

Headline	CCE helps develop soft skills, patriotism		
MediaTitle	New Straits Times		
Date	11 Sep 2015	Color	Full Color
Section	Letters	Circulation	74,711
Page No	18	Readership	240,000
Language	English	ArticleSize	444 cm <sup>2</sup>
Journalist	DR VISHALACHE BALAKRISHNAN	AdValue	RM 15,305
Frequency	Daily	PR Value	RM 45,915



EDUCATION

# CCE helps develop soft skills, patriotism

**A**RE we aware that the subject of Civics and Citizenship Education (CCE) has died a natural death in all Malaysian primary schools?

When it was reintroduced in 2004, the then education minister announced its implementation and reasons for giving Citizenship Education a fresh curriculum. Focus of CCE was on knowledge, skills and values.

Moral Education teachers then complained that the subject and CCE were very similar. However, in reality it was not.

Moral Education was taught to only non-Muslims but CCE was taught to all students. Moral Education focused on moral thinking, moral feeling and moral action. CCE focused on knowledge, skills and values. Thus, the overlapping aspect here is values, but values in CCE is focused on nationhood and civic consciousness.

I was personally involved in the structuring of the CCE curriculum in early 2000, and saw great hope in students learning knowledge, skills and values as one collective group. Currently, value-based subjects like Islamic Studies and Moral Education are studied separately by Muslim and non-Muslim students.

When Citizenship Education was rebranded as CCE, there was hope that the subject would bring together children of different ethnicity and religion, to sit together and be educated based on the philosophy of CCE.

CCE was a core subject that was introduced in stages in all primary and secondary schools from Standard Four to Form Five.

Its aim was to develop students to become patriotic citizens, who can cooperate and collaborate towards working as a team, resolve conflicts without violence, love and protect nature and the environment, and progressively contribute towards the development of citizenship and the nation.

The teaching and learning were mainly focused on student centredness and hands-on activities.

CCE was a great stepping stone towards construction of soft skills among students, especially starting from primary school. There was an allocation of 10 hours outside the formal curriculum timetable for students to be involved and interact among themselves, the school, community and the nation.

Appropriate nation-building and community service-based projects were prepared for each standard so that what was learnt in

the classroom could be transformed into action during the 10-hour allocation. The Education Ministry allocated a certain budget for this special project.

If the implementation had been effective then, we would not have to specifically educate and inculcate university students with soft skills and effective communication strategies.

Primary students involved in CCE projects would have learnt the soft skills in a natural and authentic manner.

These skills would have developed and strengthened as students in secondary schools start involving themselves with more serious community service projects. Most importantly, there would have been a natural bridge between Muslim and non-Muslim students to come together and work on projects as one team, one nation.

Digital citizenship is creeping fast into our primary education system and we need sound CCE foundations for our students to withstand local and global challenges.

Happy Malaysia Day.

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