

# Managing Public Institutions of Higher Learning in Malaysia:

## An Interview with Deputy Director General of the Department of Higher Education Management

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**E**ducation, at all levels, has always been important to Malaysians. It has been the means to optimally utilize resources, i.e. natural materials and human related, towards socio-economic growth and development. It is in the pursuit of education that Malaysians, of all ages, have ventured within and abroad as temporary educational migrants. In the distant past, the Middle-east, India and England may have been the traditional destinations abroad. Modern Malaysians are jet-setters carrying on this pursuit and academic sojourns in America, Japan, Russia to name a few, however brief, have been and still are domains of the Malaysian intelligentsia.

We now find ourselves in an enviable position. We have honed and expanded our educational resources within the country. Higher education in Malaysia is accessible to every Malaysian regardless of age and socio-economic background. The basic requirement for admission into undergraduate programmes has always been the required passes at the Sijil Tinggi Peperiksaan Malaysia (STPM), the Malaysian equivalent of the Higher School Certificate or the British A-Levels. Confirmed admission into public universities ensures some form of financial support, either through full scholarships or student loans. All that is required is that recipients continuously maintain high academic standards throughout their study.

The traditional cohort of university undergraduates is still school-leavers who make up the bulk of enrolled full-time undergraduates. Malaysian public universities, have also for a long time now, entertained mature students both in their undergraduate and postgraduate programmes as full-time or part-time students. Universiti Sains Malaysia, for example through its School of Distance Education, offers part-time undergraduate programmes through distance education. The

School's programme of studies, similar to that of the British Open University, has enabled many Malaysians for nearly three decades now, to improve themselves, their academic qualifications and their socio-economic prospects, particularly pertaining to jobs mobility.

Age has never been a barrier to academia and this is further highlighted from the academic year 2005/2006 when public universities specifically open their doors to the *warga emas*. Malaysians who have retired from their full-time jobs, i.e. 56 years and above are eligible and can now pursue undergraduate programmes. Their years of work experience in related fields are taken into account in place of the basic academic requirements for admission.

Malaysians currently can choose from 18 public institutions of higher learning, the IPTAs and numerous other private

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### HIGHLIGHTS

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# Enhancing Academic Administrators' Professionalism through the Application of Development Centre

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## Introduction

Given that high quality services of administrations are essential, there must be an effective and continuous development of faculty members who assume leadership roles in higher learning institutions. The efforts to equip them with necessary qualities that determine the effective role as academic administrators and competent managers for higher education and research activities are important in the process of making higher learning institutions excellent centres to boost nation building. True to the emphasis made by the Malaysian Government in developing knowledge workers, worker competencies, and knowledge productivity (Government of Malaysia, 2002), a proper mechanism needs to be strategised in order to bring about desirable characteristics of academic administrators in higher learning institutions.

In general this paper aims to introduce the concept of development centre (DC), and highlight the applications of psychology within the centre which would be of benefit to higher learning institutions in establishing effective training programmes for academic administrators.

## Historical Background of Development Centre

DC has its roots in Assessment Centre (AC), which has proven effective in providing rich and developmentally relevant information, paving professionals to apply DC in many human resources management decisions. The term DC is used to denote a method or an approach, rather than a physical space meant to develop employees (Woodruffe, 1995). It is an organisationally standardized procedure for assessing employees in order to identify their competencies by using multiple assessment methods. The definition highlights three key components of DC: competencies, multiple assessment methods, and development. DC permits organisations to analyse and diagnose employees' competencies, which is important to indicate the employees' further development, infer employees' behaviours, and enhance the likelihood of successful future job performance. A vital characteristic of DC is solely of developmental purpose.

Tillema (1998) outlines four focal dimensions of DC, which encompass three key components from the definition, namely (a) identifying ones' potential qualifications which can be developed through training; (b) setting up new development tracks connected to the work settings, (c) administering perpetual monitoring on the progress that individuals made (d) providing opportunity for growth in competencies.

