21ST CENTURY EDUCATION IN TEACHING ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE (ESL) IN MALAYSIA

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ABSTRACT
Recent technological advances have affected many areas of our lives: the way we communicate, collaborate, learn, and of course, teach. Malaysia’s Ministry of Education has made an initiative in transforming Malaysia’s education system by formulating the Malaysia Education Blueprint (2013-2025) to ensure students are fully equipped with the capacity to think, respond, and solve problems and to thrive within a changing society. This advancement provided a big impact on the field of education and this affects the teaching of English as Second Language (ESL) which is also experiencing transformation in the process of teaching and learning. This concept paper canvasses the advantages of using 21st century education in teaching ESL, current challenges that teachers encounter in teaching ESL in Malaysia and the roles as a teacher in using 21st century approach in teaching ESL. Ultimately, the 21st century learner will be “learner-driven,” where they choose how and what they want to learn. The teacher will serve as a facilitator and guide to help embrace 21st century learning.

Keywords: 21st century education, 21st century classroom, technology, ICT in language teaching, globalization

INTRODUCTION
We are living in the decade of multimedia and the millennium of the Internet and the World Wide Web (WWW) (Melor et al., 2009). Many children now start school technologically literate. They can use a keyboard and are familiar with tablet technology and smartphones. Educators have to ask what effect does this interactivity have on teaching and learning. There is no question that technology engages students but what they learn using that technology and how they learn still depends on the craft and skills of the teacher. By integrating information and communication technologies (ICT) into education, teachers and students are enlivened (Chua & Melor, 2012). Students are exposed to a variety of methods in learning, this especially boost students’ motivation besides being able to develop their problem solving capabilities and to think critically. Furthermore, teachers could use technology to aid in teaching complicated concepts which are difficult for the students to visualize thus increasing the quality of education (Chua & Melor, 2012).

Pedagogy in the 21st century has to put an emphasis on the 4Cs – collaboration, critical thinking, creativity and communication (Bruniges, 2012). Teachers are encouraged to involve more in collaborative projects and gain insight through international platform where educators across the globe are given the chance to share effective teaching approaches. In our fast changing world, more of the same knowledge and skills will not be able to cope or address the challenges of the future. With the avalanche of information available online, the teacher is now more the facilitator of learning than the holder of all knowledge (Bruniges, 2012). The challenge as an educator is to ensure quality pedagogy works within the world of contemporary students and to keep upskilling to meet these needs. Therefore, this paper discusses the advantages of using 21st century education in teaching ESL, types of challenges that teachers encounter in teaching ESL in Malaysia and ESL teachers’ role in using 21st century approach when teaching.

MALAYSIAN CONTEXT
According to Abu Bakr Nordin (2013), the education system in Malaysia is mostly outdated in comparison to current global changes in a manner that outmoded pedagogical practices have been used to educate students in school. As such, Malaysia’s Ministry of Education (MOE) feels the urgent need to re-evaluate the national education system as a whole resulting in the formulation of the Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013–2025. This remedy is to address the current increasing international education standard, national aspiration and society’s expectation to equip students with skills that can accommodate the necessities of 21st century (Nurazuraini et al., 2016). Therefore, it is a crucial key point for Malaysia’s MOE to upgrade teacher’s capacity to realize the 21st century education as envisioned by the Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013 – 2025. Information and Communication Technology, then, is what supports and enables this kind of education progress in the 21st century as its cutting edge and systematic instrument could cultivate a more favourable learning process (Melor & Ashairi, 2014). The use of digital resources in education system also received attention in the era of information and communication technology (ICT). Schools have been provided physical facilities such as computer lab that is complete with hardware (computer, laptop, LCD projector and internet) for the purposes of teaching and learning as an initiative through the Education Development Master Plan (PIPP) 2006 – 2010. In line with the move, administrators, teachers and students are also exposed to a variety of knowledge and skills based on technology from time to time.
21st century teaching and learning is vastly different in terms of teaching approach in comparison to the past education method (Nurazuraini et al., 2016). They mentioned that the end purpose is to cultivate students who are productive, competent in using Information and Communication Technology besides being able to think critically. Aspects of 21st century approach requires students to collaborate in projects, apply critical thinking skills in solving problems, be creative in exploring solutions and connect to learn with the world.

