

SIARAN AKHBAR

MENGENAI

'SEMINAR ON SCHOOL CURRICULAR DEVELOPMENT'

OLEH

AMINUDDIN BAKI

PUSAT SUMBER INSTITUT AMINUDDIN BAKI (IAB)	
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Pusat Sumber
Institut Aminuddin Baki,
Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia.



SIARAN AKHBAR

DI-TERBITKAN OLEH JABATAN PENERANGAN MALAYSIA

00074

PEN. 1/65/26(EDUC)

SEMINAR ON SCHOOL CURRICULA DEVELOPMENT

Speech of Epoho Aminuddin bin Baki, Chief Education Advisor, at the opening of the Seminar on School Curricula Development organised by the National Union of Heads of Schools today January 4, 1965, at the University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur.

It is indeed an honour for me to be asked to open this Seminar on "Current Development and New Emphasis in School Curricula". I would like as such to thank you for extending me this honour and at the same time I would like to express here my appreciation of your laudable work in organising this seminar and accordingly my congratulations to your Union. I am glad to observe that teachers' unions have during the last one or two years come forward to conduct seminars and discussions on professional matters - a significant parting of the ways from the days when unions were solely striving for better terms and conditions of service. This development indeed is a happy augury for the educational progress and development of the country and I particularly welcome this as it has been my ardent hope that there should be close cooperation and exchange of views between the classroom teachers on one hand and the administrators on the other but also that for some years now I have myself campaigned for this amongst leaders of different teachers' organisation.

You have chosen well indeed "School Curricula" as the topic for this seminar because keeping abreast with curriculum development, curriculum objectives of our schools, the aims and reasons why a subject must be taught, what must be its contents, what emphasis should be given so as to achieve these objectives and how they must be taught so as to make them interesting, lively and meaningful to the pupils - in other words keeping abreast with all these is essential for us all whether we are headmasters like yourselves, classroom teachers like your assistants or educational administrators like me and my colleagues in the State Education Office, the Inspectorate or the Ministry Headquarters.

All of us are too aware of the fundamental principles of school curriculum which basically aims at developing a pupil's potentiality, his ability and aptitude, equipping him with experience and knowledge of the wider world around him so as to enable him to live in harmony with himself and with others. There was the time when this aim was achieved by giving emphasis on the contents of education - the subjects taught. The view was to give a quantum - a measureful - of facts and information, knowledge and experiences without considering the pupil's ability and potential. Later this subject-centred emphasis otherwise known as Essentialist theory moved to the other extreme of 'child-centredness' giving the child freedom to follow his own interests, restricting contents of teaching to the pupil's experiences with psychology as the determinant. In turn of physical amenities the moveable desks and chairs take the place of fixed desks and benches.

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Then there was a swing to the middle when the need of the individual child as a member of society and not just an individual 'each one for himself' was regarded important and that individual freedom has to be tempered with responsibility towards society, the child as a growing social organism who must learn something of the past heritage of society and to be trained for life in the present and the future in a society with known aspiration, ideal and way of life - as a citizen, member of a family, worker and human being. All these make it necessary that the needs of the community and society requires emphasis.

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(take 2)

This development in the principles of the curriculum has led to a compromise between child and community centred education or what some prefer to call high soundingly as curriculum based on the reconciliation of Law of Child Nature and the Law of Equipment.

All of you are too aware of the importance of the Law of Child Nature in education. The importance of applying child psychology to teaching for example the need to give the pupils freedom of expression and encouraging the development of this through such subjects as the Art and Crafts, Composition, etc., the use of the five senses as much as possible and thus, developing the use of as varied teaching aids as possible - audio visual, experimentation which recognizes the importance of the pupils as active participants, the use of the child's inquisitiveness, recognition of individual differences in abilities and aptitudes of children, promotion and development of their different potentialities. These are not common textbook knowledge and basic instruction in child psychology for teachers.

It is also common knowledge to many or even all of us that being community centred as well education is an essential tool in national reconstruction. All of us are aware of the declared policy of national education for Malaysia as being to provide for our economic, social, cultural and political development as a nation. But how many of us have analysed this policy objectives from the point of view of curriculum planning so that we the educators could effectively and successfully play our role in consummating this objective and so that our educational system at all levels from the primary at the lowest to the university at the apex reflect and work in concert to achieve this policy objective.

Economically we regard education as an essential investment for the prosperity and material progress of the nation. We recognize the importance of training and supply of manpower with the right skills and in the right number. This demand reorganisation of our educational system, a change in emphasis of our school curricula from purely academic with bias towards the humanities to one more varied in emphasis - vocational, technical and scientific. This change in itself requires orientation of the attitude of parents for its success. Parents will have to be orientated to pay due regard to work and callings other than that of 'white collar' such as manual, donning overalls and dirtying one's hands with oil and soil.

From the economic aspect it demands changes in the attitude of teachers also. No more should we regard a child able only to do Art and Woodwork as being inferior to another who can understand Boyle's Law or write good essays, because the former no less has been successful in his composition although of another kind and both of them have the talents and abilities required by society in general.

Socially, there has to be integration. There has to be greater understanding and cooperation, goodwill and harmony amongst the races. This is basic. But how can schools contribute to this? We should provide the answer to this. Should not we encourage and initiate more inter school activities crossing racial divisions? Is religion - the practice of which our Constitution guarantees as basic freedom - fully tolerated in our schools?

Culturally, how can we best synthesise the different cultures or at least encourage their mutual appreciation. We should further ask ourselves - are we ourselves the educators conversant enough with the cultures and traditions of the pupils we teach and the parents with whom we come into contact in our daily work? Do we know their dislikes, the taboos and superstitions, the

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Politically, there has to be unity in our diversity; there has to be undivided loyalty to Malaysia, sense of belonging and commonness for a future. Such a training has to be consciously given by us and be reflected in both the curricular and the extra-curricular activities of our schools.