The British Psychological Society (2003) outlines that a good DC would help organisations by:

- a. providing highly relevant, observable and comprehensive information of an individual
- b. promoting effective decision making and workforce planning
- c. yielding added fairness from multiple judgments as opposed to a single judgment
- d. enhancing the image of organisation among employees
- e. providing effective preview of the role or job level
- f. developing employees' self-insight thus leading them to change and progress
- g. providing insights to observers due to their involvements in the process
- h. predicting work performance
- i. providing legally defensible selection system

## The need for Development Centre

The objective of DC is to develop and promote learning culture among participants of DC. DC uses assessment outcomes to help the identification of training needs of participants, and enhance their ability to create, innovate, generate, and utilize new ideas and skills. This is in line with the concept of career development system, which refers to an organized, formalized, planned effort to achieve a balance between individuals' career needs and the organisations' workforce requirements (Leibowitz, et al., 1986, p.4).

The objective of DC also befits the current trust in human resources management, that is knowledge productivity and knowledge worker. Organisations can support these two trusts by treating assessment as a part of a more encompassing and continuous system which goes beyond measuring performance. In order to make assessment part of a continuous system, it should serve as fundamental to development and learning processes, characterized by relevant feedback, monitoring, and coaching. Only upon meeting these characteristics, development and training

can be successfully linked to assessment, which is the developmental approach to assessment.

The Malaysian Remuneration System (MRS) has a fundamental component, the Competency Level Assessment (CLA) or Penilaian Tahap Kecekapan (PTK). The objectives of CLA are (a) to promote self-development among civil service members through continuous learning, (b) to strengthen learning organisations in the public sector in line with the aim to produce knowledgeable workers (k-workers), (c) to promote utilisation of knowledge, skills, creativity, innovation and multi-skills in performing duties, (d) to manage human resources based on competency, and (e) to recognize excellent civil service members (Government of Malaysia, 2002). On the same theme, the literature of DC indicates that the approaches and tools used in DC would support and compliment the effort to develop professionalism among academic administrators in higher learning institutions. DC is to the benefit of academic administrators, if it could be the central spine to the Competency Level Assessment (or Penilaian Tahap Kecekapan), for through it the approaches to enhance and improve the competencies of academic administrators could be managed in a more comprehensive manner. However, the CLA would not be a DC, and would be to the detriment of the academic administrators, if it is aligned only to remuneration purposes.

### **The Application of Psychology in Development Centres**

There are few hard and fast rules for designing a DC, looking at the fact that each organisation has different needs to develop its employees. In fact, an organisation's DC designers must creatively think of the best design to achieve the developmental aims of the organisation by acknowledging the uniqueness of individuals in organisation who thus have different developmental needs. This and even the three key components of DC (competencies, multiple assessment, and development) reflect the application of psychology.

#### **Competencies**

Boyatzis (as cited in Woodruffe, 1998) broadly defined competency as "an underlying characteristic of a person. It could be a motive, trait, skill, aspect of one's self-image or social role, or a body of knowledge which he or she uses" (p.64). Woodruffe (1998) described competencies in relation to performance by referring it to "dimensions of behaviour that lie behind competent performance" (p.66).

#### **Multiple Assessment**

The DC related-decision is not controlled by one tool, such as a test. In order to identify one's competencies, DC uses multiple assessments so as to form a complete picture of a person and give more meaningful prediction of his/her job behaviour. DC may involve the following exercises; presentation, group discussion, one-to-one role play, in-tray-basket, written analysis, interview, psychometric assessment, peer assessment, and self assessment (British Psychological Society, 2003; and Woodruffe, 1995). Refer appendix 1.

