



## Back to School

By Ir. Prof. Dr Dominic Foo Chwan Yee

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**I**n conjunction with Engineering Week (EW2012) of IEM, I went back to my old school - SMK Datuk Mansor (SDM), Bahau, Negeri Sembilan to give a talk on "Career Prospect in Engineering" on 15 August 2012. To my surprise, the attendance was overwhelming with the presence of 120 science stream students from Form 4 to Form – 6!

I began the talk by showing the students some comics on "World without Engineers" that I found from the internet. Next, I showed them the profile of some famous engineers in the world. These include Roberto Goizueta (former chairman and chief executive of Coca-Cola), Neil Alden Armstrong (first astronaut to walk on the moon), Andrew Grove (founder of Intel), Datuk Ir. Dr Wee Ka Siong (Deputy Ministry of Education); and everyone burst into laughter when they saw the picture of Rowan Atkinson ("Mr. Bean" – electrical engineering graduate)!

I then explained to the students about the conventional branches of engineering, i.e. civil, mechanical, electrical and electronics, as well as chemical engineering. I also showed them some of the emerging streams of engineering disciplines, e.g. agricultural, petroleum, computer engineering, etc. I then discussed the responsibilities of being an engineer in Malaysia. I explained the role of the Board of Engineers Malaysia (BEM) and The Institution of Engineers Malaysia (IEM), as well as the route to become professional engineers briefly. I also showed them some charts on salary scale, based on the IEM Employment Survey 2009-10. Obviously everyone showed concern with the pay!

In the last session, I showed some examples of successful graduates from the school. Being an alumnus myself, I am in touch with some successful graduates of the school. The students were very impressed seeing the profile of their seniors, e.g. Prof. Dr Ahmad Kamal of UTM (first batch of science stream student of SDM), Engr. Guna Kanthan (now with Fisher Scientific), Fish Leong (a Mandarin singer – not an engineer), and myself. I even challenged them "If we can be successful, why not you?"

At the end of my talk, I also presented my newly published textbook to my former physics teacher - Mr Khoo Boon Nam (who then became headmaster at another school, now retired). I acknowledged him in my book for two reasons, i.e. for teaching me the fundamental knowledge of physics in order to become an engineer; and advising me take up a chemical engineering degree, rather than chemistry.

The formal session lasted for 1.5 hrs. However, many students then came for informal consultation, which occupied me for another hour before I could leave the school! It was a wonderful experience to go back to my old school to share some tips and experience with the students; and had good chats with former teachers. I hope more IEM members will do the same too!