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# 27 FEB MOOCS, THE PLATFORM TO PROMOTE GLOBAL KNOWLEDGE-SHARING

PENANG, 27 February 2016 – Having started the first Massive Open Online Course (MOOCs) 'classroom' in Malaysia, Professor Dr. Mushtak Al-Atabi, Dean of School of Engineering from Taylor's University, was a truly passionate and creative practitioner of his art.

He was the guest speaker for the Multi Seminar Series, organised on the last Friday of every month by the USM Centre for Development of Academic Excellence and Student Development (CDAE).

The Director of CDAE, Professor Dr. Abd Karim Alias introduced the speaker as someone who is strong-willed and realistic, and having won numerous awards and having memberships in a number of professional bodies.

Mushtak, who is an engineer by training, is also involved in training and consultancy, and was at USM to deliver a talk entitled, "Think like an Engineer: Changing the World through MOOCs and Technopreneurship."

He stated that, there is a need for a more holistic educational environment in the country, as students nowadays need to have an all-round character to succeed in life.

"Universities therefore should focus not only on ensuring their students attain academic excellence, but also to have acquired emotional well-being as well as entrepreneurialism and life skills.

"These are all important for the students to survive in life in the 21<sup>st</sup> century," he said.

As he had been involved in discussions concerning the Malaysian Education Blueprint, he is very familiar with the state of education in the country. He believes that Malaysia has a great potential to become a leader in online education, more specifically in MOOCs.

He further added, as he tries to combine the idea of technopreneurship (technology+entrepreneurship), he hopes to provide the 'added value' factor to the needs of potential customers. In teaching entrepreneurship, he has provided a 'Technopreneurial Framework' whereby there would be interactions among the many elements involved, namely the 'customer', 'challenge/need/want', 'value proposition' and 'making money'.

Mushtak said that he wanted to redefine entrepreneurship in his approach, through the use of systematic thinking.

"I hope that with such an approach, I would be able to amass a large number of people who are truly interested in learning, while cooperating together, and in the process, making a difference," he said.

That is why he teaches 'Technopreneurship' to engineers, to provide them with added values'. He believes that technology can be a great 'equaliser', in the process of understanding and sharing knowledge all over the world.

In the future, he hopes that with MOOCs, there would be zero tuition fees charged whenever people want to study and zero impact on the job markets, as the entrepreneurs would become the job-creators, and not just as job-seekers after leaving the universities.

He sees Malaysia as the country where MOOCs could flourish, given the diverse and supportive socio-economic nature. It is where the idea of lifelong and flexible learning practices could grow.

He closed the session by sharing his thoughts; to dream big, to be different and to have fun; and with a reminder that "a good storyteller is a good educator".

The two-hour session was also attended by the Deputy Director of CDAE, Professor Dr. Hanafi bin Atan, academicians from various USM centres and schools and also the students.

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