#### **Development**

The assessment in DC provides opportunities to identify competency levels of employees' knowledge, skills, abilities, and other characteristics for the purpose of development (Herr, Cramer, & Niles, 2004). This developmental approach of assessment promotes and facilitates learning, a truly psychological phenomenon. Learning is defined as "a relatively permanent change in knowledge or behaviour that results from practice or experience" (George & Jones, 1999, p.145). In organisations, learning can be achieved through many mechanisms, one of which is training (Riggio, 2003), which can be systematically designed to make employees acquire the desirable attitudes, concepts, knowledge, roles or skills which would help them to improve work performance (Muchinsky, 2000). However, training should not be offered without any valid reasons for the high costs involved. As such, it is important for organisations to assess employees' training needs, an exercise which could be accomplished through DC.

#### **Participative management**

The other application of psychology in DC is evident through the concept of participative management, defined as the collaborative-oriented relationship involving participants and observers characterized mainly by openness and trust, and maintaining them after the end of each exercise. A professional who runs processes in a development centre is known as an observer, trained to be in charge of evaluating behaviours observed in exercises. As for its targets, the term participant is used. Participants are individuals who undertake the exercises in DC, and receive extensive developmental feedback on their performances. Being interactive in nature, the participants' involvement in DC exercises is essential. DC exercises are observed by a team of trained observers. The observers adopt a coaching role, leaving behind status and power thus using the word facilitator or observer for some matter.

#### **Conclusions**

Organisation development is one of the pertinent issues when productivity is addressed, and indeed it is the focal point of DC. The application of psychology is inherent in the key features of DC. In fact, DC paves the foundation to an organisation's effort to plan and implement programmes designed to enhance the effectiveness of an organisation, which could be managed by Industrial/Organisational psychologists, human resources manager, and the like. The Industrial/Organisational Psychologists are specifically trained to help organisations grow, thus enhance their productivity, and subsequently promote positive work-related attitudes, and workplace harmony among employees (Shukran, 2005). Besides the Industrial/Organisational Psychologists, the involvement of psychologists specializing in testing and assessment is desirable, as DC also needs the use of assessment in its exercises, a method which has been taken up by the public sector in Malaysia for the purpose of selection and placement (Fauzaman et al., 2005).

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## Appendix 1

**Table 1: Exercises in Development Centre**

| Exercises                  | Aim   |
|----------------------------|---|
| a. Presentation            | To assess the participants' public speaking i.e. their capabilities at giving briefing to a relevant audience group   |
| b. Group discussion        | To assess the participants' team work spirit, assessed through the team interaction based around given information. In DC, this is observed through leader less group discussion, in which a participant is placed in a situation without leadership or authority structure, allowing the observer to assess the way the former behaves in such situation (Hogan, 2003) |
| c. One-to-one role play    | To assess the participants' communication skills through communication/ negotiation exercises within one-to-one interaction.  |
| d. In-tray-basket          | To assess the participants' capabilities to perform job, assessed through simulation of role-based in-tray/ in-box, requiring action and prioritization.  |
| e. Written analysis        | To assess the participants' writing capabilities assessed through writing problem analysis exercise against work-based issue  |
| f. Interview               | To assess the participants' job related information. This is done through gathering information against key criteria  |
| g. Psychometric assessment | To assess the participants' personal psychological profiles. This is done through standardized measures of cognitive ability, personality, motivation or interest.  |
| h. Peer assessment         | Each participant is assessed by another participant in the group, who must be trained to assess the competencies in question  |
| i. Self assessment         | May be the entire means of assessment in DC.  |

# Generic Skills of Malaysian University Students

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## Introduction

**D**emands at the workplace are transforming the kinds of knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed for successful work performance. Evidence from employer surveys suggested that employers are often more concerned about soft skills or attitudes rather than technical knowledge or competencies (Stasz, Ramsey, Eden, Melamid, & Kaganoff, 1996). Empirical studies on work found that employers and workers also feel skills such as problem solving, communication and the ability to work in teams, are increasingly important for workplace success (Stasz et al., 1996). Therefore, apart from providing students with the technical knowledge, universities are entrusted with the task of grooming students with the generic skills required to be successful workers. The importance of some of these skills are documented in the Quality Assurance in Public Universities of Malaysia: Code of Practice document, which states that the quality of a university programme is assessed by the ability of its graduates in carrying out their expected roles with responsibility in society. As stated in the document, among the competencies that students should demonstrate at the end of the programme are critical thinking, problem solving, creative decision making and ability to communicate, apart from mastery of knowledge in the specific fields (Quality Assurance Division, 2004).

