

# Making more sense of flight MH370

**REAL WORLD:** The incident should encourage serious discourse in our classrooms on a wide range of issues

**A**S the world media report on the missing MAS plane (Flight MH370), teachers in schools, colleges, and universities should not go into their classes and straight away delve into the subject matter they teach.

To do so would be to ignore immediate realities and miss the opportunity of relating academic knowledge to real world happenings.

Any course will lend itself to learning from the ongoing real drama pertaining to engineering, religion, media and communication, history, geography, international relations, criminal investigation, crisis management, maintenance and landing cycles and protocols, insurance matters, and all other kinds of focus.

To explain and assist the search-and-rescue (SAR) operations, experts come to the fore: pilots, engineers, weathermen, Interpol officers, Immigration, police and military personnel. Fishermen are asked to help sight any signs of wreckage. So far, 12 nations using

42 sea vessels and 39 aircraft are assisting in the search for the missing aircraft, covering over 27,000 nautical miles square, using advanced technologies available. It is the biggest SAR operation in the history of the nation and region.

As the days go by, the energies of anger, fear, blame and denial are spent. And as tears are dry and wet again, there is general psychological acceptance and preparedness for whatever eventualities after the finding of the aircraft. Buddhist monks, Muslims, Christians, Sikhs and others pray for their loved ones. It is about hope and prayer for a miracle.

The One-Minute Manager brings to management the importance of one-minute engagement, of praise, of conversation, of ideas, and of relationships. The One-Minute Teacher is also about capturing the interest, motivation, imagination of students and raising the bar of human concerns and knowledge. Student centredness is about focusing on the needs and interests of students, beyond the mere subject matter and beyond the distraction of "finishing the syllabus".

The story of MH370 invites serious conversations, engagements, debates, and discourses. It invites teachers and students to be engaged in information management; to explore issues and think, feel, imagine, conjecture, predict, collect facts and systematic analysis.

It is about marshalling various kinds of facts and searching for answers in real time, of one missing aircraft from over 1,100 Boeing 777 with Rolls Royce engines in flight.

Spending time on such concerns is about multidisciplinary learning and may stimulate turning point thought processes related to and beyond the formal curriculum, and away from the distractions of everyday trivia.

There is the opportunity to do projects, piece together puzzles, raise questions and, at the very least get to see the map of Malaysia, Southeast Asia and Asia.

At its best, it is about developing encyclopedic knowledge, an educational objective of the past lost to the digital capacities of immediate retrieval of information without the encyclopedic brain at work.

There are complex and interesting geopolitical issues. The police assert that their responsibility is to explore security and criminal issues. The presence of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) suggests American assistance with possible criminal investigations.

The public gets to know that there are over 40 million lost passports. The matter of standard operating procedures, which are duly adhered to by Immigration Department, is raised. When Japan volunteers to send its planes to search, there is concern that China, whose 153 citizens are in the plane, may not accept the offer because of the present tensions between the two countries.

Press conferences become the important means of sharing up-to-date, accurate information, mindful of personal, political and international sensitivities. The competence of journalists in asking provocative, investigative questions or trivial ones is exposed to the world. At the same time, the competence of officials, their technical knowledge, soft skills, temperaments and public persona, come to be captured in the visual bites as they respond to various questions.

The speed of information, connectivity and transparency are matters of concern. In times like these, it is not about ego or personalities but about group and collective cooperation.

This is one of the few times, when even lesser politicians learn to keep quiet, knowing that ignorance will be exposed and there is no political mileage to be made by coming into the fray if there is no real professional and technical knowledge.

Issues of race, religion, language, and economics cannot be used, as the current situation is not likely to create an emotional political party following.

Opportunistic leaders will have their field day later, using the incident for their own purposes. By then, however, the people will be fatigued, having experienced empathy of the essence of human oneness.



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A girl holding a picture of flight MH370 that she drew during lessons at her nursery.