

Teachers - Stewards of Young Lives

Recently I attended a dinner to commemorate a special anniversary of a school. Held in the school hall, it was an evening that was crowded, noisy and very warm. But these little inconveniences did not seem to affect the spirit of the guests attending the function, many of whom were alumni and teachers past and current. Old boys and girls could be seen looking for their teachers, sharing photos and stories of their own children and families and reminiscing about school days.

Back at ACS, every year when the university holidays start, Old boys and girls make their way back to school. They claim they miss the SAC food and the rhythms of school life - but their journey back home to ACS is inevitably about seeing their favourite teachers. These are the ones whom they feel have had a hand in shaping their outlook of life and who had an enduring influence on them.

These simple observations indicate just how important teachers are to the lives and experiences of their students. For many students, even after decades have passed since they were in school, the memories of their significant teachers and their special moments together in school are firmly etched in their minds.

What exactly is at the heart of this bond between these teachers and their students?

One vital component is care. Students almost instinctively can sense whether a teacher cares for them as a person. Such teachers make it their business to know their students well and build bridges to communicate and understand them better. Caring for students does not mean being indulgent or going soft on them. In fact, many caring teachers are also strict and uncompromising with their students about what matters most - like values such as respect, integrity and reliability - but their students understand the source of that firmness in their teachers - they care.

Excellent teachers also demonstrate their care for their students by the exceptional pride they take in improving their professional craft. These teachers understand that they are preparing their students for life and the future and not just exams. So their focus is on igniting curiosity and exploration in their subject areas, building higher order thinking skills and encouraging a questioning mind that seeks solutions and improvements rather than a passive acceptance of the status quo.

The ACS (Indep) school philosophy sums up the important role of teachers: "Key to the delivery of the ACS brand of education is our teachers who are stewards of young lives."

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We have been blessed at ACS over the years with many exemplary teachers for whom teaching is both a profession and a calling. These teachers are well regarded and fondly remembered by their students. This strength of our school must be built on for the future. As the world becomes more turbulent and unpredictable, we need solid teachers to strengthen this culture of care and foster positive relationships with their students. In doing so, they would be in a strong position to teach and guide our students to confidently navigate the complexities and dilemmas that will come their way in life and make the future one where the best is yet to be.

To all our teachers who make that vital difference because you care - Happy Teacher's Day!



Winston Hodge
Principal
Anglo-Chinese School (Independent)