

EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION

Rain or shine, Joinin stays on course

TEACHERS in remote areas have to undergo gruelling journeys to upgrade their academic qualifications.

They might have to travel long distances to obtain a degree, unlike their urban or rural counterparts, as many of them are sent to teach in primary schools located in areas that are inaccessible by road.

Joinin Jabil, 42, is among those who are in such a position. He works as a senior assistant at SK Magandai in Sabah.

He is pursuing a Bachelor of Education (Teaching Bahasa Melayu) at Asia e University's (AeU) School of Education & Cognitive Science.

The programme adopts a blended approach, where students are provided

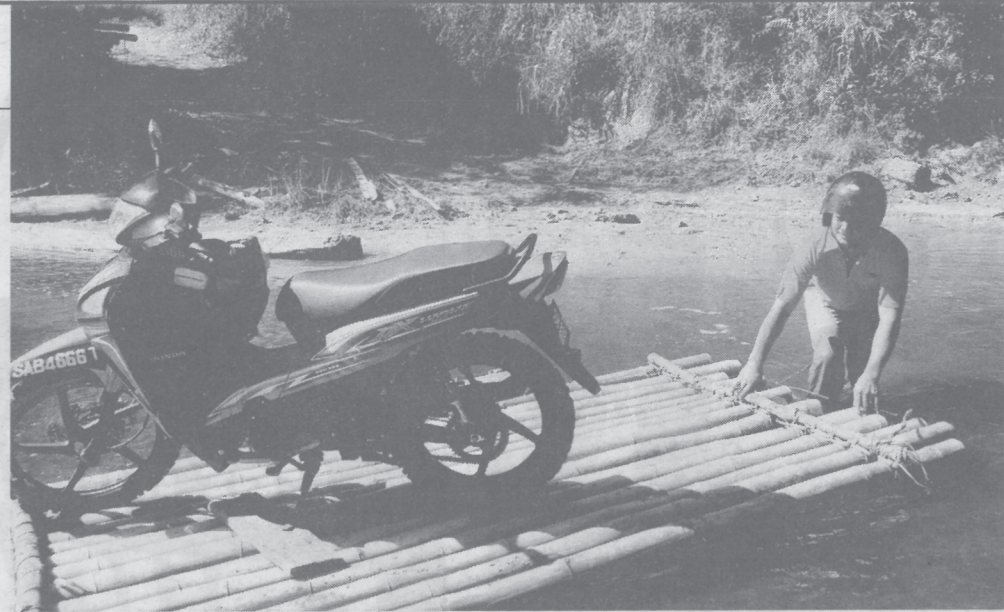
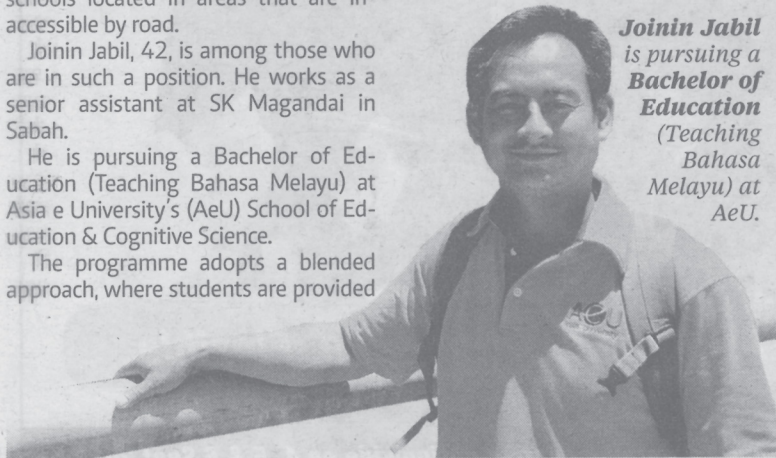
learning materials online.

They are required to attend face-to-face tutorials once a month, which are held during the weekends at the nearest AeU learning centre.

For Joinin, the closest centre is in Kota Marudu, Sabah.

He said the journey to the centre

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Joinin Jabil towing his motorcycle on a makeshift raft to cross a river.

differed in its level of difficulty depending on the seasons.

During the dry season, he would ride his motorcycle and use a raft.

"I need to cross a river using a makeshift raft.

"At certain points along the journey, I have to push my motorcycle, as the hill slopes are too steep.

"The journey takes about four hours."

Joinin said he could not afford other modes of transportation, such as a four-wheel-drive vehicle, as it would cost up to RM950 per trip.

"During the rainy season, the road I have to ply becomes slippery and muddy.

"When that happens, it is impossible to ride a motorcycle."

Because of this, he said, he had to walk for eight hours to reach his destination.

"I would stop for breaks at huts along the way, where I rest and eat snacks prepared by my wife."

He said he had to be wary of wild animals that might be nearby and persevere against the cold weather.

"It is colder than usual when passing through the forest during the rainy season."

One of the challenges that Joinin had faced was when he was bitten by a snake.

However, despite the difficult journey, he is keen to take part in learning activities once he arrives at the Kota Marudu centre.

There, he attends classes, downloads learning materials, watches video clips, uploads assignments, surfs the Internet and has online discussions with course-mates.

"The learning device provided by AeU and the adoption of the blended learn-

ing approach are suited to me," said Joinin.

He said at times, he felt like giving up, but the comprehensive learning materials, facilities provided and support of the university's tutors kept him going.

Joinin, who is in the final stages of the programme, is excited about the prospect of graduating next year.

Based on his cumulative grade point average, he is among the top 10 per cent in an enrolment of 900 students pursuing the programme.

He attributes his success to his tutors and the support he gets from his wife and four children.

Joinin's wife is a teacher at the school where he works, while his children attend the same school.

He said he had to be disciplined, as good time management was the key to success.