## Generic Skills

The terminology used to refer to generic skills differs between one country to another. According to Clayton et al. (2003), the Australians refer to generic skills as 'key competencies', 'soft skills', or 'employability skills', the English name them 'key skills' or 'core skills', and the Americans refer to them as 'necessary skills' or 'employability skills'. The skills involved are numerous and some are specific within the context of a particular work environment. Mayer (1992) documented a set of skills articulated as key competencies which are comprehensive although not exhaustive. Since Mayer's publication, additional skills associated with the workplace are now considered essential (Clayton et al., 2003). Among the additional skills are self management, innovation, creativity and initiative, and ability to perform in a changing environment. The generic skills in this

study were selected based on literature, and considered essential in ensuring success in university education. The skills are identified through a test on critical thinking and questionnaires on problem solving, emotional intelligence, personality, time management, and study skills. Skills such as communication, interpersonal and intrapersonal skills are subsumed under personality.

## Research Problem

The question of concern in this study is whether students are improving on selected generic skills throughout their university years to prepare them for the workplace. Another concern is the performance of students during their university years. Despite the tight procedure in selecting students especially in fields such as medicine, engineering and sciences, the moderate performance of Malaysian university students (Ministry of Education, 2004) caused great concern among university lecturers and administrators. Under the assumption that students are of compatible academic capabilities upon admission, would the acquisition of generic skills contribute to the difference in academic performance in the university?

Information on generic skills acquired by students upon admission and at the end of their undergraduate programme can be used as indicators on the success of school and university curricula. Thus, the knowledge on generic skills acquired by graduates is useful to aid schools and universities in improving the curricula.

## Objectives

This study aims to (i) identify the generic skills (problem solving ability, emotional intelligence, personality, time management skills, critical thinking skills and study skills) acquired by high school leavers (first year university students) and among final year university students, and (ii) identify whether relationship exists between selected generic skills and students' academic performance in the university.

## Methodology

The study employs the survey method. An instrument was developed based on six constructs identified as skills needed for success in higher learning. The instrument comprises a 30 minute test on critical thinking and a questionnaire on problem solving, emotional intelligence, personality, time management, and study skills. A total of 3025 respondents from seven public universities (UPM, UUM, UM, UKM, UTM, USM, UNIMAS) and two private universities (MMU, UTP) participated in

the study. The data analysis includes descriptive statistics, ANOVA and correlation. ANOVA was used to test whether significant differences exist in the skills acquired by students based on year of study. Correlation was used to establish relationship between students' cumulative grade point average (CGPA) and the generic skills.

## Findings and Discussions

In the analysis, the respondents were categorized as first year, intermediate (students who are not in the first year or in the final year) and final year students. In comparing the skills of students based on year of study, the study revealed that final year students obtained the highest scores in problem solving (mean = 3.47, sd = .40), personality (mean = 3.76, sd = .46), critical thinking (mean = 18.13, sd = 4.05), study skills (mean = 2.64, sd = .29) and time management (mean = 2.71, sd = .33). Although the final year students displayed better scores, overall scores obtained by Malaysian students in all these generic skills were just moderate.

There was a significant difference in (i) personality and time management between final year students and students in the first and second year, and (ii) problem solving skills between final year students and students in the first year. It was found that there was a significant moderate positive correlation ( $p < .01$ ) between CGPA and critical thinking, personality, study skills, and time management. The study also showed that there is a significant

and stronger positive correlation ( $r > .500$ ) between personality and emotional intelligence, personality and study skills, problem solving and time management, and study skills and time management. The findings showed that students improved on certain generic skills in the process of university education. Thus, it can be

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said that universities provide enough experience for acquisition of certain generic skills. Although the correlation established between CGPA and the generic skills was low, universities do need to further emphasize on the development of selected generic skills to ensure that graduates are ready to join the workforce. As stated by Stasz

et al. (1996), employers are often more concerned with the generic skills that a graduate has acquired rather than an impressive academic standing alone.

