

Journey of creativity



WHEN a survey was carried out earlier this year on a possible topic for a three-page mini magazine contest titled Mag Inc 2012, most teachers from the Klang Valley felt that the theme 'Why English?' was apt in lieu of the Education Ministry's policy, Upholding Bahasa Malaysia and Strengthening English (MBMMBI).

Teacher Kalaichelvi Subramaniam of SMK Bandar Baru Salak Tinggi, Selangor, felt that the theme was interesting as English is not given importance in schools.

"Besides, it's a good idea for the school's English panel to include NIE as an MBMMBI programme. I welcome anything that will benefit the students," she said.

The teacher-in-charge executed the project that saw 2,890 students submitting entries in *The Star* and Pizza Hut's annual Newspaper-in-Education (NIE) contest.

"I like the three-page mini magazine concept as students learn to be independent when they are required to find the materials on their own," she continued.

Teacher Leela James of SMJK Katholik, Petaling Jaya, welcomed the magazine concept.

Teachers share their views on how the Mag Inc competition encourages students to improve on their English.



Mags galore: NIE executive Anna Chieng (right) and clerical assistant Ivy Philip check out an interesting entry from Team LUCID of SMK Dato' Jaafar, Johor, that is illuminated with LED lights at the flip of a switch.

"It is a good idea. As a magazine is wholesome and entails group work, it actually gives everyone a chance to harness a skill. From my experience, most of the students do not know their forte until they are

given the opportunity to discover it. So, yes, this is a good way to make them work creatively," she said.

Teacher Aniza Masbah of Maktab Rendah Sains MARA Kuala Kubu Baru, Selangor, too, has used the

contest as a tool to encourage the use of the English language among her students.

"Our focus groups are those in Forms Two and Four. The project contributes to 10% of the students' GPA (Grade Point Average) for the semester," said Aniza who felt that the theme was a tad too general.

"The students enjoyed working on the three-minute video clip as well. Many used *Oh My English!* (the language learning sitcom produced by Astro) as a model for the video project," she said, adding that this made the students conduct research on the correct usage of the language.

Students from SMJK Kwang Hua, Klang, also took the opportunity to get creative with the video entries by incorporating jazz chants.

"Many used beats and rhythm as well as poetry to get their message across," said teacher P. Ruthirayene. However, she said that it was a

bit of a struggle for the students as many of them found the topic too general to visualise.

The Mag Inc 2012 contest, held in cooperation with the Education Ministry, came to a close on June 29.

There was a 13% increase in the number of entries received for the contest this year where over 191,000 students submitted entries nationwide.

Shortlisting of the finalists and merit award winners is expected to take place in the last week of August.

Merit award winners will be announced in *StarEducat* in September.

Prizes – courtesy of Resorts World Genting, Pizza Hut, and *The Star* – include Pizza Hut vouchers and all-expenses paid trips to Resorts World Genting and Hong Kong Disneyland.

Scholarships worth RM150,000 from Taylor's University await the grand prize winners of the Upper Secondary category.