

## Education Sunday Star

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Values are caught, not taught

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STUDENTS, keep quiet and do your work, says a teacher who raises her voice but students are not bothered.

The above is a typical scenario in a classroom when students become restless or start talking to each other.

Does the teacher realise that students are observing what she is doing all the time?

By raising their voice above the students' voices, the teachers might think they have succeeded by having good classroom management but the values caught here is vice versa.

Students will learn to scream and shout when they find the opportunity because "values are caught and not taught".

In many situations when issues of unpleasantness take place such as bullying cases, suicide, depression etc. among school students, action only seem to speak louder when there are serious incidents such as death.

Then after sometime, it quietens down until the next death takes place.

Why do we wait for such instances and only then realise that something is not right?

In countries like Japan and South Korea where the incidence of bullying is less than one percent in schools, parents are deeply concerned about the phenomenon.

The government of the day, the educational policymakers and schools are pressured to come up with continuous programmes and actions to curb bullying, socialviolations and misdemeanour.

In Malaysia, we have many policies and programmes to curb social problems and help our young people to grow in a holistic development.

However, there needs to be support and awareness from each and every individual to ensure such programmes are sustainable.

When I was a secondary school teacher and gangsters were on the rise, the police inspector of the district was a good friend to all students including us, the discipline teachers.

Students who were considered weak or potential bully victims were taught survival strategies.

I still remember the inspector telling our students: "If you sense that someone or a group of students are going to attack, assault or bully you, run as fast as you can and get to somewhere safe, like the school office or the police station nearby. Never walk alone if you feel threatened."

He made it a point to give the contact details and numbers of his department to the students.

The relationship between the community around my school and the school administration was good.

If any student wearing uniform with the school badge was playing truant, responsible passers-by would call the school and inform the principal.

Discipline teachers would round up the truant students and inform their parents to settle the matter. When students saw that schools were serious about their behaviour and character, even the naughty ones seemed a little cautious. However, negative values picked up from home quarrels and gangster friends were another challenge that we as discipline teachers had to face.

The values, which these students internalise from young, became a norm for them and teachers faced great challenges educating these groups of troubled students.

It takes a village to bring up a child.

The irony of cherishing life only when death occurs must change.

Let's educate our students to be human beings before focusing on their profession, grades and other material needs.

Let's provide them with resilient skills and a positive outlook in life. No one has the right to judge another.

Let's be tactful with our actions and words as "values are caught and not taught".

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Read more at <http://www.thestar.com.my/news/education/2017/07/23/values-are-caught-not-taught/#Ht8EfV0OLc7mdDH1.99>