

CONTACT

The Teachers' Digest

FYI: FOR GOODNESS' SAKE

How to engage students in values education.

ALL FOR ONE, ONE FOR ALL

A teacher reflects on the Sabah earthquake.

QUICK FIX, HEALTHY EATS

DIY meals you don't want to miss.

Do I have to be...



We talk to teachers and experts about what it takes to deliver effective Character and Citizenship Education.



to teach values?

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Put your knowledge to the test and you may be a winner!

CONTACT

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THIS ISSUE...

Values education has always been a key pillar of our education system. In this issue, we talk to educators about their experiences in teaching Character and Citizenship Education (CCE), and ask a couple of CCE experts for advice and tips.

In June, we saw the MOE family go through a difficult time during the Sabah earthquake incident. One young teacher was at Tanjong Katong Primary School in the week after the quake and saw first-hand how the fraternity came together in a time of need to support one another. We share her account in Heart to Heart.

Looking forward, the nation turns 50 next month. We feature seven schools which also celebrated their jubilee milestone



recently. Find out which schools they are and how they enjoyed themselves in our photo essay.

Finally, in Lifestyle, we dish out yummy and nutritious lunch treats that you can easily make in under half an hour.

Till next time!

The Contact Team

Readers' comments

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.....
.....

What do you think of *Contact*? Share your thoughts at contact_online@moe.edu.sg
Get the soft copy of the magazine at www.moe.gov.sg/teachers-digest



Contact's layout has been consistently good, and I always look forward to the graphics and illustrations that accompany the features. Browsing through the magazine is a brief respite from work, and I keep the magazines as samples to show my art students layout ideas!

Ms Ang Tze Qi
Teacher mentor
Raffles Institution

I totally appreciate the redesigning effort that has been put into *Contact* over the years. The varied perspectives and refreshing presentation have certainly been a draw. Thank you for being reader-centred!

Mrs Veronica Ho
Vice-principal
Temasek Primary School

Congratulations on a job well done! *Contact's* layout has always been evolving over the years to be refreshing, updated, and eye-catching. It is evident that great care has been taken to reach out to all educators, focusing on how they can refresh, rejuvenate, re-learn and re-focus on the core of our profession. *Contact* is certainly living up to our core mission of Lead, Care and Inspire! I like the section "Heart to Heart" where passionate educators share their heartfelt narratives. It was also timely that I was contemplating my own professional development journey so the infographic on SkillsFuture was very useful! I am certainly looking forward to future issues of *Contact*.

Mr Adrian Wong
Senior Specialist (Drama)
Arts Education Branch


Contact wins "Most Improved" award

At *Contact*, we're always striving to be better, and our efforts have paid off! At the APEX Awards 2015, an annual competition that honours the best in print, web, electronic and social media content around the world, we won the Grand Award for "Most Improved" publication! The Grand Award is given to just 82 works in nearly 2,000 entries.

What the judges have to say about *Contact*: "Copywriting is excellent, with punchy, interesting features and plenty of shorts to grab, and keep, the readers' attention. The articles are reinforced by cutting edge design, which helps make the magazine an easy read, with top drawer spreads, packed with illustrations, photos and world class infographics. In sum, a very enjoyable publication."

Our motivation to improve comes from wanting to better serve you, our readers. Thank you for your support!





Do I have to be to teach values?

We talk to teachers and experts from the Character and Citizenship Education (CCE) Branch about what it takes to inculcate values effectively and how to tackle challenges along the way.

It goes without saying that students look up to teachers as role models. But does a person have to be perfect to impart values and help others become better individuals?

Certainly not. Furthermore, students *don't* expect teachers to be perfect, says Ms Helen Choo, an adviser in the CCE Branch and a former principal who joined the education service in 1978. If and when teachers err (e.g. lose their cool in front of students), it's important that they admit their mistakes and apologise. Students will usually understand, and teachers can turn it into a teachable moment for everyone.

CCE is not about teachers just telling the class what is right and wrong. Rather, teachers are facilitators who encourage students to think for themselves, and reflect on their beliefs and actions, as an individual and a citizen of Singapore.

To help teachers with the teaching of values, schools are stepping up in their efforts in and out of the classroom, looking into assessment methods and creating better support structures.

BUILDING CAPABILITY

Ms Carmen Tham, a Beginning Teacher from Chung Cheng High (Yishun), held a debate with her Secondary 1 form class recently on the topic of online piracy. It was her first time doing so.

She had picked up the idea from a three-week co-teaching project with officers from the CCE Branch earlier this year. Ms Tham had learnt that a debate could be a handy strategy to guide in-class discussions about values.

Halfway through the debate, Ms Tham realised many of her students believed there was nothing wrong with online piracy. Without being critical, she nudged the class to consider the issue from different perspectives.

Using the example of a group project, she asked them: "If you had worked very hard on a project, but your friend copied your work and got the same score, how would you feel?" That got the students thinking.

Encouraging thought-provoking discussions helps students consider different points of view, gain greater self-awareness, and consider the consequences of their choices and actions, says Dr Thavamalar Kanagaratnam. The

Senior Specialist from the CCE Branch has been involved in Singapore's values education curriculum since 1999.

During a facilitated session, teachers are encouraged to ask critical questions and get students to challenge each other's views, leading to more robust and thoughtful discussions about character and citizenship matters.

Facilitating enriching discussions is a skill that improves with practice. Now that Ms Tham has some experience under her belt, she is more confident of conducting CCE lessons.

Ms Tham had learnt that a debate could be a handy strategy to guide in-class discussions about values.



Ms Carmen Tham
Chung Cheng High (Yishun)

Ms Tham guides her students to understand an issue from different perspectives and to empathise with others.



Ms Nur Jannah Binte Noor
Chung Cheng High (Yishun)

By listening to her students' views without judgement, Ms Jannah has earned the trust of her class that she respects them as young adults.

