

Learning skills for open distance learners education essay

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In 2010, The New Economic Model (NEM) initiative was introduced by our Prime Minister to propel the country to a high-income nation by 2020 through a knowledge-economy. But among the critical success factors outlined in the report titled ' New Economic Model for Malaysia Part 1' (National Economic Advisory Council. 2010, pp. 105), is English proficiency of Malaysian student. Knowledge economy is the economy which is based on the knowledge-intensive activities and services that contribute to an accelerated pace of technical and scientific advance. The key component of a knowledge economy is a greater reliance on intellectual capabilities than on physical inputs or natural resources (Walter, W. P., Kaisa, S. 2004). The private sectors are becoming more competitive and the globalization in business has encouraged the local companies to think beyond the nation. For this reason, the employees are forced to continue giving all their ideas and energy to what they are doing. The related skills for effective communication like presentation skills, interpersonal skills and convincing negotiation skills are essential for employees besides the technical and scientific skills. Consequently, English communication skill is very important and the ability to master English is very much required to remain employable. A research on the Academic Achievements and Employability of Graduates in Institutions of Higher Learning (Morshidi S, Rosni B, Lim HE, Mohamed NK. 2004) proved that English communication skills is imperative to learners and have significant effects on employability. Consequently, it is very important for graduate to fully proficient in English to fulfill the needs of employment in the private sector. The researchers have also revealed that most of Malaysian learners in local institutions of higher learning are found to have a

poor command of the English language. According to Taylor's University Lakeside Campus deputy vice-chancellor Pradeep Nair (The Stars Online, 2012), the problem of poor English proficiency among the student in Malaysia is stems from the fact that students were often oblivious to their weaknesses and were therefore unable to take steps to improve themselves. He pointed to recent survey results which showed that up to 64% of fresh graduates was rejected after their first job interviews due to poor English proficiency and communication skills. Accordingly, the aim of this assignment was to identify the factors leadings to poor command of the English language among students in Malaysian higher educational institutions. All the Information was collected through multiple reliable resources such as newspapers, journals and reliable online websites intended to find the top four reasons that lead to the issues. The results of this study revealed that 11 most common reasons for poor command of the English language among students in Malaysian higher educational institutions. All the reasons collected from multiple resources are categorized into four major categories. Finally, four recommendations were also included in this study to overcome the issue.

FACTORS LEADINGS TO POOR COMMAND OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AMONG STUDENTS IN MALAYSIAN HIGHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS.

There are several research papers, academic writings and journals attempted to recognize and identify the possible factors that result in poor command of the English language among students in Malaysian. Table 1 below listed among the most important factors that contribute to the issues <https://assignbuster.com/learning-skills-for-open-distance-learners-education-essay/>

and it was categorized into four major groups. Though all the causes cannot be generalized to all learners, it does represent a majority of the learners.

Table 1: Causes of limited English proficiency among Malaysian

learners

- 1English is always being viewed as a difficult subject to learn.
- 2While using English for communicating, learners are afraid to be wrong and prejudiced about it.
- 3English is not perceived as an important medium for communication as they use Bahasa Malaysia both for academic and personal interactions.
- 4Learners have inadequate or insufficient exposure to the language as there is a limited opportunity to use English outside the classrooms.
- 5Learners express unwillingness and high anxiety to use English to communicate despite acknowledging that English is important for their future.
- 6There is a lack of support to use English in the home environment and the community.
- 7Learners are found to have limited vocabulary as English reading materials are not always available. Learners depend on the English teachers as authorities.
- 8English is used only to answer teacher's questions and spoken during English class.
- 9Learners tend to depend heavily on translation and dictionary use to find the meanings.
- 10Learners display unwillingness and lack of motivation to learn English as they do not see the immediate need to use the language.
- 11There is a mismatched between policy and practice in the Malaysian English Language Teaching curriculum; the policy as envisaged in the school curriculum cannot be fully implemented in schools because of the over-riding concern for examination.

Source:

Ambigapathy (2002; 2006); Fauziah Hassan & Nita Fauzee Selamat (2002), Mohd Sofi Ali (2008), Naginder (2006), Noor Hashimah Abdul Aziz (2007), Razianna Abdul Rahman (2005), Rosemala Ismail (2008), Zaira Abu Hasan

(2008), Normazida, C. M., Koo, Y. L., Hazita, A. (2012). Lack of confidence when using English

The most common problem that faced by most learners of higher learning in Malaysia is a lack of confidence. Although they spent eleven years studying English at primary and secondary school, some of them can't even pronounce an English sentence correctly. The English subject taught in school has always been viewed as a difficult subject to learn, especially to those students from small town and rural areas. Most of them are not confident enough to communicate in English and always refuse to use the language in public. They are afraid to be wrong and prejudiced about it. In the study by Shamsudin and Nesi (2006) revealed that students are often declining to use English is because they are embarrassed about their lack of fluency. Though Malaysians are generally friendly, tolerant and understanding, but when it comes to communicating in English among them, they are shy and afraid to make a mistake. They are afraid others will laugh at them, so they will try to avoid speaking English in front of others. A studies on Willingness To Communicate In A Second Language defines students' confidence in language use is reflected in whether they are willing to communicate (Yashima, 2002; Yashima, Zenuk-Nishide, Shimizu, 2004). This meant that the lower the frequency of use of certain language, the lower level of confidence they have. Negative Attitude towards the English Language. The second reason is the negative attitudes towards the English language. For information, attitude has been defined as the inclination to act or to be in a state of 'readiness' to act (Gagne, 1985). Traditionally, the learners just learned English to pass the examination not using it as their second language. Tucker and Lambert (1973), in their studies mentioned

