

PREPARE EDUCATORS FOR E-LEARNING

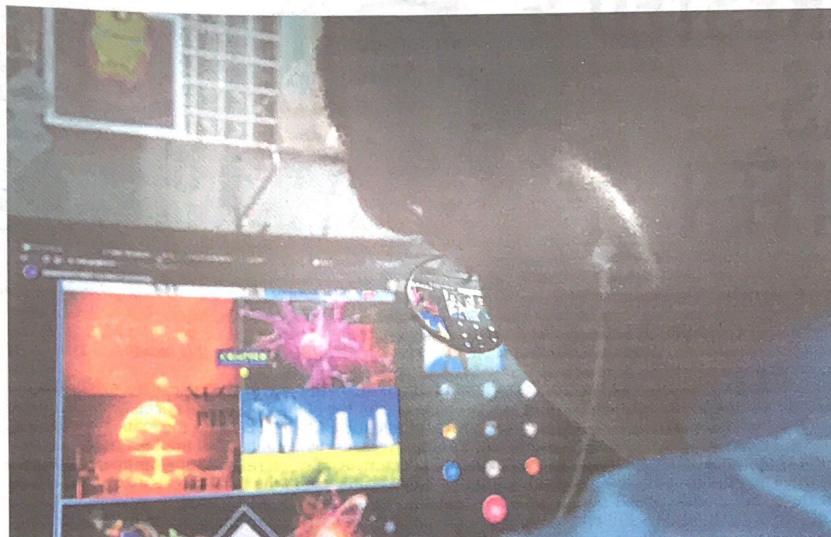
RECENTLY, Higher Education Minister Datuk Seri Dr Noraini Ahmad had mapped six strategies for higher education institutions as part of efforts to meet this year's challenges.

She said local higher education institutions had to transition to online learning, e-learning or at the very least maintain a mix of in-person and online learning. Unfortunately, many higher education institutions and their staff were ill-prepared to make the shift and had to do it for months.

Such a shift requires educators to learn, relearn and unlearn teaching methods. This is especially so for those accustomed to face-to-face teaching.

Hence, there is an urgent need to prepare academic and administrative staff and students on online learning. Noraini had stressed the need for higher learning institutes to boost their teaching staff capacity to ensure effective online learning. She expressed the desire to see the "classroom of the future" be an integral feature of such institutions.

Academic staff usually have little time at hand. So, the best option is to get them to follow a series of short online courses on online teaching. With this in mind, five online micro-courses are being designed and developed to equip educators with the knowledge and skills to teach online. The five micro-courses are online learning theory, tools and technologies for online learning,



Students will benefit if teachers can enhance online teaching skills by taking short online courses. BERNAMA PIC

developing and curating content for online learning, pedagogical strategies for online learning and rethinking assessment for online learning.

They cover the spectrum of online learning from conception, implementation to evaluation sufficient, and seek to provide a theoretical framework for the implementation of online learning.

Technology alone is insufficient to ensure the successful implemen-

tation of online learning. It has to be accompanied by an in-depth understanding of learning sciences and pedagogical strategies.

Few educators in higher education institutions have any form of pedagogical training. Most of them are employed to teach based on their expertise and qualification in a discipline (such as chemistry, hydrology and marketing).

The five micro-courses leverage

on the Learning Revolution, which brings a new way of learning via the convergence of Internet technologies, digital content and devices.

The micro-courses take into consideration students in the physical and cyber worlds. Generation Y learners grew up when the Internet was still maturing. They may be pursuing postgraduate programmes today.

Meanwhile, Gen Z learners were born in a world that has been com-

pletely connected by the Internet. They may be pursuing undergraduate programmes and are unable to imagine what life is like without Internet access. We should be cognisant of Generation Alpha students, who are waiting to enter higher education institutions.

Noraini mentioned about the Malaysia Research and Education Network Operation Centre (MYREN) supporting online learning. As the success of online learning is dependent on good digital content, MYREN can play a role in curating digital content (especially in Bahasa Malaysia) and license them as Creative Commons. This move will make them available as open educational resources that could be re-mixed, re-written and distributed to students while avoiding any copyright infringement.

I am designing and developing the five micro-courses in-between my regular job. Here, I share my two decades of experience of delivering online distance learning for diploma, undergraduate and postgraduate students.

Perhaps for each completed micro-course, the participants could be awarded a Certificate of Achievement. Upon completion of the five micro-courses, a Professional Certificate in Online Learning could be awarded to them.

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