“I want to know what goes on in students' heads.”

She will be sharing what she has learnt with another form teacher through a co-teaching programme later this year, during which they will plan and conduct CCE lessons together. Chung Cheng High (Yishun) hopes that such an arrangement will support its teachers to deliver CCE lessons more effectively.

CULTIVATING TRUST

For students to gain the most out of CCE, it's crucial to “build a climate of trust”, says Ms Choo. According to the CCE adviser, teachers need to ask themselves whether the classroom environment encourages students to express their authentic opinions and explore different views.

Ms Nur Jannah Binte Noor, also from Chung Cheng High (Yishun), knows first-hand the importance of allowing students the freedom to speak their minds. During her CCE periods, she often asks her young charges to share honest opinions on social and political topics.

Last year, in a discussion on foreign talent in Singapore, a student from her form class

expressed a discriminatory view. While it was tempting to caution the student against making such statements, Ms Jannah did not criticise him. Instead, she probed further to understand why he did so. “I want to know what goes on in students' heads,” she says.

After allowing the student to explain his case, she reminded the class that it was his personal opinion. She then shared her view on the same issue, and urged her students to consider all aspects carefully before coming to a conclusion.

Over time, such candid exchanges have earned her the trust of her students, because they know that she will always listen without judgement and respect them as individuals.

PUTTING STUDENTS FIRST IN ASSESSMENT

When genuine trust is in place, students feel free to speak their minds instead of giving textbook responses. Instead of simplistically stating the right answers, students need to develop empathy

and awareness of the motives behind their choices and actions, says Dr Thavamalar.

CCE is also not about stamping a summative grade on students for how well they demonstrate good behaviour, she adds. It is more important for educators to share observations and feedback to develop and nurture students as individuals throughout their years in school, so as to prepare them for adulthood.

At Qifa Primary School, teachers provide feedback by observing their students' behaviours and responses during group work or classroom discussions, as well as in CCE lessons and activities, says Ms Kathleen Tay, the school's HOD of CCE.

Reflection journals and video interviews also help teachers to monitor their students' learning and application of knowledge, skills and values taught during each school year.

Ultimately, says Ms Choo, the aim of CCE is to help students develop their own moral compass. They do what is right, not because of incentives or compulsion by authority figures, but because they truly believe that it is what they ought to do.

BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

Teaching CCE well isn't just the work of an individual teacher. A whole-school approach is necessary to help students develop good habits, says Dr Thavamalar, as it is unrealistic to expect them to internalise values in just the weekly CCE lessons.

These lessons serve as springboards for learning and understanding values, but it is their school and broader life experiences, and family environments, that go a long way in reinforcing what they learn in class, explains Dr Thavamalar.

Hence the approach to CCE since 2012 has involved greater and closer collaboration between schools and parents.

Qifa students are tasked to help their parents with household chores as part of the school's CCE Action Plan. Students then reflect on their experiences in scrapbooks with colourful drawings, stickers and photographs of themselves doing housework.

DON'T BE SHY TO SHARE YOUR OWN STORIES

"One thing that students really appreciate is when teachers tell their personal stories about their own struggles, with the intention of helping students make their own life decisions," says Dr Thavamalar. This can occur in any lesson, not just during the weekly CCE periods.

At St Gabriel's Secondary, Ms Veronica Teo Hwee Joo often shares her challenges if she thinks the stories may inspire students in their learning journey.

Once, the Chinese language teacher of 20 years had to guide a Secondary 5 Chinese class in writing an essay about facing difficulties and overcoming them. As she knew many students in this class found learning Chinese difficult, she took the opportunity to talk about the value of determination.

Ms Teo shared that when she conducted a CCE lesson for her form class in English, she overcame her unfamiliarity with the language by using pictures and highlighting basic words in PowerPoint slides to deliver the lesson. Knowing that the students in that class were visual learners, Ms Teo had used that to her advantage to find a solution to her challenge.

She hoped that by sharing her experience, it would encourage her Secondary 5 Chinese class to be determined in finding ways to overcome obstacles in life.

She recalls telling them: "If I can do it, so can you."



“...we are all working together to bring out the best in each child.”

Their parents sign on the CCE lesson worksheets to acknowledge their completed tasks. They can also leave encouraging comments to cheer their children on.

Ms Tay introduced this to her school after attending a CCE Branch workshop where teachers from various schools shared their best practices on strengthening CCE efforts in school.



Ms Kathleen Tay
Qifa Primary School

Ms Tay believes that teachers can find support in CCE during regular communication with school leaders.

SUPPORT SYSTEM


For teachers eager to grow in their mastery of CCE, there are many avenues to tap.

Apart from the various professional development opportunities that the CCE Branch provides for educators, it also sends advisers – former principals and superintendents – to share their experiences with schools and provide guidance in implementing a whole-school approach. Furthermore, the Branch works closely with schools to customise CCE plans for their specific contexts.

Schools are also bolstering support for CCE teachers. St Gabriel's Secondary has CCE coordinators who reach out to teachers to check on how they are doing and whether they need assistance.

At Qifa Primary, there are frequent conversations between school leaders and teachers on the topic of living out school values. These conversations have helped teachers to know that “we are all working together to bring out the best in each child,” says Ms Tay.

Teachers can engage in collaborative learning by forming Communities of Practice within their schools. They can also create Network Learning Communities with counterparts from other schools. “This support system motivates teachers to develop their competencies together,” Dr Thavamalar says.

As long as educators use the various means available to improve their craft, and continue to build trust with and provide feedback to their young charges in character development, they can be confident that they are doing the right thing. 



HOW TO FACILITATE A DISCUSSION

Teachers are encouraged to engage students in reflecting on their opinions, actions and decisions by asking questions, says Dr Thavamalar.



