

**Teachers Are A Catalyst In Producing High Integrity Individuals: DPM  
Bernama  
April 10, 2012**

KUALA LUMPUR, April 10 (Bernama) -- Deputy Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin said the fundamental function of the national education, that is to produce ethical and high morality individuals, should be upheld to ensure that the country will not get trapped in morality crisis in the future.

Muhyiddin, who is Education Minister, said in facing the onslaught of globalisation and in its quest to become a developed nation, the country should continue to uphold its educational objective as spelled out in the National Education Philosophy.

He said teachers played a major role in moulding the character of their students.

"I believe, if we hold on to these values, we will be able to avoid being trapped in morality crisis in the future," he said.

This would be a challenge for Malaysia in its quest to become a developed nation in its own mould, he said when closing the Inter-Teacher's Education Institutes' Integrity Debate Competition here Tuesday.

Referring to the experience in several Western countries, Muhyiddin said, there had been a new line of thinking among Western economists who felt that giving too much emphasis on materialistic values and economic competitiveness would leave moral values and ethics -- which are the hallmark of a prosperous society -- in neglect.

"Some say that the fall of Lehman Brothers and Merrill Lynch in the United States was not due to the failure of Harvard, Yale or Stanford to produce economic and financial experts to work for the giant corporations of the world.

"Instead, the fall of these firms was largely due to the failure of economic practitioners to create a transparent, responsible and ethical management culture," he said.

Indeed, he said, the society relied on teachers to produce knowledgeable and skilled individuals and at the same time imbibe them with noble values.

"In other words, the duty of a teacher does not stop at sharpening the mental prowess of students but also to educate them to become individuals with noble values," he said.

Mohd Rafee Mohamad from the Teknik Institute of Teacher's Education emerged champion in the debate competition and came away with RM3,000 in prize money. Mohd Syafiq A. Ghani of the Perlis campus and Mohd Fikri Mat Arit of the Islamic education campus won the second and third places respectively.

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Source: <http://www.bernama.com/bernama/v6/bm/newsindex.php?id=658229>