Using ICT in a 21st century classroom to teach English as a Second Language (ESL) is a popular tool among teachers and is widely discussed in the field of education (Melor & Hadi, 2012). There is no doubt that using ICT in education improves teachers’ instructional process and facilitates students’ learning process. In a research study done by Melor et al. (2013) that explored the pros and cons of using ICT in teaching ESL Reading and Writing, it was found that most of the teachers have shown enthusiastic response upon utilising ICT for the purpose of teaching reading and writing skills. There is no denying that students of the current generation have grown up with the technology we see all around and having the same in the field of education will not only evoke their interest in the form of tablets and laptops, they will definitely feel more at ease using a medium that they have always seen in use. Perrot (1982) argues that effective execution of set induction is able to direct students’ attention to the topic of the day, and in this process, establish a connection to the students’ prior knowledge and experience. As Sweeney (2010) had indicated, 21st century students should be managed using approaches that are not conventional. He suggested ICT tools should be integrated into teaching reading and writing so that students will be benefited from them. This could as well be applied to teaching ESL students by garnering students’ interest in the commencing stage. Oman (2001) suggested that students are usually more motivated to learn further when they are interested, or interest is established, in the lesson delivered. Set inductions using ICT in the classroom has sparked a lot of interest in the lessons and students paid great attention to what were presented to them. It is this drive to learn that further promotes and enhances the intrinsic motivation to partake actively in the teaching and learning process.

Pedagogical aspects of 21st century teaching and learning includes encouraging students to develop high order thinking skills (HOTS), to collaborate in projects that applies communication and team working skills and also using technology as a medium of learning (Nurazuraini et al., 2016). Computer technologies and the Internet are powerful instruments to facilitate language teaching and learning (Wang, 2005). In this digital generation, web technology is no longer a choice but a necessity that signifies that ESL students can now learn through writing email and handle online research. Having access to Internet, students are encouraged to develop self-discovery skills and be independent in seeking educational materials online. Research findings from Melor et al. (2013) pointed out that ICT could help students develop their vocabulary by independently searching the meaning of words online which are unfamiliar to them when they read. Furthermore, in a research regarding teacher’s perception in using ICT in ESL teaching conducted by Chua and Melor (2012), the findings suggested that teachers encourage ESL learners to surf the net to find information for the subject by providing students with some educational related websites for them to access. It can be said that in general, ICT helps to enhance students’ English language learning.

21st century classroom environment
Technology has opened up new forms of learning and creative expression for students. It has allowed them to take greater control of their learning (Brunuges, 2012). The conventional “chalk and talk” teaching approach is becoming obsolete to the needs of today’s students (Nurazuraini et al., 2016). In line with the Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013-2025, the newly revised Standard Based Curriculum for Secondary Schools (KSSM) and Standard Based Curriculum for Primary Schools (KSSR) has been implemented starting in this year 2017 according to Malaysia’s Education Minister Datuk Seri Mahdzir Khalid (The Star, 2016). This initiative is an indication that Malaysia’s education system is transforming to a 21st century motivated education system. The curriculum emphasises the teaching centred on the students and focuses more on problem-solving, project-based assignments, updating subjects or themes and implementing formative assessments (Malaysia Education Blueprint, 2013-2025). This especially encourages project based learning (PBL) approach in a 21st century classroom environment.

