what is being taught while some rebel against her teachings. In response, she adopts the restorative practice approach, which focuses first on building healthy relationships with students so they feel safe with the teacher and eventually become respectful and engaged learners.

### HER MOTIVATION:

"Having values is like having a light that tells you where the correct path is. You can score well (academically) but if you don't have a good value system to guide you, you're not a good person. That helps me to go on teaching values."



## How CCE ties in with 21st Century Competencies

**Preparing students** to be successful individuals in the 21st century takes more than just ensuring academic excellence. Students need to have the right values (centre), be equipped with social-emotional competencies (middle ring) and develop skills to thrive in the globalised world (outer ring). With these qualities in place, students will become confident persons, self-directed learners, active contributors and concerned citizens.



# Setting the Arts alight



Spark, Glow, Blaze. No, it's not about seeing the Arts go up in flames. These are the fire-inspired Arts awards for schools with holistic arts education programmes. By M. Daniel



## What's the secret behind Beatty's success?

We implemented the Arts programme across four different art forms (dance, drama, music and visual arts) in both the Instructional Programme (IP) and non-IP subjects to complement and reinforce learning. The school also adopts the 3E approach (Exposure, Experience and Excursion) to engage our students in various art forms.

## Why did the school choose to focus on the Arts?

Beatty believes that the holistic development and well-being of the students can be achieved through Arts infused with values education. Our students learn more about values by watching plays which focus on compassion, for instance. Through certain art activities, students also learn to better manage their feelings.

## How have students benefited from this programme?

In Community Involvement Programmes for the elderly, students and the elderly learn about Chinese painting and batik art. Teachers from the Aesthetics Department, with support from the National Arts Council, also produced a mobile art application for students to learn more about various art sculptures in the Esplanade area.

## How did students respond to the programme?

Our students have responded enthusiastically to the programme as seen from the large percentage of our student cohort being actively involved in at least one arts-related programme a year.

**Beatty Secondary School (Spark Award 2011-2012)**  
Miss Tan Mei Ling Audrey, Subject Head (Aesthetics)

The Spark Award recognises schools which take proactive steps to build a vibrant arts culture, develop clear structures and programmes for arts education, and encourage students' interest in at least two art forms.

## What's the secret behind Woodlands Primary's success?

Our Arts Education programme is a broad-based, comprehensive six-year programme. We adopted a 5-A approach to nurture a vibrant culture of Art and Music in our pupils – Arts infused in Curriculum, Arts for talent building, Arts for All, Arts for Capacity Building of Staff and Arts with Parents. We also house five art galleries, including [one by] teachers, which display works of different art forms.

## Why did the school choose to focus on the Arts?

Art and music are related to play time, which generates a lot of joy. Happy learners are generally engaged and motivated. The Arts is also used as a platform to build character and instil values of discipline, teamwork and leadership. For instance, hard work and perseverance paid off for 409 Primary Six pupils who put their ukulele skills to the test and made it into the Singapore Book of Records as the "Largest Ukulele Ensemble" in May this year.

## How has the Arts programme impacted teaching pedagogy in other curricular subjects?

We have worked on various inter-disciplinary courses as we believe that Art and Music need not be taught in isolation. For example, pupils doing a Science project worked with their Art teachers to design a three-dimensional model of an endangered animal.

**Woodlands Primary School (Glow Award 2011-2012)**  
Mrs Komathi Jayaraman, Subject Head (Aesthetics)

The Glow Award is for schools that demonstrate holistic planning and processes to build a vibrant arts culture, develop clear structures and programmes for arts education, and encourage students' interest in all art forms.

**Paya Lebar (PL) Methodist Girls School (Blaze Award 2011-2012)**  
Mr Ng Eng Kee, Subject Head (Aesthetics)

The Blaze Award acknowledges schools that have built a vibrant arts culture and have sustained participation in all art forms, contributed to and championed the arts in the community, and have led and assisted other schools in their arts education development.

## What's the secret behind your school's success?

We have a comprehensive approach to Arts education. For example, the school runs the ACE Aesthetics Programme, a customised music curriculum to groom musically talented Secondary One students. Also, PL Inspirations is a talent competition held yearly to showcase the various talents in the school.

