

TOP CLASS

the edupreneurs

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Australian EDUCATED

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Victoria state curriculum in Malaysia





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LEARNING FROM THE LAND DOWN UNDER

DO YOU remember the days when parents would send their children to a government school and give the teachers *carte blanche* to educate them as they saw fit? It wasn't such a bad formula as many current leaders of our nation and its industries went through that process but as more people gained access to knowledge about education and educating their children, they chose different routes for their sons and daughters.

Today, there are probably dozens of education pathways for the average Malaysian child to follow. Government run schools have upped their game considerably and the syllabus they teach has benefitted from major changes but for those whose parents can afford it, a privately run institution teaching an internationally recognized qualification using English as the medium of communication is the preferred choice.

The most popular international syllabus in this country is the IGCSE, which is of course British. We naturally have a strong link to our colonial roots and many aspects of our educational system are based on what they taught us, so it seems only natural to want our kids to have a British education. Yet, the most popular overseas destination for Malaysians with regards to education is actually Australia.

Some of it is no doubt due to the physical closeness of the country (a flight to Perth takes less than six hours) but Australia has a deserved reputation for educational excellence with its schools, colleges and universities held in high regard worldwide. Therefore, it seems odd there is only one international school in Malaysia that teaches an Australian syllabus to primary and secondary school children.

As our cover story this month explains though, that situation will be addressed in less than a year. With the Peninsula International School Australia (Pisa) set to open its doors in Setia Alam and Ipoh, more parents will be able to give their children an Australian education without having to pay the cost of actually sending their children there. It's a great bit of news for Malaysia's education industry as a whole and will help contribute to turning the country into a regional centre for international schooling.

That doesn't mean those who can't afford to send their children will lose out though. The number of government school students gaining entry into prestigious universities should be a reminder that in education, as in life, the amount of effort children and parents put in will have a direct effect on the results they achieve. The formula really is that simple.

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FEATURE

LEARNING at your own PACE

SEGi PACE programme offers flexible study schedules for working adults

| Text by KEVIN WONG |
ecwong@hckmedia.com

It's never easy to take courses in college and university once you've started working. Work commitments often get in the way and for many, the hassle of trying to balance work with studies and even family life is too much of a challenge.

SEGi University & Colleges has a solution to that conundrum called PACE (Professional and Continuing Education) to enable those who are already working to enrol for flexible part-time study programmes.

PACE enables students who are already working to pursue a higher education qualification at their own convenience virtually from anywhere and at anytime while maintaining a healthy work-life balance.

Students will have the flexibility of choosing the study mode which best suits them, be it weekend or evening classes, and even have the flexibility to view the information presented in lectures remotely.

Another unique feature of PACE is that the courses do not have a fixed number of attendees per lecture. Student numbers are fluid and instead of attending scheduled classes at a physical venue, they can conveniently log-in to their classes at any time of the day, from anywhere that has Internet access.

As far as turning up at school is concerned, students are only required to attend workshops at any SEGi campus twice a month.

PACE offers programmes from notable UK and Australian universities as well as those from SEGi University Online. Amongst the programmes offered are business and accounting, communication studies, early childhood care and education, engineering and the built environment, technology and innovation, allied health sciences as well as law.

One of the more popular programmes under PACE is the Master of Business Administration (MBA) where the majority of students value the flexibility to balance their time for studies, work and personal life.

Girish Gopal, an engineer in the oil and gas industry, says that he enjoys the flexibility given in the programme as well as the financial flexibility in paying for his education.

Meanwhile, fellow engineer Lai Kin Theng echoes Girish's sentiments on the programme flexibility and added that PACE has provided him all the support he needed with its independent system "Blackboard".

"With Blackboard, I was able to access information and lectures from anywhere and at anytime without having to attend a class physically."

John H'ng, a general manager of a technology company, shares that he enjoyed attending class every month because he chose the independent study route.

"The lecturers are well-prepared and the study materials are up-to-date and most importantly, the information is relevant to the modern business world," he adds.

PACE students are provided with flexible payment plans with zero interest and can also apply for a PTPTN loan or withdraw funds from their EPF (account two) if it's available. ■



With PACE adult learners have a wide range of programmes to choose from while maintaining a healthy work-life balance

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- Pay by subject enrolled
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*Terms and conditions apply.

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Celebrating in style

Inti concludes TEDxKL series of events to celebrate 30th anniversary

| Text by KEVIN WONG | ecwong@hckmedia.com



TEDxINTI series happening across INTI campuses and Malaysia.

INTERNATIONAL University & Colleges (Inti) and TEDxKL took a significant step to hosting a year-long series of TEDxINTI events in Inti campuses. The college is the first institution of higher learning in Malaysia to have organized a consecutive series of TEDx events with their final leg, #TEDxINTI Sabah recently held at their campus in Kota Kinabalu.

Inti CEO, Timothy Bulow, said they had collaborated with TEDxKL over the last few years and through their experience and knowledge gained from working together, Inti decided to organize TEDxINTI as part of the university's 30th anniversary celebrations.

"TEDxINTI has provided the opportunity for Inti students to participate as curators and organizers for the event, exposing them to the ins and outs of planning, organizing and managing events that closely reflect the established TED talks.

"Students from Inti International University, in Nilai as well as those in Penang, Kuala Lumpur, Subang and Sabah campuses were provided with personalised support and opportunities for cross campus engagement which empowered them to organize the TEDx event at their own campuses," he said.

Bulow added, "By empowering our students to build stronger, more connected communities via these TEDx events, we believe they will not only improve their civic engagement but also learn aspects of managing an event of this scale.

"This gives them invaluable real life exposure to managing people and deadlines, and also teaches them how to see through a project from start to finish, including the challenges of selling tickets, confirming speakers and dealing with contingencies that arise along the way."

In order to provide students with the necessary knowledge and insights into running TEDxINTI, Daniel Lim, the curator of TEDxKL mentored them and conducted personalized training sessions to help understand the methods and ways to extract the best content from their chosen speakers.

"It's not an easy process to organize a TEDx event and I am glad the students from all these campuses have been able to successfully organize then over the last eight months. This is by no means easy as it requires huge commitment and the success of these students simply goes to show the level of professionalism they have.