PBL is a student-driven, teacher-facilitated approach to learning (Bell, 2010) that enhances information, media and technology skills. In this approach, the genesis of a project is an inquiry. Students develop a question and are guided through research under the teacher’s supervision. Discoveries are illustrated by creating a project to share with a select audience. Student choice is a key element of this approach. Teachers oversee each step of the process and approve each choice before the student embarks in a direction (Bell, 2010). Students with similar inquiries may elect to work cooperatively, thereby nurturing 21st century collaboration and communication skills and honouring students’ individual learning styles or preferences. Therefore, PBL is not a supplementary activity to support learning but is considered to be the basis of the curriculum. Dewey’s theory of experience proposed that learning by doing has great benefit in shaping students’ learning. In PBL, students are constructing knowledge and building on their background knowledge. Students retain more information when they learn by doing. High-quality experiences, as well as continuity of experiences, are paramount. PBL is an effective approach and is in line with Dewey’s philosophies, to which many educators have ascribed to enrich learning (Dewey, 1938).

A 21st century classroom should consist of the following characteristics in order to facilitate PBL approach which are interactive, integrated with network infrastructure and video conferencing tool besides having work stations that
accommodate flexible student groupings to support teaching and learning. In a report by Malcolm (2009) where he studied twenty 21st century classroom concept schools in New Zealand where he argued that one of the greatest developments that is making the greatest impact on classroom design is the use of ICT. By incorporating ICT in a classroom, e-learning or online education becomes a possible learning method. According to Piezon and Donaldson (2005) online education is defined as an approach to teaching and learning that utilises new technology to communicate and collaborate in an educational context. This enables learners to actively construct their own perspectives and work in a small group. Learners engage in active, constructive, intentional, authentic and collaborative learning (Melor et al., 2013). There is a greater sense that, with learner access to the burgeoning resources on the web, and with their increasing digital skills, we should remodel education so that learners can take control of their learning process (Beetham, 2013). Students employing online education are given the opportunity to develop knowledge socially though communicating and collaborating with their peers, which is an important aspect of a constructivist-based online learning and teaching (Meyer, 2002). In this context, ICT is seen to provide a platform for active and meaningful learning to occur.

Globalisation of pupils’ education
Technology is breaking down barriers of geography and time zones. Next up is the fact that with shifting to the digital world, there are no real constraints of time and space. Schools and colleges are networked in a way that cuts across traditional institutional sectoral, and even national boundaries. A student can now go home, watch the lectures that are supposed to be covered and come back the next day to discuss the problems that is facing in the company of others in the class (Irving, 2006). Not only does this allow for better engagement, it allows better time usage as well. Students can have a real-time lesson with NASA astronauts, take a virtual tour of the world’s great museums and galleries, contact students in other countries and other parts of Australia and rehearse for performances via video-conference (Bruniges, 2012).

Teleconferencing technologies offer the opportunity for teachers and students in remote locations to have two-way audio and video communications. There had been research and development projects on cyber mentoring with elementary and secondary schools that was explored by the Washington State University with telephones, e-mail, web design, and both low- and high-end videoconferencing systems. The projects brought together University faculty and students with K-12 students and teachers at remote sites (Maring et al., 2003). Online courses with high-end video conferencing are already in use for courses offered to Japanese students. Professors at Stanford, the University of California, Davis, and California State University, Hayward, offer pre-MBA courses to students in Tokyo’s Hosei University. With complete multimedia capabilities, the videoconferencing system allows Japanese students to see live presentations of classes offered in California. Professors and students have access to a full palate of writing utensils to annotate and save slides from class lectures and discussions (Shinkai, 2004).

CHALLENGES FACED BY TEACHERS IN USING 21ST CENTURY APPROACH IN TEACHING ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE IN MALAYSIA
Despite the importance and benefits of 21st century approach in the teaching and learning process, there are many challenges and shortcomings faced by English teachers to make this 21st century approach in education system a success. This concept paper discusses teachers’ insufficient knowledge and skills, the lack of basic amenities and infrastructure and last but not least, the negative effects of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) towards Malaysian pupils.

