



Prof Barker conducting a supervisory workshop at AeU's main campus in Kuala Lumpur.

Fostering understanding

THE School of Graduate Studies (SGS) of Asia e University (AeU) organised a special supervisory workshop for practicing doctoral supervisors and PhD students at AeU's main campus in Kuala Lumpur on Aug 12.

More than a hundred participants from different universities and fields joined the event.

The primary objective of this professional workshop was to provide an opportunity for supervisors and students to discuss issues relating to their doctoral supervision relationships that they found difficult to broach.

The topic of the workshop was *Fifty-Seven Questions That Doctoral Supervisors Worry About*, facilitated by Prof Dr Miles Barker from the Department of Mathematics, Science and Technology Education, School of Education, the University of Waikato, New Zealand.

Prof Barker has worked at institutions in Malaysia – including in Kuala Lumpur, Penang, Tanjong Malim and Kuching – over the last 25 years.

Now semi-retired from the University of Waikato, Prof Barker has, over the years, presented workshops in places such as China, India, Thailand, South Africa, Kenya, Sweden and Germany.

While his specialist areas are science and environmental education, he is interested in teaching and learning in general as well as the history and philosophy of education. He has around 150 publications to his credit.

During the workshop, Prof Barker introduced his list of 57 questions, garnered from the experiences of supervisors in New Zealand, and grouped the questions into 10 clusters:

- Acquiring my own students
- Assessing the best mode of PhD
- Coordinating expertise and communications
- Advising how to write the proposal
- Obtaining ethics approval
- Supporting my student
- Deciding on the structure of the thesis
- Giving feedback on the writing



Prof Barker from the Department of Mathematics, Science and Technology Education at the University of Waikato, New Zealand.

- Handling the examination process
- Examining a thesis

Participants found the workshop interesting and beneficial as it enriched their knowledge especially in their areas of supervision, where issues were highlighted and suggestions of solution or improvement given.

Among the participants who attended the workshop was AeU's distinguished alumnus Tan Sri Datuk Seri Dr Syed Hamid Albar, who is the chairman of Malaysia's Public Land Transport Commission.

Another participant, Dr Lok Lay Hong, an AeU alumnus of the PhD in Education and head of the Department of Music at the Malaysian Institute of Art, said, "Working on an understanding of mutual expectations with your supervisor is an essential part of developing a good working relationship."

"The relationship is often presented as one changing from that of master-apprentice to one of colleagues. A more satisfying relationship will help students develop a better-quality thesis," added Dr Lok.

Among the other participants were three students pursuing their PhD at AeU – teacher Veronica J.S. Louis, part-time lecturer Hamiza Ahmad and head of mass communications at UCSI University Gloria Chan Choi Sim.

They found the workshop interesting and allowed them a more in-depth understanding of what should be expected of supervisors.

"This workshop has certainly helped to motivate me in realising I need to speed up my work, as I have been procrastinating for some time. The workshop is an eye-opener for PhD students who plan to supervise other postgraduate students in future," said Chan.

About AeU

AeU is a collaborative multinational university established under the auspices of the 33 Asia Cooperation Dialogue countries.

All academic programmes are internationally benchmarked, approved by the Education Ministry and accredited by the Malaysian Qualifications Agency.

Established in 2007, AeU has grown to become one of the leading providers of open distance learning (ODL), with an enrolment of more than 21,000 students in 65 countries.

As an ODL institution, AeU's focus is to provide accessible and affordable higher education for all.

There are three intakes every year – January, May and September. Though registration is open based on the month of intakes, registration for postgraduate (by research) programmes is open throughout the year.

A Postgraduate Research Conference will be held on Oct 4 at AeU's main campus from 8.30am to 5.30pm.

The conference will cover research topics in business and administration, education, information, communication and technology, arts and humanities and social science.

The objectives of this conference are to promote the research culture and provide a platform for researchers to discuss their knowledge, experiences and findings.

Registration fee is RM100 per attendee. The closing date for registration is Sept 25.

■ For more information, call 1300 300 238 or visit www.aeu.edu.my