

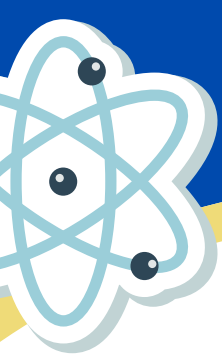

Academy of Language Studies
UiTM Cawangan Pulau Pinang

e-Lingua

2/2024



**MAY
2024**

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2/2024
EDITION

Dear Readers

We appreciate everyone who contributed to this edition of our in-house ebulletin. We encourage ongoing contributions to keep our bulletin vibrant. On behalf of the editorial committee, we hope you enjoy reading this issue. Academy of Language Studies would like to wish everyone 'Selamat Hari Raya Aidilfitri!'.



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Ra Ra Hari Raya

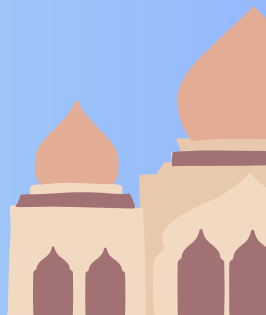
By Nazima Versay Kudus



Food plays significant roles as uniting factors among Malaysians, fostering camaraderie and a sense of community. The celebration of Eid al-Fitr or Hari Raya Aidil Fitri typically falls on the 1st of Syawal. However, in Malaysia, it has evolved into a month-long cultural celebration throughout Syawal. This extended celebration includes open houses held in homes and workplaces, where people gather to share food, stories and joyous moments.

The concept of an open house during Hari Raya is not just about enjoying a variety of dishes. It is also a cherished opportunity for friends, family and colleagues to come together, reconnect, and exchange news and updates about their lives. These gatherings strengthen social bonds and promote a spirit of togetherness and unity.

The APB Hari Raya open house was scheduled on the 17th of Syawal, which fell on April 26, 2024. The Kelab Kebajikan dan Sosial APB was entrusted with organising the event. The club had sent out an announcement, called for a potluck where attendees contributed homemade dishes and arranged for the main dish to be sponsored by the department. This thoughtful planning ensured that everyone could enjoy a diverse spread of food while celebrating the festive spirit of Hari Raya.



Laporan Bengkel Perancangan Strategik UiTM CPP 2024

Oleh Muhammad Aiman Abdul Halim & Dr. Norhaslinda Hassan

Pada 4 hingga 6 Mac 2024, Dr. Norhaslinda Hassan selaku Ketua Pusat Pengajian dan En. Muhammad Aiman Abdul Halim selaku AJK Unit Strategik Transformasi Universiti dari Akademi Pengajian Bahasa (APB) UiTM CPP telah menghadiri Bengkel Perancangan Strategik UiTM CPP 2024 yang bertempat di ILD Kg. Gajah, Perak. Bengkel ini merupakan aktiviti tahunan dalam usaha untuk menyusun arah tuju dan inisiatif UiTM CPP dalam memenuhi indeks pencapaian prestasi (KPI) yang diberikan.



Sesi pada hari pertama memberi fokus pada pembentangan indeks pencapaian prestasi bagi tahun lalu. APB UiTM CPP telah mencapai pencapaian yang membanggakan apabila disenaraikan sebagai jabatan paling cemerlang di peringkat UiTM CPP untuk tahun 2023, dengan peratus indeks pencapaian prestasi sebanyak 87.8%. Kejayaan ini bukanlah sesuatu yang mudah, namun ia adalah hasil dari kerjasama, komitmen dan dedikasi tinggi para pensyarah APB. Semoga APB dapat terus mengekalkan momentum ini untuk tahun 2024 dan seterusnya.

Seterusnya, peserta bengkel diberi taklimat berkenaan indeks pencapaian prestasi baharu untuk tahun 2024. Secara ringkasnya, terdapat beberapa KPI baharu yang diperkenalkan tahun ini, antaranya:

- Projek Keceriaan Kampus.
- “Zero Poverty Programme”.
- Bilangan pendaftaran “MyAlumni UiTM Virtual Card”.
- Inisiatif pemerkasaan Usaha, Taqwa, Mulia.



Peserta bengkel kemudiannya dibahagikan kepada empat kumpulan yang mewakili peneraju perancangan strategik UiTM CPP: Pendaftar, HEP, HEA dan PJIM&A. Tujuan utama kumpulan-kumpulan ini adalah untuk membincangkan secara teliti strategi dan sinergi yang boleh dilakukan pada tahun ini dalam usaha mencapai petunjuk prestasi yang diberikan. Kedua-dua wakil APB telah dimasukkan dalam kumpulan HEP.

Sesi pada hari kedua diisi dengan majlis perasmian oleh Rektor UiTM CPP, Prof. Ir. Dr. Hj. Ahmad Rashidy Razali. Program diteruskan dengan sesi pembentangan oleh kumpulan-kumpulan peneraju perancangan strategik UiTM CPP. Pembentangan yang dijalankan mencerminkan komitmen UiTM CPP dalam mencapai visi dan misi institusi melalui perancangan strategik yang efektif.

Secara kesimpulannya, Bengkel Perancangan Strategik UiTM CPP 2024 telah berlangsung dengan lancar dan memberikan peluang yang berharga untuk perbincangan, sinergi dan kolaborasi antara staf dari pelbagai jabatan dan fakulti. Dengan 26 KPI yang diberikan kepada APB UiTM CPP untuk tahun 2024, kerjasama dan usaha gigih dari semua staf APB adalah amat diharapkan. Semoga setiap usaha yang kita lakukan akan membawa kepada pencapaian yang lebih gemilang lagi. Bersama kita bina kredibiliti UiTM CPP sebagai universiti terkemuka di peringkat global.



Empowering Voices, Bridging Cultures: Abracadabra 6.0 Pre-Diploma Poster Competition

By Nur Fatin Shahmina Mohd Fauzey, Muhammad Aiman Abdul Halim & Aileen Farida Mohd Adam



FILM NEGATIVE



FILM NEGATIVE

FILM NEGATIVE

On a vibrant Saturday, the 20th of January 2024, Laman Perdana was abuzz with the spirit of cultural exploration and linguistic excellence. The Abracadabra 6.0 Pre-Diploma Poster Competition under the inspiring theme 'Guardians of Cultural Diversity' unfolded its sixth chapter. This distinguished event, hosted by the Academy of Language Studies (APB) of UiTM Pulau Pinang Branch (UiTM CPP) is not merely a competition; it is a celebration of diversity, language, and the boundless potential of our students.

This year, the competition saw the participation of 30 dynamic groups from the Pre-Diploma cohort, selected from 15 classes, each embarking on a journey to explore and illuminate various aspects of global cultures. Their presentations were not just displays of academic research; they were heartfelt narratives that brought distant cultures right to the heart of UiTM CPP, showcasing their linguistic prowess and their dedication to embracing the vastness of human diversity. The objectives of Abracadabra 6.0 were clear and ambitious:

- To bolster confidence in English communication among the participants.
- To kindle a deeper interest in enriching their English vocabulary.
- To hone the essential skills of conceptualising and presenting ideas in an engaging manner that captivates and educates.



Participation in this esteemed annual event is more than an academic endeavour; it is a journey towards becoming a global citizen, equipped with the language skills and cultural sensitivity needed in today's interconnected world. Language serves as the ultimate connector, a bridge that spans across the chasms of cultural differences, and through this event, our students have laid down many such bridges, showcasing their ability to not only understand but also celebrate the diversity that defines us all.

The posters presented by the participants were outstanding, and the winners were announced on 20th January 2024. Claiming third place was Nor Batrisya Abyanna Binti Muhamad Esa and her team members, Nur Aliessa Binti Anuar, Nurul Shifa Binti Shamsul Kamal, and Fatin Zulaikha Binti Mohd Shukor from Group PAS0021A. Their presentation on 'Acupuncture' (Traditional Chinese Medicine) provided valuable insights into its historical evolution and modern methods. Securing second place were Afiq Azanif Bin Zakaria, Ahmad Affifuddin Bin Muhamad Hafiz, Muhammad Amjad Bin Yusseini, and Adam Nukman Bin Abdullah Sani from Group PAS0071A. Their exploration of the festive celebration 'Chinese New Year' delved into its origins, culinary traditions, and cultural symbolism, offering a rich portrayal of Chinese community values.

The first place was awarded to Muhammad Izzul Zufayri Bin Abdul Rahman, Muhammad Dzarriff Imran Bin Mohd Anasid, Muhammad Afiq Ridwan bin Suliman, and Ahmad Azamuddin bin Muhd Hafiz from Group PBA0021F. Their presentation spotlighted traditional musical instruments like the cajon, tambourine, guitar, and darbuka, accompanied by a live music performance that impressed the judges. Moreover, the 'Acupuncture' (Traditional Chinese Medicine) presentation from Group PAS0021A received recognition as the best poster, while Muhammad Amjad Bin Yusseini from Group PAS0071A was honoured as the best presenter.

Our heartfelt gratitude extends to the dedicated lecturers from APB UiTM CPP, whose unwavering support and guidance have been instrumental in the fruition of this event. Their roles as committee members and judges have not only contributed to the seamless execution of the competition but have also provided our students with insights and encouragement that will resonate with them far beyond the boundaries of this competition.



The success of Abracadabra 6.0 is a testament to the power of language as a tool for unity, understanding, and mutual respect. It underscores our commitment to nurturing confident, capable, and culturally-aware individuals who are ready to navigate the global stage. As we reflect on this year's theme, 'Guardians of Cultural Diversity,' we are reminded of the responsibility we share in preserving and celebrating the rich cultural mosaic that our world offers. Through initiatives like Abracadabra 6.0, APB UiTM CPP contributes towards linguistic excellence and cultural understanding, preparing our students not just for academic success, but for a life of meaningful global engagement.



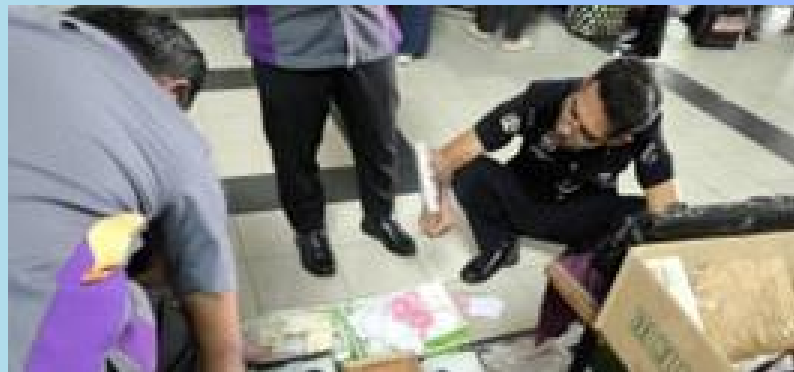
FREE MARKET 7.0

Sharing is Caring

By Seng Hui Zanne

The different faculties and departments of Universiti Teknologi MARA Cawangan Pulau Pinang recently came together for a heartwarming event, showcasing the power of generosity and caring. The event, known as Free Market 7.0, took place from April 1 to 2, 2024, and was organized by the Malaysian Academy of SME & Entrepreneurship Development (MASMED) at UiTM CPP. This year, the theme "Ramadhan Raya" set the tone for a unique and meaningful experience.

