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Towards the best education system



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AS Malaysian society struggles with the questions of identities and uncertain futures, education is expected to provide strategic and elegant solutions for the common good. The system is to solve the recurring mundane and strategic problems in its stride.

Simultaneously the system must set the highest aspirations and be inspiring to everyone who spends thousands of hours in educational institutions to hone unique core competencies.

To continue to be relevant, education must go beyond the meaninglessness which ultimately subverts the senses and sensibilities of learners and teachers alike. The system has the responsibility of familiarising learners with mankind's great common heritage and the companionship of mankind's great minds and the most inspiring and enduring ideas and ideals through the great books, literature and the sciences.

Teaching is not just for the rote mastery of contents but for the capacity for reflection, reason and wise judgments. The system must have the capacity and system to bring the unfamiliar world into the classroom and to reach and access such opportunities offered by emerging modes and systems such as the Massive Open Online Course.

Clearly, education must be liberating. If the formal system does not liberate and enhance, then the non-formal system will take the responsibility of liberating the minds and imagination of the future generations.

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Malaysia deserves no less than to have the "One Best Educational System." In this system, every learner at every level matters.

To embed this culture of respect and love for every learner, there has to be real transformation in the selection, development and retention of those who choose the noble profession and the teaching enterprise to contribute to the betterment of society and civilisation.

As an achieving society, a knowledge society, a learning society and creative society, where every learner and citizen must grow with self-respect and confidence, no obstacles must exist in the system that prevents an individual from being the best that he or she can be. The assessment system must therefore have an array of measures which recognise and nurture the multiple intelligences, personalities, attitudes and motivations that exist.

The system must create the conditions for the building of a nation with confidence in itself, with the passion for continuous perfection and the spirit of abundant faith that the best is yet to come.

The nurturing of high order cognitive competencies and the love to engage in great conversations and discourses should be the mark of the educated citizenry. Such engagements should reflect the passion for scientific thought and the processes of critical thinking.

Based on the mastery of the mathematical and the sciences and arts, and the processes of flexible thinking, the system and institutions should nurture the liberation of creative talents and expansively support the potentialities of every learner.

The mission of building high culture with a learning society must begin from the education system. Such a mission will lead to the establishment, expansion and enhancement of cultural institutions enamoured with world heritage, indigenous genius of the people and high aesthetics in all domains of life.

The country should nurture champions who would drive the establishment of unique and dynamic science museums and cultural centres in the towns and cities as institutions in the constellation of the education enterprise.

All the learning must prepare learners for participatory democracy and responsible global citizenship. Also, with all the efforts and expertise focused on the system, it should ensure employability and re-employability within the nation or region, and globally. The unconditional precondition for global employment or service is the mastery of appropriate international languages, particularly English, French, Mandarin, Russian, Spanish and Arabic.

The education service can be an open service to allow for the school education and higher education services to be one, in staff mobility, contributions and promotion prospects. With such a sizeable, formidable, and highly educated and competent teaching force, Malaysia can establish its own Peace Corp and inspire and prepare the younger generation as well as the older generation to volunteer to serve all over the world in the cause of education.

If we strive to be the exemplary leader in the world in the economic, political or technological sector, there is a strategic cause for Malaysian education to embark on a global mission. The goal must be boldly established that we must have the most well educated citizenry in the world.

Not to set and then meet the target is to fail the people and the future generation. As a relatively small country such strategic goals are

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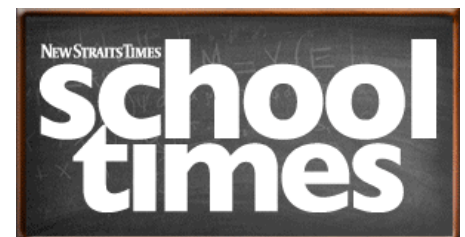
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realistically achievable.



Three sisters studying Mandarin at Kong Zi Institute. The precondition for global employment or service is the mastery of appropriate international languages such as English, French, Mandarin, Russian, Spanish and Arabic.

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