

**SPEECH BY TUN DR MAHATHIR BIN MOHAMAD AT 2nd  
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11.00 AM**

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**“RE-DESIGNING PEDAGOGY: TRANSFORMATIVE –  
VALUE BASED EDUCATION**

1. I would like to thank the organisers for this invitation to speak or give my views on “Re-designing Pedagogy: (for) Transformative, Value based on Education”.

2. Education is about imparting knowledge to children and young people. We have categorized knowledge into a number of fields or subjects. The task of the teacher is to fill the minds of the children or students with as much knowledge about these subjects as possible. We believe that with this knowledge the children would somehow be able to make a good living when they grow up.

3. Later we realised that for special work special knowledge would be needed. So tertiary institutions were set up for specialised knowledge which are relevant to the work they may have to do. Some of the people with these specialised knowledge do well, some don't. Some unfortunately cannot even find employment.

4. For many employers, apart from educational qualifications, the need is for people of good character. The education system and the teachers generally are not concerned with developing good character. As a result no attention is paid to instilling good values to build good character. We assume that students know the correct values that they must have.

5. There is a miss-match here. The teachers focus largely on giving knowledge so as to pass examinations. The employers are concerned also with the character of the applicants they wish to employ.

6. Normally parents are expected to bring up their children with the right values, i.e. the values which would enable the child to grow up into a person of good character who would avoid what is bad and do what is good. We assume that parents know what is good and what is bad. But we cannot be sure that they do.

7. Today both parents may be working and cannot spend quality time with their children. So they cannot be expected to teach by precepts and by example the proper values and qualities that their children should have.

8. If we want the children to have good values and character we have to give this task to the pedagogue – the teachers.

9. I do not know whether moral and religious education in Malaysia are adequate or not but there seems to be a growing deterioration in the character of people these days. Corruption is rampant, petty thievery is more common and serious crimes seem to be on the increase. We are constantly being asked to legislate for new laws and increase the punishment for all kinds of crimes.

10. It would seem that the education system has not succeeded in producing the kind of law-abiding upright citizen that we hoped for. Even if they don't break the law, their attitude towards work and sense of responsibility leaves much to be desired. They don't seem to have good worked ethics.

11. If we care to look at the nations of the world we would notice that some do well, some merely survive and some fail. The performance of these nations reflects the quality of their people, their culture and value system. The people in successful countries invariably are more law-abiding, and have good work ethics. Their culture seems to promote all that is good in human nature.

12. On the other hand the failed countries are usually inhabited by people with scant regard for the laws and are possessed of poor work ethics.

13. For example Korea and Japan two East Asian countries which were totally devastated by war but have not only recovered and are able to compete successfully with the developed countries of the West, including those which defeated them.

14. It is this observation that led to the Look East Policy. While we were interested in the development models these countries present, but more importantly we wanted to learn their work ethics and value system. Good work ethics and value system are not monopolised by these people only. Other people can instill and promote the good value systems and work ethics of the successful countries if they so wish.

15. Malaysians have generally accepted the wisdom of the Look East Policy. While we seem willing to adopt the values and ethics prevailing in these two eastern countries, we have not really made a study of these values in a systematic way. Obviously not all the values are good. We need to distinguish between the good and the bad. Having determined what constitute their good values we must help to instil them in our people.

16. For example if we study the culture, the work ethics and the value system of the Japanese people we will find that they are very disciplined, diligent, loyal and dedicated to their work and have a strong sense of shame.

17. Discipline involves restraining oneself so that self-interest take second one place to doing what is right. This means working hard and diligently because the work is more important than one's need to rest or to do other things. Loyalty to the nation is also accompanied with loyalty to the institution or the business one is working for.

18. The Japanese have a strong sense of shame. So strong is this sense of shame that they used to commit suicide if they fail in their tasks. Today they don't go to such extremes. But they are so concerned about not being shamed that they try as hard as they can to be successful in their work, to produce the best product, to strive for quality.

19. The Koreans too have a strong sense of pride which drives them to acquire knowledge and skills so as to be able to catch up with other countries, to have pride in their products, to grow their economy faster than their competitors. Today Korean products can compete with other countries' products and very quickly Korea has become a developed country.

20. These are rough examples of the role of culture, value system and work ethics in ensuring the success of these two countries. But if we really believe in them we need to study them more thoroughly. Academics must research and analyse these values and their effect on the performance of the people and the nations.

21. If we think the Look East Policy can benefit us, we should be more systematic in the adoption and promotion of the model, the values and the cultures involved. But we have not done so nor have we included them in the training of our teachers. We need to do this if we expect our teachers to pass on their knowledge about values and ethics to our children. Then and then only will we have the full benefit from our Look East Policy.

22. In redesigning pedagogy we must put more stress on character building, in instilling good values and ethics, in explaining why good values are good and bad values are bad. Today's generation are unwilling to merely accept what is taught to them. They need to know why things are good or bad.

23. And as I said earlier the process begins with the training of teachers. They must be taught the right values which they must promote and why some values are bad. These must be illustrated with real-life stories so they will be more effective in transforming the character of the children they will teach.

24. Having prepared the teachers, the next move is to give sufficient time for moral and religious teachings in schools. I am aware that moral values and religious knowledge are being taught. But we need to re-examine the content so as to get the best results. New text books may need to be produced

25. Education as mentioned earlier is truly about preparing the children and students to face the challenges of adult life. The education policy must therefore take into consideration the realities of life the students will have to face when they grow up.

26. At the risk of being boring I would like to stress once again the importance of English. We all are proud of our own language, our national language. But the reality is that without good command of English work in an industrialised nation cannot be done well. This is because English is the language of industry. Manuals, guide-book, instruction of complex procedures are in English. We cannot expect instructors to communicate intricate things in a language they do not understand. New kind of work, new technologies and new products are being introduced all the time. They come to us largely in the English language. We do not have the capacity to translate all these.

27. May I once again appeal for the teaching of science and mathematics in English? Let us be realistic. Malay is not yet the language of science and mathematics. Yet science and mathematics are now the most important knowledge we must have, if we wish to make progress and to become a developed country.

28. If we do not have a good command of English, especially scientific and technical English we will not be able to keep up with the advances taking place in this field all the time. We will not be employable even. Most of the jobless graduates are not proficient in English.

29. It would be sad if we do well in school but we are rejected for employment because we have poor or inadequate command of English.

30. We need to be pragmatic. The language nationalist may think that nationalism is about being able to speak the national language well. That is wrong. Nationalism is about becoming successful in all fields of life, being able to contribute towards the growth and development of your country and your race, being respected and admired by others, being leaders in whatever fields you enter and being able to stand tall. That is true nationalism.

31. If we wish to redesign pedagogy we must promote good values as a base for the educational transformation and we must have good command of today's language of knowledge – English.

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