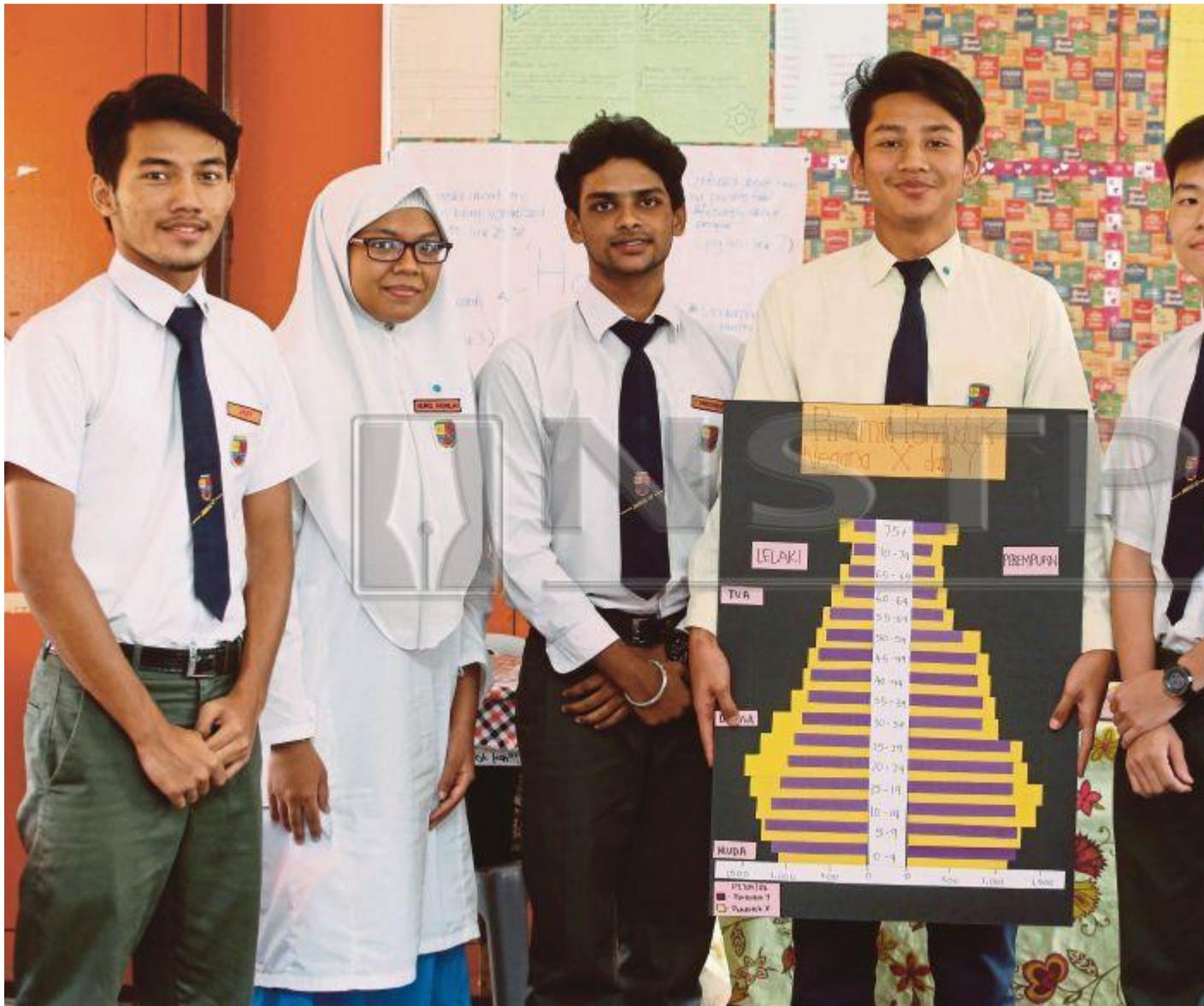


# NEW STRAITS TIMES

ESTABLISHED 1845

## Happy teachers lead to happy students



By **Dr Vishalache Balakrishnan** - January 28, 2019 @ 11:21pm

THE Education Ministry is embarking on new ways to ensure that school is fun and meaningful for students and stakeholders.

However, there's little emphasis on teachers and school administrators. It takes a village to develop a child.

One of the suggestions in educational transformation is to include happiness as a school value and identify if students are happy in school.

I inject humour and real life situations into my lessons, be it humanity subjects at school or courses at university, or even in-house training for UM lecturers.

Humour lightens up teachers and students.

A positive environment is created and it makes everyone happy, regardless of the tasks of teaching and learning.

To ensure that students are happy in class, teachers have to spread happiness. Happiness cannot be expected in classrooms when there are threats and commands.

If we want students to become happy adults, research suggests that schools focus on students' wellbeing rather than academic success.

After decades of focusing on teaching and scoring, teachers may find it a challenge to focus on wellbeing.

Sonya Lyubomirsky, a happiness researcher, says characteristics of happiness include experiencing joy, contentment, positive wellbeing, and taking life as good, meaningful and worthwhile.

How many teachers feel these characteristics?

If they do not, then they cannot bring such an environment to their students.

In my years of teaching, I have always enjoyed being with happy teachers.

They are jovial and students enjoy being with them.

But if teachers are grumbling about not having finished teaching the syllabus, students are lazy, and the headmaster is too strict, chances are the same teachers are sad.

And the students will be stressed up with these teachers in class. Ultimately, the key to creating a happy and joyful class is to be ourselves.

When students see that teachers are genuine and accept them as they are, and not as a group of products that needs drilling to score excellent grades, students will respect and appreciate the teachers.

Just choosing to be a bit more carefree with students and allowing both sides to make mistakes, learn from each other, share funny incidents caring for each other make a happy class.

When teachers loosen up, so do students.

I love laughing out aloud in class and so do my students. And despite the occasional roars of laughter, they respect the "order" that I establish in the beginning of the year or course.

Happy students love to go to school.

They interact better and find life in school meaningful.

We want our students to be happy, but it has to start with us, the teachers.

Are we happy? Do we keep our spirits high?

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