Club members get crash course on case writing

A member of the Unirazak Case Writers Club shares his experience on the Harvard method of case writing

A Trainers Workshop was conducted on Jan 7 and 8 at the Golden Sands Resort Shangri-La, Penang for the second batch of aspiring Unirazak Case Writers Club members.

Says Khairul Najmi Idris, a second batch Unirazak case member, “We had to read up a few articles about case writing – the Harvard method – in the bus on the way to Penang. We were given huge white files and began reading in earnest. Everyone was engrossed in it!”

The next morning, all participants headed for the conference room where they were introduced to Ahmad D Habir, commonly known as Pak Derry.

Pak Derry is currently the president director of Online Educational Solutions and representative of the Jakarta office in Indonesia. The main office of Online Education Solutions is in Florida, America.

Pak Derry started the morning session with a brief introduction about himself and his involvement in the Case Writer’s Club. He told the members his dream was to write detective stories, but he never got down to writing any as he had always started thinking about the detective. By right, he said, he should have been concentrating on the crime first. He then told the participants to do the same with case writing.

“That got us all thinking seriously about what we were going to write and how to present our case,” says Khairul.

Pak Derry then took the participants into the world of using cases effectively in the classroom in order to enhance teaching and learning. They watched a video of the Harvard Business School method of case teaching based on a participant-centred learning style.

The case used was about R. R. Donnelly and Sons. The participants discussed the methods employed in the video clip.

Pak Derry then steered the discussion and led the participants to write the introduction for their case. In an instant, all the participants were soon engrossed in writing their introductions. The participants later presented their introductions individually.

“Although we did our best, there were necessary ‘repairs’ to be made in our work. Some of us went off track and in his subtle and accommodating manner, Pak Derry made us aware of our mistakes and put us back on the right track.

“He motivated us further by showing us a video clip of an interesting case being taught in a classroom of adults where the lecturer successfully engaged the participants in an active discussion,” says Khairul.

Khairul adds further that it was an eye-opener for all of them as it highlighted the positive aspects of using a case study in a classroom where they also participated energetically by contributing ideas, opinions, and solutions for the case at hand.

Pak Derry began with a brief introduction to what the Harvard method of writing cases was all about. Together with his explanations and slides, the participants became immersed in the Harvard method of writing cases.

Pak Derry led the participants down the path of Harvard cases by first introducing how such a case could be utilised in a class of adults. He led the participants into giving their opinions and views by carefully introducing leading questions concerning the case.

“The class soon became alive! The participants were contributing brilliantly and were a great help to their lecturer in helping to drive home the points that he was making,” says Khairul.

The Harvard method workshop lasted for two-and-a-half days.

“On the way home, most of us slept on the bus as our brains had been working overtime, but we felt we had gained so much from Pak Derry. A special thanks to Assoc Prof Datin Dr Raja Hanaliza Raja Ahmad Tajudin whose untiring efforts have propelled the Case Writer’s Club of Unirazak to achieve greater heights. We are honoured and privileged to be among the few who have been given the opportunity to develop our case writing skills following the Harvard method,” says Khairul.
For details, look out for University Tun Abdul Razak's advertisement in this StarSpecial.