Free Market 7.0 focused on obtaining essential goods without charge and nurturing a culture of compassion among UiTM CPP personnel. The active participation of different faculties and departments, such as the Akademi Pengajian Bahasa (APB), played a crucial role in the triumph of Free Market 7.0. The dedicated team from APB, comprising individuals like Zanne, Sheau Fen, Noorli, Marni, Dr Isma, Raja Rosila, Melati, Nazima, Dr Haslinda, Maizatul, Hanani, Hafizah, Shahmina, and Noraziah, worked together to manage the APB booth and facilitate the distribution of preloved items.



What made Free Market 7.0 exceptional was the overwhelming support and contributions from the APB members. Preloved items such as clothes, toys, books, kitchenware, hangers, perfumes, and bags found new homes, spreading joy and reducing waste. Free Market 7.0 was a gathering to give and share goods and a celebration of human connection and caring.



ICCE 2023

International Conference on Chinese Education

By Assoc Prof Dr Hoe Foo Terng

The theme of the conference was “承传中华，沟通世界” (Inherit the Chinese language and connect the world). The conference was co-organized by Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman (UTAR), the Kedah State Education Department and the Organization of Taiwan Education and Cultural in Malaysia. The conference was held from November 17th to 19th, 2023, taking place at the Swiss Avenue Hotel in Sungai Petani, Kedah, and was conducted physically (face-to-face). The keynote speakers were Prof. Dato Dr. Lin Shuihao from UTAR and Dr. Zhang Jialin from the Department of Education at National Taiwan Normal University.

On November 18, 2023, a senior lecturer from the Mandarin Unit of APB UiTM Cawangan Pulau Pinang, AP Dr. Hoe Foo Terng, presented his paper entitled “Comparison of the Evaluation Format of Mandarin Second Language Courses in Universiti Teknologi MARA and the HSK Chinese Proficiency Test” at the hotel’s conference hall. He was also appointed as the session 3 chairperson (from 10.30 a.m. – 12.30 p.m.) on November 18, 2023. The conference was officiated by Deputy Director of the Kedah State Education Department Encik Malek Bin Abu Hassan. The closing ceremony was completed by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Zhang Xiaowei, Dean of the School of Chinese Studies.





Cuppa Convo with Marni:

CONFIDENCE THROUGH CASUAL ENGLISH CONVERSATIONS

By Marni Jamil

The Cuppa Convo with Marni: Confidence through Casual English Conversations (Cuppa Convo) programme was an initiative spearheaded by Ms. Marni Jamil, an English lecturer from the Academy of Language Studies at Universiti Teknologi MARA Pulau Pinang Branch (UiTM CPP), aimed at sharing her expertise with the university community. This programme was initiated in response to requests from UiTM CPP staff who expressed interest in participating in English language lessons but faced challenges committing to long-term engagements. Cuppa Convo, comprising three sessions on 18th, 19th, and 26th January 2024 from 4.00 pm to 5.00 pm at the Perpustakaan Tun Abdul Razak Library (PTAR) UiTM CPP offered the university personnel a consistent opportunity to practise English.

The primary aim of the programme was to foster English communication among UiTM CPP staff, while bolstering their confidence in expressing ideas and communicating effectively in English within a relaxed environment. The distinctive aspect of the concept was its departure from formal learning approaches. It embraced casual conversations ("Convo") and a relaxed atmosphere, akin to enjoying coffee ("Cuppa"), effectively aligning with its objectives. Proficiency in English communication is important for UiTM staff, particularly in the context of UiTM's 2025 Strategic Plan, aimed at positioning the university as a globally recognised institution. Essentially, English serves as a medium for knowledge dissemination and facilitates the exchange of experiences and the cultivation of robust interpersonal relationships across diverse backgrounds.





Additionally, Cuppa Convo adopted the Communicative Language Teaching approach, with small groups of six participants in each session learning through interaction and communication in authentic contexts. Participants were provided with practical opportunities to utilise English, aiming to develop tangible language skills and enhance overall communication proficiency in real settings. Throughout the programme, Mr. Mohd Shafarin, Mr. Muhamad Ismail, Ms. Haslina, and Ms. Noor Sapiza from PTAR UiTM CPP, along with Ms. Aimi Nadiyah from the Corporate Communications Unit UiTM CPP and Ms. Shahirah from the Treasury Unit of UiTM CPP, exhibited exceptional dedication and commitment by attending the sessions after office hours.

Furthermore, Cuppa Convo supported the venture of M20 @ The Bricks, run by UiTM CPP students participating in an entrepreneurship programme organised by the Malaysian Academy of SME & Entrepreneurship Development (MASMED) at UiTM CPP, by inviting them for a special collaboration. Muhammad Qayyim, Muhamad 'Azim, and Irfan presented their handcrafted beverages and desserts, joined by their peer Nur Muhammad Jazlan, who captured memorable moments through skillful photography during the sessions. M20 is committed to providing a space for students to relax and engage with peers, aligning harmoniously with the aspirations of Cuppa Convo.

All in all, the Cuppa Convo initiative has been beneficial for the UiTM CPP community in multiple aspects, leading to improvements in both personal and professional facets, and facilitating the enhancement of their English communication skills.

"The only way to do great work is to love what you do." - Steve Jobs



International Conference of Research on Language Education 2023 (I-ROLE 2023)

By Assoc Prof Dr Hoe Foo Terng

The conference theme, "Embracing Change: Emancipating the Landscape of Research in Linguistics, Language, and Literature," was a collaborative effort between UiTM Melaka Branch, Universiti Melaka, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia and Universiti Sabah Malaysia. Held on 13 and 14 March 2023 at Noble Resort Hotel Melaka, the conference seamlessly integrated physical (face-to-face) and online participation modes.

Distinguished keynote speakers included Prof. Dr. Ain Nadzimah Abdullah from Taylor's University, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Hanita Hassan from Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, and Assoc. Prof. Dr. Suyansah Swanto from Universiti Malaysia Sabah. One notable presentation on 13 March 2023 was by AP Dr. Hoe Foo Terng, a senior lecturer from APB UiTM Cawangan Pulau Pinang. His paper titled "Perception of Language Instructors in Using Machine Translation as an Auxiliary Tool in Learning and Assessment of Second or Foreign Language" was delivered at 10.30 in the morning at the hotel's Melaka Raya function room 2 and 3.

The conference was inaugurated by EXCO Pendidikan, Sains, Teknologi dan Inovasi Negeri Melaka, YB Datuk Rais Yasin. The event's closure was graced by Prof. Dr. Janudin Sardi, Dean of Akademi Pengajian Bahasa UiTM. Notably, select papers from the conference are slated for publication in the European Proceedings of Educational Sciences, an indexed journal in WoS.





Sparkle through Speech 3.0

Digital Dialogue: Mastering Communication Skills

By Nur Afiqah Ab Latif, Marni Jamil & Noraziah Mohd Amin

The Sparkle Through Speech (STS) programme is a specialised initiative designed for school students to enhance their language skills, specifically communicating in English, with confidence. It is organised by the Academy of Language Studies (APB), Universiti Teknologi MARA, Pulau Pinang Branch (UiTM CPP). The STS programme has progressed through three iterations as university social responsibility (USR) initiatives, namely STS 1.0, STS 2.0, and STS 3.0, beginning with the initial STS 1.0 launched on 28 August 2023, with a focus on enhancing public speaking skills in English. Building on its success, STS 2.0, then held on 27 December 2023, at the Tun Abdul Razak Library (PTAR), UiTM CPP, introduced additional activities such as learning German and French, attracting 35 participants aged 6 to 12.

STS 3.0, the latest iteration, offered meticulously designed modules that integrate digital technology to effectively communicate ideas, aligning with the latest communication needs. The objectives of the STS 3.0 programme include enhancing participants' communication confidence, fostering creative thinking in technology use for learning, exposing participants to positive aspects of podcasting, and cultivating leadership, teamwork, and problem-solving skills. The organising committee, led by Miss Marni Jamil as the Programme Director, 7 APB lecturers (Nur Afiqah Ab. Latif, Noraziah Mohd Amin, Anwar Farhan Mohd Marzaini, Nur Fatin Shahmina Mohd Fauzey, Muhamad Usamah Mohd Ridzuan, Raja Rosila Raja Berahim and Wan Noorli Razali) as the committee members and facilitators, 7 UiTM CPP students and 1 teacher from MRSM Transkrian as the facilitators, aims to achieve these objectives with the support of the UiTM CPP Administration Division. The programme, themed "Digital Dialogue: Mastering Communication Skills," was organised by the Academy of Language Studies (APB), UiTM CPP and took place on 14 and 15 February 2024, at the Tun Abdul Razak Library, (PTAR) UiTM CPP. 45 participants aged 8 to 12 registered to join the programme.

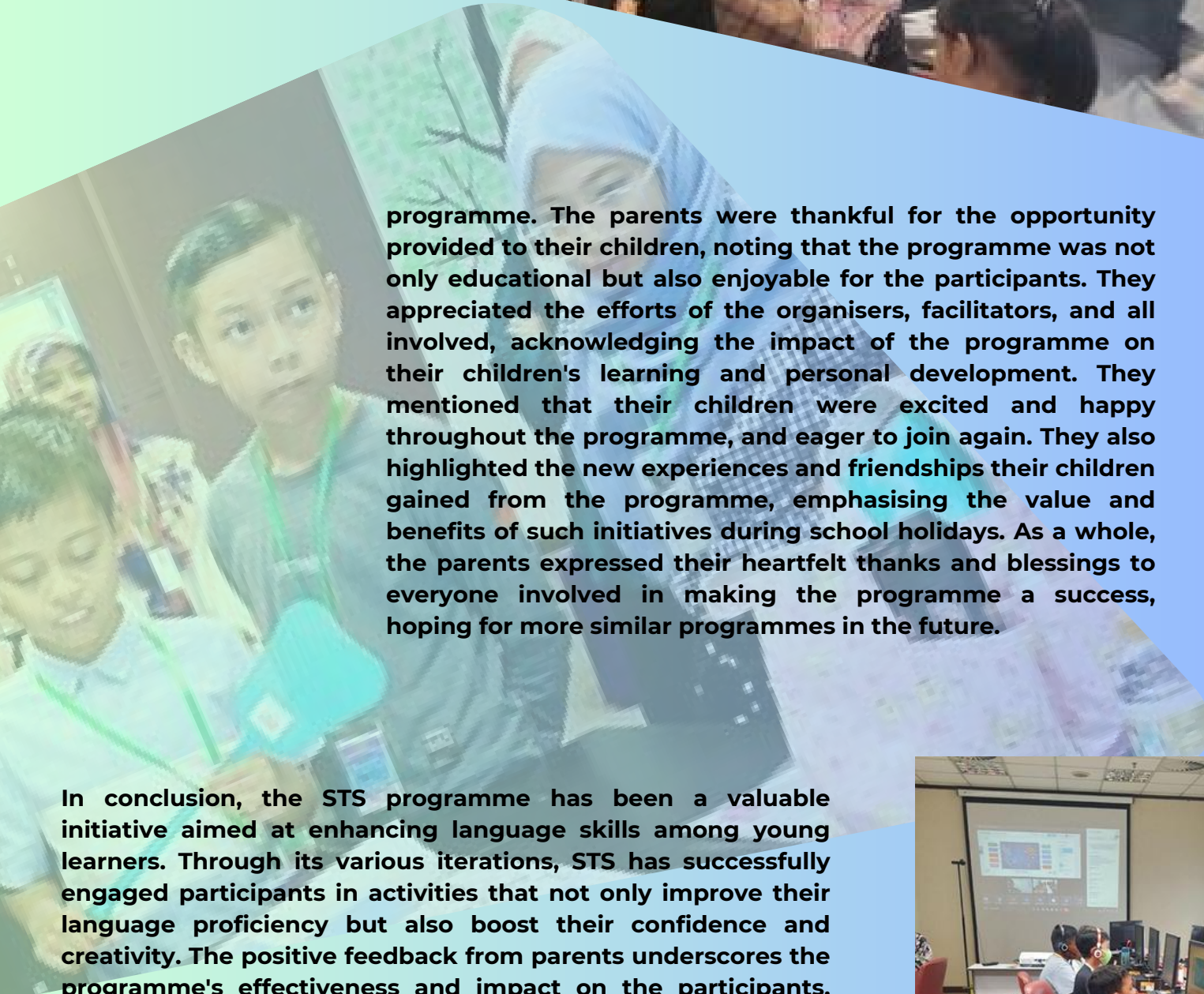


Throughout the two-day programme, STS 3.0 participants engaged in a variety of activities designed to enhance their communication skills, confidence, and creativity. On the first day, the morning session began with registration and breakfast, followed by an opening ceremony and welcoming remarks from the organisers. The participants then embarked on a series of activities, including individual and group exercises focusing on ice-breaking, chant creation, block building and presentations. These activities aimed to build participants' confidence in using the English language. The afternoon session featured activities such as speed reading workshop conducted by Ms. Farleen Azrina Zamberi with the team from PTAR UiTM CPP, and group activities facilitated by a guest speaker from Universiti Putra Malaysia, Dr. Marzni Binti Mohamed Mokhtar.