Teachers’ insufficient knowledge and skills
Teacher plays a vital role in making the 21st century education a success. The understanding of 21st century education among the teachers is very important as teachers are the ones who will execute them. Malaysia faced a serious problem in carrying out the 21st century approach especially in using ICT for teaching English as a second language due to teachers’ insufficient knowledge and skills. Most of the older generation teachers are not able to keep up due to the rapid advancement of technology (Abdullah Abu Bakar, n.d). Before implementing the ICT in the classroom, teachers themselves must know how to utilise the ICT devices to the fullest so that meaningful learning can be provided to the learners. The use of technology is an important feature in teaching English in the 21st century classroom. The young today are digital natives who “eat, sleep and breathe technology”. As pupils’ learn from the Internet in this 21st century, it is a big challenge for the teacher to keep up with the information a student has. It will be a pressure for the teacher if she cannot feed the pupils’ curiosity. Without sufficient knowledge and skills on ICT, the beneficial purposes might turn to be an awful teaching and learning experience. Teachers who are ill-equipped and not competent in ICT will be the cause of their learners to be left behind in this globalised world as they have no opportunity to collaborate and communicate globally. Besides that, teachers’ confidence in using ICT in teaching English is still at the moderate level. Cox, Preston and Cox (1999) and Guha (2000) as cited in Melor (2007) found direct evidence that lack of personal access to ICT led to lack of confidence in professional use. According to Melvina Chung Hui Ching and Jamaludin Badusah (2010), only 6.7% of teachers in Sarawak rural areas are confident in using ICT as a teaching aid in the classroom. Education Ministry secretary-general Datuk Seri Alias Ahmad said that it is not an easy task to alter the mind-sets of the staff, teachers, students and parents to accept the change towards modernising education (Arumugam, 2016). Most of the teachers in
schools are in the “comfort zones” where they are so used to the traditional teaching method of chalk and talk. There are also teachers who found it more comfortable in using only laptops and LCD projectors as compared to more complicated devices such as smart boards. Most of them do not want to challenge themselves to adapt to the technology-based classroom environment and keep up with the rapid advancement of technology. Learning without technology is depriving students of opportunities (Ee, 2016). Teachers cannot pretend technology has no place in the classroom. They must elevate their knowledge and skills on ICT in order to give pupils the opportunity to practise collaboration, critical and creative thinking and communication.

Selangor Education Department Director, Encik Zainuren Mohd Nor believes that the traditional chalk and talk method was no longer relevant for our younger generations, the Z-generation. Teachers should work towards a more interactive style of coaching by encouraging students to work in groups with the help of digital tools (Chonghui, 2016). Therefore, we can see that the roles of teachers are changing. Years back, teachers are respected for being the sole source of knowledge. Pupils practise role learning which only involves one-way communication between teacher and learners. In this 21st century education, the teachers’ roles are being “replaced” by the technology devices. Teachers need to upgrade their knowledge especially in High Order Thinking skills (HOTS) and ICT so that they can guide and facilitate the pupils through this 21st century education system.

