



**1 Tomorrow's educators:** The symposium aims to highlight the importance of being a forward-thinking teacher in a 21st century classroom. **2 Teachers need to be trained to think and teach differently so that students can succeed in an innovation-based economy, says Dr Chin.**

# Upskilling 'new era' teachers

Educators need to integrate technology into the classrooms to stay relevant and move ahead.

CAMBRIDGE English For Life (CEFL) will be organising its first teaching and learning symposium next month, in conjunction with the group's 15th anniversary celebration.

Scheduled for Oct 11 at Holiday Inn Kuala Lumpur Glenmarie, Shah Alam, the event is part of CEFL's professional development series to upskill its teachers' teaching methods.

The symposium, themed *Transforming Teaching and Improving Learning in the 21st Century*, aims to highlight the importance of being a forward-thinking teacher in a 21st century classroom.

It features the following speakers - CEFL chief executive officer Dr Elsie Chin, Universiti Putra Malaysia Department of English associate professor Datin Dr Mardziah Hayati Abdullah, English language and literature solutions provider and former magazine editor Datin Merina Hew, and Nobel International School head of English Mark Wright.

There will also be a panel of speakers from Google Malaysia, Taylor's University and Star Media Group Berhad, who will be discussing the importance of the English language in today's world and how English language teachers can bring a positive impact while teaching in a 21st century classroom.

"The education system is an engine for innovation, but without the right input to transform teaching and informed learning, there won't be any reform," said Dr Chin, when speaking at an interview on the symposium.

"Our education system must keep pace with the transformation in technology if we are to prepare our students for success in the 21st century.

"Success depends on one's ability to adapt to new tools and circumstances, to innovate, to think critically and creatively, and discover new solutions to the problems facing society."

Quoting Marc Prensky, Dr Chin said:



**For young learners:** The institution provides English language courses for even preschool children.

"Students today are 'digital natives' who have grown up only knowing the presence of social and information tools that enable them to collaborate and communicate with an audience beyond physical and geographical limitations.

"Teachers are considered 'digital immigrants' who have taught in a world largely absent of technology. Teachers not only struggle with proficiency levels and their abilities to integrate technology into the classroom, some also display resistance towards such a move."

So it is not surprising, she said, to find children who are used to wielding technology quickly lose interest and become disengaged when experiencing prescriptive teaching at school.

A gap exists between the way children live and the way they learn in schools.

"In order to prepare students to be successful in an innovation-based economy, teachers need to be empowered to teach 21st century content in a 21st century context using 21st century tools," said Dr Chin.

"Teachers must be smart enough to consume and utilise technology. There are so many digital tools out there that can be used for teaching - YouTube, Ted Talks, Google and more.

"Teachers can even get their students to teach them to explore certain digital tools," she said, adding that resistance to change is about attitude.

As an example, Dr Chin said teachers can use pop culture or sports references to make

their lessons relevant.

"However, as educators, we also need to teach our students to discern for themselves how to make things better, and to reference and not steal other people's work in this 'cut and paste' generation," said the former teacher.

Dr Chin stressed that teachers should inspire students on a daily basis.

"We want teachers to go to class with the mindset that every day is a 'wow' day. The wow is the teacher's commitment that they will shine in their presentation, make the students sit up and learn, and ensure they put on a good show each time.

"We don't want teachers to remain as digital immigrants, but to adapt and gain digital wisdom, which is what the symposium will address," said Dr Chin.

CEFL is the leading premium provider of accredited English language courses for learners from as young as four years old to working adults, catering to all levels of proficiency.

The courses lead to the internationally renowned Cambridge English Language Assessments certificate qualifications, of which CEFL is an authorised centre for the administration of the exams.

CEFL is also approved by the University of Cambridge International Examinations to prepare the learning programme for practising teachers, leading to the award of the Cambridge International Certificate and Diploma in Teaching and Learning.

Established in 2001, CEFL has since grown to have some 60 centres across eight states in Malaysia, with some 10,000 students registered for this year's programmes.

The group is offering 50 seats for teachers who are interested in attending the symposium. It is open to educators of all subjects.

The seats are free, upon a refundable deposit. Registration deadline is Oct 1.

To register, contact Erica at 03-7883 0912 or [erica@cambridgeforlife.org](mailto:erica@cambridgeforlife.org).