## How have you championed the Arts in the community?

We have partnered with the Singapore Symphony Orchestra since 2011 to hold a free public concert in the school yearly. We also organised a lunchtime concert for the elderly during Chinese New Year.

## Why did the school choose to focus on the Arts?

To realise our dream to be the "Esplanade of the East", we constructed a 771-seater concert hall auditorium. Our school is also the East Zone Centre of Excellence for the Creative Arts – we facilitate participation in the Arts for teachers and students from other schools.

## How have students benefited from the programme?

They pick up unique skills and knowledge. In the General Music Programme, students learn specific music skills such as fundamental music theory and creating percussion rhythms. In the General Art Programme, pupils learn the basic technique of critiquing a piece of art as well as drawing and painting skills.





# Finding allies in work

Two, or more, heads are better than one, especially when your job is as challenging as that of an Allied Educator (AED) in charge of Learning and Behavioural Support (LBS). The AED Learning Communities (ALCs), a professional development initiative, was launched by the Psychological Services Branch last year to provide Allied Educators with more opportunities to exchange ideas and solutions. By Chen Jingting

Last year, a student whom AED Siti Nurlela Kamarudin was working with kept getting into tussles with teachers and other students. He also had a habit of hitting himself when frustrated. Ms Siti had tried many different methods to help him but to no avail.

"I was at my wits' end," recalls Ms Siti, who has been an AED in Tao Nan School since 2008. Thankfully, she received some help during an ALC session last year, where she met 15 other AEDs from schools in the E7 cluster zone, to share ideas on helping students with behavioural issues.

That was when a fellow AED suggested that Ms Siti could involve the principal in talking to the student. And it worked – the student's behaviour improved. "The boy realised that [his behaviour] must have been a serious issue as even the principal knew about it, leading him to change his attitude," explains Ms Siti.

## MORE SUPPORT AVAILABLE

AEDs in charge of LBS play a crucial role in guiding students with special needs, such as those with dyslexia, Autism Spectrum Disorder or Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) (see sidebar).

This is how the ALC programme works: AEDs in each cluster zone identify problems they commonly face, brainstorm solutions and decide on specific learning outcomes to achieve. These may vary according to the needs of each cluster each year.

For AED Mohammad Hatta Bin Ibrahim's cluster (N4), their learning goal this year is to help students who have Specific Language Impairment – a disorder where language development is delayed – and they plan to meet about four times a year. Mr Hatta has been an AED since 2010.

"We do research through reading materials that discuss how we can develop strategies for use in the classroom and invite professional speakers, such as speech therapists, to share ideas and tactics with us," informs Mr Hatta, an AED at Greendale Primary. After testing out some approaches on students, the AEDs in his cluster – 14 of them – will meet again to evaluate the effectiveness of the strategies employed by using a set of informal progress-monitoring tools and looking at whether students' grades have improved.

Building on each other's ideas is an efficient way of learning for time-crunched AEDs, without having to spend extensive amounts of personal time in research, says Ms Siti.

Not that there was no professional development scheme for AEDs before the launch of ALCs. In the past, all AEDs from all schools in Singapore would gather for a full-day mass meeting at the beginning of the year. They were first briefed on new initiatives and programmes by the Ministry and then split into various cluster zones for more in-depth discussions.

In addition to the mass meeting, there are now ALC sessions which allow learning to take place in smaller groups with greater frequency.

## STRENGTH IN NUMBERS

The support that ALCs provide is valuable for the small community of AEDs here as most schools have just one or two AEDs in charge of LBS. Previously when problems arose, they could only look to each other for help. But thanks to ALCs, AEDs can now seek support from their peers in other schools.

