

Exemplary educators

They are teachers but what sets them apart from the rest is their push and drive in bringing about improvements for students.

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WHEN Azizul Abdul Rahman was offered a promotion as principal, he turned it down because he did not want to step away from his passion: teaching.

Azizul, who did not have any prior school administrative experience, eventually relented, and took up the job.

For answering the call of duty, Azizul, 64, was named this year's recipient of the Tokoh Guru Kebangsaan award.

He said as a teacher, his responsibility was to ensure his students fully understood what was being imparted to them.

"Only then can they excel in their studies," said Azizul, who received the award from Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi during the 45th National Teachers Day celebrations held at Universiti Malaysia Sabah in Kota Kinabalu on Monday.

Azizul's passion for teaching was matched by his drive to publish. He has so far authored, co-authored and is involved in about 100 publications on teaching.

His interest in his students went beyond just making sure they understood their lessons. He also wanted them to become responsible adults.

"For example students should be given the responsibility of becoming class monitor or prefect," said Azizul, a Johorean who first started his career as a temporary teacher at SMK St Andrew, Muar in 1972. He then continued his studies at the Maktab Perguruan Temenggong Ibrahim in Johor Baru two years later.

Azizul later furthered his studies at Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia in 1985. He has served at SMK Tun Sri Lanang, Muar, SMK Dato Sulaiman in Parit Sulong, SMK Dato Bentara Luar at Batu Pahat, and SM Sains Kota Tinggi, all in Johor, before retiring in 2010.

Meanwhile, former Education director-general Datuk Dr Ahamad Sipon received the Tokoh Kepimpinan Pendidikan (National Education Leadership Award) at the same event.

Dr Ahamad, who obtained his engineering degree from the University of Adelaide, Australia in 1974, began his career as a lecturer in 1975.

His interest in the field of science led Dr Ahamad to obtain a master's degree in 1994, followed by a doctorate in 1996 in technical and vocational education from the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University in the United States.

Dedicated duo: Azizul (left) and Dr Ahamad have shown through various initiatives how crucial changes are in teaching and upskilling learners.

The teacher who is indeed wise does not bid you to enter the house of his wisdom but rather leads you to the threshold of your mind.

Khalil Gibran



In distinguished company: Tokoh Guru Azizul and Dr Ahamad (third and fourth from left) together with Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi and his wife Datin Seri Hamidah Khamis (sixth and seventh from left), Education Minister Datuk Seri Mahdzir Khalid (second from left), Sabah Chief Minister Datuk Seri Musa Aman (fifth from left), Education director-general Datuk Seri Dr Khair Mohamad Yusof and Education Ministry secretary-general Tan Sri Dr Madinah Mohamad (second and third from right) with officials and teachers after the ceremony. **NORMIMIE DIUN/The Star**

Upon graduation, he led the Polytechnic Management Division for three years, before being appointed the Selangor education department director from 1999 to 2000. He became the deputy director-general for the Technical Education Department for four years before being promoted to be Education director-general in 2005.

Even after his retirement in 2007, he continued serving as director of the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organisation (Seameo) Secretariat until 2011.

Dr Ahamad is well known for driving the improvement of polytechnics and vocational training institutes, such as the establishment of the Pusat Latihan Staf Politeknik Batu Pahat in 1993, which was subsequently upgraded to Universiti Tun Hussein Onn Malaysia in 2007.

He was also instrumental in making sure that the 15 polytechnics in the country

received the ISO9002:2000 certification.

His passion for vocational education also led to the setting up of the Community College Management Division within the ministry, which oversaw 34 community colleges then (93 now).

Dr Ahamad also looked into the implementation of various high impact programmes including the Sekolah Bestari Project, Road Safety Project, and the Early Intervention Class Programme for Reading and Writing (better known as KIA2M).

The ministry had introduced the programme to ensure that Year One pupils could proceed to the next level of primary schooling after being able to read and write in Malay.

Azizul and Dr Ahamad each received RM10,000 in Bank Simpanan Nasional savings certificate, a medal and certificate.

One child,
one teacher,
one book
one pen can
change the
world.

Malala Yousafzai

