

# What the teachers say

TEACHING in a rural school in Negri Sembilan, Tashaniyaini Kunjan faced the challenge of getting her students to speak to each other in English.

"They are afraid of being ridiculed by their friends. It does not help matters that the system is too examination-oriented for teachers to focus more on teaching speaking," she said.

"From one of the workshops that I have attended, I would want to try the role-playing activity with my students so that they can be more confident in speaking English..

"Still, we teachers have to adapt the activities according to the proficiency level of the students," she added.

Tashaniyaini, who has 30 years of experience in teaching, shared that teachers are always open to fun and exciting lessons to nurture students' interest in learning English.

Believing that a teacher should always be a learner first, Jeyamalini Arumugam said that teachers should always look for avenues to be better in their profession.

"The challenge for me lies in grammar. I try to read more and refer to other teachers to improve myself on the subject.

"Besides, students nowadays can be smarter than their teachers. I have to always



Tashaniyaini says that she would try some of the activities with her students to help build their confidence.



Tan says that she appreciated the session on employers' perceptions on English language requirements.

keep up with the latest happenings so as to be one step ahead of them," said Jeyamalini.

As the director of UCSI English Academy, Adeline Tan teaches English to students from higher education institutions.

While the objectives in ELT remain the same for college students, Adeline attempts to help students see the relevance in being proficient in the language, that is facing the job market upon graduation.

"Although the agenda of the workshop

is geared towards ELT in schools, it is good that there are presentations which address ELT in higher education institutions such as the session on the perception of employers on English language requirements.

"This would help us tailor to our courses better in order to meet our students' needs," she said.

Hailing from the Philippines, Joselito S. Flores provided an international point of view at the conference.

Flores, who teaches in St. Paul University was a presenter at a session on the use of "Pinoy" English in Filipino media.

He spoke on how people are influenced by their first languages when writing in a second language.

"Teachers need to consider cross-cultural issues when teaching English to second language learners," he said.

When asked about his tips on becoming good English teachers, Flores urged teachers, especially trainee teachers, to not be afraid of trying out creative ideas in the classroom.

"If teachers find that students might get too noisy while participating in the activities, it is always helpful for them to separate the students and carry out the activity group-by-group," he said.