

Something isn't right about English, rues DPM

MalaysiaKini.com

Dec 9, 2014

Something is wrong if graduates spend almost two decades learning the English language but it fails to yield results, Education Minister Muhyiddin Yassin says.

He is perplexed why Malaysian students, despite spending a better part of their education learning English, are unable to converse in the language after they graduate.

Muhyiddin, who is also deputy prime minister, was speaking at the launch of a dialogue session on the Malaysian Education Blueprint (MEB) on higher education.

"I am puzzled why our children after completing pre-school, primary school, secondary school and all the way to tertiary education still cannot converse in English.

"I don't think the numbers of hours are sufficient if you take into account those 17, 18 or 19 years of learning. Something is not quite right there," he said.

"What's the purpose of learning the language if you cannot communicate?" he said.

He then pointed out several causes that could have influence the the inability of some graduates to speak the language. However, he stressed that Bahasa Melayu should not be blamed for it.

"Maybe it's the quality of our teachers, or the disinterest of the students or maybe it's because of the overwhelming learning in Bahasa Melayu.

"But I don't think we should blame Bahasa Melayu as a factor," he added.

Muhyiddin said that a language immersion programme whose curriculum is focused on teaching the students English is direly needed.

He told the crowd of his experience in a high school in Perth, Australia where students who are non-native speakers are physically moved into another "special" school, whose main purpose is to teach the students English for a year.

This kind of immersion programme is highly beneficial, he said, adding that not only Australian schools provide such a programme.

"These past few years, we have been trying to improve the learning and teaching of English. We've started it in pre-school, where the curriculum has been improved and new content have been added.

“But the problem is, the teachers themselves are not fluent in the language,” he elaborated, adding this is where the immersion programme plays a part.

Muhyiddin asserted that he personally would prefer to have Malaysian schools implement the 8am to 4pm single-session schooling system where the English language can be directly focused on.

“If only all the schools in Malaysia are conducted in a single session, which is one of my hopes, we will then extend the schooling hours to include more English programmes,” he said.

Copyright © 1999-2012 Mkini Dotcom Sdn. Bhd
Source <http://www.malaysiakini.com/news/282956>