The second day commenced with a virtual session presented by a guest speaker, Dr. Ridha Hasnul Ulya from Universitas Negeri Padang, Indonesia focusing on educational gamification in language learning. Following this, participants engaged in interactive sessions on podcasting with Syed Amir Haikal Syed Hisham Alwi and Muhammad Haziq Ahmad Fauzi from 'What Now? Jom Ah Lepak!!' podcast, where they learned about podcasting techniques and had the opportunity to create their own podcasts. The day concluded with a closing ceremony, where participants received certificates and tokens of appreciation. Overall, the programme provided participants with a holistic learning experience, combining traditional and innovative teaching methods to foster language proficiency and confidence in communication. The feedback from participants' parents was overwhelmingly positive, expressing gratitude and satisfaction with the STS





programme. The parents were thankful for the opportunity provided to their children, noting that the programme was not only educational but also enjoyable for the participants. They appreciated the efforts of the organisers, facilitators, and all involved, acknowledging the impact of the programme on their children's learning and personal development. They mentioned that their children were excited and happy throughout the programme, and eager to join again. They also highlighted the new experiences and friendships their children gained from the programme, emphasising the value and benefits of such initiatives during school holidays. As a whole, the parents expressed their heartfelt thanks and blessings to everyone involved in making the programme a success, hoping for more similar programmes in the future.

In conclusion, the STS programme has been a valuable initiative aimed at enhancing language skills among young learners. Through its various iterations, STS has successfully engaged participants in activities that not only improve their language proficiency but also boost their confidence and creativity. The positive feedback from parents underscores the programme's effectiveness and impact on the participants. Looking ahead, we hope to expand the reach of STS and offer more diverse and innovative activities that cater to the evolving needs of young learners. We also seek the support and sponsorship of interested parties and organisations to further develop and sustain this impactful programme. With constant support, STS can continue to empower young learners and equip them with the necessary skills to thrive in today's globalised world.





MOU Signing With New Era University College

By Assoc Prof Dr Hoe Foo Terng

The memorandum of understanding was signed between Universiti Teknologi MARA and New Era College University on May 5 2023. Both parties agreed to cooperate and encourage participation in the following activities/areas:

1. institutional exchanges between faculty and staff from each partner institution;
2. acceptance of undergraduate and graduate students of each partner institution for periods of study and/or research;
3. organization of symposia, conferences, short courses, and meetings on research issues;
4. exchange of information about developments in teaching, student development and research;
5. mutually promoting information and activities of partner universities within the MoU on their respective websites and
6. cooperation in any other areas as agreed to by the Parties from time to time.

The memorandum was initiated by Associate Professor Dr Hoe Foo Terng and his team members, Mr Lim Teck Heng and Miss Ong Sheau Fen, all from the Academy of Language Studies, along with Dr Santhanamery a/p Thominathan from the Department of Business Management. The idea was mooted in the Strategy planning meeting on 28.1.2021, and the MOU was scheduled to be signed between June 2021 and May 2023. The key performance indicator (KPI) for this initiative is PI83. UiTM CPP was represented by its Rector, Associate Professor Ir. Dr. Ahmad Rashidy Bin Razali, who signed the memorandum with Associate Professor Ir. Dr. Kay Dora, its Deputy Rector of Research, Industry Network, Society & Alumni, is the witness. New Era University College was represented by its Vice-Chancellor, Professor Dr. Mok Soon Chong, and Assoc. Prof. Azizan Bin Abd Ghani Othman, its registrar, is the witness. There was no physical or online signing ceremony conducted. The signing process was completed on August 29, 2023, when both parties duly signed and received the memorandum from the Rector of UiTM CPP.





Sparkle through Speech

*My Courageous Voice &
Growth Mindset 2*

**By Marni Jamil, Nur Afiqah Ab. Latif,
and Noraziah Mohd Amin**

The Academy of Language Studies (APB), Universiti Teknologi MARA, Penang Branch, orchestrated the "Sparkle Through Speech: My Courageous Voice & Growth Mindset 2.0" program on 27th December 2023, held at the Tun Abdul Razak Library (PTAR), UiTM CPP. Commencing at 8:30 a.m. and concluding at

12:00 p.m., the program aimed to afford primary school students the opportunity to proficiently acquire English language skills, thereby fostering the development of their talents, competencies, and self-assurance in consonance with the imperatives of the globalisation era.

Moreover, the initiative sought to enhance the English language proficiency of primary school students, while concurrently nurturing their interest and self-confidence, specifically targeting the offspring of UiTM Penang Branch personnel. Thirty-five students, aged between 6 and 12 years, actively participated in the program. Employing an instructional methodology centred on the application of enjoyable learning practices, the program aspired to create an environment conducive to effective learning and teaching.

Additionally, the program aspired to function as a conduit for primary school students to refine their latent potential and English-speaking abilities through the application of efficacious techniques pertinent to both present and future daily life. Five dedicated facilitators, namely Mr. Muhammad Usamah Bin Mohd Ridzuan, Nur Alia Saffrina Binti Zulfakor, Azlan Bin Jalil, Simion Anak Enchana, and Megat Ameerzaheri Bin Megat Amanzaheri of UiTM CPP, played essential roles in ensuring the resounding success of the programme.



The event commenced with an engaging ice-breaking activity named "Scavenger Hunt" that facilitated collaboration among participants. They identified individuals based on the given questions while the facilitators diligently monitored and guided participants to communicate effectively in English, which created an inclusive learning atmosphere. Subsequently, participants actively took part in a "Creating Chant" group activity, designed to familiarise them with the use of appropriate language and effective communication. This creative segment aimed to enhance their expressive skills.

The programme concluded with a survey, certificate distribution, awards ceremony, and a photo session. This impactful event left a lasting impression on the 35 primary school participants, instilling not only enhanced English language proficiency but also confidence and a growth mindset. Overall, the participants' parents provided positive feedback and they expressed gratitude and appreciation to teachers, facilitators, and organisers for the successful programme. The children had a great time, enjoyed learning new things, including foreign languages, and made new friends. The parents also hope for a continuation of the programme in the future. The responses highlight the positive impact of the programme on the children's learning experience and the success of STS 2.0!



Later in the programme, participants engaged in a "Words of Affirmation Exploration" segment, providing them with a platform to discuss affirmations about themselves and fostering precise self-expression. The programme also featured a foreign language session led by esteemed guest speakers from the Academy of Language Studies, UiTM CPP. Madam YM Raja Rosila Bin YM Raja Berahim skilfully guided participants in learning self-introductions in German, while Mr. Muhammad Usamah Bin Mohd Ridzuan imparted knowledge of the French language. The participants actively engaged in role-playing exercises that fostered an immersive environment to refine their language skills. The final activity is "Describing object" in which the students had to guess the name of objects based on descriptions given by their friends. All participants were so excited to give the correct answer.



Sparkle through Speech 1.0: My Courageous Voice & Growth Mindset

By Marni Jamil



The Sparkle through Speech 1.0: My Courageous Voice & Growth Mindset programme (STS 1.0) was organised by Ms. Marni Jamil, a lecturer from the Academy of Language Studies (APB), Universiti Teknologi MARA Pulau Pinang Branch (UiTM CPP). As an alumna of UiTM, this contribution shows a commitment to give back to the prestigious institution that plays a pivotal role in shaping academic and personal development. The programme was held on 28 August 2023 and conducted in the Seminar Room of the Islamic Centre, UiTM CPP.

The implementation of this ambitious program was facilitated by the collaborative support of the UiTM CPP management, APB lecturers, the Islamic Centre, He & She Coffee, and Mardelish. The diverse contributions from individuals in various capacities played a crucial role in ensuring the success of STS 1.0.

Named aptly, Sparkle through Speech aligns with its core goals of encompassing education, empowering young minds, and nurturing character development through speech, providing the right platform for the talents and growth potential of each child. In addition, STS 1.0 placed a primary emphasis on fostering a growth mindset and harnessing their voices for constructive pursuits. It aimed to introduce the art of public speaking in English to primary school students while sparking the flames of their enthusiasm and bolstering their self-confidence.

"The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams."

- Eleanor Roosevelt





Furthermore, STS 1.0 garnered the participation of school students, ranging in age from 8 to 13 years old. The initiative was designed on a smaller scale, with nine participants, to encourage personalised attention for each child. These budding talents took part in various activities that celebrated teamwork, creativity, and self-expression.

The interactive activities were designed to empower primary school students with the skills of public speaking in English, fostering their talents, and enhancing their abilities and learning experiences. The activities included "What's Your Week Like?", "Chant It! Describe It!", "Words of Affirmation," and "On Air." Moreover, participants also enjoyed a guided library tour of the Perpustakaan Tun Abdul Razak, UiTM CPP.

Overall, STS 1.0 made significant contributions to UiTM CPP's goals for 2023, particularly in University Social Responsibility, Knowledge Transfer Programmes, Alumni Expert Service Programme, Communities Benefiting from Knowledge Diffusion Project, and activities associated with ESI-iDART. STS 1.0 had a significant impact, aligning with community service, and contributing to laying the foundation for lifelong learning, personal development, and participants' future life aspirations.



Penang Bridge Marathon

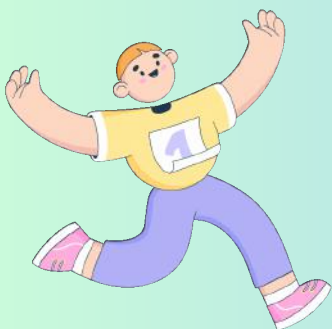
17 DECEMBER 2023

By Assoc Prof Dr Hoe Foo Terng

The number of people who signed up for the 2023 Penang Bridge Marathon was 25,000. The bridge run was divided into three categories: marathon, half marathon and 10km Fun Run.

