

AN AWARENESS AMONG LEVEL ONE TEACHERS TOWARDS SEN IN KAPIT, SARAWAK: A QUALITATIVE STUDY

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Abstract: Highly awareness of the need for special education needs students will helps teachers to prepare their learning process in classroom neatly. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to identify the awareness among level one teachers towards student with special education needs (SEN) and how they conduct these diversity leaners in the classroom. This qualitative study applied conveniences sampling and had involved 16 respondents in in -depth interview. The respondent were selected among level on teachers from four different rural schools. In order to analyse the data, thematic analysis had been applied. As a results, majority respondent show their awareness with action, while some of them show their awareness with concern, meanwhile only a few of them show their awareness with knowledge.

Keywords: Awareness, SEN, disabilities, rural

INTRODUCTION

The Malaysian Education Development Plan (PPPM 2013-2025) consists the nine key pillars in education that includes the aspirations of the students and the aspirations of the teachers, even emphasize equality of Malaysian citizen to access to education as well as bridging education gap between urban and rural areas. Therefore, every Malaysian citizen has the right of equal standing towards educational opportunities. Hence, students with special needs are also given special attention. The Ministry of Education Malaysia defines special need pupils as those who have problems such as Dyslexia, Autism, and Late Development, Hyperactive, slow learner and others. Among the biggest challenges for national education system is to respond to the needs of every learner at all level. Airil & Intan (2010). The term children with special education need represent a big category of pupils who face up with various learning difficulties and requires a variety of treatment methods. Tomlinson (2000), Vasiliki, Marita & Eleni (2011).

Therefore, teachers need to diversify learning according to the differences in the ability in order to make sure the student with disabilities will able to continue teaching and learning activities in classroom. Thus, teachers need to use the teaching methods that meet the needs of the students. Tomlinson (2000), Lawrence (2004), Burns & Dean, (2005). In other words, every pupils in this class has different levels of learning and the teacher needs to adjust the curriculum and use different teaching styles by considering the student's learning profile. In this situation, the teacher should take note of the teaching based on the students' interest, the student's performance and identify the appropriate teaching methods to ensure that the student follows the appropriate teaching process. This is in line with the Education Act (1998) Regulations (Special Education) Volume 41, No. 26 Legislation effective January 1, 1998 in part 2 states that in implementing the Special Education curriculum, teachers can modify teaching and learning techniques, for activities and the atmosphere for subjects and teaching aids to achieve the goals of Special Education.

In line with the Education for All, the challenge of Education is to improve the quality and equality of education with the mission no children leave behind. So, it regardless whether it normal or special need students. Zalizan and Noraini (2000). However, in the classroom the teacher often does not diversify teaching and learning activities according to individual ability but teach in class as a whole. Norliah & Hanafi (2016), Lynch & Adams (2008) whereas the students need to be divided into groups and assessments in the classroom need to be modified to two or three levels. Tomlinson (1999), Brown (2004) and Salend (2005). Therefore, students in the classroom need to be taught inclusively by giving special guidance and attention. In addition, teachers need to reduce the traditional form of teaching method by incorporate more into interactive learning style to gain students interest in order to achieve teaching objectives of the day. However, teacher need to play

vital roles by diversify the content of student – assigned task. Salend, (2005) Brown (2004) & Tomlinson (1999).

Aims of the study

The aim of this study was to identify the level of awareness of level 1 teachers towards the diversity of students with special needs in the classroom and how they conduct the students with disabilities in classroom.

Literary review

Human Right and Equality issue has been long recognized since the adoption of United National Universal Declaration of Human Right (1948) and has been affirmed by International treaties (UNESCO, 2007). In ASEAN Level, every person's to education is recognized through sub article 1 of Article 31 of the ASEAN Human Rights Declaration (ASEAN Secretariat, 2012). However, children with disabilities are one of many groups one of children still not enrolled in primary education in developing countries. Bines & Lei (2011). But recently, several factor are now contributing to a change this situation. Bines & Lei (2011), Airil & Intan (2010). Firstly, these changes due to more attention to disabilities children, secondly, increasing of awareness, thirdly, more recognition of the human right and fourthly changes of people attitudes towards people with disabilities. Bines & Lei (2011). However, the Education For All Fast Track Initiative (FTI) in 2007 showed there are many gaps between policy and provision and disabilities are remains significant. For examples, one – third children remaining children out of school, whereas fewer than 10% of children with disabilities in Africa attending school. Bines & Lei (2011). Therefore, children with disabilities in all countries requires a number of the complex issues surrounding, from definition and data, to policy and service delivery, finance and capacity development. Bines & Lei (2011), Airil & Intan (2010), Sufean, Hwa & Cheong (2008)

Meanwhile, Malaysia has shown a remarkable fast pace development in special education recently. Basically, the progress of special education in Malaysia can be discussed in relation to four chronological stages: before and during the early colonial period (before 1900), pre-independence (1900–1957), post-independence (1957–1990) and modern Malaysia (1990 to the present) Lay & Hui (2014). In fact, The Malaysian Education Development Plan (PPPM 2013-2025, even emphasize equality of Malaysian citizen to access to education as every Malaysian citizen has the right of equal standing towards educational opportunities

