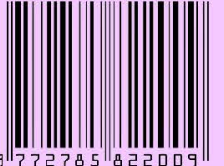


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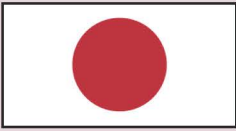
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ENHANCING STUDENTS COGNITIVE AND SOFT SKILLS THROUGH THE ONLINE EXCHANGE INTERNATIONALISATION PROGRAMME IN COLLABORATION BETWEEN UiTM AND THE UNIVERSITY OF TOYAMA, JAPAN.



School of Civil Engineering, UiTM and the Faculty of Education, University of Toyama, Japan, have started this initiative since 2021. The emergence of COVID-19 is the reason for the start of online international exchange programs between several schools in Malaysia and Japan. This international exchange program is implemented with the theme of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Using SDG-based education, also known as Education for Sustainable Development Goals (ESD), provides opportunities for students to interact by finding solutions. Both parties were collaborated as mentors and facilitators who helped apply the elements of the SDGs in education and were introduced to seven (7) selected and interested elementary schools.

The method used is inquiry-based learning (IBL) and uses scientific data to make decisions. IBL learning is a student-centered approach. The learning process is through research, exploration, and discovery. In this process, students will be actively involved in finding answers and understanding concepts, asking questions, observing, gathering information, and drawing conclusions based on their safeguarding and investigation. At the initial meeting, the school will set a topic to share together. With the selected topic, students will complete the process of gathering information and making a presentation to share with their respective collaborators. Lecturers from both universities will facilitate both parties. Surveys and interviews were conducted to collect data and information on the effectiveness and benefits of the programs. This data and information are also used as a cornerstone to improve weaknesses and shortcomings.

As a result, Students gained confidence in English, cultural awareness, and a global perspective on environmental challenges, along with the excitement of worldwide communication. Teachers benefited from learning new methods and fostering collaboration, encouraging SDG-based activities in Malaysian schools. Due to its success, the program will continue indefinitely.

The collaboration between UiTM and the University of Toyama is further strengthened by helping secondary schools integrate teaching and learning methods with ICT for collaborative learning to support the collection of data science. ICT as a learning aid was used to interact between a Malaysian and Japanese secondary school. The data collected in the study measured the effectiveness of communication between the Japanese and Malaysian student in their small groups. In addition, information related to the topics was shared and the methods of delivering information during the sharing session were also used as reference materials.

The online cross-cultural initiative between Malaysian and Japanese schools has fostered cross-border social interaction that has proven beneficial for both the teachers and students participating. Teachers can expand their understanding of the SDGs with great assistance from the university's expertise and knowledge transfer to the school community.

Author: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Marfiah Ab. Wahid