Building a Mentoring Culture in Singapore Schools

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Kua Choon Tat, Mentor Coach
Introduction

At your table, introduce yourself using the following prompts:

• Name
• Role
• What brought you to our session
• What might you hope to learn
Outcomes

Participants will be able to

- understand the approaches that the Singapore Ministry of Education has put in place to build a mentoring culture in Singapore schools

- reflect on their own mentoring practices in their districts or schools
Agenda

- Welcome and Introduction
- Snapshot of Singapore Education System
- Developing Singapore Teachers
- Partnering for Success
- Our Successes and Challenges
- Taking Stock of Mentoring Culture
- Closure
We believe in fostering a culture of professional excellence with the child at the heart of all we do.

Ethos of the Teaching Profession

We Lead, Care, Inspire, for the Future of the Nation Passes through our Hands.
Singapore’s education system has evolved...

Phases of our economic development...

- **Survival Driven**
  - 1959 – 1978

- **Efficiency Driven**
  - 1979 – 1996

- **Skills/Capital-Intensive**

- **Ability-Based, Aspiration Driven**
  - 1997 – 2011

- **Knowledge-Based**

- **Innovation-Driven**

- **Student-centric, Values Driven**
  - 2012 onwards

Singapore’s education system has evolved through these phases.
Framework for 21st Century Competencies and Student Outcomes

Desired Outcomes of Education

Confident Person
- Communication, Collaboration, and Information Skills
- Responsible Decision-Making
- Self-Awareness
- Self-Management

Social and Emotional Competencies
- Civic Literacy, Global Awareness, and Cross-cultural Skills
- Self-directed Learner
- Social Awareness
- Relationship Management

Respect, Responsibility, Resilience, Integrity, Care, Harmony

Emerging 21st Century Competencies
- Active Contributor
- Concerned Citizen
- Core Values
Student-Centric, Values-Driven Education

**Breadth**
1. Broad and Inclusive Approach
2. Broad and Holistic Education

**Depth**
1. Deep Values and Deep Connection
2. Deep Foundation for Learning

**Length**
1. Lifelong Learning
2. Learning for Life

**Journey of Life**
Joy of Learning
Entrepreneurial Dare

A *Broad & Deep* Foundation for a *Lifelong* Journey
Every Child can Excel in Life
1. Think of a word or short phrase that describes what you have learnt about the Singapore education system.

2. Popcorn out your word or short phrase.
when we focus on teachers, our students succeed
21st Century Teacher Outcomes

- The Ethical Educator
- The Competent Professional
- The Collaborative Learner
- The Transformational Leader
- The Community Builder

Every Teacher, A Gem
Strong Belief in & Support of Mentoring

Developing Teacher Leaders

Growing Our Teachers
Building Our Nation
by providing opportunities at every stage and in every way to deepen our teachers’ skills and expertise.

MOE aims to strengthen a culture of learning among our teaching force, a culture of teachers growing teachers, and in the process, nurture teacher leaders who are accomplished in their profession and able to lead fellow educators.

Qualities of the Singapore Teacher: The 4 Beliefs

Better Ways, Ideas, Tools
To Support Teachers and Schools

to deepen the culture of improving, innovating, co-creating and sharing of effective teaching resources and process innovations.

By supporting this culture, MOE hopes to create time and space for our teachers and schools to deliver more impactful learning experiences and achieve better education outcomes for our students.
Roles and Responsibilities of Teacher Leaders

• Provide **leadership** in teaching and learning to deepen the **pedagogical practice** of teachers
  - By facilitating professional learning of others
  - By providing mentorship to bring about quality teaching

In high-performing educational systems, teacher leaders take responsibility as professionals for improved student outcomes (OECD, 2011).
Mentoring, Teaching & Student Learning

- Quality Mentoring
  - Mentoring for Effective Teaching and Reflective Practices
  - Instructional Mentors

- Quality Teaching
  - Expanded Repertoire of Professional Knowledge and Skills
  - Beginning Teachers

- Quality Learning
  - Every Student, An Engaged Learner
  - Students
# Mentors in Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types</th>
<th>Areas</th>
<th>Focus</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subject or Learning Domain Based</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>CCE</strong></td>
<td>Character and Citizenship Education</td>
<td>Lead, guide and support teaching and learning of CCE (All Schools)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>ICT</strong></td>
<td>Information and Communication Technologies</td>
<td>Advocate self-directed and collaborative learning experiences for students (All Schools)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>ICAN</strong></td>
<td>Improving Confidence and Achievement in Numeracy</td>
<td>Lead in effective intervention for low progress students (Math) (Pri &amp; Sec Schools)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>STELLAR</strong></td>
<td>STStrategies for English Language Learning And Reading</td>
<td>Sustain a high standard of language teaching (Pri Schools)</td>
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<td><strong>Generic: Induction of BTs</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>SMP</strong></td>
<td>Structured Mentoring Programme</td>
<td>Induct beginning teachers (BTs) at school level (All Schools)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>STEM/IMP</strong></td>
<td>Skilful Teaching and Enhanced Mentoring/Instructional Mentoring Programme</td>
<td>Accelerate pedagogical practice of BTs (All Schools)</td>
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</table>
MOE Teacher Induction Framework

- Introduction To Teaching (ITP)
- Pre-service Engagements
- Beginning Teachers’ In-Service Courses
- Beginning Teachers’ Symposium (BTS)

Journey into the third year as an Experienced Teacher
A Structured Mentoring Programme (SMP) toolkit was launched in 2006 to support schools in designing and implementing effective mentoring of beginning teachers.
Partner Buzz

- What is similar in the way that you develop your teachers?

- What is 1 difference?
Partnering for Success
### Overview of IMP Curriculum

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Programme</th>
<th>Focus of Programme</th>
<th>Duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Year 1</td>
<td>IMP Introductory Session</td>
<td>• Rationale for IMP</td>
<td>1 half-day</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Overview of IMP</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Implementing IMP in schools</td>
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# Overview of IMP Curriculum

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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Programme</th>
<th>Focus of Programme</th>
<th>Duration</th>
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</thead>
</table>
| 1    | Instructional Mentoring Programme (IMP)        | • Instructional Mentoring  
• Observing and Conferencing  
• Using Data to Inform Instruction | 6 full days         |
| 2    | Advanced Instructional Mentoring Programme (AIMP) | • Coaching in Complex Situations  
• Mentoring for Social and Emotional Learning  
• Continuum of Mentoring Practice | 4 full days         |
Purpose and Intent of Instructional Mentoring Programme

**BTs**
- Build BTS’ pedagogical knowledge and skills through practice-based learning and mould them to be **Competent Professionals**

**Mentors**
- Enhance mentors’ mentoring knowledge and skills through practice-based learning

**Mentoring Culture**
- Grow a system-wide culture of **mentoring** in schools and towards the vision of teacher-led professional excellence

**High Standards of Teaching**
- Establish **high** standards of teaching practice in our school system
“We are seeing amazing things happen when school leaders and mentors work together to create the environments in which teachers – along with their veteran colleagues – thrive. These are schools where all teachers are supported in being learners, in holding the vision that every child can and does learn, where inquiry into one’s practice and the use of data are simply a fact of everyday professional life, and where teachers participate in professional learning communities that foster public practice coupled with supports for teacher learning.”

Engaging School Leadership Teams

Structures to support mentoring in schools

1. **Protected time** (during curriculum hours) for the IMs to **dialogue with BTs**, 90 minutes per week per BT
2. **Matching** of IMs to BTs
3. **Provide** structures and resources to support IMs’ learning both in and out of school
4. **Regular dialogue** with IMs
Levels of Mentoring Partnership

**School Visits**
Enhances Instructional Mentors’ skills

**Cluster Support**
Equips participants with mentoring skills
e.g. Foundational Mentoring Course

**Instructional Mentors’ Network (Zonal)**
Strengthens competencies of Instructional Mentors

**Milestone Programmes**
Equips teacher leaders with skills for mentoring for pedagogical and organizational leadership
### Number of Schools with Trained Instructional Mentors

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mentoring Programme</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cumulative Total</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>246</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Cumulative Total: 246

68%
Instructional Mentors (IMs) have been instrumental in helping Beginning Teachers (BTs) build professional confidence and effectiveness.

% of BTs and IMs who agreed that IMs help build BTs’ professional confidence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Instructional Mentors</th>
<th>Beginning Teachers</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>97%</td>
<td>98%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

% of BTs, IMs and CTs who agreed that IMs help BTs impact student learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Coalition Team (CT)</th>
<th>Instructional Mentors</th>
<th>Beginning Teachers</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>98%</td>
<td>95%</td>
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</table>

CT: School Leaders, SSD, HODs

Source: Participants on the Skilful Teaching and Enhanced Mentoring (STEM) Programme and IMP (2015)
“Andrew built on my strengths and helped me to reflect and refine my thinking through the way he posed questions. He listened without judgment and allowed for equity of voice. Andrew gave me the reassurance that I owned this project. My greatest takeaway is how Andrew modelled listening. I am practising this now with my teachers.”

Ezal Bin Sani with his mentor, Andrew (left).
Challenges

- Aligning with school priorities
- Resource allocation
- Uneven standards of mentoring practice
- Mentoring experienced teachers
• What are some of my key takeaways?
• What suggestions or insights might I have to offer?

Partner share
‘Taking Stock’ of a Mentoring Culture
Four **Enablers**

- Support from School Leaders
- Engaging all Staff
- Developing a Mentoring Culture
- Continual Professional Development (PD) of Mentors
- Assessing Impact of PD Efforts

*Adapted from New Teacher Centre Programme Standards*
Using the four enablers and 22 practices tool, assess your mentoring programme.
• In your context of developing a mentoring programme,
  • what have been working well for you?
  • what are some of your biggest challenges?

• Based on what we have shared in our journey, what might be your next steps?

Be prepared to share with a partner.
Closure

“Creating a mentoring culture takes careful preparation. It takes commitment, introspection, patience and understanding the process of relationship building on an organizational and personal basis.”

to be inspired is great, to inspire is incredible
Thank you