SPEECH OF
YANG HORMAT PROFESSOR DATO’ DR. DAING NASIR IBRAHIM
VICE-CHANCELLOR OF UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA PAHANG

THE LAUNCH OF READING CIRCLE PROGRAMME
WEDNESDAY, 1 APRIL 2015; 4:00 PM;
LIBRARY, UMP PEKAN

SALUTATION

My colleagues;

Haji Ruslan Che Pee,
Chief Librarian;

Associate Professor Dr. Muhammad Nubli Abdul Wahab,
Acting Dean, Centre for Modern Languages & Human Sciences;

Dr. Norrihan Sulan,
DeputyDean (Academic Affairs);

Dr. Hafizoah Kassim,
Head, Modern Languages Department;
Lecturers, facilitators and participants of Reading Circle Programme;

Assalamualaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatuh, Salam Sejahtera
and Salam 1Malaysia.

1. Alhamdulillah, I am grateful to Allah Ta’ala for the honour I have been given to say a few words and to share my thoughts with you all to mark the launch of Reading Circle Programme this afternoon.

2. I am indeed very pleased with our Centre for Modern Languages & Human Sciences (PBMSK) for taking up the challenge to carry out this noble initiative, in collaboration with UMP Library.

3. When someone works or studies in a university, that person is submitting himself to be part of the intellectual community that characterizes the knowledge-based atmosphere within the parameters of that ivory tower.
4. The intellectualism of that community stimulates the enthusiasm to expand the knowledge further, to discover new ideals and theories and to investigate the nature's scientific phenomenon, thus operationalizing the very function of a university as *studium generale* or ‘school of universal learning’ as mooted by Cardinal John Henry Newman when he spoke about the idea of a university in 1852.

5. The stimulation of that intellectualism lies in the capability of the university community to take up reading seriously as a discipline, not just a pastime. It is not only about reading materials or references of high quality on various subject matters, but also involves the ability to ‘read’ or understand the circumstances and your surroundings from various perspectives rationally and wisely.
6. Reading therefore is not only the key to knowledge, it is also the key to wisdom. In this regard, Sir Francis Bacon, a famous statesman and philosopher of Elizabethan England in the sixteenth century wrote, “Reading maketh a full man; conference a ready man; and writing an exact man.” Intellectualism therefore, is the embodiment of these qualities in one’s self – the ability to read and understand, the capability to negotiate and deliberate, and the capacity to write the right.

7. The embodiment of these three qualities perfects one’s intellectual charisma and wisdom, and this perfection is catalyzed by serious reading discipline with the ability to analyze and assess the facts presented. Francis Bacon further wrote, “Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested: that is, some books are to be read only in parts, others to be read, but not curiously, and some few to be read wholly, and with diligence and attention.”
8. **Ladies and gentlemen,**

Reading therefore, is an art. For many, it's just a compilation of papers but for some, reading itself is lifesaving. What more if you are an engineering graduate? For many years now before the emergence of computer and gadgets, books were and still are the primary source of knowledge. It is from the books, you will learn to read, write and dream.

9. Imagination is not for the fallen. Imagination has its very own escape pod through the fine lines of pages you turn. The Reading Circle Programme (RCP) is an effort to promote effectively reading habits among UMP students and also to encourage all parties to commit to the University's aspirations to strengthen knowledge among students by creating an educational platform to allow students and lecturers alike to encourage thoughtful discussion about the chosen books.
10. The campaign to encourage reading through RCP is expected to be a catalyst to nurture positive reading culture through activities proposed by the PBMSK to increase knowledge literacy and readability level among the University community.

11. Although the dispute never resulted in a definitive answer, the general consensus among educators agreed that the combination of the mentioned strategies provides a comprehensive method to cultivate reading habits. Effective reading is the most important avenue of effective learning.

12. Reading is heavily related to the educational process in which a successful education system requires meaningful reading. Reading is an identification of symbols that requires effective comprehension skill that will help the learners to understand the meaning of words in isolation and in context.
13. Before the advent of the gadgets and technology, both the young and the old found apart from the teachers, enough time to read in English for leisure purposes. This includes the habit of reading newspapers and books. They understood the joy it brought for centuries. And my question is, have you?

14. Reading is a process of thinking, evaluating, judging, imagining, reasoning and problem solving. It includes learning, reflection, judgment, analysis, syntheses and problem solving. It also includes attention, association, abstraction, generalization, comprehension, concentration and dedication.

15. The ability to read is recognised as one of the most important skills that a person can have as it is a tool for an inquisitive mind; it is the vehicle for obtaining and modifying ideas that could be mediated through words. The individual who reads well has at his command a means for widening his mental horizons and for multiplying his opportunities for experiences.
16. Reading is a crucial factor affecting intellectual and emotional growth. Reading is an important activity in the process of learning. Our Father of Independence, Almarhum Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra for example, was an avid reader, and the same goes to the Father of Modernization, Tun Dr. Mahathir Mohamad, who was honoured with the National Reading Icon Award in 2012.

17. It was through serious reading that these personages, along with other world statesmen managed to discharge the leadership responsibilities vested on them wisely, with clear strategic direction.

18. A comprehensive initiative like this Reading Circle Programme will bring the development of right attitudes, ideals and worldview, an important dimension in creating a conducive intellectual ambiance in this campus.
19. In acquiring essential understanding attitudes and social adjustment, books render a great service to the younger generation in Malaysia. Since “the whole end and object of education is the wise use of adolescence” according to Royal Professor Ungku Aziz, reading is also the enabler of maturity in thoughts and action, a significant quality that must be embraced by our students.

20. I am very much pleased with the modus operandi of RCP proposed by PBMSK. The concept of this programme is to create a platform where all students have the opportunity to take part in sharing their reading experience and discussing selected books on relevant subject matters.

21. I also understand that this programme also runs on our e-learning platform whereby KALAM@UMP and Edmodo will be used. The e-learning programme will be organized monthly for each semester and at the end of the programme, the best students from both campuses will receive prizes as reward. This constructively addresses the first of the six strategic action frameworks as outlined in my 2015 Message recently, that is augmenting the e-learning.
21. Ladies and gentlemen,

Honouring the efforts taken to make this initiative possible, I would like to express my heartfelt congratulations and appreciation to our staff from the Centre for Modern Languages & Human Sciences and UMP Library. It is my earnest hope that this Reading Circle Programme will be implemented consistently and continuously as one of our agendas by involving as many participants as possible.

22. Insya-Allah, with great teamwork, commitment and dedication from its prime movers, plus the support from the top management of UMP, I pray to Allah Ta’ala that this noble initiative will achieve its objectives and goals and eventually create a sustainable intellectual environment in this University, Ameen.

23. With that hopes and prayers, I hereby launch Universiti Malaysia Pahang’s Reading Circle Programme.

Thank you.