

## Risk of new subjects but the same old schooling?

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THE announcement of six new subjects under Malaysia's 2027 school curriculum signals a bold and necessary shift in Malaysia's education plan.

With offerings such as Teknologi dan Digital (Technology and Digital), Bahasa Isyarat Malaysia (Malaysian Sign Language), and integrated subjects like Alam dan Manusia (Nature and Humanity), the Education Ministry is clearly attempting to move beyond rote learning towards a more holistic, skills-based education.

Yet the real question is not what we add, but what we are willing

to let go. Curriculum reform in Malaysia has often been characterised by additive enthusiasm but subtractive hesitation. Each new subject carries promise not only on interdisciplinary learning, inclusivity, and character development but also adds to an already dense curricular ecosystem.

The introduction of subjects like Bahasa Isyarat Malaysia suggests a commendable move towards inclusivity. However, inclusivity is not a subject; it is a system. Without teacher readiness, assessment reform, and classroom culture shifts, such initiatives may be

symbolic rather than transformative.

The emphasis on character, literacy, and real-world competencies aligns with global educational aspirations. But here lies the tension: Can a system still tethered to high-stakes assessment genuinely nurture creativity, empathy, and critical thinking? Or will these new subjects be quietly subordinated to what is still tested?

The 2027 curriculum should not merely produce students who know more, it must produce learners who question more. That requires courage not just to inno-

vate, but to dismantle entrenched practices.

If we are serious about transformation, then curriculum reform must move from content expansion to epistemic re-imagination, where rethinking is not just applied to what we teach, but also to why and how we value knowledge itself. Otherwise, we may end up with new subjects, but the same old schooling.

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