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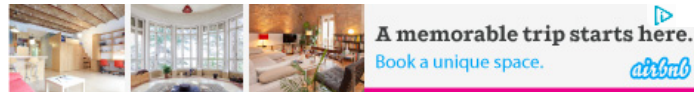
Effective policy feedback is an art



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comments 0



IMPACTFUL: Knowing fundamentals of educational knowledge is a must if there is to be positive discourse

FEEDBACK in all matters is important. Equally important is how feedback is given as well as the coverage of the feedback. Feedback can be comprehensive or specific. It can be about form or substance. There can be feedback about the contents of conversations, lectures, speeches, posture or mannerisms.

People give and receive feedback all the time, informally and formally. The culture of seeking and welcoming feedback is a positive culture of continuous improvements, stretching excellence to yet another level of possibility.

Feedback, when well received and followed by positive action for continuous perfections creates new benchmarks. Individuals and cultures which are reluctant to receive feedback are those who would continue to remain static and harbour rigid orthodoxy.

Feedback to government or institutions when well received will ultimately improve policies, programmes, implementation, delivery systems and ultimately uphold justice and promote a higher quality of life for all.

Coaches provide feedback to individual athletes in squash, swimming, to badminton, football or hockey teams. Teachers are required to provide feedback to all learners regarding learning achievements.

All good hotels, airlines and other service providers seek feedback as standard operations procedures. Governments and private sector organisations seek feedback to reevaluate mission, vision, values, and philosophies, improve products and service delivery.

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Feedback creates an exciting, bold, and dynamic culture of facing challenges and competition.

Giving feedback is a responsibility an accountability. There can be poor as well as good feedback, malicious as well as well-intentioned and positive feedback. Recipients of feedback must develop comprehensive, efficient and effective mechanisms of dealing with feedback.

Just because a feedback is given does not mean the recipient must accept and act on suggestions given although feedback recipients must acknowledge and evaluate the feedback.

The culture of feedback is a habit of mind and system of quality pursuit of those who strive to be excellent, outstanding, with renowned distinction. Those who give feedback are all speaking or writing on the same subjects but they can be placed on the continuum of the ignorant, naïve, partially informed or the leading experts in the field. There is actually an art in giving constructive feedback.

Governments and organisations formulate their development plans, strategic plans, roadmaps, blueprints all of which aim to set, clarify, target and focus on goals and objectives, to achieve their vision and mission.

Currently, in the field of education, there is the National Blueprint and National Higher Education Strategic Plan both of which seek to be in alignment to achieve excellence and place the Malaysian Education System as among the leading ones in the world.

The analogy is that a city is built and now there must be the continuous virgil to enhance every nook, corner and niche with functional, practical and aesthetic use of space while understanding the masterplan, the landscape, the philosophy behind the tradition and architecture of the city of the future, grounded on the history and memory of the past.

Stakeholders cannot engage meaningfully, deeply, and impactfully in critique and giving feedback without the knowledge registers of education. People cannot engage at the highest level of appreciative contributions without understanding the landscape of political ideology, educational philosophy, educational theories and concepts, rights and responsibilities, ownership and accountability, and things which matter in education and in life.

There are things which matter in policy, in approaches towards change initiatives, and in delivering, monitoring, and evaluation in professional practice. Anyone who wants to comment judiciously on education must understand profoundly the foundational ideas, concepts, principles, and discourses in education's realms.

There are many interrelated corpuses of educational knowledge at the global policy level as well as the national policy level. Education for All (EFA) is an example of an educational policy globally conceived, accepted, monitored by every nation, using the same templates and criteria, with leeway for country initiatives and differentia. The Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMMS), the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) are measures used as benchmarks for student achievements in education systems.

The Times Higher Education World University Ranking, Quacquarelli Symonds (QS), and Shanghai Jiao Tong Academic ranking use their particular unperfected criteria of ranking for nevertheless useful systems of university categorisation.

Educational policy language include fundamentals such as access,

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equity, efficiency and unity while educational practice language include fundamentals about character, competence, compassion, intelligences and developmental stages of growth. Understanding the language and substance of education deeply is the prerequisite to the capacity to provide informed critique to educational policies and processes.

Writer is a deputy vice-chancellor, INTI Laureate International University



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