CLARIFYING QUESTIONS

What happened?
Who was involved?
Why did you do it?
How did you feel about it?



SENSITISING QUESTIONS

Have you considered the consequences and outcomes of your actions on others?
How would you feel if you were in his/her shoes?
What would happen if everyone did that?



INFLUENCING QUESTIONS

What is the right thing to do? Why?
Do your actions reflect good character? Why?
What if nobody cares about what is right?
Is it right only because everybody does it?

We're 50!

Seven schools celebrated their jubilee, with teachers and students having a great time at events and activities. *Contact* catches a glimpse of the celebrations.



01



02

REJOICE IN DIVERSITY

In addition to their 50th anniversary, these schools also took the opportunity to celebrate Singapore as a melting pot of many cultures.

01 Whitley Secondary School

Students kicked off Whitley's celebration with a performance by the school's Indian dance troupe. The dancers, hailing from at least nine different ethnic groups, demonstrated in stunning fashion what multiracialism in action looks like.

02 New Town Primary School

On International Friendship Day, New Town's students dressed up as past immigrants who contributed to the nation's success. This was one of a series of commemorative projects the school had organised to honour their jubilee year, based on the theme "Treasure the Past, Live the Present, Embrace the Future".

OUT AND ABOUT

Hitting the outdoors for fun and meaningful activities was how these teachers and students commemorated their schools' big 5-0.

03 Changkat Primary School

Part of the festivities for the school's 50th birthday was its "50 & Fabulous! Jubilee Carnival". Students sat on amusement park rides, tried their hands at game stalls, and admired a variety of handmade crafts created by their peers.

04 Yusof Ishak Secondary School

The school highlighted its niche in arts education to celebrate 50 years of history. Students exhibited and shared their artwork with the public at an outreach event in West Mall.

05 Yio Chu Kang Secondary School

Parents, alumni, students and staff, as well as ex- and current principals, travelled 3.3km from the old Yio Chu Kang campus to its present site at Ang Mo Kio. Along the way, they remembered its origins as a small village school.



03



04



05

MY SCHOOL'S GOT TALENT!

Former and current staff let their hair down and put together a fiesta that would be remembered for years to come.

06 Presbyterian High School

Presbyterian High honoured the rich heritage of their school by inviting ex-principals back to join in the party. At the school's Jubilee Concert, former school leaders took to the stage to sing a song with the current principal, Mr Victor Owyong (far right).

07 Greenridge Secondary School

School staff starred in an upbeat dance item at its biennial Spectrum concert held at the end of 2014. The concert featured performances that recounted the school's history.



06



07



FOR GOODNESS' SAKE

Tips on making values education more engaging.

THERE'S VALUE IN EVERY SUBJECT

Every educator can play a part in passing on values. We share some tips from the *Character & Citizenship Education: A Toolkit for Singapore Schools*. If you teach...

MATHEMATICS

Share examples of successful mathematicians, or task your students to find out more about them. Note the positive qualities of these mathematicians that enabled them to discover concepts and theories.

SCIENCE

Get students to consider ethical consequences of scientific research, animal testing, as well as the cost and affordability of technology versus need. This trains students to think critically and take different perspectives.

MUSIC

Enrich students' social, cultural and historical awareness by introducing them to different kinds of songs and instruments. Teach them to apply the listening skills they learn to improve communication with others.

HISTORY

How have the choices made by individuals affected the course of our entire history? Involve students in discussions and learning journeys about our unique heritage, and how it has shaped our lives today.

PRIME TIME

Implementing the learning of values in schools can seem daunting. Dr Marvin W. Berkowitz, a well-known name in the field who has held several training seminars and talks for teachers in Singapore on character education, came up with PRIME, a model of core strategies that educators can follow.

P

PRIORITISATION

School leaders must put character education as top priority and run the programmes school-wide.

R

RELATIONSHIP

Schools need to build a strong relationship with stakeholders, whether they are students, teachers, parents or the community.

I

INTRINSIC MOTIVATION

This ought to be the primary impetus for the students to do good. Try not to use extrinsic motivation.

M

MODELS OF CHARACTER

All adults in the school should aim to live out the values they want to see students develop.

E

EMPOWERMENT OF STAKEHOLDERS

Empower all members of the school community so that their voices truly matter.

DON'T PREACH-PLAY!

Fancy using some games to open up conversation about values and character? Here are some to get you started.

START
HERE

PANDEMIC

Most games pit players against each other, but in this one, players have to work together to win. With each player playing a unique role in a disease-fighting team, teachers can use this game to discuss what makes for effective teamwork. Students can also come to appreciate how each person must play a part in order to achieve success as a whole.

bit.ly/edupandemic

CHESS

Benjamin Franklin, one of the founding fathers of the United States, was a strong proponent of using chess to teach foresight and caution. Practising to become better or learning from one's mistakes can help develop one's concentration, self-confidence and sportsmanship.

bit.ly/whyhchess

YOU'VE BEATEN THE VIRUS

ADVANCE TO 9

MIND YOUR MANNERS

The name says it all. Younger children will have some fun flipping open the different picture cards depicting good and bad behaviours, then move forward if they choose the right response. This 1987 American game may seem a little retro, but it's a great way to talk about values then and now.

bit.ly/edumanners

CAUTION! VIRUS AHEAD.

GOOD GAME!

GO TO 11

CHECKMATE!

