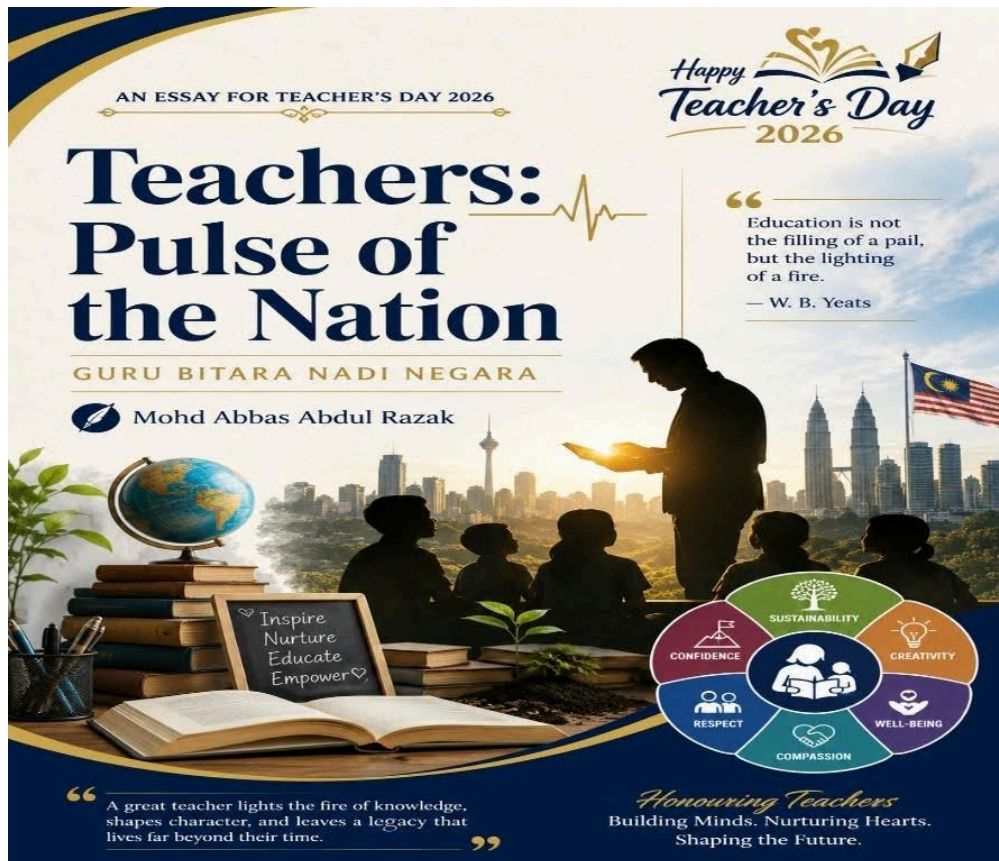


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Teachers: Pulse of the Nation

👤 Guest Submission 📅 June 23, 2026 👁 Aside

By, Mohd Abbas Abdul Razak

Though the 5th of October is gazetted by UNESCO as 'World Teachers' Day', in Malaysia, Teacher's Day is celebrated on the 16th of May every year. The sole purpose of this celebration is to acknowledge and appreciate the great sacrifices and contributions made by teachers in educating the nation and in producing the next echelon of leaders who will be able to navigate the country along the path of prosperity, progress, and development.

This year marked the fifty-fifth anniversary of the Teacher's Day celebration in the country. Events were organised at the school, state, and national levels to honour outstanding teachers. The theme chosen

During this year's celebration, the government also announced that it is exploring ways to reduce teachers' paperwork so that they can channel more of their energy into lesson delivery and classroom teaching.

In this year's Teacher's Day message, the Malaysian Prime Minister, YAB Dato' Seri Anwar bin Ibrahim, called upon teachers to assist the government in shaping society according to the *Madani* principles, which encompass sustainability, creativity, well-being, compassion, respect, and confidence.

Besides that, the Prime Minister also cautioned schools against focusing solely on developing the minds of students. According to him, 'excellence without a soul' would be counterproductive in the overall process of educating the younger generation. As such, education in Malaysia should cater to the holistic development of an individual, encompassing physical, intellectual, social, psychological, emotional, and spiritual growth.

My Reflections on the Role of Education and Educators

There is an old wisdom that says, "*A poet is born, while a good teacher is made.*" The making of a good teacher requires dedicated effort from an individual who aspires to be an educator, along with years of experience in refining the art of teaching.

Teachers are special individuals in our lives. Their role comes next to that of our parents. Though countless teachers have educated us from playschool to a tertiary level, we still tend to recall their names and characteristics. No teacher under the sun can teach everything that comes under their domain or about life itself. Nonetheless, all of them have contributed, in one way or another, to our intellectual and personal development. As students, we have gathered every bit and piece of knowledge from each teacher, and from these, we have formulated a recipe for life.

The analogy of a good teacher is like one who takes his students to the shores and waits for them to plough through the waves and take a deep plunge into the depths of the ocean. Coming out of the water, they will be able to present pearls and other precious items from the bed of the ocean to the teacher. To put it another way, a good teacher is like a spark that sets ablaze the students' quest for more knowledge and understanding.

Murabbi who nurtures and moulds them into individuals of good character. A *Murabbi* teacher not only transmits knowledge and information, but also educates the students' minds, souls, and consciences.

In talking about education, one wise man said, "*Education is the broadening of the horizon of thinking.*" Opposing the old ideas of education, which only focus on the accumulation of information, W. B. Yeats (1865–1939) once said, "*Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire.*" As a complement to the words of Yeats, American motivational writer William Arthur Ward (1921–1994) stated:

'The mediocre teacher tells.

The good teacher explains.

The superior teacher demonstrates.

The great teacher inspires.'

According to Al-Ghazali (1058–1111), "*Knowledge exists potentially in the human soul like the seed in the soil; by learning, the potential becomes actual.*"

Philosophically speaking, in Islam, knowledge and education are closely linked to the birth of wisdom, the refinement of character, and the upholding of moral principles. In this regard, a well-educated person enjoys a good relationship with God, the self, nature, and the entire human race. In addition, such an individual acts responsibly towards his or her family and country.

When discussing education and human creativity, Sir Ken Robinson (1950–2020) believed that education is a process that provides a platform for creativity to show up in an individual. As such, parents and teachers should dive deep into the minds of their children and students to discover who is good at what. Robinson's famous quote explains his point very candidly: '*Human resources are like natural resources; they're often buried deep. You have to go looking for them; they're not just lying around on the surface. You have to create the circumstances where they show themselves.*'

My Last Word

Even though we live in an age of cutting-edge technologies employed in classrooms and online platforms, the role of a teacher cannot be

teacher's explanations, along with the sharing of his or her anecdotal life experiences, go a long way in inspiring students to become better individuals than they were before they began their educational journey with that teacher. Such sharing leaves an indelible imprint on the hearts, souls, and minds of students. For this reason, a teacher lives far beyond his or her time.***

(The views expressed are those of Dr. Mohd Abbas Abdul Razak from the Department of Fundamental and Interdisciplinary Studies, AHAS KIRKHS, IIUM, and do not necessarily reflect the views of IIUM-Today)

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