"With TEDxINTI, the college will be able to create students who not only become graduates with a heightened sense of social responsibility, but will also have the experience of handling such a massive conference," he said.

In conjunction with the series, TEDxINTI clubs were established with students taking up leadership roles and working closely together with the speakers that presented their ideas during the conferences.

Some of the notable speakers included JJ Fernandes, one of the country's pioneer radio announcers, Robest Yong, an entrepreneur, Barbara Jansen, the founder of 4Paws, Siron Pereira, the head coach for the Malaysian debate team, Danish Harraz, a 9-year-old chef, Abel Chuah, regional manager for Teach For Malaysia and Megan Steven, an activist.

To celebrate the university's 30th anniversary, each of the campuses invited some of their outstanding alumni members to participate as speakers. They include Heidi Quah, founder of Refuge for the Refugees, Marcus Low, founder of Hostel Hunting, Edison Lim, magician and entrepreneur, Swarna Naidu, a finalist for Miss Universe Malaysia 2016, Ganesh Muren, chief executive officer of Saora Industries and winner of The Brand Laureate's Here for Good Award 2016 and Rica Sham, an announcer at Hitz FM Sabah.

For 2017, the TEDxINTI programme is set to continue with more emphasis on empowering young minds to unearth inspiring individuals and to provide them a stage to share their stories. ■

Working together for a greener Malaysia

Greencity International College and Eco Club Malaysia sign agreement to address environmental issues

| Text by KEVIN WONG | ecwong@hckmedia.com

GREENCITY International College (KAGC) and Eco Club Malaysia (ECM) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with seven organisations to develop viable solutions to pressing environmental issues. The partnership signifies an intention to collaborate in developing workable solutions to ensure the sustainability of the environment.

At the same time, it will provide a framework for collaboration on research projects and to further develop innovative features and solutions in the environmental aspects of green technology development, green building management, renewable energy and agro-technology management.

The scope of this collaboration includes the pooling and exchange of ideas, expertise and resources as well as the joint

organisation and participation in conferences and seminars on environmental issues hosted by ECM.

Additionally, through this partnership, KAGC students and faculty members would have the opportunity to undertake projects and understand the importance of green technology for green building certification and the challenges of resource conservation in densely populated city centres.

The organisations that signed the MoU were The Plus Communications, Build for Tomorrow, Fleming, Tadom Hill Resort, Mr International Malaysia, Istana Hotel and Varsity Assist.

The Plus Communications chief executive officer, Simon Wong, said this unique partnership with KAGC and ECM is a forward-looking initiative as it will be a part of the country's green movement.

Build for Tomorrow founder, Rubén Cortés, said, "With this partnership, we are able to leverage on the expertise each of us have and add good practices to our environmental developments. The shared aim is to work closely with students and the communities on green development and to achieve a sustainable lifestyle.

Among those present during the ceremony was Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris Pro-Chancellor Tan Sri Datuk Seri Dr Yahaya Ibrahim who said that various organisations and disciplined green approach they take would provide a comprehensive foundation for students and professionals to learn about development with an eye on environmental conservation.

"With their (KAGC and ECM) mission to train and educate future leaders and developers to become information disseminators and role models to others who wish to live more sustainably this agreement is a big step towards a greener future," he added. ■



KAGC and their MoU partners.

Safety first

Volvo and KidZania teach kids about road safety

| Text by FAISAL SHAH | faisalshah@hckmedia.com



William Edwards, CEO, Integrated Theme Parks & Attractions For Themed Attraction Resorts & Hotel Sdn Bhd, presenting the keys to the city to Lennart Stegland, MD, Volvo Car Malaysia Sdn Bhd (L) and Mats Nilsson, MD, Volvo Malaysia Sdn Bhd (R)

KidZania KUALA LUMPUR recently announced a partnership with Volvo Car Malaysia Sdn Bhd (Volvo Car Malaysia) and Volvo Trucks Malaysia Sdn Bhd (Volvo Trucks Malaysia), the newest members of its circle of industry partners.

Volvo Car Malaysia will create a Volvo Car dealership in KidZania's child-friendly cityscape where children will not only have the opportunity to experience the profession of a car dealer and designer, but will also learn about the importance of being seated correctly and thus safely, in a car.

"At Volvo, we are working towards building a safer world for all road users – a big part of securing this future is education. We realise that there is a lack of understanding in the importance of using proper child seats in Malaysia so we hope to change that," remarked Lennart Stegland, managing director of Volvo Car Malaysia.

In addition to learning about the importance of child seats, the dealership will also encourage children to develop and improve their interpersonal communication skills by delivering a sales presentation as a car dealer. The car designer profession on the other hand encourages them to express themselves creatively through

the use of customised software that will have them make decisions on car aesthetics and safety features.

Meanwhile, the partnership with Volvo Trucks Malaysia is aimed at creating awareness on road safety; by simulating actual road conditions especially when facing large trucks. It incorporates Volvo Truck's 'Stop, Look, Wave' campaign which is tailored towards raising children's awareness on safe behaviour in traffic via the use of specially developed training kits. This is part of the Volvo Group's global campaign which offers interactive training and user material for children as well as educators, youth, group leaders, police officers and other people who work with children.

"Safety is one of Volvo Truck's core values which we is dear to our hearts. It has become a part of us, our culture and brand heritage. Volvo has a long tradition of developing products that enhances safety and continuously invests a large amount of time and resources studying accidents, consequences and causes. And now, we are bringing to the classroom key safety learning and skills as we believe in starting the process from a young age," said Mats Nilsson, Managing Director of Volvo Malaysia Sdn Bhd. ■

Job satisfaction

Study of financial services industry reveals best work practices

| Text by KEVIN WONG | ecwong@hckmedia.com

THE High Performance Work Practices (HPWPs) study by the Asian Institute of Finance (AIF) has provided insights on the HPWPs across Malaysia's financial services industry and analysis on what drives high performance.

The HPWPs are workplace initiatives that are aimed at improving productivity and performance that focus on creating an engaged and empowered workforce.