MOVE TO 7

HELP FROM OUTSIDE

Schools here often work with external agencies to expose students to new experiences. If you need ideas for collaboration, consider the following:



OLD IS GOLD

Want to spur your students to care for others from a different generation? In the Council for Third Age's Intergenerational Learning Programme, launched in 2011, students teach senior citizens skills such as photography and social media engagement. Through the interaction with the elders, students practise respect and kindness.

bit.ly/ilpschools



HISTORY BUFFS

You can enhance your school's National Education efforts by approaching the National Heritage Board (NHB). The NHB helps schools set up heritage corners where students learn the fascinating history of their schools, the local community and the nation. The Heritage Participation Grant supports projects such as exhibitions, workshops and other programmes.

nhb.gov.sg



Do you leave a note with your name and contact after you accidentally damage a car in a parking lot? You may answer “yes”, “no”, or “depends” in this game of moral dilemmas, while other players will attempt to spot if you are bluffing. More than just a fun and suspenseful game, teachers can also use this to start a discussion on moral ambiguity and talk about how to navigate real life situations where things can be a little bit greyer.

Please contact me!
Thank you for leaving your
contact with the affected car owner.
ADDITIONAL ROLL

Great communication!
Congrats on building your settlement.

Congratulations!
THE END

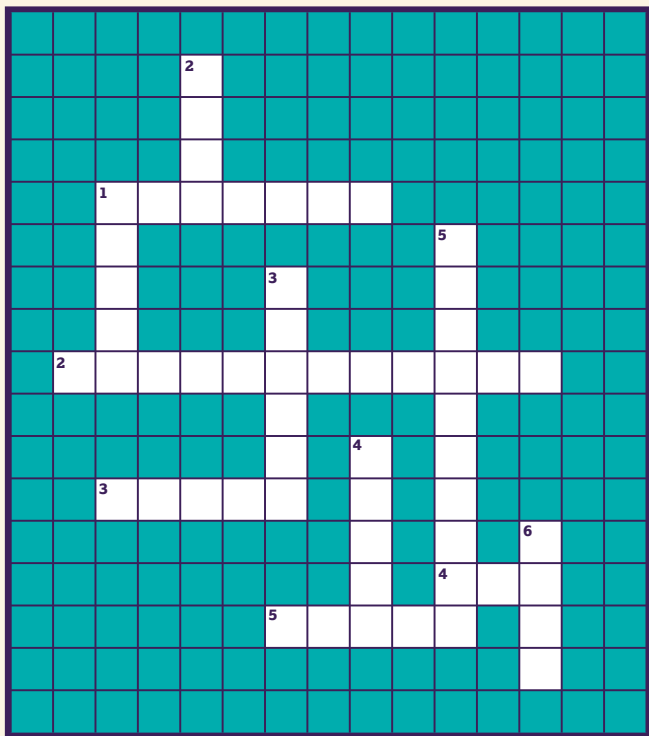
A complex game where players not just need to gather resources and build settlements, but have to negotiate and trade with other players to get the materials they need as well. With this format, teachers can use the game as a way in to talk about the importance of communication, empathy, and community.

Develop your students' awareness of animal care through the Animal Hero project by the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) Singapore. After listening to a talk by the SPCA, students can share their knowledge with their relatives and neighbours, and fill in a card each time they do so. They get an Animal Hero certificate when they complete the card within a month.

What are the most popular values favoured by schools? We visit the websites of 187 primary schools and 168 secondary schools, and create a word cloud based on our findings.

UNVEIL THE MASCOTS

These cuddly characters have been around sharing good principles with children and adults alike. How many of them can you name?



DOWN

1. Launched in 1982 to promote courtesy and kindness, this mascot quit in 2013 because of “an increasingly angry and disagreeable society”. It has since resumed its role with the Singapore Kindness Movement.
2. You should have seen this mascot around, thanks to the 2015 SEA Games. His name is inspired by Sang Nila Utama, the legendary prince who founded Singapura.
3. This toothy squirrel has been educating children on the importance of saving money since it first appeared in 1969. It stars in a mobile app as part of POSB’s National School Savings Campaign.
4. You won’t find another creature as concerned about food hygiene and safety as this mascot for the Agri-Food & Veterinary Authority of Singapore.
5. Launched in 2005, this droplet of cuteness is the official mascot for the PUB, the national water agency.
6. Not to be confused with the charity pachyderm, this mug-carrying elephant was a symbol of water conservation introduced by the PUB in 1973.

ACROSS

1. This pink elephant from the National Council of Social Service has been around since 1984. Whenever he is happy, his heart will grow and he’ll fly into the air.
2. This green frog mascot of the National Environment Agency has undergone two makeovers. Its current look comprises a heart-shaped chest to denote its love for the clean and green lifestyle.
3. If you like being as busy and effective as a bee, you would be a good friend to this mascot, introduced by the National Productivity Board in 1982.
4. This red-mane lion cub is one half of a pair who showed up during the Youth Olympic Games (YOG) in 2010 to promote the values of excellence, friendship and respect.
5. The other half of the YOG mascots is a Merlion.

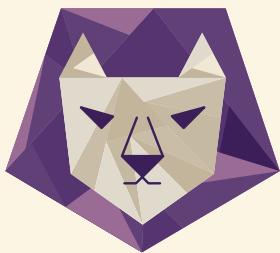
ANSWERS: [DOWN] 1. SINGA 2. NILA 3. SMILEY 4. OSCAR 5. WATERWALLY 6. BOBO • [ACROSS] 1. SHARITY 2. CAPTAIN GREEN 3. TEAM Y 4. LYO 5. MERLY

DESIGN YOUR OWN MASCOT

Need an adorable ambassador for your school or class values? Here are some tips from Japanese artist Pukumuku (twitter.com/pukumuku).

1

THINK OF A KEYWORD



Some animals go well with certain traits; for example, a lion and leadership. Avoid negative associations; eschew the sloth if you want to promote diligence.

2

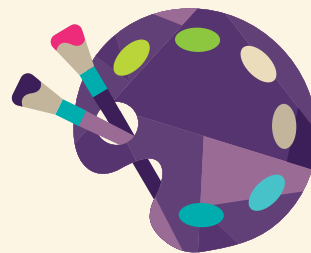
THINK OF ITS MISSION



What do you want the mascot to do? How does it fit your school’s vision?