The full marathon category was divided into four groups: men's open (with the running numbers starting with A), women's open (with the running numbers starting with B), men's veteran (with the running numbers starting with C) and women's veteran (with the running numbers starting with D). The half marathon category was also divided into 4 groups, but the running numbers were preceded by E, F, G, and H. The 4 groups of the 10km Fun Run were the men's open (the running number was preceded by J), the women's open (the running number was preceded by K), the male junior (the running number was preceded by M), and the female junior (the running number was preceded by N). In this Bridge Marathon, I was a referee for the men's veteran group (full marathon) and the female junior group of the 10km Fun Run.

With the use of electronic timing, the records of the run were captured without any glitches. The full marathon was flagged-off by the representative of the Chief Minister of Penang at 1:30 am, while the half marathon was flagged-off at 3 am. Both starting and finishing points were at the Queensbay Mall car park. The 10km Fun Run started at the Eastin Hotel at 6:30 in the morning and ended at the same place as the half marathon. The award presentation ceremony was held at 8:00 in the morning, and the whole event went on smoothly without any complaints.



43rd Penang Annual Round Island Relay

DECEMBER 10, 2023



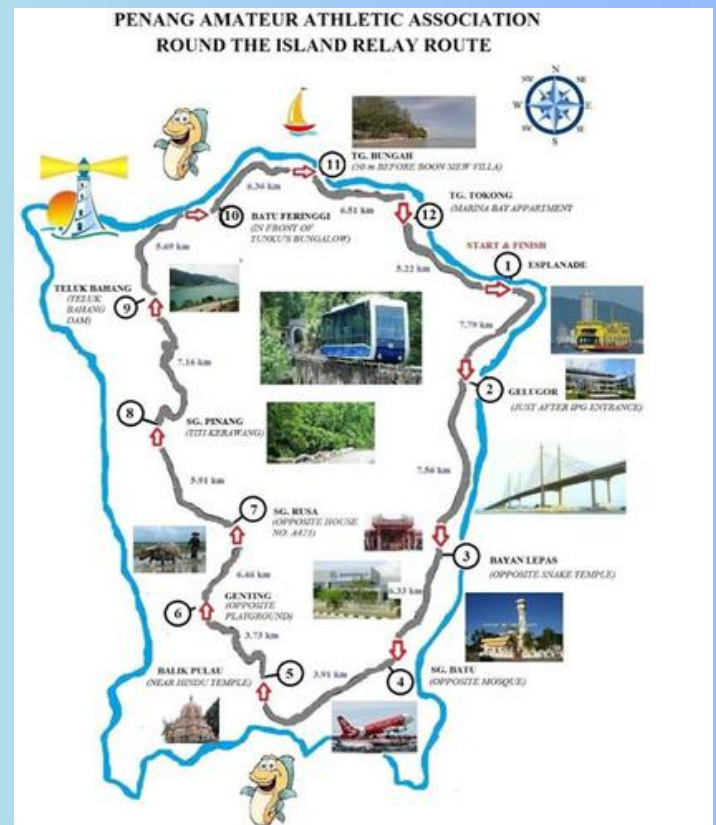
By Assoc Prof Dr Hoe Foo Terng

A total of 44 teams took part in the 2023 Penang Annual Round Island Relay. The relay run was divided into 3 categories: Men's Open, Men's Veteran, and Mixed Team. Each team consisted of 12 members and changed the baton at 11 exchange zones around the island (please refer to the map). Participants in the Men's Open and Men's Veteran categories were all male, while members of each Mixed Team comprised of six males and six females.

The teams registered for the event were labelled from Team 1 to Team 14 in the Men's Open category, from Team 15 to Team 30 in the Men's Veteran category, and from Team A to Team S in the Mixed Team category. I participated as one of the referees for the Men's Veteran category and was stationed at the Balik Pulau exchange zone. At this station, the fourth runner had to pass the baton to the fifth runner.

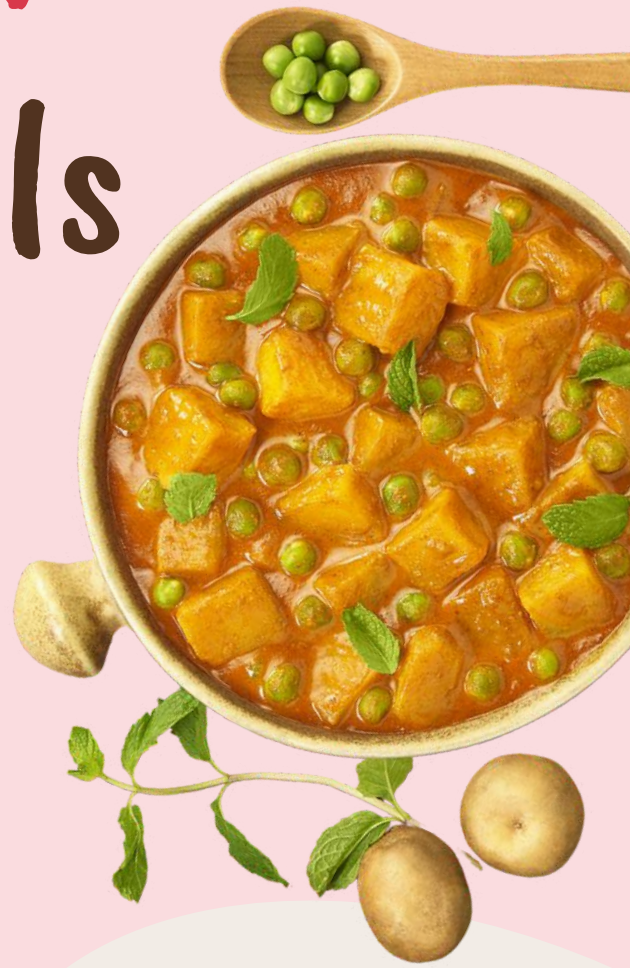
44 teams turned up for the race. However, only 43 teams completed the race as one team was forced to withdraw because one of its runners suffered from heat stroke.

The relay was flagged off by the president of the Penang Amateur Athletic Association at 3.30 am, and concluded at 11.30 am at the Penang City Town Hall, where both the start and finish occurred. The award presentation ceremony, attended by a representative of the Chief Minister of Penang, was held promptly at 11.30 am. The entire event proceeded smoothly, without any complaints.





Head over Meals



Is Comfort Food the Same as Favourite Food? 25

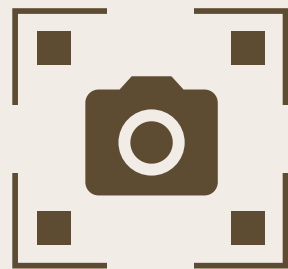


Little Chefs in Making 28



and order now!

scan the code



Is Comfort Food the Same as Favourite Food?



By Nazima Versay Kudus



During the COVID-19 restrictions, many people have gone the extra mile to enjoy their favorite comfort foods. With a lot of free time on their hands, they have been experimenting with cooking and sharing their culinary adventures online. For many who are unable to travel back home or "balik kampung" to enjoy their mothers' home-cooked meals, these online food creators have become a comforting alternative.

Entrepreneurial ventures like the Nasi Kandaq Transporter experienced a surge in popularity during the lockdown. Nasi Kandar, a beloved Penang dish, is not easy to prepare due to its complex nature, consisting of a rice base topped with a variety of curries. These curries are challenging to make as they are a blend of different flavors, including fish, chicken, beef, prawns, squid, and other curry dishes. During that period, Nasi Kandaq Transporter offered delivery services on specific days of the week from Penang to the Klang Valley area. Consumers were able to relish the nostalgic taste of this Penang specialty, and the convenience of having the food delivered is especially appreciated during times when travel for food is not feasible. Indeed, if one cannot travel for food, the food can travel to you.

In his journal article titled "Comfort Food: A Review" (2017), Charles Spence summarizes the defining characteristics of comfort food as outlined by various authors. Comfort foods are those that offer consolation and a sense of well-being, providing psychological and emotional comfort. They are often linked to childhood memories or home cooking, prepared in a simple or traditional style with a nostalgic or sentimental appeal that reminds us of home, family, and friends. These foods are significant in celebratory meals, typically being favorites from one's childhood or associated with specific people, places, or times that evoke positive feelings. The act of eating one's preferred comfort food is believed to improve mood and overall well-being.



Opor Pahang



According to Sultan Al-Abdullah’s palace cook, Hasnah Koming, a common dish served to His Majesty is Opor Pahang (Menu kampung pilihan Agong, Raja Permaisuri, 2019). A collection of the late Tunku Abdul Rahman’s recipes were documented by his daughter, Tunku Dato’ Paduka Khadijah Tunku Abdul Rahman, in a recipe book entitled Favourite Dishes from Tunku’s Kitchen among others kerabu perut kacang botol, otak otak daun mengkudu, gulai daging Siam and telur itik masak kuning dhal. Meanwhile the daughter of the Prime Minister, Dato’ Seri Anwar Ibrahim’s revealed that her father likes to eat cekodok (Rosmah Idayu, 2022).

My all-time comfort food, lovingly made by my mother especially when I am feeling under the weather, has to be her delicious egg rasam. This flavourful dish with its slightly sour, spicy and hot taste profile originates from South India. Its rich soup base comprises a medley of ingredients including mustard seeds, fenugreek seeds, coriander seeds, turmeric powder, black pepper, cumin, garlic, chilies, ginger, tomatoes, curry leaves and tamarind. This aromatic blend not only delights the palate but also has therapeutic benefits, such as helping to unclog a stuffy nose. The Penang Jawi Peranakan variation takes it up a notch by incorporating eggs into the boiling soup, making it not just a comfort but also a nourishing option during times of reduced appetite, such as during a fever. While it may not be the most visually appealing dish, its taste and health benefits more than make up for its appearance.

Preparing and consuming bubur lambuk during Ramadan creates a sense of comfort and nostalgia. The porridge, rich in flavours and hearty ingredients cooked in large pots, fosters a spirit of gotong-royong as communities come together to the surau or balai raya to prepare this beloved dish. The process of making bubur lambuk involves an elaborate mise en place, from washing and soaking the rice to preparing the meat, spices, vegetables and herbs. The involvement



Egg Rasam



of adults handling sharp cutlery and hot pots underscores the seriousness of the preparation. Young ones are often sent by their elders to collect the bubur lambuk but are cautioned about the hot pots. As the bubur lambuk simmers and fills the air with its enticing aroma, it becomes a focal point of anticipation when that family rep repeatedly asks "dah siap ka?" (is it ready?), awaiting his/her share of the meal. Alongside bubur lambuk, air halia (ginger tea) is prepared during bulan puasa. The tea, brewed with slices of ginger, coriander seeds, black pepper, cumin, cinnamon and pandan leaves, creates a scent trail like a Pied Piper, drawing people towards the aromatic fragrance. Both bubur lambuk and air halia hold a special place during Ramadan. They are packed with quick carbohydrates, proteins, and vitamins, making them an ideal choice for iftar. Despite being enjoyed throughout Ramadan, there is a strange feeling that these dishes never taste quite as good as during the fasting month, perhaps due to their shared experiences and memories.

Comfort food and favourite food are distinct concepts although both relate to personal enjoyment of food. The former specifically refers to culinary choices that evoke a sense of nostalgia, sentimentality or emotional well-being within an individual, often linked to specific cultural backgrounds or personal experiences. On the other hand, the latter encompasses a broader range of edible delights that individuals find pleasurable due to factors such as flavour. While comfort food tends to be chosen for its emotional benefits, favourite food is selected primarily for its sensory qualities. Notably, comfort

food does not necessarily align with general preference for flavours or textures, as it is influenced by psychological associations rather than inherent properties of the food item. Conversely, favourite food reflects individual tastes and preferences.