The study consisted of a focus group of senior human resource practitioners across the Malaysian financial services industry and identified five HPWPs relevant to the industry which were performance management, learning and development, succession planning, employee involvement in decision making and payment systems.

At the same time, the study surveyed over 2,000 financial services personnel across the Malaysian financial services industry and found that highly satisfied employees, representing more than a third of the total population surveyed, ranked performance management as the top work practice.

It was then followed by learning and development.

Through the study, it showed that these employees' job satisfaction came from 'what they could do' rather than 'what the organisation can do for them'. Therefore, it has become crucial to have a robust performance management system that is able to measure their contributions and achievements.

In addition, the rest of the population surveyed ranked learning and development as the top work practice with performance management next.

Also, it was notable that payment systems or remuneration and incentives practices, was ranked lowest

among both highly satisfied employees and the rest of the population surveyed.

The results have suggested that 'it is not all about the money' but in fact, it revealed that what Malaysian financial services industry employees want most is to find meaning in their jobs and to have an effective relationship with their manager.

AIF chief executive officer Dr Raymond Madden, said with the shortage of talent across the Malaysian financial services industry, organisations must act quickly to identify and implement HPWPs.

"Although there is no 'one size fits all' model for HPWPs, it is hoped that this study can serve as a basis from which each organisation can map their own optimal work practices.

"Much has been written about the annual performance review recently with many organisations abandoning the formal annual review process. Our research suggests formalised performance management is key to encouraging HPWPs," he added.

Maybank group chief human capital officer Nora

Abd Manaf shared AIF's High Performance Work Practices Study was timely and meaningful in its release of the study's results.

"Structure and preciseness in many existing management tools like the typical Performance Management System have the potential to mislead one into thinking that these provide effective and strong governance.

"With this study, many can now see that these tools need to be transformed because they, in fact, have also proved to limit and hold back high performers from playing their best game. This study gives clear insights into what truly makes high performers tick," she said. ■



Asian Institute of Finance chief executive officer Dr Raymond Madden



Investing in education

Ekovest supports Chong Hwa Independent High School teachers and students

| Text by KEVIN WONG | ecwong@hckmedia.com

IN appreciation of the teaching staff of Chong Hwa Independent High School, Kuala Lumpur, Ekovest Berhad formed the "Ekovest Chinese Education Endowment Project" to support the continuing free education for the children of the staff. As part of the their corporate social responsibility initiatives, 62 students were awarded scholarships for tuition fees and miscellaneous items worth RM259,680.

Ekovest Berhad managing director Datuk Seri Lim Keng Cheng, who is also the chairman of the school board of directors said it was not about the money but it was about the spirit of giving back to the teachers.

"Also, I want the public to know more about the challenging history faced by the Chinese independent schools. At the same time, I hope this will also encourage other corporations to help," he added, after presenting the mock cheque during a ceremony on the school grounds.

He then shared that he used to be one of the students who benefited from scholarship funds, and wanted to give back to the community.

Among those present during the ceremony were Women, Family and Community Development Malaysia deputy minister Senator Datin Paduka Chew Mei Fun and MCA Federal Territory chief Datuk Yew Teong Look.

Meanwhile, Chong Hwa Independent High School principal Chia Song Choy urged students to follow the example set by Lim to give back to the school and society in the future when they have found success. ■

COVER STORY

Affordable AUSTRALIAN education

HCK Education teams up with The Peninsula School to offer Victoria state curriculum in Malaysia

| Text by FAISAL SHAH | faisalshah@hckmedia.com

Here's an interesting fact about our education landscape. Australia is the leading international education destination for Malaysian students; especially for those pursuing a tertiary education, but there is currently only one international school in the country teaching an Australian curriculum. In an industry dominated by schools teaching the Cambridge IGCSE course, there is a big opportunity to redress this imbalance.

That will happen in January 2018 when Peninsula International School Australia (Pisa) opens the doors to its campuses in Setia Alam and Ipoh to welcome its first batch of students. A partnership between The Peninsula School (TPS), a private day and boarding school in Melbourne, Australia and HCK Education, Pisa will instruct its students using the same curriculum taught in schools in the state of Victoria.

According to Pisa senior operations manager, Jonathan Chong, Australian schools follow a national curriculum but for Years 11 and 12, schools in Victoria follow a different education programme to better prepare students for entry into university.

"Students who graduate from Year 12 are awarded a Victoria Certificate of Education (VCE), which is a university admission qualification that is recognised by leading universities in the United Kingdom, the United States and of course Australia. The VCE offers a wide range of study choices and encourages students to develop their creativity, critical thinking and learning skills with 90% of graduates going on to pursue tertiary education," he said.

Internationally recognised as a comprehensive system that helps



PHOTOS BY HCK EDUCATION

PISA offers parents the opportunity to send their children to a tier one international school that teaches the Victoria state curriculum but at a price that is comparable to a tier two school

— Lee Kok Cheng, Pisa CEO



Pisa Ipoh starts operations in 2018 but will charge lower school fees due to market conditions

mould well-rounded students who excel academically and show a high level of social and leadership skills, the VCE curriculum is supervised by the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA), which is a statutory body in the state.

Pisa CEO, Lee Kok Cheng said the VCAA, which is answerable to the Victorian Minister of Education, is the oversight body for VCE curriculum and helps ensure the high standards it sets are retained even when it is delivered overseas.

"Through our partnership with The Peninsula School, parents and students can be assured that the same level of teaching offered in Australia

will be delivered in our Setia Alam and Ipoh campuses. Therefore our students will be getting a highly recognised Australian education at a fraction of what it usually costs," Lee added.

Quality at an affordable price

With the cost of international education continuing to rise due to external factors like currency fluctuations, parents are becoming more cost conscious and taking a closer look at the advantages schools can offer their children. In Malaysia, international schools are loosely divided in to a three-tier system based on the fees they charge, the strength of their faculty and the facilities offered.

"There is no standard definition for the tiers but we categorise tier one schools as traditional international schools that used to only cater to foreigners before locals were allowed to enrol. The perception is that these are the elite schools that hire mainly expatriate staff and teachers. Tier two international schools serve the local community who want to study an international curriculum at a lower price, so they will use more local teachers while a tier three school is usually one that teaches both a Malaysian and international curriculum but will be almost fully staffed by local teachers," says Lee.