that students in university generally find it difficult to maintain their interest in English language learning as English is not seen as important to their immediate needs other than to pass their examination. A lot of negative attitude builds up from unfamiliarity with the culture of the target language. Malay students from small towns or rural places usually grown up in a situation that English is unimportant language, not like their speaking home language, Bahasa Melayu. Learners have inadequate or insufficient exposure to the language as there is a limited opportunity to use English outside the classrooms. Learners express unwillingness and high anxiety to use English to communicate despite acknowledging that English is important for their future. Teaching And Learning Methodology In Primary And Secondary School

The main reason for this is that the English curriculum and its implementation in our national school system is far from satisfactory both in terms of its content and teaching. The overall picture is discouraged and is indicative of the need to change the ways in which English language literacy is taught to Malaysian learners. In learning a second language or a foreign language, research has established that it is utmost important that learners receive maximum support in terms of supportive and conducive learning environment as well as adequate, meaningful language experience. As shown in Table 1, these elements are currently lacking in our education system. (Normazida, C. M., Koo, Y. L., Hazita, A. 2012). The studies highlighted here suggest two important issues regarding English language learning in Malaysia. First, Bahasa Malaysia has a strong influence over the learning of English. Interference of the mother tongue language system in some ways contributes to wrong use of English grammatical rules,

morphology and syntax. Learners tend to refer to their first language system when writing in English, use direct translation and depend on dictionary meanings to comprehend English text (Ambigapathy, 2002; Nambiar 2007). Because of its strong orientation towards national based assessment, our education system has generally produced students who are unable to operate autonomously (Koo, 2008) ' whereby learners assume the part of empty vessels' (Naginder, 2006), presuming that teachers will teach them all the lessons they need to know. This characteristic indeed discourages and inhibits independent language learning. The strong tendency to depend on teachers for their own learning is further worsened with the prevalent discourse of examination throughout their school experience (Ambigapathy, 2002). The high importance placed on scoring good grades in the examination further establishes the need to memorize and regurgitate even in the discourse of assessment in higher learning institutions (Lee King Siong, Hazita Azman & Koo Yew Lie, 2010; Koo, 2008). Lack of Awareness on The Importance of English There are many reasons for this phenomenon; one of them is lack of awareness on the importance of English. English is not treated as a core subject like Bahasa Malaysia. Learners display unwillingness and lack of motivation to learn English as they do not see the immediate need to use the language. Learners are found to have limited vocabulary as English reading materials are not always available. There is a lack of support to use English in the home environment and the community.

SUGGESTIONS.

English Summer Camp to Promote Multicultural Interact and Develop Confidence.

To overcome the issue of lack of confidence while communicating in English among most of the of Malaysia higher learning institutions learners is by motivation. Motivation, as concluded by Gardner (2001), is when an individual has a drive and desire for some goal and have an effort to achieve it, persistent and enjoys the activity, attentive to the tasks and utilizes strategies. Clément, Noels and Deneault in their journal titled ' Interethnic Contact, Identity, And Psychological Adjustment' revealed that students are more motivated and have a positive attitude towards the native speakers of the language they study. These intercultural contacts have been proved to increase self-confidence when communicating in English (Clément, Noels, & Deneault, 2001). The positive and pleasant intercultural contacts will lead students to interact more frequently in English inside and outside the classroom. Because the experience was enjoyable, the increased self-confidence of the students, in turn, affected their motivation in a positive way. (Wen-chi Vivian, W., Ling Ling, Y., & Marek, M. , 2011)Therefore, successful interaction with native speakers can relieve students hesitancy to express themselves and increase their confidence in using the language.

Suggestion 2

Suggestion 3

Reforming Malaysia Education Policy, Systems & Standards

The review of literature discussed here illustrates the challenges and the complexities surrounding English literacy learning in the Malaysian education
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scenario. The review clearly reveals the need to reassess the approaches used to teach English literacy in this country. One common suggestion that emerges from these studies is to incorporate out-of classroom practices into the learning as well as to deliberate on social and cultural influence on English literacy learning (Naginder, 2006; Marlyna Maros et al., 2007; Nor Hashimah Jalaludin et al., 2008; Razianna Abdul Rahman, 2005).

Consequently, for Malaysian post-secondary school students who are weak in the English language as it prepares them sufficiently well for their entry into university and college courses. The course engages students in activity-based and process-oriented lessons that will develop, extend and enhance a range of skills. These include Speaking, Listening, Reading and Writing. These skills will be taught in an integrated as well as interlinked manner.

CONCLUSION

The job market in general is so competitive that we need to do more than just present our background and qualifications. Graduates tend to fail because they never display or communicate their employability skills, only presenting their factual credentials. The most fundamental factor in elevating all three learning variables is enjoyment. This is also intuitive, because students who are bored or who do not see the value in a course will not apply themselves. Because student-centered active learning improves enjoyment, EFL instructors must make this a priority in their instructional design. As part of this, the findings indicate that teachers should strive to offer their students successful interactions with native speakers, or excellent speakers of English from any other culture, on topics of particular interest to the students.

ATTACHMENT