

FRESH IDEAS FOR LANGUAGE LEARNING

GETTING shy children to come out of their shells is a conundrum that all teachers have had to face in their careers.

The challenge is arguably greater for English teachers in Malaysia as some children find the language intimidating.

Local teachers who are looking for effective methods of getting across to bashful and passive learners may find useful tips from a workshop on How To Encourage Students To Speak at the upcoming 5th Johor State English Language Conference 2013 from Sept 14-16.

Secondary school teacher Jaib Singh, who has over 30 years of experience, will share examples of how teachers can encourage shy learners to speak inside and outside of the classroom.

At the end of the 90-minute session, teachers will be armed with the skills to help weak and quiet students overcome their fear of English and learn to make lessons more lively.

Themed Moving Forward In English Language Teaching, the three-day event is jointly organised by the JB English Language Teaching Organization (JELTA) and the Johor State Education Department and supported by M Suites Hotel, Oxford Fajar and Permas Publications.

The conference will be officiated by Deputy Education Minister Datuk Mary Yap Kain Ching while New Straits Times Press group managing editor



Abdul Jalil Hamid

Datuk Abdul Jalil Hamid will deliver the keynote address.

Dr Mohamed Abu Bakar, deputy director of English Language Teaching Centre at the Ministry of Education, will speak on the Education Blueprint.

Organising chairman Vincent D'Silva says the seminar serves as a platform for teachers to gain insights into innovative ideas that will help them meet the challenges of teaching English in primary and secondary schools.

It covers diverse areas within English Language Teaching (ELT), English Literature and English as a Second Language (ESL), such as creative and innovative methodology, curricular and material design innovations, and critical thinking and creativity in English



Mary Yap Kain Ching

Language teaching and learning.

Besides Jaib Singh, other speakers include former Associate Professor Dr Nesamalar Chitravelu from University of Malaya Faculty of Languages and Linguistics; Associate Professor Dr Cynthia Yolanda Doss from Universiti Teknologi MARA Shah Alam; Rahmah Sayuti from SM Sains Sembrong, Kluang; Professor Dr Jayakaran Mukundan from Universiti Putra Malaysia and Maureen Parker, a mentor-teacher trainer for the Ministry of Education TELL (Teaching English Language and Literacy) project and teacher Sumati Muniandy, among others.

Nesamalar's paper on *The Way We Are And May Need To Go* will provide a brief look at the problems teachers



Vincent D'Silva

and learners of English language in Malaysia face today.

She argues that the problems cannot be solved overnight by applying "quick technical fixes as they need more far-reaching rethinking of the nature and objectives of language and education".

On the other hand, Doss will present a paper on *Mind Maps — A Resource Tool For Teaching Reading, Writing, Speaking And Listening*.

Sumati Muniandy, currently teaching at a school in Johor Baru, will speak on *Language Anxiety Among ESL Learners*.

Participants can also look forward to witnessing the Model United Nations which is an academic simulation of the UN that aims to educate participants about civics, current events

and diplomacy.

Students from selected schools in Johor Baru will take on roles of diplomats and engage in a debate.

"This is an interactive learning experience involving young people. It also encourages more active and enjoyable learning skills through challenging and exciting activities," says D'Silva.

A unique feature of this conference is the informal sessions which allow participants the chance to discuss issues with the presenters.

It is hoped that teachers attending the conference will be able to "adopt and inject new ideas and approaches into their teaching".

An exhibition of books and multimedia products for ELT will be held during the conference.

JELTA will also be awarding the Johor Excellent English Language Teacher Awards to five educators who have contributed to the development of English language teaching in the state.

In view of the overwhelming response, the closing date has been extended to Sept 11.

Registration fees, which include lunches, coffee breaks, a conference bag, materials, stationery, files, a grammar book, a group photo and a certificate of attendance, are RM130. To register, call Nur Maryam (017-790-5426/017-782-4738) or fax 07-2244-737 for details.