Lack of basic amenities and infrastructure

School amenities and facilities have the important roles in ensuring the quality of teaching and learning with respect to achieve the quality of 21st century education. The performance of school facilities significantly affected student achievement (Hasbullah et al., 2011). The biggest challenge faced by teachers that caused a stunt in the implementation of 21st century approach in the classroom is the lack of basic amenities and infrastructure. Basic amenities such as tables and chairs are not adequately enough in some schools especially in rural areas. Not only that, the infrastructure provided is also not conducive enough to support pupils’ 21st century learning. The facilities are holding the teachers back from creating the learning environment they really want to provide their students (Leapaldt, 2016). Malaysian Digest (2014) had conducted an interview with Ms. Ong Siew Lan, a teacher from SJK (C) Kg. Baru Tampin who has been teaching English for 12 years in the rural district. When contacted, she admits that there is an existing gap in English proficiency between students from urban and rural areas. “I believe the main reason behind this problem is the availability of well-trained teachers and the lack of infrastructure in the rural schools,” she said. Hope Place, a Kuching non-governmental organisation founder, Kelvin Wan said all children have the right to get quality education but sadly most of them, especially in the interiors, do not have the opportunity to get the best education due to their remote location and lack of amenities or mentality. The lack of basic amenities and infrastructure is the main challenge to implement the 21st century education as the teacher themselves cannot control it from happening because it depends on the government plans regarding the urban and rural areas disparity. Most of the rural areas in Peninsular as well as in Sabah and Sarawak are facing a critical time of getting enough facilities and the power supply for their daily routines what more to use them for high electrical appliances such as the technological devices. The research by Zainudin Hasan and Muhamad Azam Jaafar (2007) found that 71.3% of teachers in one of the rural schools in Kelantan agreed that the number of computers provided in the school is not enough. For those who have the power supply, they will also face their own problems in terms of internet connectivity. Both electricity and internet coverage are very important in providing students the virtual learning platform which will help to narrow the digital gap between the urban and rural schools. Therefore, teachers in rural area cannot solely rely on the internet coverage in preparing teaching materials for the pupils. Lessons which challenge pupils’ thinking abilities and activities which involves collaboration and communication are considered 21st century education although they were conducted offline.

Negative effects of ICT towards Malaysian pupils

We must not forget that despite the advantages, there are also many negative effects of ICT along with the 21st century education. Being exposed to a borderless world also means that our pupils are exposed to the negative elements such as internet scams and pornography. Mohammad Chowdhury (2016) in his journal defined both moral and values. Morals refer to human behaviour where morality is the practical activity of that human behaviour while values are linked to beliefs and attitudes and guide human behaviour. With the many negative issues, it is the role and responsibility of a teacher to emphasise on morality and values aspects to prevent learners from misusing the ICT facilities provided. Teacher must make sure that pupils use the ICT to collaborate and communicate in a positive way and retain their politeness online and offline. These moral values must be fostered and embedded in their hearts as they cannot be monitored all the time.

TEACHER’S ROLES IN USING 21ST CENTURY APPROACH IN TEACHING ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE IN MALAYSIA

Along with the development of Malaysian Education system towards the 21st Century Education, teachers’ roles have also changed. This section discusses several roles of teacher in the 21st century education including teacher as a
knowledge and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) practitioner, the 21\textsuperscript{st} century skills and moral values enforcer and finally, the researcher in the teaching and learning process.

\textbf{A knowledge practitioner}

First and foremost, the most important role of a teacher in the 21\textsuperscript{st} century education is to be a knowledge practitioner. A teacher is the middle person between the 21\textsuperscript{st} century education and pupils. By being a person who is knowledgeable in all the aspects such as content areas, academic ability, pedagogical and 21\textsuperscript{st} century skills, the teacher will be able to upgrade his / her teaching profession for him / her to be respected as an agent of 21\textsuperscript{st} century education.

A teacher must first be conversant in his own subject matter and content knowledge. As for Malaysian teachers, we had been introduced to Primary School Standard Curriculum (KSSR) in 2011 (Bahagian Pembangunan Kurikulum, 2011). Up until now, most of the primary and secondary school teachers are facing difficulties in understanding and applying the curriculum as just what is intended by our ministry. For instance, English curriculum has also changed from the integration of skills in Primary School Integrated Curriculum (KBRS) to modular approach in KSSR. This change needs teachers to be proficient in the English teaching approach so that they are able to communicate in the sense that they can connect the learners to learn and deliver the lesson profoundly.