Pisa will be unique in offering a tier one teaching force but charging fees equivalent to a tier two school. It gives them a competitive advantage in trying to attract students but there are practical reasons for it too.

"Taking into account the fee structure for international schools in Malaysia we have decided to charge fees comparable to the best tier two schools but employ a tier one level faculty. Our partnership with TPS is vital to achieving this because of their 55-year track record in Australia. Their supporting role includes them sending senior teachers to Pisa to help train our teaching staff and we'll also be adopting a lot of the systems and practices they already have in place," Lee explains.

"Other curriculums don't dictate the quality of teachers you can use to teach in your school but because Pisa is audited by the VCAA, we need to

hire teachers who are experienced at delivering the VCE curriculum to ensure that the standard of teaching delivered is equivalent to what is being taught in Australia," adds Chong.

According to HCK Capital Group Bhd executive director Clifford Hii, getting a tier one international school ranking depends on many factors aside from the quality of the teaching staff.

"It also involves factors like the overall schooling experience for the students as well as the communication between parents and teachers. To achieve this, Pisa will set up a department solely dedicated to the welfare of students as well as keeping parents updated on their progress. We will also launch an app that enables them to keep tabs on their children and meet with them frequently to discuss their performance in school. This way, Pisa and the parents can work closely to ensure the success of our students and that expectations are being met," he says.

Going beyond academics

One of the big selling points for Pisa is that students will be able to have a learning experience that is equivalent to their counterparts studying at the Melbourne campus but at a fraction of the cost. To fulfil this goal the Pisa Setia Alam campus will be located at Edusentral, a 4.85ha mixed development project owned by HCK Group.

Aside from having 44 units in commercial blocks as well as 1,700 serviced suites and condominiums, Edusentral will also house the Pisa campus which will boast not only state of the art teaching facilities but also a gymnasium, auditorium cum multi-purpose hall, badminton courts, science laboratories and a comprehensive library boasting the latest multimedia learning tools. Pisa Setia Alam will also have extensive sports facilities including a football field and a swimming pool, which is in line with its aim to produce students equipped with an extensive skill set that will benefit them in university and beyond.

"Aside from the world class facilities we offer at Pisa, we will also have boarding facilities to cater to our foreign students who are expected to make up to 30% of our student enrolment. That is done



Pisa students can expect the same learning experience as their counterparts in Australia

by other schools too but ours will be more than just about providing a room and meals. We'll be implementing a real boarding concept with house masters, pastoral care for the students and house activities designed to instil a spirit of camaraderie among those who stay there," says Lee.

As for school fees, students who sign up for the 2018 school year will pay a special price that starts from RM26,000 for the first year. The regular rate will start at an estimated RM37,200 for the first year rising to RM75,000 per annum for Year 11 and 12 students.

"I think our fees are competitive based on what we offer at Pisa, but it should also be noted that fees at Pisa Ipoh will be approximately half of what students pay at Setia Alam. The sporting facilities there won't be as extensive but the teaching and learning experience will be exactly the same and the fees are dictated by market forces rather than any reduction in the overall experience," adds Hii.

With the clock now ticking towards their commencement of operations in 2018, Malaysian education stakeholders will be keeping a close watch on news about developments related to Pisa this year. Only time will tell if it can become one of the premier international schools in the country but when you combine the reputation for excellence of TPS and HCK Education, chances are it'll be a success. ■



(L to R) HCK Capital Group executive director Clifford Hii, Pisa senior operations manager Jonathan Chong and Pisa CEO Lee Kok Cheng admire an artist impression of the Setia Alam campus

FEATURE



Ace EdVenture founder Anne Tham believes using games can help stimulate learning

PHOTOS BY JONATHAN LOI

Traditional teaching methods using a chalk and board are not as effective as before so we developed Chemcaper to engage students via its gameplay while imparting facts and knowledge as they progress through the various levels

— Anne Tham, Ace EdVenture founder

If you're an educator you've probably heard the term gamification in education but what exactly does it mean? Quite literally it's teaching by using a game or, more specifically, it is the use of in-game thinking, attributes and mechanics in a non-game context to engage users to solve problems.

This concept has been used in several domains such as sales, marketing and simulator training (flight training and construction vehicles training) but its use in education is still fairly new. The standard model in education involves the accumulation of points and unlocking achievements to motivate and enhance the learning process.

At the same time, gamification in education aims to make learning more engaging and appealing to student, going beyond traditional learning methods that many view as uninteresting.

On paper, it may seem like an odd way to teach but many education institutions have begun to see the positive results of gamification in education and are using it as an alternative teaching method.

Ace EdVenture founder Anne Tham shares that modern children do not have anything against learning but they do not like to be bored while they are doing it.

"The problem with most schools today is that the way children are learning their subjects is boring. The feeling of boredom will not help students to memorise or understand the lessons that they are being taught in the classroom.

"However, students are excited to learn about something when it entertains their minds. They will be able to recall what they learned

The learning GAME

Computer games are changing the way students are taught

| Text by KEVIN WONG | ecwong@hckmedia.com

better and this can be done via video games. So that is why we made it our mission to change the perception of how education can be delivered and developed our game, Chemcaper," she says.

She adds students today would also find it easier to do their revision through a video game instead of reading from their textbooks.

"In this day and age, it is almost impossible to get children to drop their gadgets in favour of picking up a textbook so we figured it might be better to design Chemcaper to be played on their mobile device (i.e. smartphones or tablets) where they are spending most of their time.

The next step in learning chemistry

Tham shares that she decided to push gamification even further by developing Chemcaper, as the biggest issue among students learning science subjects is the vast amount of information they are required to memorise.

"We chose chemistry as the first subject to developed as it is also one of the most difficult sciences to explain because everything is happening at a molecular level. The idea of chemistry is difficult to grasp because we have to rely on words to explain what is happening. Therefore, an individual's ability to learn chemistry would really depend on their ability to imagine or perceive what is happening on that level.

