The Star

Bringing the world to classrooms

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In rapt attention: Sobha (in yellow) guiding Malathi (third from right) and her team members during a group activity in Muar.

CHANGE in classroom outcomes starts with the teachers.

LEARN ENGLISH

Acknowledging the need to continuously upskill educators to effect positive change, three district education offices (PPDs) recently teamed up with Star Media Group to expose their teachers to the myriad possibilities that newspapers can bring to the English language classroom.

Hairiazlisyam Hashim was among 64 primary and secondary school teachers who attended The Star's Newspaper-in-Education (Star-NiE) teachers' workshop held at PPD Pekan in Pahang on July 23.

While the SK Permatang Keledang English language teacher is familiar with using newspapers as material in his lessons, he said the workshop injected "a lot of new ideas" on how to use them in a fun way.



Hairiazlisyam

“For example, we learnt to come up with sentences using the correct tenses based on pictures from newspapers.

“We also learnt to create our own news article based on a published one. And at the end of the workshop, we designed our own version of a front page for our newspaper,” he told StarEdu.

He said his students have benefited from newspaper learning.

“They learn vocabulary, sentence structures and tenses, to name a few. Besides, newspapers come with colourful pictures,” he said.

New to using newspapers in the classroom, SK Jalan Kebun teacher Nanthini Satgunasingam got an eye-opener when she joined 37 other primary school teachers at the Star-NiE workshop held at PPD Klang in Selangor on July 26.



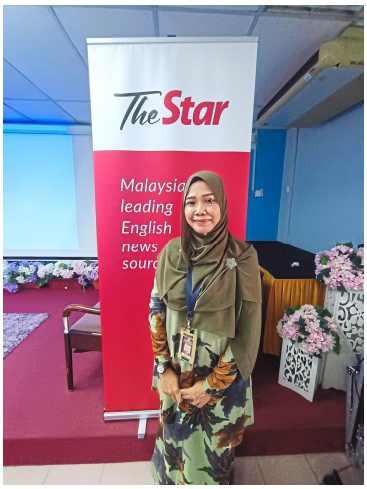
Nanthini

A decades-long Mathematics teacher, Nanthini, who has transitioned to teaching English, was pleasantly surprised to find newspapers to be a “valuable resource” for enhancing reading comprehension, vocabulary, and critical thinking skills.

“I now know how attractive and interesting newspapers can be as a teaching and learning tool. “Newspapers can capture students’ interests more effectively than traditional textbooks. Newspaper activities can also encourage collaboration among students.

“Group discussions, peer teaching and project-based learning centred around articles can foster teamwork and communication skills,” she said.

Expressing eagerness to incorporate newspapers in her lessons, she said activities like reading published articles can help students develop essential reading skills, such as skimming for main ideas, scanning for specific information, and understanding different text structures.



Zalinda

Agreeing, Language School Improvement Specialist Coach Plus (SISC+) Zalinda Rahmat from PPD Klang said using newspapers in the English language classroom is an effective way to improve students' language mastery.

"It allows teachers to uncover students' talents and encourage creativity in English language literacy.

"The workshop was enjoyable and very useful as it promoted collaboration, communication, critical thinking, creativity and value in English language teaching and learning.

"I hope the teachers will implement the knowledge and hands-on activities from the workshop to vary their lessons," she said.

Johor's PPD Muar officer Rahman@Abdul Rahman Selamat, who was at the Star-NiE workshop held at PPD Muar on July 31, also encouraged the 80 primary and secondary school teachers in attendance to apply what they had learnt with their students.

"Rural schools can benefit from utilising newspapers in teaching and learning.



Rahman

“Teachers can conduct a variety of engaging activities, while students can develop their listening, speaking, reading and writing skills, and obtain current news that can lead to more robust idea generation,” he said.

Echoing his sentiments, Language SISC+ Malathi Murugayah from PPD Muar said newspapers are a real-world language centre for students and a rich resource for teachers to carry out various activities.

The workshops in Pekan, Klang and Muar were conducted by Star-NiE freelance trainers Mercy Ratna Bye, Chang Siew Juen and Sobha Rani Dev, respectively – all retired English language teachers.

Since its inception in 1997, the Star-NiE programme has supported English language teaching and learning in primary and secondary schools nationwide.

Star-NiE activities are available in StarEdu on Sundays, and in StarLifestyle on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays.