

Daily Express

INDEPENDENT NATIONAL NEWSPAPER OF EAST MALAYSIA 
Established since 1963

Bring back teaching Civics in schools for all students

Published on: Tuesday, October 06, 2015

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

When the subject was first reintroduced in 2004, the Education Minister then announced its implementation and reasons for giving Citizenship Education a fresh curriculum.

The focus was on knowledge, skills and values. Teachers who were teaching Moral Education complained that both the subjects were very similar.

However, in reality it was not.

Moral Education was taught to only non-Muslim students, but CCE was taught to all students in school.

Moral Education focused on moral thinking, moral feeling and moral action. CCE focused on knowledge, skills and values. Thus the overlapping aspect here was on values, But values in CCE 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 subjects like Islamic Studies and Moral Education are studied separately by Muslim and non-Muslim students.

So when Citizenship Education was rebranded as CCE, there was hope that this subject would bring together children of different ethnicities and religions to sit together and be educated based on the philosophy of CCE.

CCE was a core subject which was introduced in all primary and secondary schools from Year Four to Form Five.

The primary objective of CCE was to develop students to become patriotic citizens, who can co-operate and collaborate towards working as a team. It was also aimed at resolving conflicts without violence, protecting nature and the environment and progressively contributing towards the development of citizenship and the nation.

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

CCE was a great stepping stone towards the construction of soft skills among students, especially those at primary school.

There was an allocation of 10 hours outside the formal curriculum timetable for students to be involved and to interact among themselves, the school and the community.

Appropriate nation-building and community service-based projects were prepared for each level so that what was learnt in the classroom could be transformed into action during the allocated time.

The Education Ministry allocated a budget for this special project.

If the implementation was 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.

Such skills would have been strengthened as they moved on to secondary schools where they would have been involved with community service projects.

Most importantly, there would have been a natural bridge for students to come together and work on projects as one team.

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

Dr Vishalache Balakrishnan, Senior Lecturer, Faculty of Education, Universiti Malaya