

**Relationship Between ICT And Education Remains Contested - Muhyiddin
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KUALA LUMPUR, May 27 (Bernama) -- Education Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin today reminded the people on the contesting relationship between information and communication technology (ICT) and education.

"ICT does make a difference. And I think, this is our stand. We cannot afford to take a chance with the future of Malaysia," he said.

Muhyiddin said that over 30 years of research had not yet concluded that ICT had impacted education.

"Instead, it is very much correlational and this is recognised even by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (Unesco).

"In 2011, their publication stated that the relationship between ICT and student learning was more complicated than one based on mere availability or use -- what matters is how ICT is used and what is tested."

Muhyiddin said this in his speech for Digital Education Show Asia, here, today. The speech text was read out by Deputy Education Minister I Datuk Mary Yap Kian Ching.

In the speech, Muhyiddin also related the value and danger of 'digital nannies' where parents gave tablets to their children as young as four to take time off from the kids.

"In the current trend, children as young as four years old have iPads and other tablets which parents have given to them as a learning tool. Children's uptake of these tablets have been phenomenal; they use these devices without having to learn from their parents. They just pick up and use them.

"However, I contend that this trend has both value and danger. Though learning can occur using these devices but more often than not, they are used as distractors, filling a gap where parents require 'time off' - digital nannies if you will," he added.

Muhyiddin said many reports had stated that children played games and interacted online without supervision which had led to children being addicted to these devices.

He said this gap between learning and consuming was a paradox.

"At one end, we would like to see that children learn with these devices but at the same time, we want them to consume content and applications responsibly and ethically.

"Thus, I believe digital literacy is important as it ensures responsibility and ethics as part and parcel of being a netizen in Malaysia," he said.

Muhyiddin said he was keenly aware that ICT and technology changed at a faster rate than change at the school level.

"Education thus needs to be flexible in incorporating ICT in schools. I also fear that the rate of technological change may result in teachers who are perpetually novices at technology.

"Other dangers such as social and ethical challenges need to be addressed. A coherent and structured implementation needs to accommodate these changes as well as support the inclusion and participatory nature of technology and society," he added.

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