"Through playing and experiencing the game, students or even adults will be able to easily remember and retain information for a longer time and in greater detail. The game is designed to teach elements of chemistry that students would

usually learn about in textbooks and classrooms through a role-playing game (RPG) in the form of Chemcaper."

She explains Chemcaper is a chemistry adventure game that teaches fundamental chemistry concepts targeted at children aged 10 to 14 where they will learn chemistry topics such as scientific apparatus, separation techniques, groups of elements, properties of elements and types of chemical bonding.

"With vast learning features, players will learn about the types of elements in Chemcaper as it consists of diverse characters and landscapes based on the types of chemical elements in the Periodic Table. Also, they will understand the process of chemical bonding by creating Petticles — cute collectible companions based on real life particles, that fight Roub's (the main character in the game) battles.

"Additionally, they will also gain knowledge about chemical elements and their properties and learn the separation techniques and scientific apparatus required in labs through the game feature that requires them to create potions in the game. Chemcaper also has an interactive guide that bridges in-game content to the real world, thus making sure it remains relevant to what is being taught in schools," Tham says.

She adds that Chemcaper is currently developed with the year-7 chemistry syllabus and that Ace EdVenture is looking into integrating other subjects like physics, biology, mathematics and additional mathematics into the current game instead of developing standalone programmes for every subject. ■



The gaming interface of Chemcaper

FEATURE

How to go GREEN

Students to learn about the environment so that they know how to conserve and protect it

| Text by KEVIN WONG | ecwong@hckmedia.com

Stop the presses. The global environment is deteriorating faster than expected and something has to be done before it's too late. That's pretty much the same message environmentalists have been doling out for the past two decades but little if anything has been done about it.

It's no laughing matter as the depletion of the ozone and increasing levels of emission of greenhouse gas are prime global examples of how humans are affecting the world. Meanwhile, issues like ground water pollution and soil erosion are localised consequences of human activities and how they impact the environment.

Since there is only one world for us to live in, it's therefore essential to have a comprehensive level of environmental education (EE) to teach people young and old how to use and conserve the precious resources we have. It's then hoped that they are able to have the right expertise to handle fundamental issues that lead to pollution problems.

It may sound frivolous but EE is a process that allows individuals to explore environmental issues, engaging in problem solving and taking action to protect and preserve the environment. Through it, individuals develop a deeper understanding of environmental issues and have the skills to make informed and responsible decisions.

Hence, it is vital to have EE implemented in schools to teach children the importance of conserving the environment as the responsibility to take care of the world will be theirs in the future. It also provides opportunities for students to become more engaged in real world issues that transcend the classroom as they would be able to understand the relevance of the theories taught in school and apply them to complex environmental issues.

This is particularly important for Malaysia. With the rampant logging of Malaysian rainforests, water pollution and land erosion all making headlines, the need to raise environmental awareness among Malaysians via more environmental education is critical.

Environmental advocate and president of the Protection of Natural Heritage of Malaysia (Peka), Puan Sri Shariffa Sabrina Syed Akil, says the education system plays a crucial role in incorporating eco-friendly habits in their institutions and to introduce EE in the syllabus or at the very least in extra-curricular activities.

"Schools should also organise more events related to promoting environmental awareness where students can learn good eco-friendly habits and be more conscious towards the environment.

"The Ministry of Education should also look into making EE compulsory for all students. At the same time, they should not just look into creating a syllabus focussed on the environment alone but come up with a system that incorporates lessons about things that can be implemented in real-life situations; such as community projects that encourage environmental sustainability and preservation," she says.

She adds that teaching about conserving and protecting the environment should start from home.

"Parents need to teach and remind their children about the importance of nature while engaging in interesting conversations with them about the topic. They should also come up with creative

activities that promote environmental awareness and preservation."

She adds it is important for parents and teachers to give children a role in any environmental initiative to make them feel responsible for preserving and protecting nature.

Shariffa shares one of the biggest problems that hinders the implementation of EE is the lack of urgency and awareness among education institutions.

"Peka is willing to work with them to help implementing EE because once these institutions are aware of the importance of environmental education it will then be easier to spread the message," she says.

Lacking in awareness

Shariffa says that awareness among Malaysians on environmental issues needs to be improved as poor knowledge and subsequent inaction in conservation has led to a lot of issues.

"Even though many Malaysians are aware of the importance of the environment and how its destruction may affect us, I feel there is a lot more to be done. Currently, our knowledge is mainly textbook-based and lacks any real conviction to

turn our intentions into actions that are required to conserve and protect the environment.

"Environmental awareness is crucial at every level. For us to become a green nation, EE must be implemented from pre-school level onwards. If more Malaysians are made aware of the importance of the environment, then more will be involved in preserving it," she says.

With the current state of the country's economy and the increasing cost of living, it is difficult for many Malaysians to care for the environment when they are focussed on making money to put food on the table. However, Shariffa says it is possible to do both if they look at the bigger picture and know that without their effort to protect the environment today, there will be nothing left for their children and future generations to live on.

"So, it's not really caring for something extra when we care about the environment. It is actually about caring for ourselves. We need to realise that we are one with nature and have a symbiotic relationship with it.

"Just look at the Orang Asli as an example. They are not rich and they have very few worldly possessions but their community is able to care for the environment because they know how important it is to conserve it for their livelihood and for future generations," she says.

Talking about theories is good but as advocates, Peka is also heavily involved in many activities that make a difference to the environment. To date, they have planted over 40,000 trees and have worked with many education institutions, corporate bodies and communities to give talks to highlight the importance of protecting nature, especially Malaysian rainforests.

Shariffa says that the organisation is willing to support education institutions by coming up with environmental activities and campaigns to create more awareness among students.

"We have been organising programmes for schools through Peka Junior, our arm specifically aimed at students to be involved in the protection of nature and the environment," she adds

"Additionally, we hold the 'Save Our Rainforest Race' annually - a race that symbolises the importance of planting trees to save our planet which incorporates elements of fun and adventure gained from being inside the rainforest."