Whether the food you enjoy is comforting or a favourite, the first step towards maintaining good health is cultivating healthy eating habits. Tun Dr. Mahathir Mohamad, an octogenarian himself, advises people to embrace the principle of "eating to live, not living to eat." Additionally, he imparts another valuable lesson from his mother: knowing when to stop eating, especially when the food is delicious (Mahathir, 2019).



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Little Chefs in Making

By Che Nooryohana Zulkifli

It's a common concern for working parents to worry about their kids being left at home without food. Some may resort to getting takeout food from restaurants or preparing meals in advance to freeze and reheat later. However, as children grow, so does their appetite, making frequent outside food purchases less practical, especially during adolescence. While cooking and preparing meals early is a viable solution, work demands can often make it seem overwhelming and exhausting. Drawing from personal experience and navigating through similar challenges, I've come to realise that empowering children with culinary skills can be a transformative solution. Instilling a sense of culinary independence in children not only alleviates the strain on parents but also fosters a valuable life skill set for youngsters. Teaching them the basics of meal preparation promotes self-sufficiency and cultivates a deeper appreciation for the effort and thoughtfulness that goes into nourishing oneself and others.

Parents should consider investing in convenient kitchen gadgets such as air fryers and food choppers for an effortless learning journey. I've observed that these appliances excel in expediting the cooking and meal preparation process, particularly when whipping up Malay delicacies like Ayam Masak Kicap and Ayam Sambal. Given children's relatively simple palates, these dishes can be swiftly prepared.

The staple ingredients for Malay cuisine typically include shallots, onions, garlic, and ginger.

Meanwhile, other dishes like Masak Lemak Kuning, Rendang, and Curry may call for additional ingredients like lemongrass, turmeric, and an array of spices such as cardamom, cinnamon stick, clove, fennel, and cumin.

Like what I did with my kids, I began by introducing them to various cooking and baking shows on television. These programs showcase diverse cuisines spanning Western, Asian, Indian, Italian, and Arab dishes.



Watching reality shows such as Masterchef, Chopped, Beat Bobby Flay, Cooks vs. Cons, Baking Impossible, Is it Cake?, Cake Boss, and Buddy vs Duff always ignites excitement in them. They also enjoyed getting creative with Play-Doh, crafting both impressive and less-than-perfect fake food creations. As their interest in cooking blossomed, I started to call my eldest son into the kitchen whenever I prepared meals. Over time, his interest grew, ultimately making my job as a parent much smoother.

So, at the age of 14, my son had already taken up the task of preparing meals, not only for himself but also for the entire family, for instance, Ayam Kicap. The process begins with frying the chicken; a task made convenient and safe with the use of an air fryer. The chicken is marinated with turmeric powder and salt before being placed in the air fryer for 30 minutes at 180 degrees Celsius. While the chicken cooks, he concurrently prepares the gravy ingredients like onions, garlic, and ginger. Here, the food chopper proves invaluable, swiftly chopping these ingredients instead of laboriously slicing them by hand. Once chopped, they're ready to be sautéed. Then, soy sauce and tomato ketchup are added, brought to a boil, and combined with the cooked chicken to create a delicious dish. Similarly, Ayam Sambal follows a similar method and utilises many of the same ingredients as Ayam Kicap, with the addition of chilli paste and turmeric juice for its distinct flavour.

Another simple yet satisfying dish to whip up is fried rice, requiring just shallots and garlic as its main ingredients. Depending on your preferences, additional ingredients can be added to customise the dish to your liking. For instance, if you're a fan of Belacan Fried Rice, sautéing belacan or shrimp paste along with garlic and shallots is essential. On the other hand, for Tom Yum Fried Rice enthusiasts, don't forget to include lemongrass, small chilli, and kaffir lime leaves in the sauté, along with a dollop of tom yum paste for an extra burst of flavour. Unlike more complex dishes like Rendang and Nasi Dagang, these recipes are relatively straightforward, making them perfect for our kids to master. They can not only serve as invaluable helpers in the kitchen but also step in as emergency cooks when we're unavailable due to work commitments or illness.

As my son approaches his 16th birthday this year, I couldn't be prouder knowing that he's adept at preparing a variety of dishes, including Lasagna, Aglio E Olio, and Sambal Tumis Udang. There is only one word to end this article, and I must say it in my mother tongue to get the right feel of it, and it is 'lega'. 😊





Art & Culture

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Henna: A Cultural Tapestry of Beauty, Tradition, and Symbolism

By Noraziah Mohd Amin

The English term, "henna" is derived from the Arabic word, "al-ḥinna" and the term, "henna" is also used to describe the dye made from the henna plant and the practice of creating temporary tattoos using these colors (The Art of Henna in Muslim Cultures, (n. d). Henna, which is scientifically known as *Lawsonia inermis*, is a plant from the Lythracea family that encompasses over 500 plant species, including pomegranate (Ariffin et al., 2020).

Henna wearing is an integral part of cultural festivities and traditional rituals. Henna, which has a long history dating back centuries, has become an essential aspect of Malaysian culture. Henna is a popular plant in Malay society and it is often used as a pigmenting agent and for adorning brides during traditional wedding ceremonies (Ariffin et al., 2020). In Malay culture, "malam berinai" or a henna wearing night is arranged before the wedding ceremony on the next day to ensure the reddish pigment left by applying henna paste on the skin stays fresh and vibrant red.

The practice of using henna at certain events and celebrations has its roots in Indian culture and the majority of archaeologists hold the belief that the use of henna can be traced back to its origins in Egypt (Ariffin et al., 2020). This belief is supported by the finding of mummies adorned with henna on their fingernails and toenails (Ariffin et al., 2020).

Henna has been used for ages to pigment the skin, fingernails, and hair as well as to colour textiles. It is used to decorate the hands and feet of people at important events like weddings, festivals, and religious ceremonies. Henna, also known as "mehndi" in Hindi and Urdu, is believed to bestow good fortune prior to wedding ceremonies and possess "barakat", an intangible force of positive energy that brings blessings and safeguards against malevolent entities (*The Art of Henna in Muslim Cultures*, n. d). The complex patterns and vivid hues of henna function as representations of aesthetics, affluence, and cultural



heritage, mirroring the multifaceted fabric of Malaysian civilization. Henna wearing in Malaysia, whether for personal beautification or as part of community rites, represents the enduring traditions and cultural legacy of the country. In Afghanistan, henna which is known as “kheena”, is believed to bring good fortune and joy according to Afghan culture. Henna in this country is used by male and female individuals throughout many events, including wedding nights, Eidul Fitr, Eidul Adha, and Shabe-e Barat. In Sudan, henna is used as an adornment and as a symbol to indicate a woman’s marital status (Bauer & Kaucka, n. d). The conventional North African design comprises of geometric designs characterised by bold lines and abstract motifs. In Sudan, black henna is preferred by the local tribes, although in other nations henna may vary in hue from brown to red or even orange (Bauer & Kaucka, n. d).

From the perspective of Islam, Ariffin et al. (2020) state that it was narrated from Abu Dhar, from the Prophet SAW who said: “Indeed the best to change (color) gray hair with is henna and *katam* (a type of henna).” According to al-Sindi, it is advisable to apply henna and *katam* separately since when combined, these two substances will create a dark hue that is strictly forbidden for dyeing hair and facial hair (‘Ali Ibn Adam Ibn Musa al-Ityubi al-Wallawy, cited in Ariffin et al., 2020). *Khadab*, which refers to the act of altering the colour of hair and beard, may be done using henna (*hinna*) and similar substances, according to al-Fayyumi. During the process of *khadab*, the colour of the hair and skin may undergo a transformation, appearing reddish, yellowish, or similar in hue.

Wearing henna provides a multitude of advantages in terms of creative expression and enhancing one’s appearance. Henna is a temporary method of body decoration, enabling people to explore various patterns and aesthetics without the permanence associated with a traditional tattoo. Henna designs exhibit elaborate and meticulous craftsmanship, including a wide range of classic motifs as well as contemporary patterns. Applying henna enables the creation of elaborate and visually striking patterns that enhance the wearer’s appearance. The deep russet hue of henna provides a striking juxtaposition against the complexion, resulting in a visually captivating effect. Adorning oneself with henna promotes a strong connection with cultural customs and ancestral legacy. Henna patterns often convey symbolic meanings and cultural value, enabling people to demonstrate their cultural identity via the medium of body art. There is a belief held by some individuals that the application of henna may have therapeutic advantages, such as facilitating relaxation. Applying henna may also induce a calming state, promoting a feeling of contentment in the person wearing it. Thus, knowing all these benefits, the imperative lyric from a once popular song from a Hindi movie, *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge* which says, “*Mehndi laga ke rakhna*” (“Put your henna on”) should be a good reminder about the importance of wearing henna.

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Playful Heritage: The Legacy of Malay Traditional Games

By Muhammad Aiman Abdul Halim, Muriatul Khusmah Musa,
Wan Noorli Razali



GULI (MARBLES)



Guli, also known as Kelereng is a game where the humble marble transforms into a vessel of boundless joy and excitement. One beloved version of this game stands out—players draw a circle in the sand, which becomes the arena for an enthralling battle of precision and tactics. In this classic contest, participants take turns, each aiming to expertly flick their own marble with just the right force and angle to knock their opponents' marbles out of the circle. The ultimate aim? To emerge as the master of marbles, boasting the largest collection at the game's end. Players come armed with their personal arsenal of marbles, each piece a prized contender in this high-stakes game of "keepsies," where victory means claiming the marbles of the fallen foes.

But the excitement doesn't end there. The game of Guli unfolds in myriad forms, from the precision-targeted shots aimed at knocking out specific target marbles to the skillful art of propelling marbles into meticulously crafted holes in the ground. Each variation not only tests the players' dexterity and strategic thinking but also invites them into a shared experience of joy, challenge, and the thrill of competition. Guli is a reminder of the simple pleasures that come from a handful of marbles, a patch of ground, and the company of friends eager to challenge the limits of their precision and imagination.





BATU SEREMBAN

Selambut, also known lovingly as Batu Seremban or Serembat, is a traditional game that weaves together skill and grace. This cherished pastime, varying in name from the north and east coasts (Selambut) to the west coast (Batu Seremban) of Peninsular Malaysia, captures the essence of communal joy and individual prowess.

Predominantly a game of girls, Selambut can be enjoyed solo or in lively groups of two to five players, creating a vibrant circle of participants. At the core of this game are the 'buah'—the game pieces that hold the magic. Whether it's five or seven, these pieces are the heartbeat of Selambut. Traditionally, the 'buah' were simple elements of nature: rubber seeds, pebbles, or small stones, each adding its own unique touch to the game's rhythm.

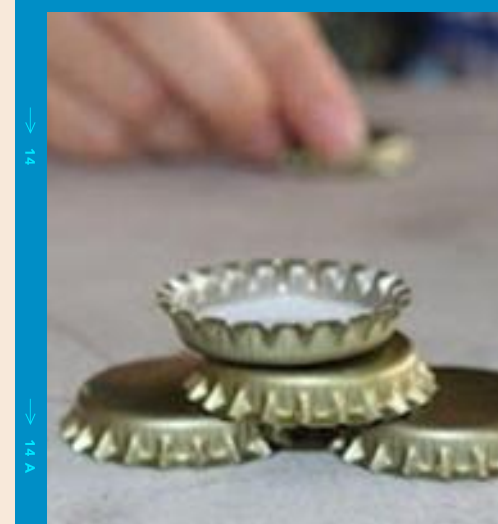
However, as times have evolved, so has the essence of Selambut. Today, players often opt for cloth bags, meticulously sewn and tenderly filled with saga seeds, sand, or other materials, adding a modern twist to this age-old game. These crafted pieces glide through the air, caught with skill and grace, as players navigate through the levels of the game.