METHOD

A sample of 16 teachers, was invited to take part in the study. The sample was a convenience approach sampling was adopted. An in – depth interview was conducted with a focus group from four different schools that represent four categories, rural areas, PI, P2 and P3. These government primary school, situated in Kapit Sarawak and a team of researcher conducted the interview in these four school, which was thematic analysis applied and focus on probing the interviewees for missing link during the 15 minutes of interview. Prior of this interview, the logistics such as obtaining the official permission to do the interview and while school was on – going were duly compiled

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Awareness with action

The findings show that majority of respondent proved they need to use different teaching material and exercise in order to tackle the student with disabilities. This was stated by study participants through the interview follow.

“... I will prepare different teaching material such as paper ball...” (R6)

“...I need to prepared different exercise ...” (R9)

Some of respondents' show their awareness in action by prepared differentiate their lesson plan by not focusing on their objectives as a general and

“... prepared my different lesson plantry to not be focusing the general objective only but also focusing on the needs of my student with learning difficulties...” (R8)

Used different technique and pedagogy based on student condition on particular day.

“... Normally I diversify my teaching and learning style to coop with student's condition and mood...” (R16)

Apart from that, some respondent taken an action by reporting the cases to administration and also suggested the students name for outreach programme

“... I will report to school head and discuss with parents...” (R15)

“...suggested the student to join outreach programme...”(R12)

Awareness with concern

The findings obtained from interview found that some teachers use to ask the student readiness every day before they start the lesson. They also explained this strategies will be able to help them identifying student's mood and feeling on that particular day.

“... every day, I will have a lesson with this class, and the first things that I do is, asking this special student with simple question. How are you today? Do you have your breakfast? What do you eat during recess? (R4)

“ ...before start my lesson, I will talk to my special student first... (R9)

Awareness Towards knowledge

In order to handle the student with needs in normal classroom, teacher need to gain more knowledge and exchange experience among colleagues. Therefore, they explained that they ask others for helps and opinion.

“... I ask other teacher who teaches the same class to share our experience...” (R13)

“.. I will ask remedial teacher to help me ...”(R3)

DISCUSSION

Awareness in action

In order to control the class with diverse learner, teachers need to diversify learning curriculum according to student's readiness to attend to the standard curriculum, school curriculum and behavioral respond. It will help the teacher to examine students' performance and their progress from time to time. In this research the findings show that majority of teacher said that they need to diversify their learning material or exercise. . By doing this action, their hopes its will fulfill their students' abilities and lesson objective on that particular day was achieved. These finding can also be linked to the discovery of Tomlinson (2000), Brown (2004), Burns & Dean, (2005) , Lee (2010) that teacher needs to diversify their learning material and teaching strategies.

Awareness with concern

The term children with special education need represent a big category of students who face up with various learning difficulties and these requires a variety of treatment methods. According to this research, respondent believed that they need to look after student readiness before they start the lesson every day. It was because respondent believed that students with needs behavior was depended on their moods and it will be changed. Therefore, an awareness with concern was in line with research that conducted by Tomlinson (2000), Vasiliki, Marita & Eleni (2011), Airil & Intan (2010) whereby before conducted the lesson or prepared the material for the lesson teachers concern's highly required in order to make sure the learning objective on that day will be achieved.

Awareness in knowledge

High costing is involved in sending all Year 1 teacher for attending SEN course because of locality may affect their knowledge in handling SEN in classroom. Even, some children are still children undergo diagnostic test in Outreach Programmes, In fact, currently the location for PPKI class is only offered in school within town area required teachers in P1 ,P2 and P3 to implement Inclusive Education Programmes. However, all 16 of interviewees in this study never attend any course regarding special education programmes. These findings were also congruent with the studies conducted by Sufean, Hwa & Cheong (2012) regarding awareness among primary school headmaster and teacher are found to be critical for success of inclusive education by the concept of “equal opportunity for all., meanwhile, 60% of teacher did not get attend any course in inclusive programme. Norliah & Hanafi (2016)

CONCLUSION

Emphasis on special needs students continues to gain an attention of the world and regional countries including Malaysia. The special Education Division has created positive initiatives which will hopefully bear fruit in the future. In fact, The Education Blueprint (2013 – 2025) is a path way in

the evolutionary process of special Education. Thus, this indicate the improvement and dissemination of information regarding equality in education acceptance more widely and adopted throughout Malaysia. Therefore, this study has shown that teachers in remote area have a positive awareness towards the existence of student with special needs in classroom. However, gaps still remains in the continuous professional development especially for the teacher in remote areas in order to improve teachers pedagogical skills in addressing learning problems, categorize of special education students, teaching strategies and others. Thus, children with special education need represent a big category of students who face up with various learning difficulties whereby teacher struggle to handle student with needs, therefore, training and support framework to drive actual practice most welcomed.

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