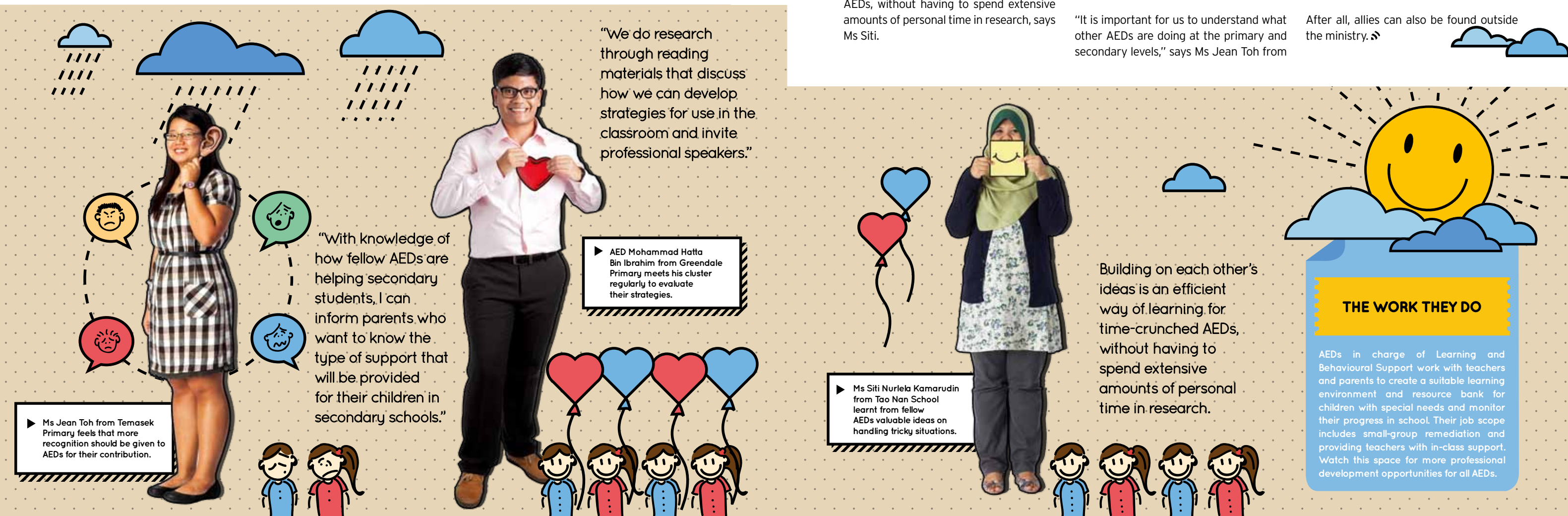
"It is important for us to understand what other AEDs are doing at the primary and secondary levels," says Ms Jean Toh from

Temasek Primary, an AED for about five years. "With knowledge of how fellow AEDs are helping secondary students, I can inform parents (of my pupils with special needs) who want to know the type of support that will be provided for their children in secondary schools."

As of now, her cluster (E2) – a community of 11 AEDs – has come up with resource kits containing tips for teachers and parents on managing children with ADHD and Autism Spectrum Disorder.

Moving on, Ms Toh hopes that more can be done to recognise AEDs for their contributions, or at least provide them with more resources to do their work, such as additional funds to purchase teaching materials for children with special needs. She also suggests an intranet portal where AEDs can easily share ideas and contacts of external agencies experienced in helping these students.

After all, allies can also be found outside the ministry. ▶



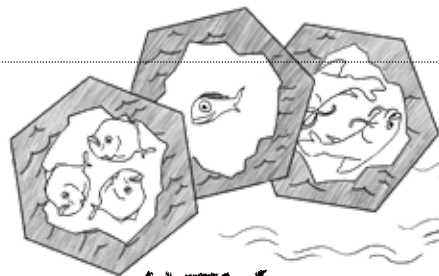




# Let the games begin

Some say children learn better through play. Put that saying to the test by trying out these educational board games in your classroom (and have some fun yourself).

By Muhammad Irwan Shah



HEY,  
THAT'S  
MY  
FISH!



**Try it if:** You want to develop strategic thinking in your pupils.

**How it's played:** Each player (or team) controls an army of penguins. The objective - to gobble up as many fishes as possible. Each penguin is only allowed to move in a straight line over tiles, which represent the fishes. Once a penguin lands on a tile, it gets to "eat" the fish(es) on it. Players have to strategise the movement of their penguins not just to eat the most number of fishes, but to also prevent other players from having their fill.

**Suitable for:** Those aged eight and above. For two to four players or two to four teams.

**Available at:** Paradigm Infinitum

**Price:** \$19.90

7 ATE 9

**Try it if:** You want to hone your students' ability to do quick mental sums.

**How it's played:** Each card has a big yellow number between one to nine and a small blue number which indicates +/- one, two, or three. A card is first laid in the middle of the table and the rest are distributed among the players. Players then race to add their cards into the pile.

For example, the middle card's yellow number is two while the blue number is one. Players can either throw a card with the number one (2-1) or three (2+1). The one who clears his cards first wins.

**Suitable for:** Students aged eight and above. Up to four players or four teams of players.

**Available at:** My First Games ([www.myfirstgames.sg](http://www.myfirstgames.sg))

**Price:** \$19.90

YOU'VE BEEN  
SENTENCED!

**Try it if:** You are tired of seeing grammatical errors made in compositions, or you've run out of ideas on how to make learning sentence formation interesting for the children.

**How it's played:** Out of over 2,500 words, players have to construct grammatically sound sentences with the words they are dealt with. So be prepared for weird sentences like "Elvis freaked out on a stinky Frank Sinatra." Generate more laughs by asking students to justify why their seemingly nonsensical sentences make sense.

**Suitable for:** Players aged eight and above. Up to five players or five teams of players.

**Available at:** Paradigm Infinitum (220 Orchard Road, #03-01 Midpoint Orchard)

**Price:** \$39.90



THE SETTLERS  
OF CATAN

**Try it if:** You want to briefly introduce the students to concepts of exploration, trade and resource allocation, which are covered in History and Geography. Students also get to flex their thinking muscles by strategising on expanding their reign and bargaining with other players over resources.

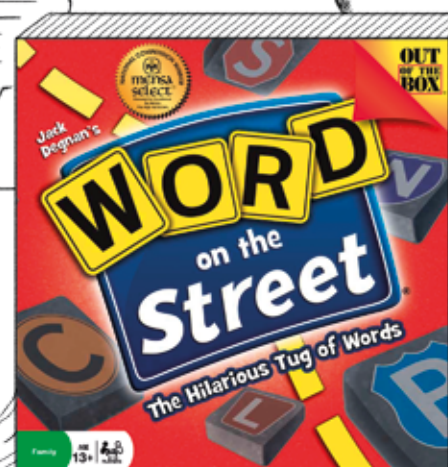
**How it's played:** Imagine Monopoly with a medieval twist. The game starts with two settlements and two roads. Each settlement is worth one victory point. The winner is the first player who accumulates 10 victory points.

To win points, players have resources to build new settlements, roads or upgrade their settlements to cities. Certain resources may be cut off from the player and he can trade with other players for the materials he needs.

**Suitable for:** Those aged 10 and above. Up to four players or four teams of players.

**Available at:** Paradigm Infinitum

**Price:** \$69.90



WORD ON THE STREET

**Try it if:** You want to develop spelling bee champions out of every student, or at least get them to spell simple words correctly. You also want to introduce them to new words.

**How it's played:** The board is shaped like a street with letters from the alphabet arranged in the middle. Players are required to come up with words according to a category card. The excitement begins when players have to race against time and one another to pick letters off the street to form their words. The letters a player picks are now off-limits to his opponent.

**Suitable for:** Those aged 12 and above. There's also a "Word On The Street Junior" for younger children.

Up to eight players or eight teams of players.

**Available at:** My First Games ([www.myfirstgames.sg](http://www.myfirstgames.sg))

**Price:** \$55.90

BEFORE YOU TRY  
A GAME,  
ASK YOURSELF:

- How will it fit into my instructional plans and learning objectives?
- How can this game build on students' existing understanding of subject content?
- How will I facilitate the game-playing process? Do I assess the students on learning as they play?
- How can I guide them when they are unable to carry out required tasks?

#### Disclaimer:

Games featured are not endorsed by any person(s) or divisions. Teachers are advised to assess the suitability of games based on sound educational pedagogies and principles before using them in class.





# Nature escapades

You don't need to leave Singapore to have a break from urban life. Check out these places for a weekend getaway with nature.