The elements of the 21\textsuperscript{st} century education in the KSSR blueprint was wonderful except for the implementation. This is where the problems begin. The implementation of KSSR is yet to be accurately and efficiently being practised due to inept teachers. Not only that, it is important for teachers to be competent in applying pedagogical and coaching skills to the pupils. With a sufficient knowledge on theoretical principles of a good teaching and learning process, a teacher will be able to provide a conducive learning environment and amended teaching strategies for a better pupils’ learning experiences. Not only that, teacher will be able to inculcate critical and creative thinking among students using the suitable approaches so that 21\textsuperscript{st} century education is carried out efficiently in the classroom.

The teachers must play their parts and have initiatives to join any training or courses whether they are organised by the government or non-government organisation. This is to enhance their own understanding regarding the changes in curriculum especially English curriculum along with the 21\textsuperscript{st} century education. English teachers really need to master how to carry out lessons and understand how each skill, namely listening, speaking, reading, writing, language arts and grammar is emphasised and integrated in the KSSR curriculum to provide meaningful learning for the pupils. Teachers must realise that in 21\textsuperscript{st} century approach, the ‘chalk and talk’ method is less efficient in providing the pupils knowledge.

Teachers must equip themselves on how to help the pupils search for knowledge through the internet themselves. The English learning process must be more learners’ centred, involves cooperative and collaborative learning and also ongoing assessment. Teachers must be well-versed with these approaches so that the implementation of 21\textsuperscript{st} century education in teaching English as a second language in Malaysia is a success.

\textbf{An information and communication of technology (ICT) practitioner}

Secondly, a teacher plays an integral role as an ICT practitioner. The integration of ICT in our English teaching and learning process is an important element in 21\textsuperscript{st} century education which proves the advancement of our curriculum as an effort of being at par with the education system of other developed countries. One of the 11 shifts outlined in The National Education Blueprint (2013-2025) in order to transform and improve the national education system is to emphasise on utilising ICT to improve the quality of learning in Malaysia (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2012). Referring to our new KSSR curriculum (2011), “integration of salient new technologies” is one of the underlying pedagogical principles of the curriculum related to 21\textsuperscript{st} century approach. These proves have shown us how ICT is being enforced in our new KSSR curriculum and National Education Blueprint in enhancing the 21\textsuperscript{st} century education system in Malaysia.

As we noticed, our new KSSR curriculum gives special emphasis on the use of ICT in the teaching and learning process. In 2015, Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin, the Ex-Malaysia Deputy Prime Minister said to Bernama.com, “After two years, we could see changes in the classroom. Not only in how the classes are conducted, but the role of the teachers has also changed and they are now more of a facilitator to assist the students obtain accurate and correct information at the tip of their fingers.”. Thus, the role of a teacher is to serve as the sole source of knowledge has been somehow ‘replaced’ by the internet. Particularly now, the teacher acts as a facilitator to assist the pupils’ learning and guide them in obtaining information through just a “click”. This clearly shows that the role of teachers is affected by the use of ICT.

Before implementing the ICT in teaching English, teachers themselves must know how to utilise the ICT devices to the fullest so that meaningful learning can be imparted to the learners. As agents of 21\textsuperscript{st} century knowledge, teachers must be literate in ICT and introduce the use of technology to the pupils. The Education Ministry is committed in preparing teachers for 21st century learning by encouraging them to improve their knowledge of ICT and e-learning. There are many technology devices provided to the teachers including the YES Altitude mobile phone for interactive teaching and learning and YES dongle for internet connectivity. Both devices are important in carrying out the Frog Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) which is one of the platform to practise the 21\textsuperscript{st} century education in school. It is important for teachers to play their parts as ICT practitioners as the 21\textsuperscript{st} century education emphasises on the collaborative learning, the ability to think critically and creatively and communication which will be successfully achieved through the use of ICT in the classroom.
According to Julita Mustafa (2016) in her article, the Educational Technology Division director, Encik Zaidi Yazid said, “Teachers can take online courses offered in many recognised institutions and be certified. They get hands-on experience in using information and communications technology in education.” For that reason, there are many workshops, seminars and courses are conducted at the district, state and even national level to provide the teachers with suitable input so that teachers are able to fully utilise the technology given. Aimee Maron (2009) introduces several types of Web 2.0 which can be used by teachers in teaching English such as Blogger, Wordle, Flickr, Facebook, Meetup, LinkedIn and Slide Share. As English is a communicative language, teachers can use these mediums to promote multi-level language support, assess books and learning materials online and inspire critical thinking and creativity.