CEPER (BOTTLE CAP)

Ceper, also affectionately known as "Tutup Botol" is a game that marked the childhoods of many during the 1970s and 1980s. This traditional game, often played with a sense of camaraderie among young children, utilises a simple yet ingenious tool: the humble bottle cap.

Requiring at least two participants, Ceper is more than just a game; it is a test of dexterity, strategic thinking, and the harmonious coordination of eyes and hands. Each player takes turns skillfully flipping their collection of five bottle caps, aiming to outmanoeuvre their opponents through a series of calculated moves and creative strategies.

The essence of the game lies in the "counting of successful ceper" - a thrilling moment where players weigh their flipped caps to score points. The excitement builds with each flick, as participants vie to showcase their mastery over their caps, blending finesse with quick thinking. Ceper is a testament to the creativity of play, where simple everyday objects are transformed into sources of endless fun and challenge.



CONGKAK

Believed to have originated during the time of the Malay Sultanate of Malacca, Congkak is a traditional game that has captivated the hearts of generations, dating back to a remarkable 600-year legacy. Primarily an indoor game, Congkak holds a special place in the community, especially among women and children.

Played by two opponents, the game unfolds on a beautifully crafted Congkak board, adorned with 14 holes or "kampung" (villages), and two larger end holes known as "rumah" (homes). Each participant strategically manoeuvres their set of "buah" - marbles, rubber seeds, or pebbles - across the board with the aim of capturing their opponent's pieces.



In some traditional variations, the earth itself becomes a part of the game, with holes carved directly into the ground, connecting players with the natural world. The objective is as elegant as it is challenging: to empty the adversary's side of pieces, gathering the spoils into one's "rumah." The victor emerges not just through the quantity of pieces claimed but also through strategic acumen and foresight.

LUMBA TEROMPAH TEMPURUNG (COCONUT SHELL CLOG RACE)



Step into tradition with the thrilling Coconut Shell Clog Race (Lumba TerompaH Tempurung), a unique and exciting game that transforms ordinary coconut shells into challenging footwear for racers. Crafted from the specially selected three-pointed coconut shells, each pair of clogs is ingeniously designed to test balance and agility. The creation process involves carefully piercing one of the shell's thinner sections to thread a durable rope through, securing wooden blocks on either end to fashion the makeshift clogs. Participants then gear up to dash across an open field, navigating from the starting line to the finish, which can span a heart-pumping distance of 20 to 30 metres. This game will definitely bring a touch of camaraderie and fun to any outdoor gathering.

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Jawi Peranakans in Conversation

By Nazima Versay Kudus

Jawi Peranakan is a hybrid of the Indian-Malay community. The community emerged during the British Malaya period, as a result of intermarriage between Indian merchants and traders with local Malay women. In Penang, the Jawi Peranakans have played a significant role in shaping the cultural and historical landscape of the region. Today, the community comprises the descendants of these unions, preserving some of their unique traditions, customs, cuisine and dialect, which vividly reflect the amalgamation resulting from intermarriage. Presented below is a dialogue that employs words that distinctly encapsulate their cultural identity.

Chombi: Assalamualaikum **Aci** (kakak) Jan. Awat yang dok **keliting** (mundar-mandir) tu?

Aci Jan: Waalaikumsalam Combi. **Mai** (mari) la masuk. Semak la rumah sikit. Anak cucu mai. **Depa** (mereka) dok main **acilut** (main sembunyi-sembunyi) tadi. Ni cuba tengok depa **gurmit** (asah guna pengasah pensel) pensel rata-rata. **Ketoq** (bekas untuk ludah) aku pun depa buat main. **Pukui** (pukul) depa dengan **kambey** (kayu) baru tau. Baru **sat** (sekejap) tadi aku **getu** (cubit) depa.

Chombi: Ni **chek** (saya) mai ni ada hajat.

Aci Jan: Ha **awatnya** (kenapa)?

Chombi: **Lagu** (macam) ni, chek mai nak pinjam **barang** (barang kemas).

Aci Jan: **Insat** (Sekejap). Aku **boh** (letak) dalam **gundi** (guni), **tang** (di) mana tak tau. **Hang** (awak) nak pinjam apa?

Chombi: **Mastora** (kalung berlian) Aci la.

Aci Jan: Nak pinjam nak **pi** (pergi) mana?

Chombi: Anak chek nak **khutbah** (akad nikah).

Aci Jan: Oh yang **suap gula** (tunang) dulu ka? Eh hang bukan ada barang **nani** (nenek) hang ka?

Chombi: Dah kena **balaih** (dicuri) hari tu. Sarbanu ni **ketegaq** (degil) sikit Aci. Muka **chom** (masam) saja tak **dak** (ada) barang nak pakai dia kata. Dia takut orang dok **camdek** (perli) masa kenduri. **Ghaplah** (pening kepala) chek. Mana nak siap kenduri. Mana nak kacau **pulut kacau** (wajik). Mana nak pasang **pandey** (khemah kenduri).

Aci Jan: Ooo ya ka. **Mapley** (pengantin lelaki) orang mana?

Chombi: Orang **bagan** (Butterworth). Tapi lani depa **dok** (tinggal) di **Counter Hall** (Jalan P. Ramlee).

Aci Jan: Elok la, **ponu** (pengantin perempuan) orang **tanjung** (George Town). Tak jauh sangat. Ni kata kat Sarbanu jangan dok **cengey** (bengis) sangat bila dah kahwin. Allah! Aku lupa **rasem** (sup pedas asal selatan India) **ataih** (atas) api. **Nana** (abang) Saleem hang hari-hari nak makan yang tu aja. Baru laju dia **podu** (makan). Hang mai **satni** (kemudian) lah aku bagi barang.

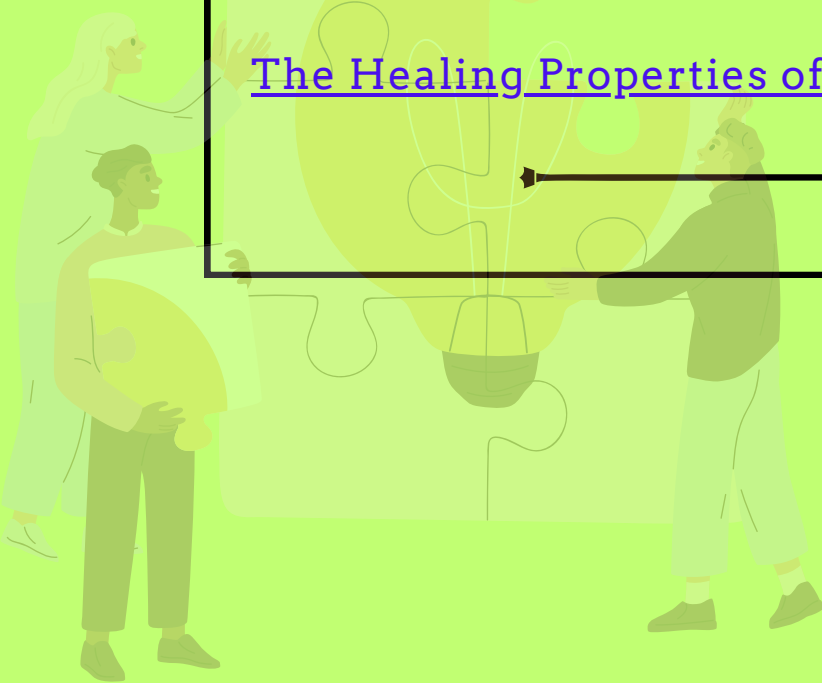
Chombi: **Lagu** (macam) tu chek baliklah dulu. Terima kasih Aci.



Lecturer's Contribution



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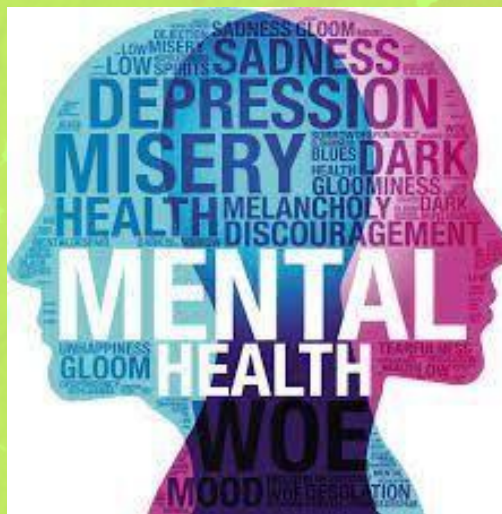


MENTAL HEALTH: SUBCONSCIOUS MIND

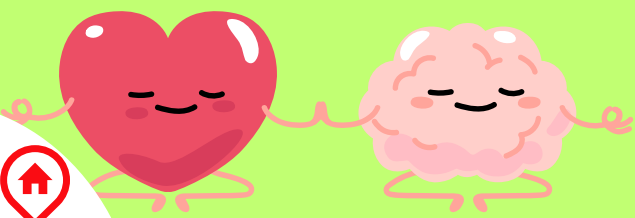
By Emily Jothee Mathai

According to the World Health Organization (WHO, 2022), mental health is a state of well-being in which an individual realises his/her own abilities, can cope with the 'normal stresses' of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and can contribute to the community. The word 'normal stress' is somehow very subjective. What may seem normal to someone may seem excessive to the other.

Principally, after the onset of COVID-19, the issue of stress has escalated among people from all walks of life around the globe; university students are one of them! According to Nur Shakila Ibharm et al. (2021), students from institutes of higher learning were highly affected primarily due to campus closures, the shift to virtual classes, and financial constraints. A study carried out by Kush et al. (2022) in the United States of America in which the mental health status of teachers and professionals in other occupations were compared found that teachers reported a greater anxiety level compared to those in other professions. More closely, a local study carried out by Ahmad Razali Ishak et al. (2022) on 391 teachers revealed that the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in depression, anxiety, and stress among Malaysian teachers.



No doubt Covid-19 has somehow dampened now, and life is back to normal. Nevertheless, the impact created during the pandemic should not be left unnoticed. The stress experienced during the pandemic is carried forward subconsciously, which results in many facing mental health issues.



People, in general, are unaware of the power of the subconscious mind. They often associate the mind with the brain, which they are not! They are two separate entities altogether. The brain is the physical organ filled with neurons that form the nervous system, whereas the mind is non-physical and is made up of the conscious and subconscious mind (Gilmour, 2023). The conscious mind is functional, which one is aware of and is involved in analyzing and decision-making in our daily lives, whereas the subconscious mind is the storehouse of all traumas and thoughts, both positive and negative (Gilmour, 2023). The subconscious mind generally controls humans! Therefore, to be positive at the conscious level, one must change one's beliefs at the subconscious level (Gilmour, 2023).

It sounds easy, but it is challenging to practice, especially when you are unaware of what is happening in the subconscious mind. It takes an experienced clinical psychologist to set free the beliefs and traumas that keep one in psychological struggles: anxiety, low self-esteem, depression, and the list goes on. If these issues are not tackled as soon as possible, it could lead to long-term negative effects!



