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FULL 'STEAM' AHEAD

New Straits Times, Malaysia



INTERACTIVE EDUCATION

FULL 'STEAM' AHEAD

IN the 21st century, students and future graduates are expected to be equipped with transferable skills. The best educational experiences prepare learners for the real world, providing them the skills and knowledge to adapt to complex situations later in life.

Learners should be taught to think not only critically, but creatively too. Even history's greatest inventors would not have accomplished what they had without their less-than-conventional ideas.

STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics) education fills this gap, encouraging learners to think outside the box, hence changing the way they perceive and navigate the world. It can also help to nurture individuals who are better prepared to address complex global concerns.

Even more so if we hope to embrace the Fourth Industrial Revolution (IR4.0) and be well-prepared.

We need to boost our efforts in nurturing a skilled workforce, and STEAM education is a crucial component of this.

Evolving from STEM, the inclusion of arts helps recognise the field as being equally important to one's development, besides teaching the values of creativity, innovation and communication.

It also includes a broader range of subjects, like liberal arts, fine arts, performing arts, language, design and more, widening the learners' perspectives on a problem and how best to approach it.

The University of Nottingham Malaysia's (UNM) Faculty of Science and Engineering and Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences recently delivered a masterclass on STEAM, with the participation of more than 500 students from 100 schools nationwide, both physically and virtually.

During this masterclass, we presented topics, such as "The Luck

of (Genetic) Draw", "3D-Print Your Future", "How to be a Real Influencer", "How to Build a Diversified Investment Portfolio" and "Korean 101 (and Foreign Language Learning)".

The masterclass was aimed at providing young learners a taste of the latest trends, and the skills and knowledge that they will one day need to contribute to the economy.

In addition, we wanted to increase accessibility to STEAM education for our young learners, and to reintroduce it in a way that was interactive and fun, proving that STEAM is not as intimidating as it is often made out to be.

STEAM education can also help equip learners for some of 2022's most in-demand jobs in the country as listed by JobStreet, such as information and technology, software development, digital marketing, finance, business development, medicine and education.

With the goal of developing industry-ready graduates, exposure to

STEAM can provide young learners with the advantage needed to navigate jobs of the future.

We call for parents and guardians to recognise the impact and benefits of STEAM education on a child's development, academically and otherwise.

We speak of the need to produce a skilled workforce, but it must begin with us to make these programmes accessible to young Malaysians. Only when they grow, can we grow as a nation.

DR KHER HUI NG

Associate professor and associate dean,
 Faculty of Science and Engineering,
 University of Nottingham Malaysia (UNM)

DR JOANNE LIM BEE YIN

Associate professor and associate dean,
 Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences,
 (FASS), UNM



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SUMMARIES

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