By Muhammad Irwan Shah



## KAMPONG BUANGKOK

**Website**  
<http://bit.ly/KampongBuangkok>  
**Location**  
Off Yio Chu Kang Road

If you're interested to know what Singapore was like in her kampong days, visit Kampong Buangkok, said to be the last existing kampong. *The New York Times* calls it Singapore's Last Eden.

Feel free to explore the public areas but politely ask for permission from the residents before taking photographs of their homes. Try chatting with them to find out more about their unique living environment.



## LOWER PEIRCE NATURE TRAIL

**Website**  
<http://sg.sg/LowerPierce>  
**Location**  
Lower Peirce Reservoir

This 900-metre trail, filled with over 900 flowering plants, 100 ferns and 250 animal species, is a utopia for nature lovers. During the 45-minute to 1-hour walk, enjoy beautiful water bodies surrounded by the lush greenery of one of the country's last remaining mature secondary forests. Also, see wildlife frolicking in their natural habitats. You are unlikely to get hot and sweaty during the walk, thanks to trees that shield the trail from the scorching sun. Begin your walk at house no. 72 along Old Upper Thomson Road at the Casuarina Entrance.



Photo by National Parks Board

## LABRADOR NATURE RESERVE

**Website**  
<http://bit.ly/Kn8s3o>  
**Location**  
Labrador Park

If you're a nature lover and a history geek, then you have to check out Labrador Nature Reserve, once a place for military installations during World War II. Besides the 50 species of birds and 11 species of butterflies, you can see war relics such as the fort and machine gun posts. You may also want to have a picnic and enjoy a magnificent view of the South China Sea.



Photo by National Parks Board

## FOREST ADVENTURE

**Website**  
<http://www.forestadventure.com.sg/>  
**Location**  
Bedok Reservoir

Not for the faint-hearted, this place promises adrenaline-rushing, heart-pumping fun for all ages. Experience what it's like to swing from tree to tree like Tarzan, and "fly" across the Bedok Reservoir while hooked to giant zip lines, the longest of which is 200 metres.

And don't worry - safety features are of the highest standard and instructors are trained to conduct daily checks on all systems and safety equipment. Try out the Grand Course, which can take up to 2.5 hours to complete. Children can also go on the 1-hour Kids Course, which is safe enough for them to tackle by themselves, while parents cheer them on from below.



Photo by Forest Adventure

This secluded place in the Bukit Timah Nature Reserve is truly a hidden gem. Once an abandoned quarry, it now hosts a diverse range of flora and fauna and offers a breathtaking view. Avid photographers will enjoy snapping shots of its unique landscape and trekkers will also have a field day exploring the reserve.

