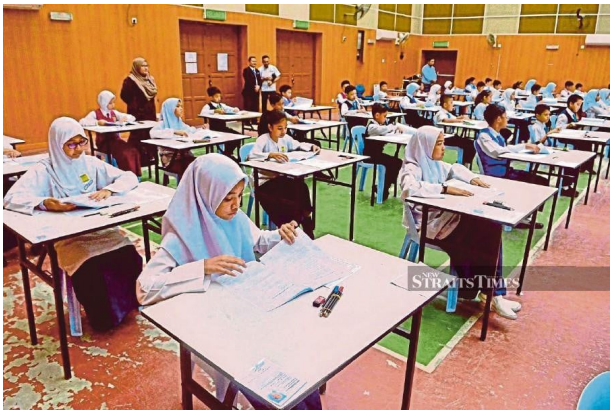
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Focus on project-based learning instead of traditional exams, says expert

By Amalia Azmi - September 23, 2024 @ 7:05pm



Educationist and Skolar Malaysia co-founder Dr Tazli Azizan said that problem- and project-based learning, portfolios or collaborative work are more aligned with the National Education Philosophy's goals. STR/FAIZ ANUAR

KUALA LUMPUR: The Education Ministry should focus on professional development and assessments for students, over traditional written examinations.

Educationist and Skolar Malaysia co-founder Dr Tazli Azizan suggested this approach, saying that problem- and project-based learning, portfolios or collaborative work are more aligned with the National Education Philosophy's goals.

"These assessments promote critical thinking, creativity and problem-solving, which are crucial for the future workforce.

"For these assessments to succeed, we must address structural issues, such as class size and teacher workload," he told the New Straits Times today.

He said large class sizes, impacting 13 per cent of the students, can hinder personalised teaching, while the heavy administrative load on teachers can limit their ability to implement innovative teaching strategies.

"The integration of technology, particularly with tools like generative artificial intelligence, provides a remarkable opportunity for educators.

"With the right training and support, teachers can leverage AI to enhance creative teaching practices and lessen administrative burdens, allowing them to focus more on

facilitating students' learning experiences rather than merely preparing them for exams," Tazli said.

He said reinstating the Ujian Pencapaian Sekolah Rendah (UPSR) and Pentaksiran Tingkatan 3 (PT3) tends to focus on memorisation and repeating facts, which fails to reflect the skills needed in today's world.

"One major con of bringing back these exams is that it may reinforce this outdated mode of assessment.

"The students are often evaluated solely on their ability to recall information under high-pressure conditions, rather than demonstrating deeper understanding, or critical thinking skills," he said.

However, he said there are valid concerns that the removal of standardised examinations might leave students, parents and educators without clear benchmarks for academic achievement.

For some, he said, examinations provide a structured way to assess progress, especially in larger class sizes.

He said personalised assessments can also be more challenging for teachers to implement.

Meanwhile, former education director-general Tan Sri Alimuddin Mohd Dom said the ministry's consideration to conduct a study to reinstate UPSR and PT3 is a positive step, as many believe it enhances education in this country.

"The previous removal of these examinations aimed to prevent students from being overly tied to exams.

"However, we also need assessments that maintain national standards. Both of these are important," he said.

Alimuddin said these examinations would help students identify their strengths and weaknesses, as they serve as a form of assessment.