There is still a long way to go before environmental education is taken seriously by educators around the world but hopefully, through the efforts of organisations like Peka, it will happen soon so that we can all take action before it's too late. ■



Malaysians are aware of the importance of taking care of the environment but so much more can and should be done at schools

— Puan Sri Shariffa Sabrina Syed Akil, President of PEKA

CAMPUS LIFE



Getting hands-on experience is vital in any form of vocational training



Students are taught technical skills, one off the reasons why they are doing the work required



TOC has 50 lecturers thus ensuring a low student to teacher ratio



On-site computer facilities are important as cars are becoming increasingly reliant on modern electronics



Students get to work on a range of cars to ensure they gain comprehensive knowledge

PHOTOS BY TOC AUTOMOTIVE COLLEGE

Rewing up the AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

TOC helps to keep your car on the road while championing respectability for automotive technicians

Text by FAISAL SHAH | faisalshah@hckmedia.com

Picture the following scenario. A student who has always performed well at school speaks to his parents about his future vocation. His grades are good enough to enable him to pursue a degree in engineering, law or accountancy so mom and dad are hopeful for the future. Financing will be tight but they've saved up enough over the years to pay for an overseas education in virtually any country. So, how do they react when their child says he wants to work in the automotive industry and study to become an automotive technician?

In another household not too far away, another student from the same school is facing his parents too. He wasn't a very good student, has poor academic grades and barely passed his SPM exams but they still want to send him to college to at least study for a general humanities degree and eventually find his own niche. The world is littered with examples of billionaires who failed in school anyway so there's still a chance for success. When the student tells his parents he wants to enrol in an automotive college to become an automotive technician, how do they react?

According to Adelaine Foo, founder and CEO of TOC Automotive College (TOC), most parents are less than thrilled when their children

say they want to study a technical course to become automotive technicians.

"Even today, 13 years after I started TOC, our students face a lot of resistance from their family when they say they want to come here. I'd like to change that attitude and I started the college because I believe every worker deserves respect for the job they do. Society though has other ideas. For instance, we all treat doctors with a great amount of deference but think the person who services our car is just a menial worker. Yet, a doctor can only save one life at a time on an operating table but a technician could potentially affect the lives of at least five people if he does not service a car properly," she says.

With such passion for the profession, one would think Foo has a long history working with cars but her family is actually involved in the entertainment industry.

"My degree and masters are actually in arts, culture and history so I didn't know much about cars, car servicing or the automotive industry. I do have a passion for teaching though and I love seeing how being a teacher can change the lives of students but I was also inspired by my emotions and how I felt when I saw automotive technicians being disrespected by people who owned the cars they were repairing or servicing," Foo explains.

TOC officially commenced operations on Jan 1 2004 at a facility in Section 51 PJ. Foo admits that starting the college was a risk because nobody wanted to pay to learn how to be a technician. They would either go to govern-

ment vocational schools for free or start working as an apprentice. An automotive college also has considerable set-up and running costs because tools, engines, cars and a myriad of other parts need to be purchased.

"To help offset the risk, we engaged with a number of industry players and managed to secure 10 scholarships for our inaugural intake. Therefore, our first batch of students didn't have to pay to come to TOC and the college had an assured revenue stream," she adds.

Even though they were literally giving away free education, TOC had a rough start.

"We estimated that we would maybe get 100 applications for the scholarships and we could then pick the cream of the crop, but by the time the deadline arrived we had ten applications for ten scholarships. So everybody got to study for free and even then we had to deal with telephone calls from angry parents who accused us of misleading their children by offering scholarships to join a sunset industry," Foo says.

Slowly but surely the mindset of parents and students changed and after taking 10 months to recruit their first 10 students, TOC managed to get 100 students in their second year of operations. Things then just progressed from there.

In 2007, the college shifted to its current location in Section 19, PJ. They now have the ability to teach up to 1,000 students and while ties to industry players remain strong, TOC is no longer so dependent on sponsorships and scholarships to flesh out its revenue stream as parents are now willing to pay for their children to attend courses at TOC.

With a teaching staff of 50 full-time lecturers, the college is able to take the view that if a student wants to study a class he will be taught even if he's the only one taking it. TOC is also able to do this because its courses consist of 70 per cent practical work with only 30 per cent of a student's time spent sitting in a classroom.

"We're accredited by the Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA) and therefore by the Ministry of Higher Education. This means we have to teach our students English, Mathematics, Science, Pengajian Malaysia, Pengajian Moral and Pengajian Islam, which doesn't always go down too well with them. This is because they're learning a vocation, which means they're not too interested in traditional 'chalk and board' learning but we have to teach these subjects to meet MQA requirements.

"We still have quite a lot of theory classes for our automotive courses because we take an approach called 'thinking hands'. We want our students to not only have the technical skills but we want them to also know why they are changing certain parts and not others," explains Foo.

While traditional universities and colleges have career advisors to help students decide on their future, TOC has an entire department dedicated to getting work placements, which allows



PHOTO BY MUHAMMAD HAZIM

Adelaine Foo is the founder and CEO of TOC Automotive College

them to guarantee work experience for all their students. While undergoing internships the students earn an allowance, which can either help offset some of the cost fees or give them a head start in earning a living.

Those studying for the Diploma in Automotive Technology will clock up 10 months of work experience upon graduating from the two-and-a-half-year course, which not only gives them a head start in work life but also allows them to enter degree programmes and forego one or two years of the course. TOC also has partner universities in several countries which offer degree courses in engineering, automotive technology and motorsport technology, which is the easiest route to take for students who want to further their studies.

Another advantage TOC graduates have is that their skills are applicable in any country that has cars. The college carefully tweaks its programmes to ensure they meet the training and knowledge requirements set in several major countries, which is becoming increasingly important as about 10% of their students are foreign.

Because a large proportion of the course work requires practical experience, the facilities at TOC include every single aspect of car maintenance for both diesel and petrol engines. They also have diagnostic tools and simulators, which aren't found

in traditional workshops with a huge store of parts, tools and materials.

"For our diploma in motorsport technology we also have design facilities, a race shop to produce parts and even a four-wheel dyno so it's a lot like running a racing team on site. It also helps of course that we have partnerships with a lot of automotive industry companies and they help with supplying us consumables and even whole cars and engines. It's a symbiotic relationship of course and we send our students to work with them to gain work experience in return.

"TOC doesn't have a huge campus but we have facilities like computer labs, a games room and student rest areas. We also have a lot of clubs that allow our students to play sports against other colleges, but we use external facilities for these activities," Foo adds.

Despite the success of TOC over the past 13 years (2,000 students have graduated) and the establishment of many more automotive colleges, there is still a considerable gap between the needs of the automotive industry and the number of people entering it. There is also still a healthy level of scepticism amongst parents about job prospects though Foo says that graduates don't have to just be technicians.

"A lot of our students become service advisors almost immediately while others have gone on to open their own workshop. The can also join the insurance industry as adjusters and work in technical support centres. Most importantly, they will be equipped with working skills that are relevant to the industry that they are passionate about and ultimately, that means they will become effective workers who deliver their services professionally," she says.

Perhaps one day in the near future, vocational skills workers will be viewed with the same level of respect as those qualified to be doctors, lawyers and accountants and if that happens, TOC will have played a major role in seeing it come true. ■



FEATURE

COACHING for success

Dwi Emas International School lecturers take the initiative to become mentors to ensure the success of their students.

| Text by KEVIN WONG | ecwong@hckmedia.com

Dwi Emas A-levels students paying attention during a lesson



Every student has a unique way of learning and to maximise their growth and potential, educators are required to be flexible and adapt the way they teach in classes.

Moreover with the advancement of technology and accessibility to knowledge, the role of educators is in need of a paradigm change from being just teachers to becoming facilitators of skills and knowledge for their students.

Dwi Emas International School A-levels lecturers embody this new ethos by being teachers and mentors who help bring out the very best in every student. ■



Students attempting a chemistry experiment

Help will always be given to students who need it

CYNTHIA WONG Pure Maths, Statistics and Further Statistics lecturer

Wong says the A-levels lecturers place emphasis on understanding the academic topic and concepts and try to make it a fun and interactive learning experience for the students.

"We cover all the major styles of learning through the use of visual aids, vocally explaining things as well as including classroom activities and coursework. At Dwi Emas, we recognise that students are individuals that have different preferred learning styles.

"There are three learning styles, visual (pictures and videos), auditory (someone explaining something to them or through music) and kinaesthetic (experiential learning) where most people would fall into."

She explains that every student has a preference and if they are taught in their preferred way or their lessons incorporate

some form of every learning style, they will learn more effectively.

Wong shares that the lecturers have a good working relationship with their students.

"I truly believe in the concept of 'no real education can take place without a meaningful student-teacher relationship.' Therefore, I think an educator should not be someone that a student fears, but rather a role model and mentor for their students as someone to look up to and turn to for guidance.

She adds that even though she would not be able to reach out to all of her students, she strives to be someone they can trust and rely on.

"What also makes Dwi Emas different is that we provide a course called financial education, where we teach students to adopt an entrepreneurial mind-set. At the same time, we try to bridge the gap between college and university by equipping the students with skills for an effective university education.

"Additionally, we have a more structured

further mathematics programme to set students up for success by preparing them linearly through the course content — students complete the mathematics programme before progressing onto further mathematics."

Wong shares that she relates her lessons to real life examples as often as possible to get students to be engage in discussions during the lectures.

"Instead of conventional teaching methods, I believe an active discussion among my students and I will enable them to understand topics a lot better than just providing them with lots of information without any contextual reference.

"At the same time, we altered the basis of our teaching culture by examining what we liked and disliked about the system and tried to see how we can improve on the overall experience as well as make learning more effective," she says.

She adds she would self-reflect after every class she taught so she could further improve her lessons for the next class.



SUYIN ONG AS and A2 Economics lecturer

With A-levels being such an academic programme, Ong says that she incorporates immersive activities before proceeding to teach a new topic.

"I would share stories that are silly or intriguing to capture their imagination and to engage them. At the same time, I will add interesting visuals in the lessons such photos, doodles, videos or whacky get-ups (for activities purposes)," she says.

Like her colleagues she agrees that every student has a particular preferred learning style that educators must identify and implement in their lessons. The way to teach is centred on capturing all individuals with the way they can best learn.

She shares that she teaches her students to constantly upgrade their work just like teachers are also doing to improve their teaching methods.

"We would find new ways to turn teaching



into activities that students can engage in which would be followed by a debriefing. We also find ways to further improve existing activities.

"The challenge is that every class reacts to learning material differently depending on their dynamic and it is our great pleasure to find more and better ways of making the learning even more fun and engaging," she says.

Ong adds that Dwi Emas differs from other A-levels programmes as the lecturers are interestingly youthful.

"This works in our favour as the bond we forge with our A-levels cohort is unusually strong. It is clear that all of our teachers care very much about their students and the passion they have for sharing knowledge and generating curiosity is genuine.

"During my time as a student, my teachers and lecturers were adept at teaching but somehow lacked the personal touch of getting to know me as a student and as an individual. I believe it is important for educators to provide a safe environment for the students as only then will they be able to learn to their maximum capacity."



BEVERLYN NATHAN Biology lecturer

As studying Biology requires a strong understanding of the subject, Nathan says she uses many different teaching methods to help her students remember what is being taught and that it is not just for their examinations but to be used in life.

"Our students are taught the Ace culture which comprises many different values that ensure they adapt well in school. Also, it is an open environment between students and lecturers where they are able to learn and understand better as we provide a safe environment.

"Those attending Dwi Emas are given the opportunity to be themselves and from there they will be able to achieve even more than they envisioned," she says.

She adds that while it can be a challenge preparing lessons to include all the learning styles, Nathan and the other lecturers are trained to prepare lessons which are current, easy to understand, fun and unique.

TAN MENG CHWEN English and Real World Abilities lecturer

Tan says one of the things that makes Dwi Emas A-levels different is that the lecturers do their best to ensure each student understands the lessons through meaningful, relevant and applicable coursework.

"The lecturers are trained to find ways which can be interesting and surprising to make sure students get to the point where they learn the subject matter and also learn how to learn.

"Additionally, what we do here works because what we teach encompasses more than the subject matter for exam purposes. We are preparing them to be leaders, to create opportunities for themselves and others for a future that is both uncertain and exciting at the same time. As such, what we do empowers students; it gives them the courage to try, speak up, ask questions and have a love for learning," he says.