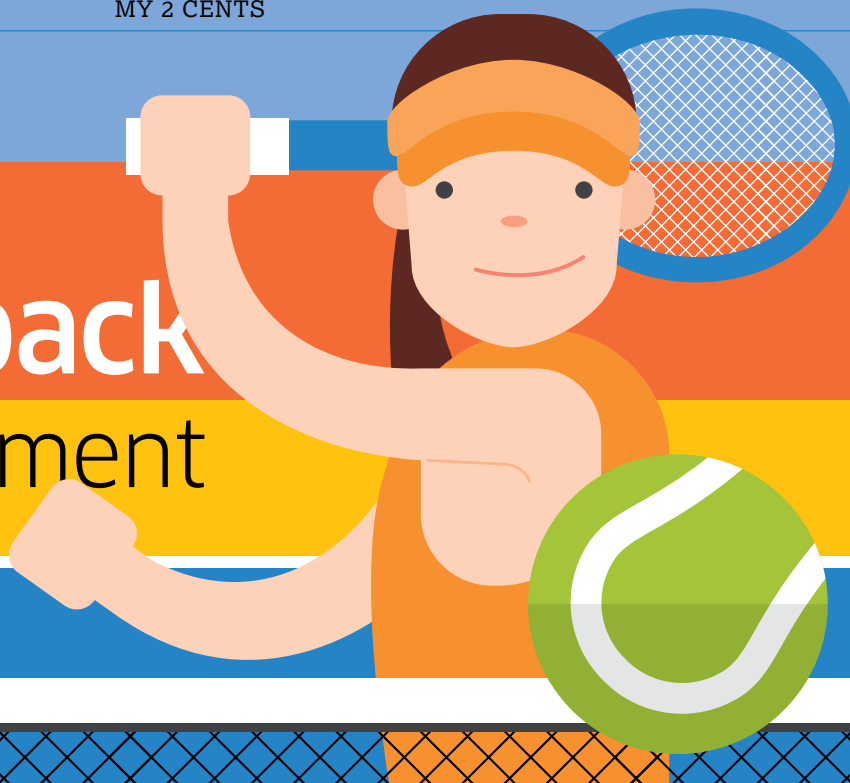
3

THINK OF ITS COLOURS



Red is zesty and aggressive. Green is peaceful and hopeful. Purple is mysterious and unsettling.

Best bounce-back moment



★★ Best entry ★★

Ms Sharon Chee
HOD/CCE
Stamford Primary School

I recently joined a new school and had to adapt fast to multiple new responsibilities. At times, it felt overwhelming and things were zooming past in a blur. To bounce back from these trying moments, I bounced tennis balls – playing tennis, my favourite sport, and setting aside time to exercise boosted my stamina and rejuvenated me. I also bounced ideas off like-minded colleagues who were passionate about making improvements for our school and students. Exploring ideas with them fuelled my conviction that together, we could make things better. My husband likes to say, “When you are at your lowest, the only way is up!” Indeed, bouncing back is a state of mind.

Mr Edmund Lim
Senior Teacher
Teck Ghee Primary School

When a close family member suffered from a critical illness, my entire lifestyle changed to cope with the demands of caregiving. Sometimes I was at a loss of what to do. During these times, I drew strength from the support and concern shown by my school leaders and colleagues. With their support, I could better manage my responsibilities at home and at school.

Ms Tan Peiling
Teacher
Canberra Secondary School

Sometimes, I have doubts about my abilities and whether I am cut out to be an educator. Previously, my form class had issues that led to me blaming and doubting myself. I then turned to my colleagues and family members for support. They encouraged me to press on and focus on my strengths as an educator, while slowly working on my weaknesses. Their support never fails to perk me up and help me to become a more competent teacher.

Next Issue

LEARNING WITH THE STARS

Who is one famous person you would like to invite to your school to give a lesson or speech? Tell us why!

Please send your submission to contact_online@moe.edu.sg by 14 Aug 2015. Submissions should be no more than 150 words, and these may be edited for length. Please include your name, designation, school and contact number. The best sharing will be published in the October 2015 issue.



All for one, one for all

How does a fraternity of teachers come together in a time of need? With much heart it seems. To Ms Han Zi Rui, a young art teacher who helped out at Tanjong Katong Primary School in the week after the Sabah earthquake, the outpouring of help and affection spoke of a community that cared for and was proud of their own.

Tanjong Katong Primary School (TKPS) has rules that are a little different from the litany of “dos” and “don’ts” I’ve come across elsewhere. They start this way:

1. Take care of yourself
2. Take care of those around you

After spending a week helping out at TKPS, I’ve come to see how these rules are lived out by the teachers and students. On June 5, TKPS lost several young adventurers and teachers to the Sabah earthquake when they were on Mount Kinabalu as part of the Omega Challenge learning programme. News reports had detailed how the teachers risked their lives to protect their young charges, while a student tried to calm her classmate down when the earthquake struck.

When I was activated to support the tribute centre at the school, I got to work quickly. There was little time for reflection, though tears welled up at the incoming news of the lives that were lost.

While setting up the tribute boards and helping out with odds and ends, the conversations I had with teachers, students and parents made me think a little harder about my life in school and my own calling as a teacher.

THE TANJONG KATONG FAMILY

Tanjong Katong Girls’ School (TKGS) and Tanjong Katong Secondary School (TKSS) may not be affiliated to each other or to TKPS, but together, they cared for TKPS as family members would.

TKGS sent crates of bottled water, while TKSS hauled whiteboards from their school a few blocks away to display the numerous tributes TKPS was receiving. Mdm Haslinda Bte Zamani, the TKSS principal, also helped to host the visitors till late into the night, while the vice-principal provided food, *kopi* and *teh* to keep everyone going.

