

Developing excellent educators

THE education industry is responsible for moulding the minds of the future generation. Hence, the government has introduced the Malaysian Education Blueprint 2013-2025 to revamp the education landscape with an education system that will prepare learners for the 21st century.

A crucial component to its success will involve the teachers in preschool, primary school, secondary school and higher education.

Most teachers in public schools have a teaching qualification and nearly all teachers in secondary school and about 40% of teachers in primary school have a bachelor's degree.

The School of Education and Cognitive Science (SECS), Asia e University (AeU) has been accorded the task by the Ministry of Education to upgrade about 3,000 primary school teachers to the bachelor's degree level.

In its third convocation on September 21, the first cohort consisting of about 80 teachers will graduate with the B.Ed (TESL).

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"In Malaysia, only about 10% of kindergarten teachers have teaching qualification approved by the Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA).

"It is of concern that the young minds of our country may be taught by teachers who only have minimal training in early childhood education.

"Being a parent does not qualify that person to be an early childhood educator," says Prof Dr John Arul Phillips, dean of the SECS.

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kindergarten teachers with an SPM qualification.

The programme is conducted part-time through distance learning with face-to-face tutorials during weekends.

Teachers do not have to leave their jobs to obtain an MQA-approved teaching qualification.

With the rapid development of private and international schools, teachers with an approved teaching qualification are in demand. SECS offers the Graduate Diploma in Teaching (GDipTchg) for both primary and secondary school teachers.

This diploma is a teaching qualification for both degree and non-degree holders and is approved by MQA.

Another trend identified by Prof Phillips is the growing tendency for lecturers in colleges and universities to possess a teaching qualification, which is a requirement in several international universities.

"For example, a person with a master's degree in marketing may have the content knowledge but may not have the pedagogical knowledge and skills to impart content effectively," says Prof Phillips.

SECS offers the 12-month Postgraduate Diploma in Higher Education Teaching (PGDipHET), aimed at tertiary education teachers to equip them with the knowledge and skills in higher

education teaching.

The 18-month programme is open to degree and non-degree holders from any background with experience in teaching or education-related experience.

According to Prof Phillips, AeU is unique in that all its students are working adults who are seeking an upgrade.

The delivery system is flexible – adopting e-learning based on a blended-approach that combines online and face-to-face interaction.

Students are provided with the learning materials online and classes are held once a month on weekends.

Students access the materials and discuss on an online platform and attend classes in more than 25 learning centres spread all over Peninsular Malaysia, Sabah and Sarawak.

SECS hopes to provide opportunities for educators and others who wish to upgrade themselves to be involved in the education industry.

It is the vision of the school to equip the education workforce with the knowledge, skills and values required to engage in activities that will enhance the performance of young learners.

"We wish to attract educators who have the passion to teach and 'professionalise' themselves with appropriate qualifications," says Prof Phillips.