## SINGAPORE QUARRY

**Website**  
<http://bit.ly/Sgquarry>  
**Location**  
Bukit Timah Nature Reserve

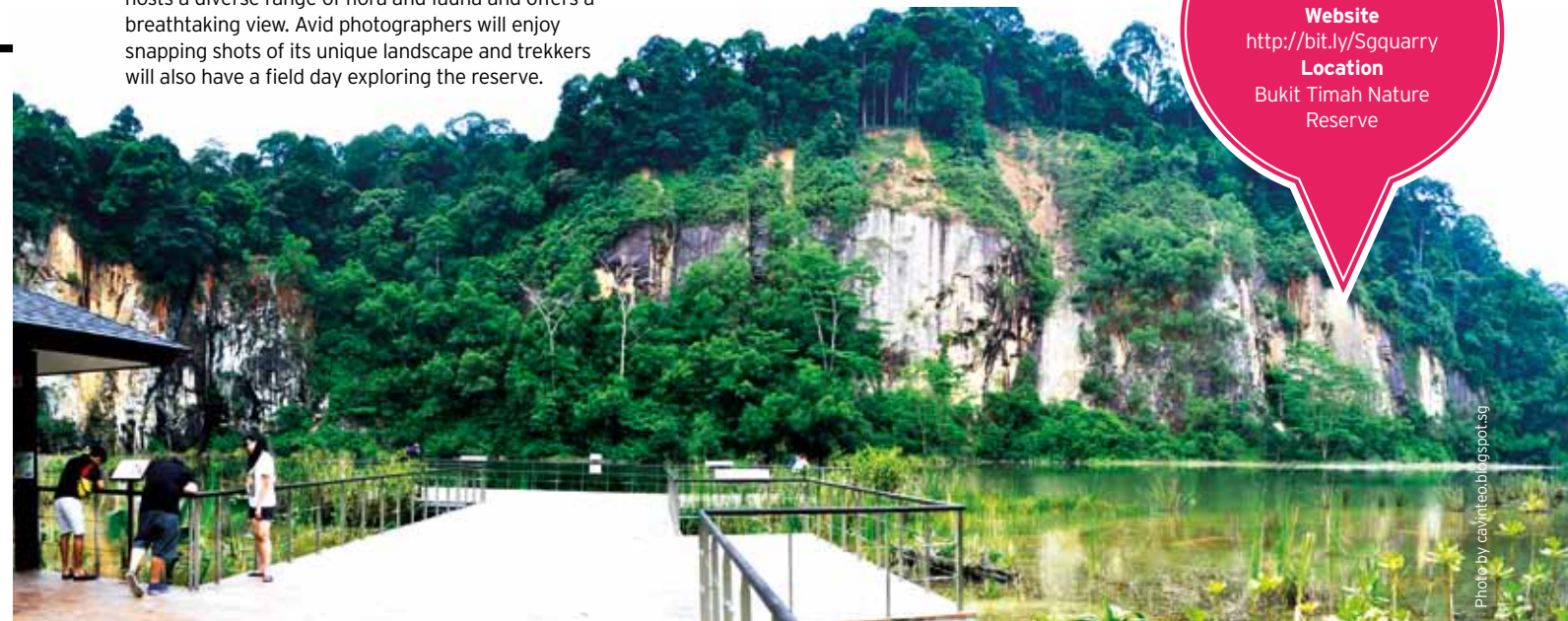


Photo by calvinteo.blogspot.sg





# Acronyms you must know

Does it take you a few minutes to decipher what STELLAR, SERI and CHERISH mean? Help is here.

**If you're teaching in a...**

**Primary school**

**PERI**  
Primary Education Review and Implementation

**STELLAR**  
Strategies for English Language Learning and Reading

**HAPpe**  
Holistic Assessment Prototype

**Secondary school**

**SERI** Secondary Education Review and Implementation

**CLLIPS** Contextualisation, Learner-centredness, Learning-focused interaction, Integration, Process Orientation, Spiral progression  
(Under the revised English Language curriculum)

**ACoLADE** raising Awareness, structuring Consolidation, facilitating assessment for Learning, enabling Application, guiding Discovery, instructing Explicitly  
(Under the revised English Language curriculum)

## If you need to know...

### PROGRAMMES & POLICIES

**CHERISH**  
CHampioning Efforts Resulting in Improved School Health

**COMPASS**  
COMMunity and PAREnts in Support of Schools

**EAGLES**  
Edusave Awards for Achievement, Good Leadership and Service

**TEACH**  
strengthen Teacher professionalism; deepen Engagement with teachers; fulfil teachers' Aspirations; enhance teachers' Career opportunities; and achieve Harmony in work and life.

**PSE**  
Programme for School-based Excellence

**CUEP**  
Committee on University Education Pathways beyond 2015

### IT APPLICATIONS

**IAMS** Identity and Access Management Services

**SSOE** Schools Standard ICT Operating Environment

**ASM** Ask Senior Management (within My Forum)

**PS (EP)** Permanent Secretary (Education Policy)

**DGE** Director-General of Education

**DS (S)** Deputy Secretary (Services)

**Dy DGE (C)** Deputy Director-General of Education (Curriculum)

**Dy DGE (S) cum DOS** Deputy Director-General of Education (Schools) cum Director of Schools

**PS (ED)** Permanent Secretary (Education Development)

**DS (P)** Deputy Secretary (Policy)

This is not an exhaustive list (gasp!). Only some of the many acronyms commonly used in schools and HQ are featured.



## WINNING ENTRIES FOR APRIL

Congratulations to our three winners, who will each receive \$30 CapitaVouchers!



