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work on improving their attitudes. Institutions of higher learning also have an obligation here to address this issue; they have to provide counselling and training where graduates develop positive and healthy attitudes here.

Inti College, for instance, has a counselling department that runs training sessions to teach students the intricacies of job applications. We refer to these as holistic education which emphasises interpersonal skills, learning skills and other skills such as how to contribute to a company's continued growth and well-being, as well as being loyal to the company that provides opportunities for learning.

Q: Some believe our education system is ineffective in producing more creative and "thinking" students. What can be done to produce all-rounders?

A: The general belief is that Malaysian students have not been given the kind of education that leads to creativity and the ability to think independently. Many educationists have attributed this to the curriculum and course content in particular, and our education system in general. Our examination system promotes rote learning and memorisation of answers as if answers are all absolute. As a result, these graduates always look for right

and wrong answers, giving little regard to the process involved in arriving at the answers. Many of them are also inadequately prepared when facing ambiguities and dealing with paradoxes which are common in our daily lives. It is a well known fact that for many issues, the answers depend on your premise and assumptions.

I understand that the Ministry of Education has made great efforts to remedy this.

This problem is further compounded by the fact that Malaysian students generally do not spend enough time on general reading.

Both reading and learning skills are lacking. They spend time at the computer monitor and television. While this may contribute to some form of visual and graphic skills, their ability to express themselves is not developed.

To be an all-rounder, one needs to read widely and interact with people. In this regard, parents should consider sending their children to an institution of higher learning where there are residential facilities, and which encourages an all-rounded education. It is still not too late for their children to learn to interact with others as well as develop interpersonal skills. These values are indispensable in their adult and working lives.

Read about Tan's thoughts on Inti College in the next Education & You on Dec 20.