And one could not miss the massive “TKSS ♥ TKPS” sign that the “big brothers and sisters” of the secondary school created for their juniors. This simple, touching message provided great solace for those grieving.

This was the larger Tanjong Katong family at work, and it reminded me that I come from a large community of educators.

CARE FROM FELLOW EDUCATORS

Everyone from general staff to school leaders showed their support in different ways.

I saw two TKPS Operations Support Officers, Mdm Manickam, 61, and Mdm Leacheme, 75, handing out apples and bottled water to visitors. The students were like their own grandchildren,



Teachers and staff from all over Singapore came to support TKPS. Many did not know the children and teachers personally. But as one teacher told me, they felt very keenly the sense of tragedy so they had to turn up and help.

they said. Like the families of the students, Mdm Manickam and Mdm Leacheme had fervently hoped the children would return safely, and were deeply hurt when the news updates told them otherwise. Despite their pain, they still gave their best at work and came to school every day to make sure it was clean for everyone.

In the busy Ops room, the catered lunch boxes sat cold as everyone was more concerned with the work at hand. TKPS's principal, Mrs Caroline Wu, was grief-stricken, but put on a strong front to rally her staff. Zonal Director, Schools South, Mrs Ng Ai Lin, was also ever-present to shepherd the team.

Mrs Marian Chia, Superintendent for the E5 cluster, made sure energy levels remained high. She was heard on the mobile phone cheekily threatening, "Come in and take your lunch now.

Otherwise, I won't eat mine too." Only when the eating started did she then sit down to have her meal.

These little acts of concern – whether in the form of a lunch box, a hug or just a shoulder to lean on – were clear indicators to me that no one was ever alone.

Many teachers helping out at TKPS were also staff from 11 other schools in the E5 cluster. They seamlessly came together to mobilise resources and manage the streams of visitors who came to give tribute.

Beyond the cluster, teachers and staff from all over Singapore came to support TKPS. Many did not know the children and teachers personally. But as one teacher told me, they felt very keenly the sense of tragedy so they had to turn up and help.

Some like Ms Ramona from Catholic High shared a strong sense of solidarity with the TKPS teachers who were on the Omega Challenge. She was heartened by their heroic acts on the mountain.

Those who were unable to come down to the school to pay their tributes were speaking on social media to their friends, families and the public in their own ways. Being fellow teachers was reason enough for us to come together and lend each other strength.

ENCOURAGEMENT FROM OTHERS

Teachers also received hugs and comforting words from current and former TKPS students. They penned

condolences for the lost teachers and, heartbreakingly, for the little ones too. There were also notes of encouragement and love for the school. "TKPS will pull through as one," one note said.

On the last evening, just minutes before the tribute site closed, a harried National Serviceman arrived in army fatigues with a huge backpack. This ex-TKPS student took a taxi here the moment he booked out of camp to pay tribute to his former teacher, Mr Mohammad Ghazi Bin Mohamed, who lost his life. The teenager wrote no notes, but spent time reading the messages others had left. Watching him, I was reminded of the lasting impact that we teachers would have on our students' lives.

What surprised me as well, was the number of parents who volunteered their time. Within hours of the news breaking, Parent Support Group members, parents of alumni, and even friends of TKPS parents rallied together on their own to help out at the tribute site. They manned the tribute booths, decorated the tables and boards, and brought food to share.

The parents' presence and assistance showed a supportive relationship between them and the school.

THE MEANING OF "FAMILY"

One afternoon, I spotted four TKPS students doodling on a tribute card for their teachers and friends. One of them said: "Through this, I truly understood the meaning of the quote 'All for one, one for all.' And I know my school is showing that."

It had been a trying and sad week, but I felt the experience united us. From what I saw, we were undoubtedly a family who could weather good and bad times together.

Hence, I believe that even as our hearts continue to weep, we will pull through as one – for our schools, our friends, our families, and most importantly, for our children. **■**

Ms Han taught in Evergreen Secondary for three years before being posted to MOE HQ as an officer with the Communications Division.

Wisdom from *Lee Kuan Yew*

As Singapore's first prime minister, and Minister for Education in 1975, the late Mr Lee Kuan Yew was passionate about achieving a top-notch education system. He and his team saw the importance of education in ensuring the survival and prosperity of the nation. *Contact* shares some of his thoughts and words.

“...I have never ceased to be a student, I have never ceased to learn.”

Speech at the Seminar on “Education and Nation-building”, 27 December 1966.



“In the community, the one group that must have this desire to construct and to build and improve upon what we have built must be amongst those who are entrusted with our young.”

Speech at the Seminar on “Education and Nation-building”, 27 December 1966.

“Now, I have said that I believe that if I have to choose one profession in which you give the most for the least it is probably teaching – if you take it seriously. You have to have the temperament for it to coax, to stimulate, to cajole, to disciple a young mind into good habits. You must have an aptitude.”

Address at the Opening of the Third Asian Teachers’ Seminar, 20 November 1966

“My definition of an educated man is a man who never stops learning and wants to learn. I am not interested in whether a man has a Ph.D or not, or an M.A. for that matter, or a diploma. Mao never had one, neither had Krushchev, nor Stalin.”

Speech at the Parliament House, 23 February 1977

“... just as a country is as good as its citizens, so its citizens are really, only as good as their teachers.”

Speech at the Seminar on “Education and Nation-building”, 27 December 1966.

“...[schools] will teach our students high standards of personal behaviour, social norms of good and bad, right and wrong. Without these values, a literate generation may be more dangerous than a completely uneducated one.”

Address on the eve of National Day, 8 August 1967

Quick fix, healthy eats

Nothing perks you up in the afternoon like some home-made lunch! *Contact* serves up these simple and yummy recipes that you can prepare in under 30 minutes.

