

MASTERING SKILLS

Prepare school-leavers to enter workplace

NOT all students who have finished secondary school want to continue their studies at a higher level. Some may simply jump into the working environment.

Knowing the challenges that we face today, are we sure that they are properly equipped to enter the workplace?

Fast-growing technologies and socio-economic development have brought new challenges to students and society, making their lives and the workplace more complex and challenging.

School-leavers need to be better equipped with skills to survive in the workplace environment.

Unless our children are equipped with innovative skills that enable them to adapt to changes, they will be unprepared to meet the

said challenges.

There is no doubt that the 4M (*membaca, menulis, mengira and menaakul*) approach in school is essential, but we have to prepare our children with basic soft skills and knowledge to enable them to adapt to current demands.

Teaching basic career skills should not be similar to the way normal subjects are taught. The concept of career awareness should be taught across all subjects in school.

For example, when teaching Mathematics or a language, we need to find ways to relate the content to the real situation in the workplace, where the knowledge and skills would be applied.

Besides that, we can also have a transition programme that offers students a simulated workplace environment, as early exposure is of

paramount importance. The basic skills taught should include communication and information technology skills, in addition to 4M.

To a great extent, providing our children with exposure to the workplace environment will better equip them for their future.

Our children should leave the education system ready to spearhead their lives with the career, attitude, passion, skills and experience as demanded by stakeholders. Business and industry sectors may not expect the system to produce all-rounded skilled workers, but at the minimum, they want prospective workers to be able to cope with the demands and challenges associated with entry-level positions.

Therefore, school-leavers need to demonstrate good literacy and numeracy skills, which include Mathematics and computer skills. The ability to master foreign languages is an added value for students.

The business and industry sectors have repeatedly told us that they want school-leavers to demonstrate passion, discipline and the ability to learn.

In today's world, there are no more excuses. To secure a place in the competitive job market, school-leavers have no choice, but to acquire — and master — both soft and hard skills.

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