



# theSun Education Focus

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## Focus on lifelong learning

### > AeU moves towards Continuous Professional Development

BY YEE JIE MIN

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**A**SIA e University's (AeU) School of Education & Cognitive Science aims to push forth with their core business—which is providing teacher training and education as well as giving people a chance to “come back and learn”.

The school's dean Prof Dr John Arul Phillips said there is great potential for people who want to move to the education industry.

“We want to raise the professional qualification of teachers and raise the prestige of the profession. AeU has programmes for the whole spectrum, for educators from all levels,” he said.

Some of the programmes offered are Graduate Diploma in Teaching, Post Graduate Diploma in Higher Education Teaching, Master of Education and Bachelor of Education (Teaching English as a Second Language).

“We are moving towards Continuous Professional Development (CPD) which is about lifelong learning. There are a lot of good websites that teach you new developments and new ways of teaching,” Phillips said.

“Education in Malaysia has to change as it is very content-orientated. I would go for less content because why do you need to memorise when you have Google? Why are we teaching when students can get information on the web? Higher education in Malaysia has not utilised the web for content and delivery.

“With Internet connection, you can learn everything on the web. If you are still lecturing, I think you are outmoded. You should give notes before lecture and that's where the idea of a flip classroom comes in—where students do homework in class.

“Students develop 21st century skills when you do small group teaching and collaborative learning but universities today are still lecturing,” he added.

“When we started (online distance learning), we wondered if we were stretching it too far as other universities were giving out notes but we

took the chance and it turned out very well.

“Indirectly, the teachers may be older and are not used to technology, but they are savvy with their smartphones. We are lucky to be caught in the group between 35 and 45 who we call digital migrants.

“I am surprised that they are very versatile. They have not once asked for notes or said they don't have Internet access. We have done it with

older people, and it should be done for the younger generation,” Phillips said.

“My school has over 3,100 students all over Malaysia. They all have smartphones with 3G connection and that makes it possible for them to tether to their laptops.

“They are very active, having discussions online, downloading material and watching YouTube videos. We underestimated our

students in terms of infrastructure. We thought we couldn't get access because our delivery system is purely through the web,” Phillips said.

On the effectiveness of AeU's delivery system, Phillips said, “It comes from how you design the learning material. The three most important things for a learner is content, the person teaching it and assessment. We make sure that we get these three things right.”



Phillips says older adult learners who are “digital migrants” can be “very versatile”.