Besides that, teacher can also seek information and help on teaching practices from the Teachers’ Activity Centres while the technological skills can be acquired through Community of Practice (CoP) where best practices are shared online and offline. Communities of Practice (CoPs) is a partnership model designed to help teachers to develop professionally through the use of online tools (Puvaneswary Murugaiah et al., 2014). With the supportive community, teachers will feel relieved and more motivated to learn and use the technology as they know that they have somewhere to ask for help.

**A 21st century skills enforcer**

Besides ICT skills, there are many other 21st century skills which are important to be mastered and learnt by the Malaysian pupils. It is the teachers’ role to teach and enforce the 21st century skills as it is an effort in line with our new KSSR curriculum. Several examples of the skills according to the Thoughtful Learning website (2014) are learning skills (critical thinking, creative thinking, collaborating and communicating), literacy skills (information literacy, media literacy and technology literacy) and also living skills (flexibility, initiative, social skills, productivity and leadership).

We are able to see that, the 21st century education in teaching English as a second language in Malaysia is actually being implemented through our KSSR curriculum’s educational emphases as envisaged by the Ministry of Education in 2014, in line with the transformation of the national education in the National Education Blueprint (2013-2025). The recent KSSR curriculum is a challenge to all teachers as there is a change in the assessment form. From the mad race of A’s to a more holistic assessment, the teaching methods have also changed and teachers must focus more on how to develop pupils’ ability to think critically and creatively by promoting High Order Thinking Skills (HOTS). The School Based Assessment (SBA) focuses on pupils’ development in various skills including the communication, collaboration and thinking skills which will be assessed throughout the teaching and learning process formatively. Cator (2010) states that the 21st century education is focusing on preparing students for lifelong learning, not just to excel in examinations. In other words, the 21st century education will require a ‘culture of inquiry’ and knowledge generation, not just information delivery.

The teachers as 21st century educators play their roles mainly as facilitators. According to (Harmer, 2007), the term ‘facilitator’ is used by many authors to describe a particular kind of teacher, one who is democratic rather than autocratic, and one who fosters learner autonomy (where students not only learn on their own, but also take responsibility for that learning) through the use of group work and pair work and by acting as more of a resource than a transmitter of knowledge. Besides that, teachers are also responsible to provide a holistic outlook and create opportunities for pupils in decision making, problem solving, social skills, and also group interaction through activities conducted in the 21st century teaching and learning process. According to Farah Merlinda Muharram (2014), educational institutions are the producers of talented human capital of whom are not just good in academic knowledge but also equipped with soft skills such as good communication, leadership, teamwork, high morale and ethics, able to employ critical thinking, entrepreneurial and apply lifelong learning. The English teachers should encourage the pupils to participate and make suggestions on how they may carry out an English language activity according to the pertaining skills. The English teacher, as a facilitator should only be facilitating by guiding them how to search, analyse and synthesise the information critically and creatively. Furthermore, teacher must also guide them to communicate and conduct group discussion including how to lead the group’s discussion.

**A researcher in teaching and learning process**

Besides being a facilitator, a teacher also plays an important role as a researcher in the 21st century classroom. Along with the development of our education system, there will be many changes made in order to upgrade the Malaysia Education Curriculum. The current curriculum might not suit our learners well due to several factors such as the differences in academic and geographical background. The teacher must be committed in finding alternatives to enact the new curriculum with the learners. In order to adapt successfully to the changes in our curriculum, there must be certain enhancement and improvements made to suit the planned curriculum with our own learners. Teacher as a researcher makes room for positive changes in terms of classroom practices towards a successful transformation of 21st century education in Malaysia.

