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EDUCATION

Transforming students' lives

TEACHERS Day is around the corner and we teachers feel the need to reflect on what our responsibilities were when we started our journey in the teaching profession.

What will it be like when we become the transformers of the *Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013-2025*, which will start its second phase next year?

Many colleagues are having mixed feelings about their future.

Will there be more paperwork, more subjects and more time spent in school completing documents and formative assessment sheets?

Our goals are to prepare our students for the workforce, develop holistic individuals and hope that they lead a contented moral life. These goals have never changed.

Education policies emphasise critical thinking and problem solving. But throughout our own educational experiences, weren't we applying those components? I remember when we wanted to perform a bamboo dance during Teachers Day for our teachers.

We needed bamboos, so we went to the jungle behind my house and cut down several bamboo plants, cleaned and dried them, and did our performance.

We obtained permission from the caretaker of the area and received help from our parents to ensure that we did not get hurt while cutting down the bamboo plants.

We cut enough bamboo and cleared up after us. We learnt to cut the bamboos in safe and easy way. Isn't all that part of our learning experiences?

Many colleagues are sad because students are not relating to them. They say students focus more on technology and have isolated themselves from human relationships.

They may have hundreds of friends on Facebook and other apps but they need a teacher to educate them to be a good friend and person.

They need a teacher to share their thoughts and vision.

They need a teacher to teach them to resolve online issues. And if students prefer to go online to discuss issues, then teachers of the 21st century need the knowledge and skills to prepare online platforms for students to meet and discuss.

Students today may not chop bamboo and perform a bamboo dance, but allow them to present using technology and we will be amazed at their creativity and knowledge of technology.

Teachers should not be threatened by such skills and expertise. We should embrace their expertise and work with our students to impart our wisdom.

Today, knowledge is gained from multiple sources.

With the world at their fingertips, 21st-century students want to study something that is meaningful and challenging and helps them in their current and future lives.

They want to be challenged. They want discussions in the most creative ways and they want to develop. They do not want teachers telling them what they must do and must not do.

They do not want teachers yelling or focusing only on textbooks and homework.

What they need is a teacher who can understand the challenges they are going through as students of the new millennium and ease those challenges.

If we ask ourselves, what do we remember of our teachers from primary to secondary education, we will remember incidences of teachers caring for us, reprimanding us and treating us as special individuals.

Those are what matter at the end of the day.

To my teacher comrades, have a reflective Teachers Day and keep up the good work.

You are transformers for today's students.

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