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UPLIFT YOUR MOMENTUM

By Dr Nur Ilianis Adnan

On January 7th, 2024, I was invited to Penang Free School to give a motivational talk to lower secondary students. I felt so honored to be there and to share my insights. The students were very attentive and participative. It wasn't just me who did the talking. I tried my very best to involve the students as much as I could.

Upon arrival, I was welcomed by the organizer of the program, Mr. Ridhwan Shariff, the director of Mind & Soul, a company that deals a lot with mental health. I was then ushered to the classroom where all the students were already waiting for me.

I started off my talk by showing them a short video which was famous on Instagram. The video was about an Arab guy from Dubai talking about branded items. I asked the students, what does success mean to them? Of course, I received a lot of answers from the students. Then, I continued telling them about 'Red Car theory'. The theory explains, if someone was asked to count a red car and for each red car they spotted, they would be given RM20, suddenly they start noticing red cars everywhere. It's not that there are suddenly more red cars on the road, but rather that the person's attention has been primed to notice them because of their recent purchase. This phenomenon can apply to various aspects of life beyond just cars. Just like noticing red cars, setting clear and specific goals can prime your attention to notice opportunities and resources that align with those goals. When you have a clear vision of what you want to achieve, your mind becomes attuned to relevant information and possibilities that can help you progress toward success. From this point, I taught them goal setting. I asked them to break down their goals (1 year, 5 years and 10 years).



Next, I showed them my favorite motivational songs and got them to write just some parts of their favorite songs that can uplift their spirit. For instance, for me, it has always been the soundtrack of Moana and the lyrics: SEE THE LINE WHERE THE SKY MEETS THE SEA? IT CALLS ME AND NO ONE KNOWS HOW FAR IT GOES IF THE WIND IN MY SAIL ON THE SEA STAYS BEHIND ME ONE DAY I'LL KNOW HOW FAR I'LL GO. Before I ended, I introduced them to a thing called, 'Vision Board', which I strongly believe serves as a powerful visualization tool to clarify and reinforce your goals and aspirations. Then, I encouraged them to make one vision board and place it nearby their bed or mirror so that they can often see their visions and goals.



THE HOLISTIC LIVING

By Emily Jothee Mathai

Holistic living simply means caring for all parts of our body, be it mind, body, or soul. In our busy day-to-day lives, we often have no time to look into our overall self, which is very important for our overall well-being. Concerns crop up only when we encounter some health issues. We then rush to get the necessary help to combat the disturbance that has affected our daily lives. Once battled, we blissfully revert to the normal routine. This way of living is unhealthy and results in many health issues in the future.



In holistic living, we observe the three parts of ourselves: mind, body, and soul. All three elements are connected. Often, we tend to exert our body to complete an important task. As a result, we don't get proper sleep (body) as we are anxious (mind) of the pending work. We then practice withdrawal syndrome from family and friends (soul) to accomplish unaccomplished tasks.

It is important to recognise the connectivity between the mind, body, and soul. A healthy mind leads to a healthy body; a healthy body leads to a healthy soul. It only works unilaterally and not bilaterally.



Ultimately the mind, which constitutes the conscious and subconscious mind, plays a crucial role in maintaining a healthy well-being. Psychologists say that the subconscious mind which consists of beliefs, perspectives, expectations, and fears, controls 95 percent of how humankind behave, react, and perceive things in our surroundings. Therefore, training our subconscious mind towards healthy living is the key to a healthy body and soul.

These are some of the ways towards maintaining a healthy subconscious mind:

Surround yourself with positive supportive people!

Meditation – visualizing the past pain and releasing it.

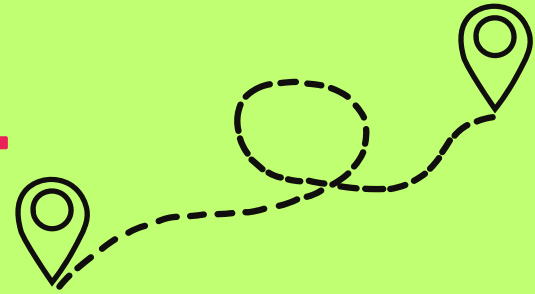
Self-hypnosis



Generally, everyone is unique in their own way, and they deal with matters around them, be it work, studies, family, entertainment, illnesses, finances differently. Therefore, we cannot compare someone to another by issuing statements like – “Why did you do it that way? It should have been done this way”. The reality is, everyone is different, and they handle matters differently. As long as the mind, body and soul are balanced, it leads to the well-being of a person. So, what are we waiting for? Practice holistic living with a positive mind.



By Dr Nur Ilianis Adnan



Embarking on my journey through Garmisch, Munich, and Innsbruck offered me a profound insight into the rich tapestry of European culture. As an Asian girl, living in the tropical country all my life, exploring these magnificent cities, I was struck by the juxtaposition of tradition and modernity, and how each locale contributed uniquely to the mosaic of European identity.



All praise to The One who has permitted all these things to happen. Alhamdulillah, my winter tradition in Germany continues. My sixth time and still counting. This year, I realised that as I age, I don't appreciate shopping around for materials. I treasure the good feelings of sipping hot kinder punch when it's cold outside at the Christmas market, indulging hot choc on the mountain, sitting at the balcony drinking black coffee with some Christmas cookies, eating Apfel kuchen and chocolate pudding for breakfast, layering myself and taking a night stroll alone around the city while listening to my lagu wajib "Mencari cinta sejati" by Chakra Khan and "Perfect" by Ed Sheeran. As I was

writing this, I asked my best friend, "What else do I need to add?". She replied, "I rasa you dah dapat segala-galanya yang you nak because Garmisch dah melengkapkan segalanya". I am touched and couldn't thank HIM enough 🧠 My favourite line is "Ask and you shall receive."❤️

Keeping this entry for my memory. My trip to Germany, my second home (GM2H) this time makes me feel a lot at 'home' for some reasons. As always, there is no explanation. Big thanks to my German language teacher, Annette. I'm not fluent enough to 'membawang', but at least, good enough to survive and make little conversations. Managed to also help one stranger from India to order her food in Deutsch. Got all the things that I wanted, alhamdulillah except for Reibekuchen.



My journey culminated in Innsbruck; a picturesque city nestled in the heart of the Austrian Alps. Here, against the backdrop of snow-capped peaks and Baroque architecture, I encountered a fusion of Austrian charm and Alpine serenity.



Standing at the summit of Zugspitze, Germany's highest peak, I was humbled by the majesty of nature and the boundless beauty of the Alpine landscape. Trips to Alps can never go wrong. Oppss I take that back, unless if there's a blizzard, then yes, so wrong! You might regret going up there..lol..Watching the sunlight cast a golden glow over the snow-capped mountains, I felt a profound sense of connection to the world around me, igniting a spark of creativity within my soul.



Moreover, my journey through Garmisch, Munich, and Innsbruck has deepened my understanding of cultural diversity and the importance of cross-cultural dialogue. By embracing the rich tapestry of European culture, I hope to bridge the gap between East and West, inviting my fellow friends to embark on their own journey of discovery and enlightenment.

In conclusion, my trip to GM2H has been a transformative odyssey, enriching my understanding of European culture and inspiring me to embrace the beauty of the world around me. Subhanallah. As I return home to this microwave..I mean, Asia (just kidding), I carry with me not only memories of breathtaking landscapes and historic landmarks but a renewed sense of creativity and purpose.



SAMBIL MENYELAM SAMBIL SULAM UKHUWAH DI LAUT SANUR

Oleh PM Dr Rofiza Aboo Bakar



September 2022 membenarkan saya berkunjung sekali lagi ke bumi dewata: Bali, Indonesia. Kali ini misi saya mudah sahaja: berehat, berbasikal, mencari ide untuk menulis artikel dan mengunjungi beberapa masjid dalam jangka masa dua minggu berada di sana. Kesemua misi saya berjaya dipenuhi. Akan tetapi, istimewanya juga ialah saya berupaya menyelam ukhuwah dengan rakan baru.

Oleh kerana ini adalah kali keempat saya tiba di Bali, saya hanya mahu menghabiskan masa yang banyak di dalam premis hotel dan pantai yang menghadap Laut Sanur tanpa tergesa-gesa melawati lain-lain tempat yang sarat dengan pengunjung. Laut di sini amat ideal untuk aktiviti berenang kerana pasirnya yang landai menjadikan ia tidak begitu dalam atau merbahaya. Ombak yang membadai tidak akan sampai ke pantai kerana ianya pecah apabila melewati terumbu karang yang memanjang (Alexander, 2023) serta terletak kira-kira 500 meter dari pantai. Rutin pagi selepas bersarapan adalah untuk berehat di atas kerusi panjang yang disusun rapi pihak pengurusan hotel. Berehat sambil membuka 'laptop' mencari ilham penulisan sebelum terjun ke dalam air dan naik semula ke pantai adalah aktiviti harian yang tidak mungkin berlaku di Malaysia.

Sebelum berpisah, sempat diberitahu namanya Anna. Keesokan hari, saya kembali ke premis yang sama dengan harapan boleh bertemu beliau lagi. Namun, kelibatnya sudah tiada. Saya berbasikal beberapa kilometer di sepanjang Pantai Sanur mencari beliau tetapi hampa. Namun, pesanmu kuingat. Moga kamu bisa kembali ke Ukraine dengan selamat.

Semasa berada di Sanur, sempat saya berkenalan dengan seorang wanita kulit putih yang sering berendam di dalam air tanpa berenang tetapi hanya melihat langit biru yang dihiasi awan putih di atas. Tingkah lakunya menarik perhatian saya. Juga, oleh kerana saya memang suka menjalin persahabatan, perlahan-lahan beliau didekati. Dalam perbualan yang singkat itu, saya akhirnya ketahu bahawa beliau ialah seorang pensyarah Psikologi yang lari dari Ukraine kerana rumahnya habis hancur dibedal bom akibat peperangan Russia-Ukraine. Beliau tidak tahu berapa lama beliau akan berada di sini menumpang anaknya yang mengajar yoga di Bali. Syarahannya masih berjalan tetapi kesemuanya dilakukan secara atas talian. Sebelum berpisah, pesan beliau ialah supaya kita bersyukur jika negara aman damai dan ada makan, pakai dan minum.

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HAIKU

By Dr Nur Ilianis Adnan

Sometimes, I make Haiku to express how I feel. Expressing feelings using Haiku makes me feel a lot better. I feel like I can remain calm and mysterious at the same time. Apart from expressing my emotions, creating Haiku is also good for your brain. It trains your brain to stop and reflect. Try it if you don't believe me. Here are some Haikus I made a few months back when I felt I needed to be more appreciated.

A drop of honey,
On my lips, the biggest grin
Imagine, a hive?

Pretty wings I own,
Fly higher, and if I go,
Will you ever catch?

Like the fine rainbow,
Appreciate and embrace me,
For I will vanish

Enjoy my presence,
And don't ever be reckless,
Good ME won't come twice.