Being a researcher in the classroom allows teachers to observe the daily occurrences related to the pupils and investigate the pedagogical problems through inquiry such as carrying out Action Research. When the teachers ask themselves "How can I make my English teaching and learning process better in order to prepare my pupils for 21st century education?", they are actually starting to develop an action plan. Teachers must always enquire about what they think, reflect on their own teaching and observe her pupils' learning. Then, pupils’ work must be collected to be evaluated and they act as data to examine the effectiveness of teaching and learning methodology that produced them (Ritchie, 2000). Therefore, as a
researcher in the classroom, teacher must identify the existing problems, not only academic wise but also issues related to the pupils’ soft skills and find suitable interventions to solve the problems. In creating and using the interventions, elements of creative and critical thinking, collaboration and communication must be taken into consideration so that they are aligned with the 21st century education.

The findings of a teacher’s research will contribute to an improvement in the quality of English teaching and learning process towards the learners’ betterment in line with the 21st century needs. English is the international language which must be firstly mastered by Malaysian pupils as most of the reference books and articles to look up for references are written in English (The Malaysian Times, 2012). Therefore, teachers must find ways to help pupils learn and acquire English language according to their level and abilities through researches. According to Rinaldi (2003), it has always happened that the solution to certain problems leads to the emergence of new questions, expectations and changes. The initial research will lead to another research that helps to generate new perspectives and strategies on how to conduct a more effective English teaching and learning process in the classroom. Clearly, we can see that there is no one correct way in teaching pupils although researches have been made as everyday new things will occur and teachers need to be well prepared.

Moral values enforcer
Last but not least, the teacher plays a vital role as a moral value practitioner and enforcer in this 21st century education. The National Education Philosophy (NEP) defines education in Malaysia as “an on-going effort towards further developing the potential of individuals in a holistic and integrated manner, so as to produce individuals who are intellectually, spiritually, emotionally and physically balanced and harmonious based on a firm belief in and devotion to God”. The NEP has emphasises on the importance of manner in order to develop a balanced individual who does not only possess high knowledge and intellectual ability but also practises positive moral values. As our education system is globalising to be at par with other developed country in the world, the pupils are exposed to many negative elements from the outside world especially through the communication medium. The advancement of technology cannot be controlled and restricted as it is one of the elements in the 21st century education and also in line with the government’s aspiration to produce first class human capital who has high skill in the field of ICT.

As the saying goes “strike the iron while it’s hot”, teachers must start cultivating good values at a very early age as early as Year 1 so that they are able to practice the values and carry with them the whole life. In order to inculcate the moral values to the pupils, the teachers must develop closer relationships with them. In addition to that, the teachers must always provide students the intrinsic and extrinsic motivation so that they are able to cope and withstand the ups and downs of the advanced world. As a value practitioner, a teacher must be able to model positive behaviour towards the students. By adhering to the teacher’s ethics and code of conducts, the teacher is able to set a good example for pupils to follow. The role of a teacher has impacted from the advancement of education system towards 21st century. As a result, education is not just a matter of forcing children to achieve good grades but also to groom them to be an adult who possess good moral values throughout their lives.

CONCLUSION
All in all, the elements of 21st century education is very important to be integrated in the English teaching and learning process as it helps to bring up our education system at par with the education system of other developed nations. The elements of creativity, critical thinking, collaboration and communication in the curriculum is to bring a new shift in preparing Malaysian younger generation for the 21st century advancement. Moreover, a teacher is an important asset to help prepare pupils to achieve the national aspiration that is to produce a holistic individual who are able to cope with the globalisation. The government and teachers must work together to overcome all the shortcomings and make sure the 21st century education in Malaysia is a success. With this pure effort by all the education stakeholders, it is hoped that we can produce a better generation for the betterment of the society and country align with our National Education Philosophy (NEP).

REFERENCES