## Conclusion

Results from this study indicate that there was an increase in the acquisition of certain generic skills between final year students and the junior students. However, the final year students still had not acquired some of the skills needed in adapting to the challenging workplace. Thus, specific strategies need to be integrated in the teaching, learning and assessment in the university to ensure that students gain in both the technical and generic skills to help them cope better with their study, university life and work life. Although the teaching methods adapted in the university did reinforce the enhancement of generic skills, further research needs to be conducted to identify means on enhancing generic skills through classroom interaction, for both small and large group classes, laboratory and lecture settings. Although the university curricula continuously undergo improvement, the development of skills needs to be incorporated and emphasized further.

## (Endnotes)

This article is derived from the study entitled "Development of Indicators as Complement to Current University Entrance Requirement" conducted under Intensified Research in Priority Areas (IRPA), led by Associate Professor Dr. Aida Suraya Md. Yunus.

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# Higher Education in Malaysia and Australia 2005: a Regional Research Forum on Higher Education

Professor Morshidi Sirat, Director, IPPTN and Professor Ambigapathy Pandian, Associate Research Fellow, IPPTN were invited to present their working papers at the inaugural Malaysia-Australia Higher Education Forum held at the University of Wollongong, Australia, 2-4th November 2005. The two-day forum, convened by Associate Professor Peter Kell, brought together academics and experts in higher education in Malaysia and Australia at the University of Wollongong, Australia to deliberate current higher education situation and chart future research directions and collaboration. The intended outcomes of this forum were to:

- Continue a regional engagement on issues in higher education.
- Develop a publication to document the forum.
- Establish a formal research link between participants in higher education in the Asia Pacific.

At this forum it was decided that IPPTN will organise the *Malaysia-Australia Higher Education Forum 2006* in Penang, Malaysia in November 2006. The theme for the forthcoming conference is *Higher Education in the Asia Pacific and Networked Society* and the focus for deliberations are as follows:

- Mathematics Education bilateral studies in the teaching of Science, mathematics and the language interface.
- The Concept of knowledge communities and interconnected networks and communications. What does it really mean for the academy?

- Interconnected Knowledge and Research: Research policy and directions and the dilemmas for Australia Malaysia and other partners in the Asia Pacific.
- Connecting with the Environment: Higher Education, the environment and sustaining sustainability?
- Networking and linking to broader knowledge community: Links of Lifelong Learning, “second chance” learning in adult education.
- Maintaining the Standard of Higher Education in the Asia Pacific: Quality assurance of transnational education.
- Interconnecting global communities: ICT and emerging technologies of learning.
- Interconnections and global diversity: Intercultural implications emerging from internationalisation for teaching/research.
- Governance and leadership higher education.
- Professionalism in teaching and leadership.
- Inclusion in Higher Education: Gender and inclusion in higher education research in the Asia Pacific.
- Networks, funding, resourcing and the governance of Higher Education in the Asia Pacific: Private exchange or public goods? Public corporation of private enterprises?



Participants of  
Malaysia - Australia  
HE Forum 2005

institutions of higher learning, the IPTSs. Malaysians can choose to study fully within the country or abroad. There are academic programmes, for example twinning and exchange, which can also be pursued in parts, in the country and abroad, as well as cross-county programmes. This wealth of resources in academia is now placed under the Department of Higher Education Management of the Ministry of Higher Education (Malaysia).

The Department of Higher Education Management is the conduit towards making the country the centre of excellence in education and research in the region and in due course, in the world. We have the resources and we want to optimise and share them. The brief given to the department is to see to the strategic plan, the roadmap for Higher Education in the country. Ultimately the department is to enforce these plans and strategies and monitor them. As its name indicates, the Ministry of Higher Education deals only with Higher Education and this pertains to all post secondary school education, from diplomas to PhDs. The Ministry, and thus the Department has under its wings polytechnics, community colleges and university colleges. There is a wealth of knowledge and skills to manage and disseminate.

