

# Teacher lost in transition

**N**ELSON Mandela once said: "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world."

This great South African statesman, who united his country and saw it become the most developed African nation, knows what he is talking about.

Education and nation-building go hand-in-hand. In view of this, teachers must be held in high regard.

They are the ones who teach and educate by imparting knowledge and skills to students. The importance of the teaching profession cannot be over emphasised.

However, if our country's policymakers fail to fully optimise or misdirect its teaching expertise, it would be a waste of precious resources.

I am trained to be a secondary school Biology teacher. I graduated from Universiti Putra Malaysia in October last year and finally got posted to a school in May this year.

Unfortunately, I was posted to a Chinese primary school in a remote rural town called Manchis in Bentong, Pahang, about 300km from my hometown, Ipoh, Perak.

I was made a primary school teacher for a number of reasons.

Chinese primary schools in Malaysia have been facing the problem of teacher shortage for many years:

While it may seem that teaching primary schoolchildren is easier than teaching in secondary school, in my opinion the opposite is true.

Well, I have been trained for four years, plus three months of practicum training, to teach secondary school students, not primary.

The approach, pedagogy, techniques and so on for teaching secondary school students are entirely different from that of teaching primary school pupils. Hence, I found myself at a complete loss when I got to the school in Pahang.

My colleagues told me not to worry and said I would soon get used to it but frankly, weeks have passed and I still haven't got a clue how to conduct a decent lesson.

Nevertheless, I still do my job to the best of



## Let's Hear It

Let's Hear It, c/o Education Editor,  
Menara Star, No. 15 Jalan 16/11,  
Section 16, 46350 Petaling Jaya.  
e-mail: educate@thestar.com.my

Letters must carry the sender's full name, address, telephone number and signature. A pseudonym may be included.

my ability.

Returning home after a long day's work, I would console myself with the thought that this is just a temporary posting.

I strongly believe I would one day go back to teaching Biology in a secondary school, where I truly belong.

However, this is not all there is to my story.

To my dismay, when I received the job offer letter from the Education Ministry, my field of expertise was changed from Biology to Chinese! How could this happen?

I wasn't the only one; my colleagues' fields were also changed to Chinese!

Does this mean we are going to be teaching in Chinese primary schools?

I have always dreamed of being a great Biology teacher, teaching my favourite subject and imparting fascinating facts and knowledge about our amazing natural world to my students.

But now it seems that my ambition, my dream and my hope have all been dashed.

First, we were sent to teach in primary schools without our consent. Second, most of us were sent to remote areas. Third, our fields of expertise were all changed to Chinese.

I know I am in no position to make any demands from the authorities. All I want is to serve my country by being the best Biology teacher I can be.

I sincerely hope that the Education Ministry would give us a letter guaranteeing that we would be posted to secondary schools, perhaps in a year or two. Let this plea not fall on deaf ears.

**BRYAN LEE**