Exploring Lecturers' Readiness for 21st Century Education in Malaysian Higher Learning Institutions

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Abstract

The nature of teaching is now changing as current lecturers are required to equip their students with 21st century skills. As such, the Malaysia Education Blueprint 2015-2025 for Malaysian higher education has been developed which emphasized on structuring more holistic and integrated curricula to prepare students for the needs of 21st century employment skills. However, this 21st century education demands more than merely teaching through chalk and talk. There are concerns whether current lecturers are able to grip with the fast pace of technological advancement and to impart that skills to their millennial students. On the other hand, despite having excellent academic records, employers are concerned that current fresh graduates lack the adaptability, multitasking, decision-making and problem-solving skills in the workplace. As such, the objective of this study is two-fold. First, the study would like to assess the lecturers understanding of the 21st century skills. The second objective is to identify whether the teaching practices of 21st century skills (critical thinking, collaboration, communication, creativity and innovation and use of technology as a tool of learning) are applied by the lecturers in their classrooms. A survey adapted from Hixson, Ravitz and Whitman (2012) was administered among a sample of Malaysian higher learning institutions' lecturers. The findings of the study indicated that Malaysian lecturers are currently moving towards the 21st century learning education approach. Suggestions and recommendations are also discussed to provide for lecturers to better equip in handling the changing scene of education in this 21st century.

Keyword: 21st century skills; higher education; millennial students; national agenda; pedagogy