The exciting and challenging task of heading and managing all the public universities has been given to Yang Berbahagia Datuk Prof. Mohd Yusof bin Kasim. He is the recently appointed Deputy Director General who deals solely with public universities. There is another Deputy Director General who deals solely with private universities. Datuk Prof. Mohd Yusof has been given two years, 'from the 1 April 2005 on secondment', to get the roadmap in place and going. Jobs mobility, or rather responsibility mobility is not new to Datuk Prof. Mohd Yusof. He was with Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, (UKM), and in fact in some ways he still is, as he has never resigned nor has his post been terminated. He has been in various capacities: lecturer, researcher, administrator and consultant with UKM's Faculty of Economics, Centre for Research Management and Institute of Malaysian and International Studies (IKMAS), for 23 years. He was then seconded to the University of Sabah Malaysia to fill in a much-needed

position in the newly set up university. He was their economics lecturer and the International Corporate Director. In the latter position, he brought in 150 foreign students to study in the university. It was not that much later that he was directed to be part of MTEN, the government's economic think tank. His area of academic expertise, not surprisingly is regional economics and globalisation. Then of course, came this current responsibility.

The Department of the Higher Education Management has three main sections: governance, academic development and student admissions. It is responsible for the training of manpower: academics

programmes have to be relevant to the needs of international markets. Malaysia wants to continue being economically vibrant and competitive and in that context, Malaysian national standards equate international standards. The government sees Malaysia as a global player in the service sector furnishing global employment needs. Thus in meeting this global employment needs and in ensuring that our graduates, particularly our science and technology graduates, are employable wherever they choose to work, all science and mathematics programmes in the public Malaysian universities are to be taught in English from the academic year 2005/2006 onwards. According to

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and non-academics, the courses offered by the respective higher institutions and the setting up of new faculties as well as new universities. It determines the policy for student admissions into the universities as well as into the matriculation programmes offered by the universities.

There are three units under governance. The first deals with monitoring the performance of the academic institutions under the Ministry. The second sees to coordinating its various resources, i.e. manpower and institutions and, the third deals with the overall management of all these resources. In brief, the first task of the Department is to see to the development and achievement of all the institutions of higher learning in the country.

The section that deals with academic development is responsible for all the academic programmes offered. It has to ensure that all programmes offered are of international standards. Academic

Datuk Prof. Mohd Yusof, 'the other task of the department is to re-evaluate and assess the branding of programmes and resources as well as developing clusters in an exercise of the economies of scale, synergising and adding value to existing resources.' Optimal use of resources and opportunity cost appear to be the modus operandi of the Department of Higher Education Management.

In short, the Department's role is to work out an action plan for higher education. This requires that all key players are made to be well versed with their respective roles. In this respect, Datuk Prof. Mohd Yusof, under the Director General of the Department of Higher Education Management, works closely with the other Deputy Director General. The department is working on and formulating a strategic plan and the relevant roadmap for individual players. This roadmap is also going to encourage others to become temporary educational migrants in Malaysia: academic sojourns and homestay in Malaysia.

# National Conference on Skills and Competencies in Education 2005

The development of graduates' workplace skills and competencies is the responsibility of educational institutions, industry as well as the graduates themselves. This was one of the messages conveyed to the participants of the recently held National Conference on Skills and Competencies in Education 2005.

Organised by the School of Humanities, Universiti Sains Malaysia, the two-day conference held in the university's main campus, on 29 and 30 November 2005 was attended by about 100 participants. The conference was designed to act as a meeting of minds to examine problems, issues, challenges and prospects on the skills and competencies learnt, acquired and disseminated in primary, secondary and tertiary education. Participants included academicians, teachers, teacher educators, researchers, administrators and students.