Fruity porridge

The blazing sun can make those mid-day lessons especially hot. Treat yourself to a refreshing dish – packed with dietary fibre and antioxidants – to cool yourself down.



Smoked salmon AND CREAM CHEESE SANDWICH

A sandwich doesn't have to be boring, and you don't always have to use tuna. Try this version for a hipster café-worthy meal or snack.

PREP TIME	COOK TIME	TOTAL TIME
8 min	0 min	8 min

INGREDIENTS

1 focaccia bun (you can replace with any bread of your choice)	Arugula leaves (also known as rocket salad)
Cream cheese spread	Coarse ground black pepper
4-5 slices of smoked salmon	

INSTRUCTIONS

Slice the focaccia into half.

Spread cream cheese on both halves of the bread and place a handful of arugula leaves on one half.

Add the smoked salmon and season with a pinch of black pepper. Cover it with the other bread half, and voila, your lunch is served.

TIP

Squeeze a lemon over the salmon just before placing it on the bread to neutralise the fishy smell.

PREP TIME	COOK TIME	TOTAL TIME
12 min	0 min	12 min

INGREDIENTS

¾ cup rolled oats	2 teaspoons of honey
½ cup Greek yogurt	(adjust amount according to taste)
¾ cup fresh milk (can replace with soy or rice milk)	½ cup fresh blueberries, strawberries & kiwis
1 tablespoon of chia seeds	Crushed almonds

INSTRUCTIONS

Mix the rolled oats, Greek yogurt, milk, chia seeds and honey in a container with a lid.

Add the fruits into the mixture and stir well.

Cover the container and store it overnight in the fridge.

Sprinkle crushed almonds on top before eating.

TIPS

You can also use mango, bananas, walnuts and pistachios. Or go for a flavoured yogurt instead of honey!



Soba noodle salad

Be the envy of the staffroom by showing off this exquisite but easy-to-make dish that can be eaten either hot or cold.

PREP TIME	COOK TIME	TOTAL TIME
8 min	10 min	18 min

INGREDIENTS

60g soba noodles	1 spring onion, thinly sliced
½ Japanese cucumber, thinly sliced	3 tablespoons of Japanese sesame dressing
¼ cup shredded carrot	2 tablespoons of sesame seeds (or pine nuts)
5-8 cherry tomatoes	A handful of dried seaweed
1 hard boiled egg	

INSTRUCTIONS

Cook soba noodles according to directions given on its packaging.

Rinse noodles in cold water and drain the excess water.

Add the cucumber, carrot, cherry tomatoes, egg and spring onion to the noodles and mix well. You can prepare this a day before and refrigerate it.

Pour the Japanese sesame dressing, sesame seeds and seaweed over the salad. Toss well before eating.

PREP TIME	COOK TIME	TOTAL TIME
10 min	12 min	22 min

INGREDIENTS

3 eggs	Sundried tomato pesto
1 diced fresh tomato (drain excess liquid away)	Ground black pepper
10-12 fresh basil leaves	Olive oil

INSTRUCTIONS

Crack the eggs into a bowl. Beat the eggs well with a fork.

Heat up a frying pan and add the olive oil. Use low to medium heat, because you don't want to cook the eggs too quickly.

Pour 1/3 of the egg mixture into the frying pan. Spread the mixture out in the pan.

Once the top of the omelette is no longer runny, place it on a plate.

Spread the tomato pesto on the omelette and top it with some diced tomatoes along with 3-4 basil leaves.

Roll the omelette and cut it diagonally into half. Repeat the steps for the remaining egg mixture.

TIPS

Make a thin omelette so that you'll be able to roll it easily. If you want more protein in your meal, add a few slices of cold cuts such as turkey breast.

Egg roll WITH TOMATOES AND BASIL

Keep yourself energised through your afternoon classes with this flavourful protein powerhouse.



The X Factor

Teacher's edition

THE DECODER ↓

No one can read a doctor's handwriting, right? Wrong! Just ask teachers. Those years of marking students' "chicken scratchings" have trained them to make sense of any scribble.

The Sun
was shi
so bri

It's often said that it takes a certain "something" to be a teacher. And it's true. *Contact* highlights five special abilities that most of you probably already have.

YOU
DID
NOT
DO
YOUR
WORK

THE SIXTH SENSE →

(aka "Ehhh... How did the teacher know?!")

Why are teachers the least likely victims of practical jokes? Dealing with mischievous students has trained educators to instinctively know when they are confronted with excuses, schemes, and homework-eating pets.