AYAT-AYAT LUCU PENUH MEMIKAT

Oleh PM Dr Rofiza Aboo Bakar

Amat jarang saya menonton cerita Melayu kecuali cerita-cerita klasik P. Ramlee ketika saya tinggal dengan ibu dan arwah bapa dahulu. Astro Warna dan Citra yang sering memainkan cerita-cerita Melayu pun tidak saya pasang di rumah. Pendek kata, saya sudah kurang berminat menonton. Akan tetapi, apabila saya berkesempatan berkelana bersama rakan yang tampak pendiam tetapi melucukan, Raja Rosila, saya mula belajar untuk menonton 'Sepahtu Reunion', sebuah program yang dipancarkan secara terus-menerus oleh Astro, terutama sekali apabila minda perlukan rehat.

Program lawak ini mendapat sambutan ramai sehingga dikatakan mencecah lebih 6 juta penonton pada satu-satu masa selain daripada mempunyai penonton-penonton yang bergelak tawa riang di studio. Apakah yang istimewa tentang program ini? Tidak lain tidak bukan: ayat-ayat lucu yang dilontarkan oleh para pelakornya seperti Jep Sepahtu, Shuib Sepahtu, Rahim Sepahtu dan Pak Ya serta pelakon-pelakon jemputan mereka. Lawak mereka tidak lagi terikat dengan gelagat-gelagat 'slapstick' seperti yang dipertontonkan oleh para pelawak di era 70an-80an. Lawak mereka lebih profesional dan dipenuhi dengan ayat-ayat lucu yang pada pendapat saya penuh memikat.

Kebanyakan penonton memang ternanti-nanti akan ayat-ayat ini setiap kali program berlangsung. Mereka seolah-olah sudah tahu bila ayat-ayat ini akan diucapkan sehingga mereka berteriak-teriak penuh semangat setiap kali muzik iringan dibunyikan menandakan sudah tiba masa pelakon melafazkannya. Penonton turut berteriak perkataan "chia... chia... chia" bersama-sama pelakon sebaik sahaja dialog itu disebut menzahirkan tanda riang gembira.

Selalunya ayat-ayat ini akan diucapkan oleh pelakon-pelakon utama yang terdiri daripada lelaki (L) kepada pelakon-pelakon jemputan wanita (W) dalam usaha mereka menjayakan peranan memikat (L) dan terpiikat (W). Kadang-kadang peranan itu boleh bertukar. Mari kita lihat sebahagian ayat-ayat lucu penuh memikat ini:

L: Ada apa dalam 'menu' itu?

W: Hmm... ada mee bandung, nasi goreng, bihun ladna....

L: Bukan...! Dalam 'menu' itu ada 'me' 'n' 'u'. (Penonton berteriak "Chia... chia...chia sambil bergelak ketawa).

L: Apa beza awak dan ikan?

W: Tak tahu.

L: Ikan berenang-renang di lautan; awak berenang-renang di hati saya.

W: Awak dah lama ke bekerja sebagai arkitek?

L: Ya, dah lama dah.

W: Patutlah saya berasa awak dah lama membina cinta di hati saya.

L: Awak lahir kat mana?

W: Saya lahir di Kampung Awah, Pahang.

L: Tipu! Orang cantik macam awak ni selalunya lahir di kayangan.

Saya sendiri ketawa terbahak-bahak sehingga berair mata dibuatnya. Bagi saya, ianya terapi yang baik setelah lelah bekerja memerah otak mengadap jurnal dan laptop. Terima kasih Rosila memperkenalkan saya kepada Sepahtu!



THE HEALING PROPERTIES OF ESSENTIAL OIL

By Emily Jothee Mathai



Have you heard about essential oil (EO) in Malaysia in the good old days? It would have been used in small quantities by various groups of people before the 21st century but it was not commercialized. Today, EOs are widely used in the country and there are many brands in the market, to name a few - Young Living, doTERRA, Easecox. I am not promoting the brands of EOs here, but generally they have benefitted many people across the globe.



EO is not something new in the 21st century. Historically, the use of essential oil started way back in 4500 B.C.E by the Egyptians. It was used to create tinctures, powders, salves and ointments for medical purposes and spiritual ceremonies. In China, the use of essential oil was also practised by The Yellow Emperor, Huang Di during his reign in 2597 BC.



Today, EOs are gaining popularity in the global market. What is the driving factor? The healing properties of EOs! Aromatherapy is one of it. Aromatherapy, a type of alternative medicine is the most ancient art of healing. "Aroma" means fragrance and "therapy" means treatment designed to cure. The inhaled aroma from EOs via diffuser is believed to stimulate the emotional centre of the brain which plays a role in controlling emotions.



Besides inhaling, EOs can also be applied on the skin in which the molecules of EOs travel through the bloodstream and promote whole body healing. The oil however cannot be applied directly onto the skin as it is highly concentrated. It must be diluted in a carrier oil such as jojoba or grape seed oil before massaging it onto the skin.

In short, the therapeutic effect of EOs is undeniable as evidence have shown that various types of EOs have a wide range of health benefits (Lakshan et. al., (2016)). Besides healing, the usage of EOs also provides pleasure and soothing effects which relaxes someone from a stressful day at work. No wonder EOs are well-received in this growing stressful environment across the globe.

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Creative Writing

Pantun Majlis Pertunangan

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Call Me by My Middle Name

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Pantun Majlis Pertunangan

By Melati Desa

Lidah pendita kiasan bersulam
Senyum menguntum tamu persila
Bismillah kata pesanan kalam
Assalamualaikum majlis bermula

Lewat senja beli barangan
Untuk menjamu Puan Nyonya
Selamat tiba ke taman larangan
Nak tumpang lalu apa kuncinya?

Bertukar salam senyum diraih
Batik pelikat selindang melintang
Walaikumsalam terima kasih
Apa hajat rombongan datang?

Anak ayam makan dedak
Walau kenyang tidak sendawa
Berapa mayam Mak Andam hendak?
Itulah kuncinya yang kami bawa

Jawi Rumi tulisan khat
Seni canting zaman berzaman
Ke sini kami kunjungan beradat
Ingin menyunting kembang di taman

Buah Nona buah Ara
Buah berangan pohonnya rapat
Wakil teruna membuka bicara
Majlis pertungan bersunahkan adat

Tikar anyaman daun mengkuang
Diraut Cik Siti sirat menyirat
Memikat kembang jangan bertualang
Terpaut hati hajat bersyarat

Orang menjerat burung punai
Mari diletak ke dalam bakul
Yang berhajat sudah tercapai
Hati berkehendak sudah termakbul

Berbaju labuh berkain kembang
Masakan sama berbaju mini
Dari jauh kami datang
Menurut saja adat di sini

Keris dilumur asap kemeyan
Keluk erat diselit ke pinggang
Silat bertaruh pertahan berseni
Sirih dikapur tanda perkenan
Elok adat dibawalah pulang
Mana yang buruk tinggalkan di sini



Call Me by My Middle Name

By Che Nooryohana Zulkifli

“So, are you going or not? It’s really up to you if you don’t want to go. Just make sure your sister gets ready quickly!” With her lipstick applied, Mom grabbed her bag and headed downstairs. I hurried to my room, urging my sister to get ready for school before Mom erupted in frustration once more. Sitting by the bed, I wondered why skipping school seemed acceptable for me but not for my sister.

When the final exam results came out, I could hear the excitement bubbling in my mom’s voice as she chatted with Dad about my sister’s stellar performance. Standing by my door upstairs, I tried to catch the bits of their conversation but didn’t hear my name mentioned. Well, that should be fine. Clearly, there wasn’t anything noteworthy to say about me anyway.

Well, next!

It was during breakfast when my mom asked if my younger brother wanted to tag along to the shopping mall. I couldn’t help feeling excited because I wanted to browse for some of my favourite stationery items. The thought of that funky pencil with a furry bear on top lingered in my mind. Quickly finishing my sandwich, I dashed upstairs to get ready. Dressing up didn’t take much time, and as I made my way downstairs, I could already hear the car engine revving. Just as I was about to slip on my casual slippers, my mom stopped me. “I don’t think you need to come. You’ll only slow us down. Your brother alone is already too much of a handful”.

Petrified.

I heard my parents talking about getting new bicycles for us. I was again, off the roof! I even spilled the beans to my younger brother. He was smashing his opponent on Nintendo and he couldn’t seem to be bothered at all when I dropped the bomb. All the video games he had were his favourites and even though we were gaming buddies, I never got the chance to tell my dad what would be my personal wishlist. He never asked though. When the bike truck finally rolled in, I was upstairs chilling in front of the TV. I raced downstairs to get a peek at our new wheels, but my excitement fizzled out when I saw only two bikes being unloaded. Dad hauled them onto the porch and with a hesitant step forward, I asked, “Which one is mine?” He was busy inspecting the new stuff and casually replied, “You can just take Lindsay’s bike since she has outgrown the current one. And yeah, your brother will ride this smaller bike. Yours is too old already for him. Got some rusty metal here and there”.

I froze.

Lindsay finished school and she was accepted in a prestigious university. Mom and Dad were over the moon, and honestly, who wouldn’t be? Lindsay was a star student, no doubt about it. There was one time when she was away, she rang Mom for money. I can hear Mom just say yes to her request. I knew back then our parents couldn’t afford many things but Lindsay never seemed to be short of money. Meanwhile, I was stuck in the middle of these epic money fights between Mom and Dad. It was like a soap opera, except the drama was real and Lindsay?



She was clueless about it all. There was also one time when I needed new sportswear and begged Mom to buy it because I had to wear it for the school's sports day. I remember she just brushed off my request like it was nothing and so there I was, sprinting around the field in my regular school uniform and almost tripped over that long skirt.

I finally finished my high school. It marked the beginning of the college application process. So today, I would discover where I would spend the next four years of my life. When my dad arrived home, his face beamed with pride as he announced that I had been accepted into a decent public university. However, my mom's reaction was less enthusiastic. "Are you absolutely sure about her enrollment? You should check again. We wouldn't want to be embarrassed showing up there only to find her name missing. And even if she's been accepted there, can she come through? She's not gifted like Lindsay."

My brother came over to Mom's home that day. He had been engulfed in work for several weeks, making it difficult for him to find time to come home. His office was quite far, forcing him to rent a place nearby. It was clear that Mom had been eagerly awaiting his arrival. He appeared worn out and tense. Seeing him in this state, Mom offered him comfort and reassurance, expressing that he could always turn to her for support if he encountered any difficulties, including financial ones.

When I was married to my husband, there were numerous occasions when we struggled to make ends meet, to the extent that we couldn't afford our rent. And just when we thought things couldn't get worse, we had to kiss our only car goodbye.

I still remember those rough days like they were yesterday – trudging through the pouring rain, pushing my eldest daughter in her stroller for nearly 10 miles just to buy groceries. Mom knew how tough things were, but she never offered to help out. All she did was continue to complain about why I chose to marry a financially struggling man. The funny thing is, while she could forgive my brother's antics in a heartbeat, my own struggles seemed to fuel her bitterness. Each day felt like a battle, with her resentment growing thicker by the minute.

Same old, same old.

Lindsay called me that one evening. When she shared her plans to migrate, I felt a pang of envy. How I wished that opportunity had come to me instead! How I wish I could disappear. She said life can be more meaningful when struggles are part of it. While she may be older than me, wisdom doesn't necessarily come with age. She never fed her children instant noodles as staples and waited for hours in line at public hospitals, so please, don't talk to me about struggles.

"You never listen and that's why I'm always angry at you! Unlike Lindsay, you never go against me and I don't know what went wrong that you changed"! My mom shouts in her usual shrieking voice. I am already too tired to reason with her, let alone to fight. It has been more than 30 years going down this same road. If you think my tears throughout these years are enough to flood a town, you are right!



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