

Passing the baton to next generation

THE "best" English speakers with clear diction and flawless grammar would be the baby boomer generation of English language teachers in primary and secondary schools. These old-timers, who have the ability to discern between a gerund and present participle, are the last torchbearers of the Queen's English in Malaysia.

Having taught English for more than 30 years, the time will soon come for these experienced teachers to retire and pass the baton to the next generation.

With their thorough knowledge of the language and decades of teaching experience, these teachers are clearly national treasures whose legacy should live on.

This is exactly what UCSI University aimed to do through its two-day Star-Nie Teacher Workshop Programme held at its Terengganu campus in February.

UCSI Terengganu fully sponsored the participation of more than 80 experienced teachers and students, who consisted of those pursuing a range of English and education-related programmes.

They included those from the Datuk Razali Ismail Institute of Teacher Education (IPG) and 24 students under government scholarship to pursue UCSI's degree in teaching English.

It provided students the platform to mingle and learn from their future colleagues as well as from the workshop itself.

The experienced teachers, on the other hand, gained new ideas and activities to teach English in class using *The Star* newspaper while having a fun experience.

"We are old-timers and have not attended such a course in a long time. It is refreshing in many ways, in terms of gaining new teaching ideas as well as boosting our morale when we became students for a day,"

said Sakhirah Ahmad, an English teacher from SMK Chukai.

She and her colleague had driven two and a half hours to attend the workshop and said that the journey was definitely worth it.

The workshop was clearly a success, judging from the glowing feedback from all participants.

According to the Faculty of Social Sciences and Liberal Arts dean, Dr Irene Tan, it is UCSI University's aim to highlight and acknowledge the value and contributions of these teachers who have, for many years, shouldered the responsibility to raise the bar in English education in the east

coast of the peninsula.

At the same time, the university also aims to provide them with new teaching aids and ideas to effectively teach English by sponsoring workshops and talks such as the Star-Nie Teacher Workshop Programme.

"In addition to sponsoring workshops and *The Star* newspapers to schools in Terengganu, our focus is to ensure we continue these teachers' good work by giving our students a sound English language-related degree," said Dr Tan.

Students who pursue the Faculty of Social Sciences and Liberal Arts' English language-related degrees, such as the Bachelor of Arts

(Hons) in Education and English, do not necessarily need to have a career in the education line if their passion lies elsewhere.

As one of the most popular degrees in the job market today, an English language-related degree can also pave the way for a career in linguistics, journalism, communications and so much more.

You can drop by the university's Open Days on April 20 and 21 (9am-6pm). Scholarships are available to deserving students via the UCSI University Trust.

■ For details, call 03-9101 8882 or e-mail www.ucsiuniversity.edu.my/onlineenquiry.



Star-NiE Teacher Workshop Programme participants at the UCSI University Terengganu campus.