THE AURA →

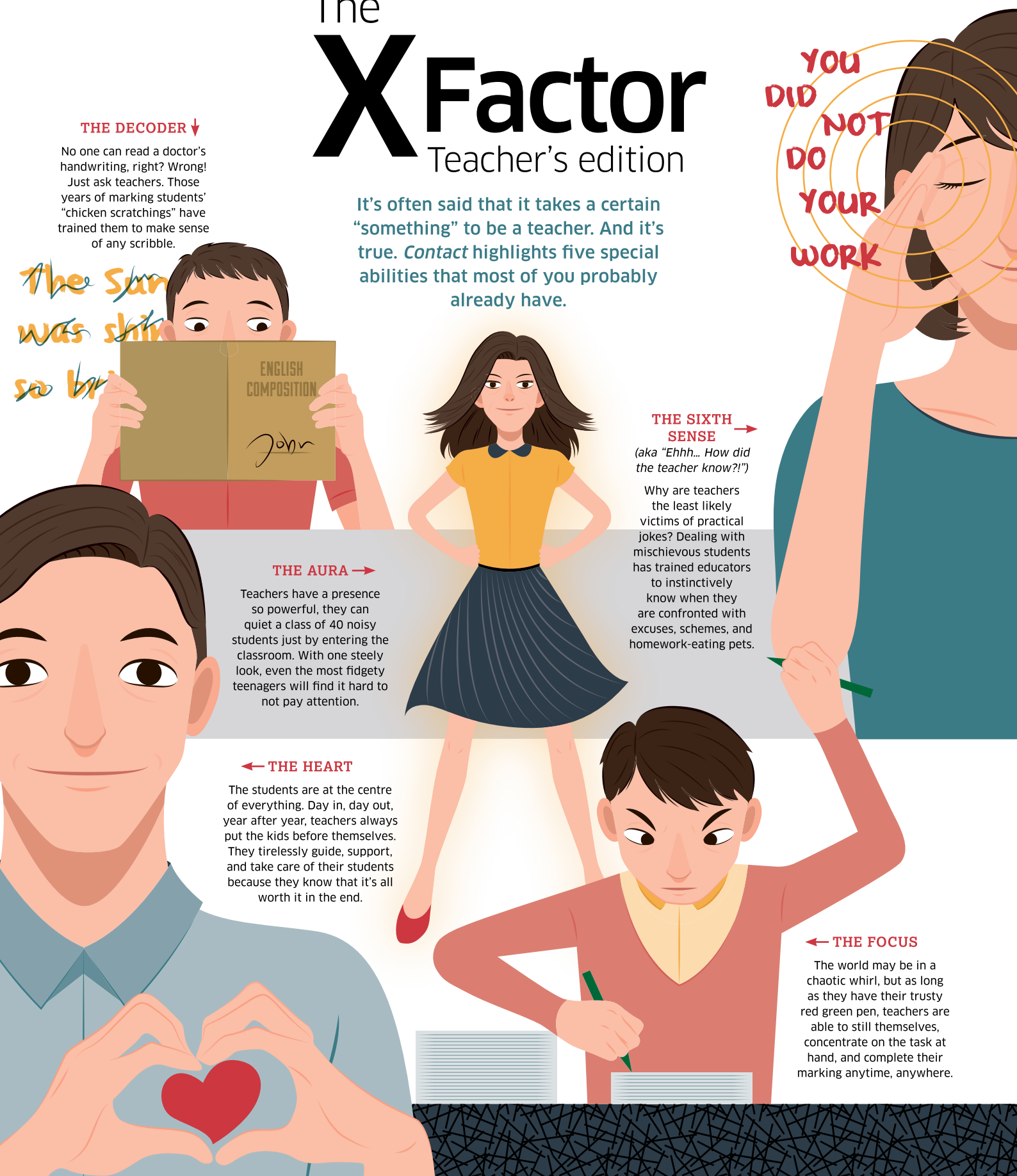
Teachers have a presence so powerful, they can quiet a class of 40 noisy students just by entering the classroom. With one steely look, even the most fidgety teenagers will find it hard to not pay attention.

← THE HEART

The students are at the centre of everything. Day in, day out, year after year, teachers always put the kids before themselves. They tirelessly guide, support, and take care of their students because they know that it's all worth it in the end.

← THE FOCUS

The world may be in a chaotic whirl, but as long as they have their trusty red green pen, teachers are able to still themselves, concentrate on the task at hand, and complete their marking anytime, anywhere.



Winning entries
this issue

Who's your **best** friend at work?



Jovial colleagues are hard to find, harder to leave, and impossible to forget. Thank you for the laughter!

Mr Tan Yuanyan
Teacher
Tampines Secondary School



Azna was my 'twin' at Si Ling Primary School for 10 years. Besides having the same blood type, we always completed each other's sentences!

Mdm Nur Alisa Abdul Samad
Teacher
Concord Primary School



Rashidi's age, 33, equals my years of teaching. He says I am his supportive mentor but HE is my IT support and buddy.

Mdm Vanitha K S Perumal
Teacher
Gan Eng Seng
Primary School

Thank you for sharing your photos!
Each published photo wins a \$30 voucher!



NEXT ISSUE

GIFTS FIT FOR A TEACHER

What was one meaningful Teacher's Day present you had received? Take a picture of it and share with us how it touched your heart.

The competition is only open to staff of Ministry of Education (MOE) Singapore.

Each participant is allowed only one entry. The photo entry must be original and unpublished. The staff must be the original author and sole owner of his/her photo entry.

The photo should be in high resolution, JPEG format.

Submit the photo with your full name, institution, designation, email and contact number, failing which the entry will be rendered void.

Provide a caption (max 25 words), explaining what the photo is about and how it reflects the theme. Captions may be edited for length, flow and clarity.

Send both photo and caption to contact_online@moe.edu.sg by 14 Aug 2015.

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.

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.

GUESS & WIN!

How much do you know about our **education** heritage?

Find out with our SG50 quiz! This issue, we feature two school logos used in the past. The first three readers who correctly guess what the logos are win an attractive prize each!



These logos represented
important training
institutes in the past.

**THINK YOU HAVE
THE ANSWER?**

Send it to
contact_online@moe.edu.sg
by 14 Aug 2015.

2



The answer to last issue's quiz:

1. **HYDROMETER
OR SALINOMETER**
2. **WEIGHING BALANCE
OR BEAM BALANCE**

**Congratulations to
these lucky winners!**

Ms Jacqueline Lee Chin Lin
Teacher,
River Valley High School

Mr Huang I Lung
Teacher,
Teck Whye Secondary School

Ms Chua Sue Ann
Guidance Officer,
Student Development
Curriculum Division

Good Morning 'Cher: Our Schools, Our Teachers, Our Stories

Join us as we showcase our education journey over the past 50 years and pay tribute to our pioneer educators. The exhibition will be coming to you at the following malls:

Changi City Point
10 to 12 July

Westgate Mall
24 to 26 July

AMK Hub
14 to 16 August

Suntec City
28 to 30 August

Get all the details at bit.ly/morning-cher and remember to smile when you say **#GoodMorningCher!** See you there!

