

Innovation, paradigm shift essential in schools – expert

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SEMPORNA: School management and administration have to undergo constant innovation and paradigm shifts in line with the objectives of the national education philosophy, according to a local educator.

Dr Muhamad Suhaimi, a lecturer with Universiti Malaysia Sabah's (UMS) School of Education and Social Development, said this is necessary for improving the teaching and learning process.

At the same time, constant rejuvenation also helps avoid school administrations from becoming obsolete.

"The main aspect to be looked into is how the management can be improved without waiting for directives or circulars from the top.

"The innovative and creative management will always think of creating a conducive and stimulating working environment for the school staff.

"All management aspects that are considered no longer relevant or that further complicate the bureaucratic process should be reviewed.

"It is important that the matters agreed upon at meetings are implemented and do not remain on paper only," he added.

Dr Muhamad said these points are detailed in his working paper, entitled "Rethinking Education Management: Innovative and Futuristic Issues", which he recently delivered during the Education Organisation Dynamic Seminar (SDOP) in Semporna.

The seminar, organised with the cooperation of the Semporna District Education Department, was conducted by the Political



Muhamad Suhaimi

Secretary to the Rural and Regional Development Ministry, Datuk Jaujan Sambakong.

Dr Muhamad said the school administration's approach often depends upon the administrators' ingenuity and could change due to time, the situation or the staff.

Further, when delegating to any parties a particular duty, those who delegate should be confident of the party and place their full trust in them.

In this context, the 'empowerment' concept is emphasized, rather than being 'overpowering', so that subordinates will carry out their tasks and responsibilities with full dedication and autonomy.

The second aspect that should be given emphasis in school management and administration is related to clinical supervision, guidance and constant monitoring

of the teaching and learning process in the classroom. According to Dr Muhamad, the innovative and futuristic elements coming to school management and administration are inevitable, whether one likes it or not.

Novice teachers need guidance and advice from 'expert teachers' or 'otai' to help them mature in education, as they lack experience, though they may have an excellent academic background.

"By combining the knowledge, skills and efforts of the 'old faces' and 'new faces', only then can the teaching and learning process in the schools be improved to attain excellence.

"The brainstorming between both sides will help unleash innovation and futuristic views in the teaching and learning process," he said.

The third important aspect in increasing innovation in the school administration and management is human resources - the administrator, teachers, support staff and students.

The human resource aspect is closely linked with the comfortable and harmonious school surroundings that will contribute to the excitement, or 'the pleasure of working' for the staff and 'the pleasure of studying' for the students.

"Schools are the second home for its staff and students. If all of them are receptive to the slogan "my house my heaven", then why not "my school my heaven"?

According to Dr Muhamad, the innovative and futuristic elements coming to school management and administration are inevitable,

whether one likes it or not.

However, the innovation that he refers to was not inventing something new. Instead, it was the renewal in the management philosophy in the schools, while being futuristic here referred to keeping up with the times.

A school administrator and a manager should be able to identify any problem or difficulties ahead and should have the solutions ready at hand.

"Then rises the question of how to become innovative and futuristic? Among the steps to be taken is to get out from the comfort zone.

According to Dr Muhamad, to be an innovative and futuristic manager or administrator, the school staff should consider all work or assignments as a devotion, and not something of a daily routine.

Teachers, too, have to continue with their studies and enhance their knowledge up to a doctorate level, and their main aim should be to learn more, enhance their skills and not just to receive a degree or in the hopes of gaining material rewards, including promotions.

"Believe it or not, if we learn for the sake of only earning a degree, knowledge will not favour us. Therefore, all knowledge and skills gained should be applied at the workplace after completing the studies for the benefit of their students," he said. - Bernama