

Schools shouldn't just focus on grades — Professor

on 05 December 2012.

KUCHING: Schools that focus on producing top scorers are likely depriving students of other aspects of human development, stated Prof Dr Lau Seng.

The Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS) Centre for Technology Transfer and Consultancy director said an overemphasis on public examination grades had transformed schools into factories, which manufactured robots to answer past year examination questions.

“Students are assessed merely by their grades from examinations. Schools are graded based on their students’ examination grades, teachers’ career promotions are also dependent on students’ grades, and scholarships are given based on their individual grades.

“Such emphasis has resulted in other aspects of human development being largely neglected,” he said in an email recently when commenting on Malaysia’s current education system and its impact on future generations.

Lau is one of seven speakers who will share their expertise during the KTS Education Forum on Dec 12 at KTS Garden in Pending.

He said when English was abolished as the medium of instruction in schools, the standard of English among Malaysians dropped drastically.

“This made us less competitive in the era of globalisation. Realising this, we introduced the teaching of Mathematics and Science in English in the hope of addressing the language issue.

“However, we did not prepare enough competent teachers to conduct classes in English. Hence the delivery failed and now we revert back to the original arrangement.”

The victims of such frequent policy changes, Lau stressed, were students and the country’s economic competitiveness.

He pointed out that it is not unheard of for locally-trained students to be less employable compared to their counterparts trained abroad.

“Previously, our local graduates were of comparable standing with some reputable western institutions of higher learning. Now, the gap has grown much wider just like the receding Arctic ice.

“If we maintain the current policies, the gap is going to grow even larger. Therefore, we should start employing credible and competent teaching staff both for schools and universities.”

Lau suggested that the current school curriculum be reviewed to focus more on holistic human development.

“This means that our curriculum should be more broad-based with a good balance between core subject knowledge and soft skills development.

“At the school and first degree levels, the courses should not be too specialised. Specialisation should be conducted at postgraduate level.”

He added that theoretical training alone was inadequate as the young require good hands-on learning experience.

Lau called for determination and resourcefulness to follow through each proposed and adopted policy instead of hastily introducing new policies.

“As a whole, our education system is better than most developing countries in the world. However, we are not on par yet with the developed world.

“We need the political will to make a true transformation of our education system and some necessary policies may not be the popular type and they need strong courage and passion to implement.”

On Dec 12, Lau will highlight the main outcomes of Malaysia’s education policies as well as put forward some points for thought with regards to the current system.

He will touch on five areas: ‘The Malaysian Education Policy’, ‘The Malaysian Education Plan or Blueprints’, ‘The Implementation of the Malaysian Education System’, ‘Monitoring of Key Performance Indicators’ and ‘Review of the Education System’.

For enquires on the KTS Education Forum, call Avril Soon or James Chia on 082-345033 during office hours

Source : [Borneo Post Online](#)