

All teachers are mini scholars

I totally concur with Associate Professor Dr Vishalache Balakrishnan's view on the importance of having reflective educators.

In her letter to the editor dated on 20 Oct 2022 ('Reflective teachers an asset to the education system'), Dr Vishalache reflected on 3 key challenges of nurturing more reflective teachers, namely (1) effective assessment of students' learning, (2) provision of a good research culture, and (3) willingness to embark on a research-informed teaching career.

Building further on Dr Vishalache's insights, all educators should identify themselves as mini scholars. Renown educationist, Professor David Hargreaves also sees teaching as a research-based profession. In his very own words, 'I have no doubt that if were (if teaching were research-based), teaching would be more effective and more satisfying' [1].

Education is an ever-evolving business. Time changes and so do people. Therefore, all teachers should actively seek out what works best for their students.

I understand that most teachers do not have the capacity nor resources (time, fund or research skills) to carry out independent research. But all teachers of all levels should at least have a scholar mindset, that their teaching practice is guided by the latest research in education. This can be achieved via life-long learning.

As such, all schools and education institutions should encourage exchanges of effective teaching ideas among teachers. A national guideline can also be penned by MOE to nurture more reflective educators in a systematic way.

Talking about harsh reality, people are most incentivised to conduct research if they are being rewarded for their hard work. So, making sure good teachers are being recognised and appreciated is the first step of encouraging research culture.

Very often, we talk about revolutionising our education, and raising teaching standard is undeniably one of the top priorities. I deeply believe by nurturing more reflective teachers, we shall see a brighter education in Malaysia.

Dr James Woon Sy-Keen, PhD, Fellow of the Higher Education Academy (FHEA, UK)

Lecturer of Biomedical Sciences, Newcastle University Medicine Malaysia,

Iskandar Puteri, Johor.

Reference:

[1] David H. Hargreaves (1996), Teaching as a research-based profession: possibilities and prospects