

Making of the creative student

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KUALA LUMPUR: The school environment is set to undergo a drastic change. It may even resemble a university in three years — that is if the National Education Blueprint 2006-2010 is successfully implemented.

Instead of doing heaps of homework, primary and secondary students will be encouraged to do their work using PowerPoint presentations in class. There will be more interactive work.

The Education Ministry's Chief Inspector of Schools, Alimuddin Mohd Dom, said yesterday this was one of the ways to make students more creative and innovative.

"Students will be attending more public speaking classes so that they can build on their confidence and communications skills," he said.

For instance, he said, students would have to talk on various topics during public speaking classes to brush up on their language and presentation skills.

"When fully implemented, it (the blueprint) will result in a massive shift in the education system with primary and secondary students becoming more confident and creative.

"The blueprint will help produce well-rounded students. By

the time they enter universities, they will have no problems adapting to the system there, and later on in the job market.

"If the blueprint is properly implemented, tuition will not be necessary as the improved education system would ensure excellent students are produced," he added.

The ministry's director of Education Planning and Research Division Datuk Dr Salleh Hassan said students from secondary and primary schools were known to be dependent and rigid.

"That will change once the blueprint is implemented. We want them to be more independent."

Citing an example, he said the blueprint would produce students who will be on par with those from Singapore.

"I take Singapore as an example since it is our closest neighbour. Compare their Form Five students to ours, and you will find that they differ in many ways. They are more international in their thinking, while ours are not.

"In five years, I think this will change and more of our students will be on par with them."

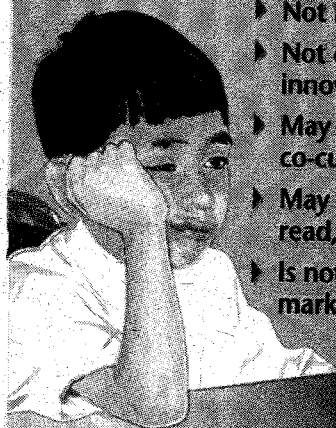
Salleh also said that the gap between rural and urban schools would be reduced once better facilities, as promised in the blueprint, were made available.

The National Education Blueprint is aimed at bringing about a major change in the education system. Below we compare the characteristics of a student today and what the blueprint promises in 2010.

The student in 2007

- ▶ Lacks confidence
- ▶ Lacks communication skills
- ▶ Lacks leadership skills
- ▶ May not be able to speak proper English
- ▶ Too dependent on tuition
- ▶ Does not mix freely with students of other races
- ▶ Studies in a very exam-oriented environment

- ▶ Not IT-savvy
- ▶ Not creative and innovative
- ▶ May not take part in co-curricular activities
- ▶ May not know how to read, write and count
- ▶ Is not very marketable



The student in 2010

- ▶ Self-confident
- ▶ Able to communicate well
- ▶ Has leadership skills
- ▶ Able to speak good English
- ▶ Won't be dependent on tuition
- ▶ Mixes freely with students of other races
- ▶ Studies in an environment that is not too exam-oriented
- ▶ Is IT-savvy
- ▶ Is creative and innovative.
- ▶ Takes part in more co-curricular activities
- ▶ Has no problems with reading, writing or counting.
- ▶ More marketable



What they say



Mohd Firdaus Azmi, 14, student, Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan La Salle, Brickfields:

"The size of classes should be reduced so that teachers can give better attention to the students. More pedestrian bridges are certainly a good way to ensure the safety of students when crossing busy roads."



Bidin Othman, 42, driver, Brickfields:

"If the size of classes is reduced, students will get the same attention from their teachers. But to penalise parents who do not co-operate in tackling their children's drug problem is not appropriate because sometimes parents might overlook their children's social life and activities. It is hard to follow up on our tech-savvy kids these days."



Nurul Umira Azali, 14, student, Sekolah Menengah Vivekananda:

"Smaller classes are good for the students so that the teachers can give attention to the whole class. To add more vocational subjects is good, but it also depends on the student's interest."



Foo Suan Pooi, 54, retired bank officer:

"The government should introduce more single-session schools soon. It is inconvenient for parents to fetch their children, especially when they have extra co-curricular activities in the morning, and their school session only starts in the afternoon. It is also not safe for children in the afternoon sessions as schools finish late in the evening."