The conference, in which IPPTN acted as one of the major co-sponsors, featured prominent speakers including Dato' Prof. Ibrahim Ahmad Bajunid from UNITAR and Assoc. Prof. Omar Osman from the Corporate Division, Universiti Sains Malaysia, Dr. Ng Chern Soon from PSDC, as well as research papers from local and international educators.

An issue high on the agenda was how to successfully incorporate the teaching of skills and competencies in the curriculum. Some of the participants demonstrated that skills such as communication, ICT, creativity and problem solving are lacking among students and current graduates and more efforts had to be made by educators to improve these skills.

One the ways in which the skills can be improved is through industrial attachment. According to Assoc. Prof. Mohd Ridzuan Nordin and Raihani Md Kassim from KUTKM, their study indicated that there are areas of opportunities to enhance the competencies development of undergraduates through industrial attachment. These include better students' preparation including good communication skills, positive attitudes, and closer working relationship between university and organisation to develop common understanding and expectations.

Another, perhaps somewhat less familiar, way is through the study of philosophy, as presented by Assoc. Prof. Zailan Morris from Universiti Sains Malaysia. In her paper, she identified certain intellectual skills that could be attained



Dato' Prof. Ibrahim delivering his keynote speech

from the study of philosophy which will prove useful at the workplace and will be appreciated by employers as assets. The study of philosophy, she said, "cultivates an inquiring mind by engaging with the big questions dealt with by philosophers, and trains students to ask the necessary and crucial questions which is an important step in problem solving".

Organisational problem solving skills may also be enhanced through entrepreneurship programs. A group of researchers from Universiti Utara Malaysia, who presented a paper on 'The importance of entrepreneurship education to organisations and nation', found that entrepreneurship education graduates are suitable and important to most organisations. Exposure to entrepreneurship education in higher education, they said, is consistent with the government's effort to create more entrepreneurs among graduates.

In addition to the issue of teaching skills and competencies in education, many other related issues were presented and discussed including classroom assessment techniques, the role of economy and the relevance of programmes offered in institutions of higher learning to the industry. All in all, the conference proved to be an enriching experience for teachers, teacher educators, researchers and administrators – from primary, secondary and higher education levels – who got together to share experiences.

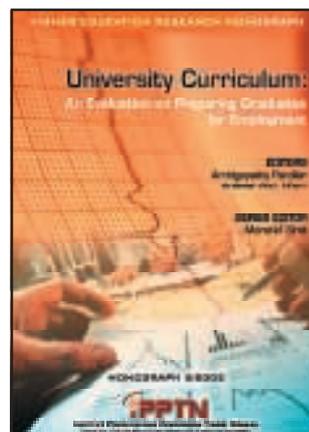
## *Reported by:*

□ Munir Shuib, Azreen Zainul and Noraini Mohd Yusof

# New Publications

## 1. Monograph 5/2005 University Curriculum: An Evaluation on Preparing Graduates for Employment.

The contents highlight information on preparing graduates for employment from the following perspectives: the USM administration units, lecturers, undergraduates, graduates and employers. The monograph will be useful in aiding the Department of Higher Education Management, Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia and Public Institutions of Higher Learning to determine the focus and direction of national higher education.



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## 2. Monograph 6/2005 Integrasi Etnik di Institusi Pengajian Tinggi Awam (Ethnic Integration in Public Institutions of Higher Learning)

This monograph provides empirical evidences of ethnic integration in public institutions of higher learning in Malaysia. It documents the pattern of interaction amongst students of different ethnicities in these institutions by focusing on their academic and non academic activities in the campus. Special attention was given to the benefits of interaction, such as networking. The study also looked at the issue of segregation according to ethnic background, students' shared values, public opinions regarding ethnic integration, and students' commitment to nation state and nation building. Data on the above was generated from focus group interviews, brainstorming sessions, observation and a postal questionnaire survey.



