

'UNLIMITED AMOUNT OF INFORMATION'

'NEWSPAPERS BRING THE WORLD INTO CLASSROOMS'

Johor Education dept assistant director says they are great 21st century learning tools

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THE use of newspapers in class can boost the learning experience of schoolchildren and allow them to gain more knowledge beyond the walls of a classroom.

According to Johor Education Department principal assistant director of English, Rokiah Ahmad, newspapers provided an authentic reading activity for learners, as the published articles were on real-life events.

She said the beauty of newspapers was that they were more up to date than school textbooks,

and were inexpensive, as well as readily obtainable and versatile.

"They bring the world into the classroom. Newspapers are great learning tools in the 21st century.

Rokiah was speaking at the *New Straits Times*-Newspapers for English Language Enhancement Workshop at GBW Hotel here.

The workshop was organised by Johor English Language Teaching Association (Jelta), in cooperation with the Johor Education Department. Apart from GBW Hotel, the other sponsors were Oxford Fajar and University Bookstore Malaysia (UBS).

Some 100 teachers from here and Pasir Gudang attended the event, which carried the theme "The Strength of Newspapers for Educational Purposes".

Rokiah said newspapers could be used to boost one's skills in reading, writing, listening, speaking, social studies and science.

"Learners can internalise the full range of world background knowledge, language conven-



'New Straits Times' group editor Rashid Yusof (standing, centre) at the *New Straits Times*-Newspapers for English Language Enhancement Workshop in Johor Baru yesterday. With him are (standing, from left) Johor Education Department acting director Sallina Hussain and Johor English Language Teaching Association president Vincent D'Silva. PIC BY HAIRUL ANUAR RAHIM

tions and vocabulary through reading newspapers.

"It expands the curriculum with an unlimited amount of information, be it social issues, the sciences, economics, sports and entertainment.

"There is information in the newspapers such as pictures, headlines and captions, that make excellent springboards for lessons."

According to Rokiah, teachers and students should make full use of the *New Straits Times* School Times pullout published every Tuesday to make lessons more engaging and effective.

Universiti Utara Malaysia senior lecturer Associate Professor Dr Hariharan N. Krishnasamy said with the amount of information it carried daily, newspa-

pers could supplement and complement school textbooks.

"Newspapers are a rich source of content, which can be used to expand one's knowledge, including schoolchildren.

"It can be utilised to support learning across the curriculum, promoting higher level thinking skills and encouraging lifelong reading."

According to Hariharan, reading newspapers was an excellent way of acquiring a second language, such as English.

Johor Education Department acting director Sallina Hussain said newspapers were useful teaching aids for teachers, which complement other forms of educational resources, such as videos.

"Teachers use them because they

offer up-to-date stories and news."

She added that there were sections in newspapers that offered fun learning activities, such as cartoon strips and comics.

Jelta president Vincent D'Silva, who concurred with Sallina, said newspapers had the potential to be an information storehouse.

"Newspapers not only bridge the gap between the classroom and the outside world, but also spur creativity among schoolchildren."

In his speech, NST group editor Rashid Yusof mentioned about the lack of reading among the younger generation, which is considered a national crisis.

"Teachers are our hope to motivate schoolchildren to read, using newspapers as an effective medium."