JACQUELINE LIM Real World Abilities lecturer

Lim says the lecturers of Dwi Emas care and believe in creating a holistic and enriching yet realistic learning experience for their students.

"We teach knowing that we are preparing them for an unknown future by equipping them with the appropriate tools that they need to embrace a new world.

"And through the Real World Abilities subject, they are challenged to stretch their understanding and perception of things. They will also learn the skills to approach things from different perspectives, and to create more opportunities for themselves and the people around them," she says.

She explains that these skills are interdisciplinary and students will be able to connect more quickly and creatively across different subject matters and fields of study, and on whatever projects that come their way.

"Our students will learn to be more flexible and be versatile learners and leaders," Lim adds.



CAREERS UNUSUAL

Changing the WORLD

Zikry Kholil explains what it means to be a social entrepreneur

| Text by KEVIN WONG | ecwong@hckmedia.com

When you're fighting hard to overcome social issues, the job requires more than just passion. It also needs self sacrifice for the greater good. These days, there is a special breed of workers called social entrepreneurs who are putting themselves out there to provide their services to solve social issues that plague society as a whole.

Unlike an entrepreneur who focuses on making profit, a social entrepreneur's focus is on creating an impact first, with profit concerns only coming after the main goal is achieved.

Social entrepreneur and Incitement (a thriving global movement of independent event organisers) co-founder Zikry Kholil shares that a social entrepreneur is someone who runs a business or an enterprise that is purpose driven with a goal to help fix a social issue.

"A good example would be a pay it forward business model where a service or product is paid for in advance. Another good example is to have the give back factor for a service where it could be whenever a pair of shoes is purchased, another pair would be given to someone who is in need of new pair of shoes," he says.

He shares that initially he did not see himself being a social entrepreneur as when he founded Incitement, it was more or less as an inspiration movement to incite positivity and to transform people's inspiration into action by channelling them to social projects, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and programmes that have a positive impact on society.

"But through the years, Incitement had grown so much bigger reaching out to 45 countries that we could not ignore the value we created hence we transitioned from being a movement into a social business. That is how I ended up being a social entrepreneur and Incitement has become a modern social business where we connect audiences to social projects.

"I never thought about becoming a social entrepreneur. However, it happened as a natural part of the learning curve when I started on this journey with a simple idea by taking action to make the world a better place," he adds.

Zikry shares that his aspiration to become an entrepreneur is secondary these days as Incitement's main objective is to solve social problems.

"My co-founder and I did not want Incitement to become just another NGO or a movement but an entity similar to a business that helps people by making changes that really matter."

“I never thought of becoming a social entrepreneur but it's happened as a result of what I intended to do with Incitement which is to make the world a better place for everyone”

— Zikry Kholil



PHOTOS BY ANWAR FAIZ

Zikry with his Incitement team, solving social issues

Challenges as a social entrepreneur

Zikry says one of the biggest challenges he faces is that there is the lack of collaborative efforts among social entrepreneurs.

"We have a lot of collaboration among NGOs but for social entrepreneurs, everyone is trying to be the pioneer of something or everyone wants to play the hero role. Due to this, it is quite difficult to rally social entrepreneurs to come and work together. That being said, we are fortunate to be able to have a few that are willing to collaborate."

He adds the other challenge is that there is not enough law enforcement to support, protect and help social entrepreneurs.

"For example if there is a social entrepreneur in this region helping out refugees, there is no specific law that allows them to get government support. Another good example is in West Africa where NGOs and social projects to build wells and roads for villages have paved the way for soldiers to harass and rape women.

"Goodwill work done by NGOs and social entrepreneurs are therefore sometimes becoming counter-effective and just go to waste," Zikry shares.

The 29-year-old says the best way to overcome the two challenges is to engage the grassroots, which have a greater voice and can reach out to the people with authority.

"This is what we are striving to do, by supporting many grassroots initiatives from the bottom that could help catalyse the white noise (the impact that is created from the bottom) to reach the point where ministers, governments and even the United Nations will notice what we are doing."

Driven by concerning statistics

While the world is used to strong images to drive it to action, Zikry isn't always driven by emotional stories of children dying and suffering from war or hunger as he says there is so much more to it than that.

"There are about four billion people that

are collectively part of the larger world issues, and two billion people who do not even have life necessities. Meanwhile, another 1.3 billion people do not have access to toilet facilities, while two billion people do not have financial services.

"When I look at these statistics, I ask myself what the United Nations and world governments are doing to solve these issues. It's clear they need our help as social entrepreneurs and we can't just depend on them to solve these problems," he says.

In 2016, Zikry invested his time in Liter of Light Malaysia where he provided and built cost-efficient solar lights to address the issue of *solar poverty* around the world.

"Believe it or not, there are about 4.7 billion people globally that do not have artificial lights. In Malaysia, we are fortunate to have only one percent of the population without such facilities. In the span of five years, we have managed to power up 21 villages where 3,000 Malaysians now have access to lights and are equipped with the knowledge to maintain them."

The life of a social entrepreneur

Zikry describes his career as a social entrepreneur as fun, adventurous, mysterious, challenging yet self-fulfilling. On a typical day, he shares that he and his team would start with a team huddle that begins at 10am.

"We do this so that everyone will share what they are working on, the challenges they face and if they need any help in their projects. However, most of the time, I am out for meetings; attending press conferences, meeting clients and potential partners."

To work full-time as a social entrepreneur requires perseverance and sacrifice.

"One piece of advice for those who want to join the field is that they have to understand the pain and sacrifice they need to make in order to be a full time social entrepreneur. They must be able to comprehend the pain of the risk of going bankrupt, opposition and many other emotions. At the same time, they must be able to embrace failures and have perseverance and patience to not throw in the towel so easily."

He adds that being a social entrepreneur is more challenging than an entrepreneur as a social entrepreneur cannot be completely profit-driven.

"Those who are interested to be one must also know they will need to sacrifice their time with loved ones, family and friends. Once they know this and they still insist on this career, then perhaps they are ready to join the movement to make this world a better place." ■

NEXT WEEK



Sunway Property sets its sights on the north

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