General

Mastering skills of technology simplifies work

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Kuantan, 28 April 2020 - UMP administrators and lecturers are urged to improve the information and communication (ICT) skills to address the problems faced while working from home during the Movement Control Order (MCO) directive in curbing the spread of Covid-19 in the country.

The implementation of online teaching and learning (T&L) is the best solution to ensure unaffected delivery of T&L due to the current uncertain situation.

The Deputy Director of the Higher Education Leadership Academy (AKEPT), Associate Professor Dr. Mukhzeer Mohamad Shahimin said in the series of Bicara Pentadbir entitled *Normal Baharu, Bersediakah University Awam?*, educators have no choice but to use virtual teaching and learning to ensure it can be delivered the best possible.

“In this digital age, they need to explore this new knowledge. Administrators and lecturers will be more positive in passing through the new normal during this outbreak,” he said.

He added that various digital learning platforms such as online videos, Google Classroom, and others.

“Initially, it was difficult as the lecturers are comfortable with face-to-face sessions. However, since the spread of this disease is through close contact, social distancing must be adopted as one of the new normals.

“In the context of higher education, this new normal requires all institution of higher learning (IHL) to adopt social distancing.

“The obvious solution to the T&L session is to limit students movement during the MCO, and the T&L sessions can be continued afterwards.

Along with him were three invited panellists, the Registrar of Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM), Dr. Hajah Ina Md Yasin, the President of Malaysia Association of Public University Administrators (MASTI) cum the President of Universiti Malaysia Perlis (UniMAP) Administrators Association (POTENSI), Raja Shah Erman Raja Ariffin and Mohd Raizalhilmy Mohd Rais, the Vice President of MASTI (Corporate Relations) cum the President of the UMP Administrative and Professional Officers Association (PPTI).

The programme was moderated by the Senior Publication Officer, Muhammad Azli Shukri.

Dr. Hajah Ina Md Yasin also agreed that administrators must improve their ICT skills not only as the platform to make it easier to work from home but also as the preparation to move in the Fourth Industrial Revolution (IR 4.0).

“We can now discover the importance of smartphones. If earlier, we rarely expose our children to the use of smartphones, but now during the MCO, smartphones are their schools. All teachers are adopting online learning that we realise its need for children’s learning sessions.

“At the same time, administrators and civil servants are affected by the implementation of work from home during the MCO.

“In terms of administration, we are going through many new things, but for several organisations, this new normal is considered a challenge to be faced,” she said.

She added the current role of administrators is to shed light on the changes to the staff.

“Without the understanding, adverse effects will manifest, hence retarding the job process and eliciting conflicts.

“Embracing changes is indeed tough, but with cognisance of what we want to do, we will gain cooperation and prompt response.

“At the beginning of MCO, some were exasperated, but when we pulled together through MCO Phases 2 and 3, the new normal has been accepted as we started to understand,” she said.

As an administration effort, universities have to deal with four things, namely expectation, identification, evaluation, and responses.

Situations change randomly during this crisis. We must identify what is happening and its impact so evaluation can be made and execute the appropriate action.

“Besides, administrators must act fast and accurately,” she said.

Meanwhile, Raja Shah Erman Raja Arifin believed most of us were not ready to embrace the new normal as there may be a handful of administrators are in different zones.

“Working from home is also the biggest challenge to face because one does not only have problems with the ICT facilities but needs to juggle between work and family,” he said.

Mohd Raizalhilmy also shared the steps the administrators need to adopt in familiarising with the new normal, peri-and post-Covid-19.

“With the new normal, people are unconsciously more creative and innovative, especially in doing the job.
“Many things can be done during the MCO such as gaining knowledge on online platforms such as Zoom, Google Meet and Webex, which are uncommon previously,” he said.

He also shared some tips to stay energetic to work from home by ensuring conducive working space and reminding about integrity in carrying out the mandated responsibilities.

“Counsellors also need to play a role in addressing issues related to mental health such as depression, anxiety and stress that are escalating during the MCO.

“MASTI is currently conducting studies related to the occupational impact of MCO and Covid-19, and

the results of this study will be beneficial to all communities, especially the university administrators.

The *Bicara Pentadbir* series, organised by PPTI UMP in collaboration with the Registrar's Office and the Office of the Vice-Chancellor, was aired on 28 April 2020 via Zoom and the UMP Malaysia and PPTI Facebook pages and engaged over 200 participants among the administrators of public universities across the country.

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