*Series Editor*  
Morshidi Sirat

*Editor*  
Mansor Mohd. Noor

# Announcement

## International Higher Education Policy Research and Management Forum 2006: Higher Education in the Asia Pacific and Networked Society

Date: 8-11 November 2006

Venue: Universiti Sains Malaysia, Penang, Malaysia

### Objectives

- To provide an opportunity for higher education policy researchers and administrators to discuss issues pertaining to higher education that are of importance in their respective countries.
- To deliberate on higher education issues on a multi-country basis such as Japan-Malaysia and Japan-Australia-Vietnam.

### Themes

- Interconnected knowledge and research: research policy and directions and the dilemmas for Australia, Malaysia and other partners in the Asia Pacific.
- Connecting with the environment: higher education, the environment and sustainability.
- Networking and linking to broader knowledge community: links of lifelong learning, "second chance" learning in adult education.
- Maintaining the standard of higher education in the Asia Pacific: quality assurance of transnational education.
- Interconnecting global communities: ICT and emerging technologies of learning.
- Interconnections and global diversity: intercultural implications emerging from internationalisation for teaching/research.
- Governance and leadership in higher education.
- Professionalism in teaching and leadership.
- Gender and inclusion in higher education research in the Asia Pacific.
- Networks, funding, resourcing and the governance of higher education in the Asia Pacific: private exchange or public goods, public corporation of private enterprises.

### Target Participants

Academicians, researchers, policy makers/  
administrators/managers at the sub-ministerial level and  
post-graduate students.

### Closing Date for Abstract Submission

31st May 2006

### Closing Date for Full Paper Submission

31st August 2006

### For more information please contact:

Organising Chairman

Professor Morshidi Sirat

Tel: 0604-6590534 / E-mail morshidi@usm.my,

morshidi2000@yahoo.com

### Registration Fees

#### *Local Participants*

Early Registration RM300.00

Late Registration RM350.00

Students RM200.00

#### *Participants from Overseas*

Early Registration USD150.00

Late Registration USD200.00

Students USD100.00

<http://www.usm.my/Hed.forum>

**CALL FOR PARTICIPATION AND PAPER PRESENTATION**

## Guidelines on Submission of Manuscripts

1. Manuscripts should be written in English, typed using Times New Roman 12 point font, and double spaced on only one side of A4 size paper with ample left and right margins on Microsoft Word.
2. The length of the manuscripts should not exceed 1000 words. An abstract of about 150 words should be included.
3. Authors are responsible for obtaining permission to use any published material. The publisher shall not be held responsible for the use of such material.
4. Citations in the text should include the author's last name and date of publication, e.g. (Ashton, 2001). If quotations are used, page numbers should be indicated, e.g. (Ashton, 2001:30).
5. Endnotes may be used.
6. Include tables and figures within the text. Number tables and figures consecutively.
7. The reference list should be arranged in alphabetical order and should include only works cited in the text.

Examples:

Yule, G. (1996). Pragmatics. Oxford: Oxford University Press. Wolfe, R.N. & Johnson, S.D. (1995). Personality as a predictor of college performance. *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, 2., 177-185.

Watkins, D. (1998). A cross-cultural look at perceptions of good teaching: Asia and the West. In J.J.F. Forest (Ed.), University teaching: International perspectives. New York: Garland.

8. All submissions should include a cover page containing the title, name of author(s), designation, affiliation, mailing/E-mail address and telephone/fax number. A brief biographical note of the author(s) should also be included.
9. Manuscripts submitted must not be those already published or those which have been offered for publication elsewhere.
10. Manuscripts received will be acknowledged but not returned.
11. Submission of a manuscript will mean that the author agrees to transfer copyright of his/her article to the publisher if and when the article is published. Authors who wish to send their articles to be published else-where should seek the written agreement of the publisher.
12. Manuscripts may be sent via e-mail attachment or via post together with the diskette.

## CALLING FOR NEWS BRIEFS AND SHORT ARTICLES

Bulletin of Higher Education Research welcomes short articles, opinions, comments and information about people and events related to higher education in public and private institutions in Malaysia and abroad. Please address your correspondence to:

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