

## **Improving teaching in higher education in Malaysia: issues and challenges**

### **ABSTRACT**

Various initiatives at national and faculty levels are carried out to improve teaching quality at Malaysian universities. Measures such as auditing and accrediting university programs and obtaining certification for quality management help improve program management and standardize students' learning experiences. However, these do not guarantee quality teaching within the classrooms. Initiatives at faculty levels do not promise quality teaching as staff development often takes place within workshops and training sessions that rarely promote sustainable learning resulting in minimal impact on instructional practice. To improve teaching, staff development effort should promote professional learning within communities of practice in which teaching experience and dilemmas are shared and reflected upon. A close scrutiny of the teacher learning culture in many higher educational institutions in Malaysia, however, reveal that such effort would be an arduous task due to the numerous challenges to be overcome. To encourage the formation of communities of practice within faculties to improve teaching quality in Malaysian universities requires drastic changes to the policies which govern academic staff's achievement and success. It also requires the setup of a new entity under the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) to monitor staff development efforts in Malaysian universities. At university level, forming communities of practice within faculties requires drastic changes to the job description of staff developers.

**Keyword:** Communities of practice; Higher education; Staff development