

## Education

Sunday, 6 November 2016

### Making the classroom more conducive

THE incident where one of our secondary school students fell to his death from the third floor of his school made me very sad.

Being a discipline teacher for more than a decade, I understand that adolescents at that age are very agile and need time to break free.

According to reports, the student was trying to rescue a school bag which another friend had thrown down is all quite natural gimmicks among adolescents.

In my years of dealing with adolescent boys and girls, I have dealt with more cases. However what I am going to highlight here is when did the incident happen. If it was during school hours, then what were the teachers doing?

One of my unwritten regulations for my trainee teachers when they start their practical teaching is to be at the classroom at least several minutes before the bell goes off for the next period. Being early before the teacher in class leaves can resolve many discipline issues.

In my own experience, once the bell goes, the students who actually need a physical stretch after a 40 or 80 minute lesson will start running around or to the next class to have some excitement. And I think it is only natural for them to have such an urge as they have been focusing or trying to focus on the lesson taught.

Research has shown that many discipline cases do take place during change of periods. Usually in the olden days, the principal or other school administrative will make their rounds during such times. It is still a routine in several schools and a kind of subtle warning that all students and teachers are to be in class to continue with the learning and teaching process.

After all these years in the educational field, I ask myself ... I just finished an 80 minute class which could be anything from Science, Maths, languages, Religious Education or Moral Education. I have another three different subjects before recess or school ends. What do I need? Yes, a short break to rest my mind, exercise my limbs and refresh my muscles. And how can teachers help deal with that need? I always made sure that my students kept standing after they got up to wish me and did some physical movement and basic exercises in the classroom, spoke to their friends about anything and then settle down. But because Moral Education (that I mostly taught) is a subject where the Muslim and non-Muslim students have to go to their respective classes, students would have moved a bit and felt fresh to start a new subject.

In most New Zealand secondary schools, students have the privilege to move from one building to another building. Meaning teachers of different subjects are in the specific rooms and it's the students who move from classroom to classroom.

It gives the students the opportunity to walk, chat with their friends a bit, go for nature's call, feel refreshed and continue with the next subject. Year 12 and Year 13 students (Lower Six and Upper Six) also have the privilege to leave the school grounds for lunch breaks or a short rest at home if home was nearby. The issue of students playing truant hardly exist.

Teachers in Malaysia do not have such a privilege with our limited buildings and big number of students in each classroom. But there are always innovative ways to help students prepare for the next lesson.

It is essential to remember that preparing students physically, mentally and emotionally would lessen discipline issues and make the classroom more conducive for students and teachers.

Take my challenge teachers, come up with innovative ways to excite your students and make their learning journey a meaningful one, for them and for you!

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<http://www.thestar.com.my/news/education/2016/11/06/making-the-classroom-more-conducive/>