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PEN: 1/65/26 (EDUC)
(take 3)

To provide for this national reconstruction by means of economic development, social integration, cultural synthesis and political unity, we have since 1956 a common content Malayan orientated syllabus, a National Language as a compulsory subject of instruction and as from this year and shortly will effect a reorganisation of our school system particularly at the secondary level in order to ensure well-balanced education for the development of the potential of each pupil and to provide him thereafter with diversified education and training at the upper secondary college and university levels thereby to provide each with a training for a livelihood and the country with skilled manpower it requires for its development.

But these system and structure by themselves will not be sufficient for the purpose of fully achieving our curriculum objectives and educational goals. Multi-racial countries with educational system backed by much cultural affinity as the case is in Canada OR with a compulsory unitary educational system for its plural communities like Hawaii OR with diverse cantonal educational system again propped up by affinity of culture of its plural population with the Greco-Roman-Christian civilisations as its source as the case is with the Swiss of German, Italian and French extractions still face inter-racial issues despite their affinities and decades of national education. In Canada one observes very clearly the open manner in which the English and the French Canadians fought out their differences with the latter striving for a resurgence culturally and economically. In Hawaii the native Hawaiian harbours a feeling of dejection over their under-privileged position in a country which their Polynesian ancestors founded.

The same gloomy prospects are before us if we do not make ourselves conscious of the many issues and problems elsewhere and learn to provide as many artificial affinities since we have almost nothing in common and contribute whatever we can towards correcting the social and economic imbalance in our society where political rights and privileges have long since Independence been equally shared by the simple stroke of the pen. In short a system of education in and by itself is not a sufficient guarantee. The teachers, especially you the headmasters who lead them, is important. You yourselves as the agents of change must first be ready and be able to change yourselves - to re-educate yourselves and re-orientate your attitude and thinking.

For us the present generation of educators who have obtained our education and training under a system and pattern that was far from national but was either colonial or ultra-racial, will first have to change ourselves. We should not only say we know and believe in our national goals and aspirations BUT also dedicate ourselves fully to the extent that our words and deeds truly reflect that this young and sovereign nation of ours stands and strives for.

This of course is what is normally expected of us. This all of us are fully aware. For how can we expect to educate and train our pupils, the future generations to be good, loyal and responsible Malaysians if our own national and civic consciousness, our loyalty and devotion, sense of responsibility and dedication is questionable? Or are we just complacent

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Teachers who teach their pupils to do as they say but not do what they do have always been the butt of our professional jokes. I would appeal to Headmasters and through them to other teachers to be exemplary and to live up to the maxim: Do as I say and do as I do.

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PEN: 1/65/26 (EDUC)
(take-4)

I have emphasised the need for teachers to re-educate ourselves when I was privileged to open your Annual Delegates Conference last August. I consider it important to repeat and re-emphasise this here because of the many complaints and petitions that continually reach the Ministry about teachers acting in a manner which the petitioners have alleged as stemming of racial prejudice and discrimination.

It has been known that a teacher's relationship with some of the pupils became bitter when derogatory remarks were made in a class discussion over the racial incident in Singapore at a most inopportune time when the incident itself was hardly over. Complaints have been made of teachers whose words and actions have made the pupils to feel that they have been deliberately ignored and neglected just because they are racially different. Parents have come forward alleging discriminations even on religious grounds. Planting this seed of discord is obviously sowing trouble for the future and certainly a risky investment.

Knowing how sensitive the people are, I do not suggest that these complaints are fully genuine. It might have been exaggerated. Let us hope they are merely suspicions and at the worst isolated cases. But whatever its reliability, it should be a matter of grave concern to all of us teachers who are entrusted with the challenging task of nation-building out of human material. A proverb says "Where there is smoke, there is fire". Even if metaphorically the complaints are embers and not fire, it should no less demand our urgent attention and concerted action to put out, lest such embers of tension and disharmony, fear and suspicion smoulder into an uncontrollable flame of hatred and bitterness engulfing us all and endangering the very house that Ahmad, Ah Chong and Ramasamy built on 31st August 1957, and pledged to safeguard and look after jointly.

We have just crossed the threshold of a new Year of 1965 and away from the past which was a year of national crisis with Indonesian confrontation and three unfortunate racial incidents. Let it be our New Year resolution therefore to ensure in the best traditions of curriculum principles and objectives that the school will really become the melting pot of our plural society, the nursery of education for Malaysian unity and citizenship and the workshop of Malaysian progress and prosperity.

And always remember that however grandiose the scheme and plan for education might be, whatever the latest principles of curriculum you will have learnt by the time this seminar ends and accordingly introduce into your schools, whatever the latest contents of education and the latest methods used to impart them to your pupils ... in the final analysis it is your sincerity and dedication that are the determinant of success. To borrow a phrase from the Bible, "The school is better because of the teachers who teach in it".

Let us therefore live up to the trust reposed in us by the Nation to educate and treat equally the children of whatever racial or religious origins to be worthy citizens and in doing so we first be true Malaysian ourselves in our thinking and attitude, in our words and deeds with malice to none and goodwill to all our pupils.

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen, it is now my great pleasure to declare open this seminar for Head Teachers. May your deliberations meet with success and May God give us all guidance.

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Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen, it is now my great pleasure to declare open this Seminar for Head Teachers. May your deliberations meet with success and May God give us all guidance and strength, knowledge and wisdom to carry out our role and task of building Malaysia through Education. Thank you.

KUALA LUMPUR,
4th Januari, 1965.

(di-umumkan pada pukul 4.45 petang)

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