**CONTRIBUTOR:**  
**Ong Fui Ping,**  
Teacher, Yuan Ching Secondary School

A game of tug-of-war brings teachers together and makes them fitter!



**CONTRIBUTOR:**  
**Koh Tee Huat,**  
Teacher, Kranji Secondary School

Control is everything!



**CONTRIBUTOR:**  
**Mr Joe Norzlan Manaf,**  
Media Manager, Edgefield Primary School

Teacher: "Running 1.6km with my form class, anything to get them past the line."  
Student: "Running 1.6km with my form teacher, how cool is that?"

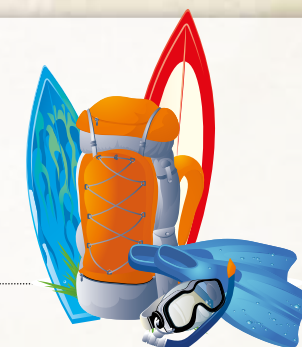


## NEXT THEME: "A NEW ADVENTURE"

Embarking on a new hobby or learning a new skill? Share your adventures with us! Snap a picture, send it to us and stand to win vouchers worth \$30 each!

### INSTRUCTIONS

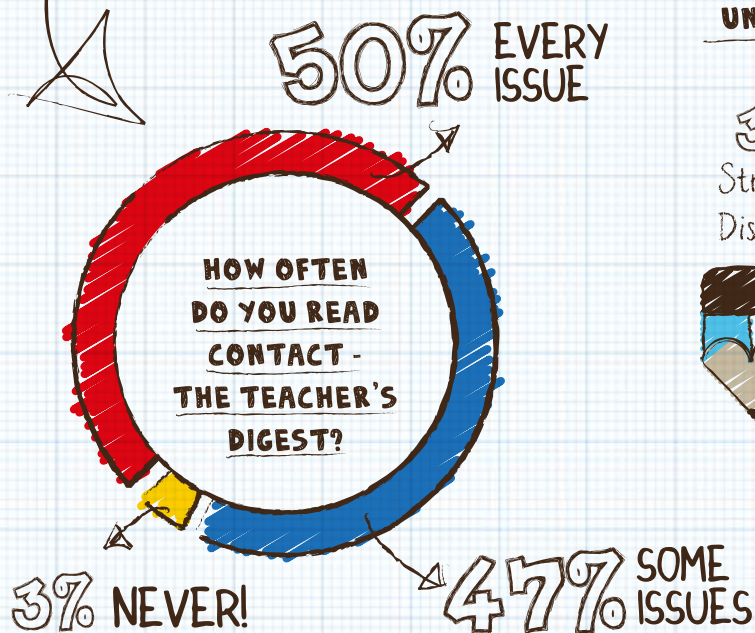
- The competition is only open to staff of Ministry of Education (MOE) Singapore.
- The photo should be in JPEG format, A4 in size and have a resolution of at least 300 dpi.
- The photo entry must be original and unpublished. The staff must be the original author and sole owner of his/her photo entry.
- Submit the photo with your full name, institution, designation, e-mail and contact number, failing which the entry will be rendered void.
- Each participant is allowed only **one** entry.
- Attach a caption (max 25 words), explaining how the photo reflects the theme.
- The copyright of all entries shall remain with the photographer. However, *Contact* reserves the right to use and modify the selected entry as well as other suitable ones, with full acknowledgement to the copyright owners, for future use and publication.
- The photo entry will be judged based on relevance to theme, creativity and originality. The judges' decision is final.
- Three winners will each receive an attractive prize. *Contact* reserves the right to change or replace the prize with another of equal or greater value should the featured prize become unavailable. Prizes are not exchangeable for cash.
- All winners will be notified by email. Prizes not collected within two weeks will be forfeited.
- Send your entry to [contact\\_online@moe.edu.sg](mailto:contact_online@moe.edu.sg) by 7 September 2012.



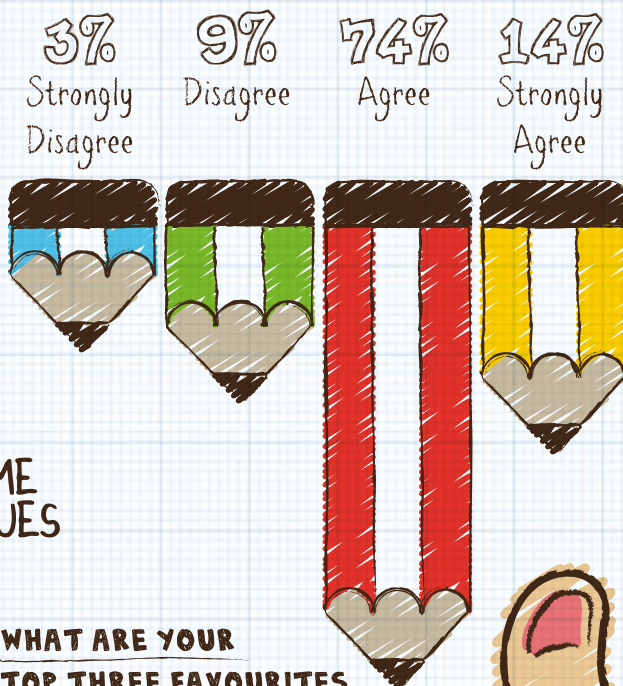


# What say you?

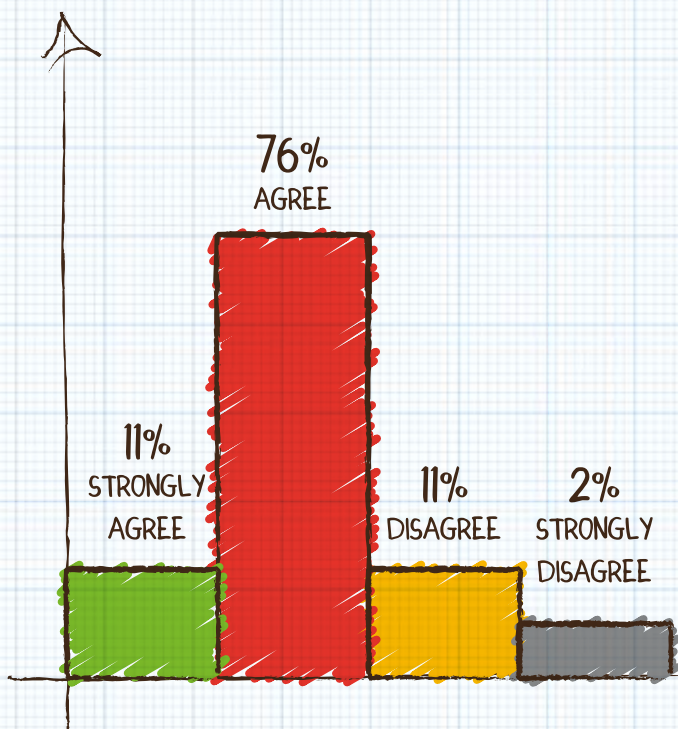
The results of our Readership Survey 2012 are out. Thanks for sharing your thoughts on the magazine!



## **CONTACT GIVES ME IN-DEPTH UNDERSTANDING OF EDUCATION POLICIES, PROGRAMMES AND INITIATIVES.**

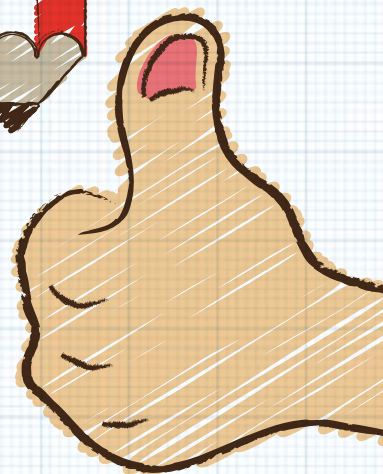


## **CONTACT GIVES ME USEFUL, PRACTICAL TIPS ON ISSUES I FACE IN SCHOOL.**



## **WHAT ARE YOUR TOP THREE FAVOURITES IN THE MAGAZINE?**

- ★ FEATURE STORIES
- ★ ARTICLES THAT GIVE PRACTICAL TIPS
- ★ COVER STORIES



## **ON THE WHOLE, I LIKE READING CONTACT**

