

Principal's Message 2016

The act of teaching is only complete when someone is taught "to understand in order to act, to act in order to make a difference in the minds and lives of others -- to act in order to serve others responsibly and with integrity."

- Lee Shulman, American education psychologist

Welcome to the new school year of 2016.

As a first-year Principal, I am greatly thankful for the strong support given by the Clementians, staff and stakeholders including the School Advisory Committee and parents. In my message in 2015, I articulated my personal beliefs of how an effective school should function in accordance to the peoplecentric philosophy in relation to the pupils, staff, parents and the community-at-large. In the year ahead, I will continue to move Clementi Primary School to the desired state of my personal beliefs together with my teachers.

I believe that young pupils learn best when teachers harness their innate curiosity to bring about selfdirected learning at an early age. As the pupils get older, teachers must facilitate their inner journey to find the passion within them to sustain their joy of learning. As a father and educator of two boys aged eight and thirteen, I am a true advocate of what I am writing.

I believe that when we teach, we must strive to keep every child and his / her thought processes visible in class at all times. In my observations of the lessons, it is possible that a child can go through two weeks in class without being held accountable for contributing to the class discussion. The pupils may go through the entire routine of completing the worksheets and sitting for examinations, but it is a onetime off account of their learning when a score or grade has been given back. Moving forward, Clementi Primary School's teachers will endeavour to make the pupils and their thought processes and learning visible by hearing their voice and making use of the conversations and exchanges in class to achieve the lessons' learning outcomes. This pedagogy happens to be a key tenet of socialising both the pupils and the teachers to the 21st century workplace too, where collaboration and communication are essential for productive outcomes.

Pupils should not just be accountable to the teachers; teachers need to change their instructional practice to ensure that the pupils are accountable to their peers' learning too, to facilitate opportunities for them to engage in accountable talk, and to build on each other's learning. With this paradigm shift, classroom instruction has become much more complex beyond the days of how the older generations of Singaporeans were educated, with the pupils taking direct instructions from the teachers and practising the same routines to ace examinations!

My teachers and I will need your strong support and partnerships to implement the new ways of classroom instruction and I hope that you can see your child becoming a confident communicator and keen learner as he / she journeys the six years of learning with us.

Wishing all a healthy and abundant 2016!

Mr Albert Chia