

**PhD Research Proposal : An Investigation Of Teachers' Readiness  
Towards School Based Assessment Scheme In Selected Malaysian  
Teacher Training Institutes.**

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**ABSTRACT**

This is a presentation of my research proposal entitle "**An Investigation Of Teachers' Readiness Towards School Based Assessment Scheme In Selected Malaysian Teacher Training Institutes**". A new assessment system for schools will be implemented by 2010 to give way for the change of the Malaysian education system from centralized examination, to a combination of centralized examination and school-based assessment. Therefore, The Teacher Education Division (TED) of the Ministry of Educations (MOE) formulates policies and guidelines pertaining to teacher training in Teacher Training Institutes in Malaysia. Opportunities for contextualized learning beyond observation and practicum experiences are important to support pre-service learning (Baker, 2000). This study will focus on an exploration of Teachers' readiness for School Based Assessment (SBA). The proper research questions and the research objectives have been develop to get the accurate findings. The study will comprise certain amount of teacher that will be observed in the classroom. At lease different practical selected teacher will be observed. .This study addresses quite extensively the research problem of how SBA can be successfully implemented by all teachers in teachers training institutes for teacher training. A study will conduct at Teacher Training Institute, Batu Pahat, Johor , Malaysia to investigate the teachers' readiness, as experienced by students (teacher training). The methodology utilized in this study is largely qualitative in nature, involving focus groups and semi-structured interviews. For triangulation purposes, questionnaire surveys are employed to collect some quantitative data to support the qualitative findings. For this research, a brief content analysis using the scissor-and-sort technique will utilize.

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## **CHAPTER 1**

### **1.0 Introduction To School Based Assessment in Malaysia**

A new assessment system for schools will be implemented by 2010 to give way for the change of the Malaysian education system from centralized examination, to a combination of centralized examination and school-based assessment. With the move, it will change the whole culture of knowledge acquisition, thus making the students find fun in learning. Therefore, teacher will be train to get ready to use any best approach to the students for school based assessment.

Formal education in Malaysia is provided at four levels - primary, lower secondary, upper secondary and post secondary. The age of admission to the first year of primary education is six years old. Promotion from grade to grade is automatic. Continuous school-based assessment is administered at all grades and at all levels. However, at the end of each level, students sit for common public examinations. Successful completion of secondary education can lead to a number of opportunities for further study and training at post-secondary and tertiary levels, both in the academic and professional fields provided by universities, colleges and other educational training institutions.

The forms that examinations and assessment take care widely recognized as determinants of educational practices. Over the past few years, new approaches to assessment have emerged in a number of countries. These have come primarily from a variety of overlapping debates concerning the purposes and methods of assessment (Messick,1994) and their impact on teaching and learning (Resnick & Resnick,1991).

Malaysia like other educational systems, has been concerned with how the changes in assessment practices and procedures can improve teaching and learning

#### **1.1 Background of the study**

In the context of building our prosperity, the Ninth Malaysia Plan represents one of the most significant Malaysia Plans in our country's history, as the nation is currently at the mid-point of the journey towards the year 2020. The second thrust of the National Mission is to raise the country's capacity for knowledge, creativity

and innovation and nurture 'first class mentality'. Malaysia's future success depends on the quality of its human capital, not only in terms of intellect but also character. Therefore, in line with this thrust, the Government aims to undertake comprehensive improvement of the country's education system, from pre-school to tertiary and vocational institutions. A more enabling environment will also be fostered to encourage the R&D. At the same time, heavier emphasis will be placed on the shaping of values to create more well-rounded individuals.

The Teacher Education Division (TED) of the Ministry of Educations (MOE) formulates policies and guidelines pertaining to teacher training. The Division also implements and evaluates the curriculum and examination system while being responsible for the selection of candidates into the teacher training programmes. As part of its core business, the TED identifies areas of needs in terms of expertise; levels of skills required and type of courses to be offered before such programmes are carried out. To enhance teachers' professionalism and to improve teacher quality, the MOE offers special diploma courses running over a period of one year for non-graduate teachers apart from other professional development courses offered to all teachers.

Teacher Training Institute Ministry of Education is a progressive institution which aims to provide quality education relevant to the economy and industry by creating a conducive and stimulating environment that encourages total development, continuous improvement and lifelong learning. Its vision is to prepare teachers and graduates for a future of dynamic change, with relevant knowledge, lifelong skills, character and a thirst for continuous improvement. It is with this vision that the Teacher Training Institute constantly evaluates its teaching approaches to keep up with the emerging need of learners as well as the needs of government educational institutions and industry.

## **1.2 The Research Problem**

With the National Education Blueprint 2006-2010 spelling out its mission to produce more confident, creative and well-rounded students, a new assessment system is seen as the catalyst to bring about much-needed changes in the education system. The new system will be a combination of the current system of central examinations (which may take on a different form) and school-based assessing methods, which will see teachers playing a vital

role in assessing their charges. It is hoped that the move will empower teachers to really get to know their students, using various informal methods and psychometric testing such as diagnostic, general ability and aptitude tests. Pre-service teachers require extensive knowledge and experience. Opportunities for contextualized learning beyond observation and practicum experiences are important to support pre-service learning (Baker, 2000)

According to UNESCO/ILO Recommendation concerning the Status of Teachers (1966), the purpose of a teacher-preparation programme should be to develop students' general education and personal culture; their ability to educate others; an awareness of the principles which underlie good human relations, within and across national boundaries; and a sense of responsibility to contribute, both by teaching and by example, to social, cultural and economic progress.

However, in studies of how teachers implemented new initiatives in the curriculum (see for example McRobbie & Tobin, 1995; Tobin & LaMaster, 1995) it is found that when the philosophy of the curricular innovation is significantly different from the theories and beliefs held by the teachers, the challenge or demand on the teachers requires them to restructure their belief system. Sometimes, such restructuring or domestication may be problematical or even 'personally threatening'.

### **1.3 The Research Questions**

This study focused on an exploration of Teachers' readiness for School Based Assessment (SBA). The research questions addressed were:

1. How will Teacher identify Readiness towards SBA?
2. Why did different teachers perceive SBA differently?
3. On what did the teachers base their interpretation of SBA regulations and their enactment of these in the classroom? Was this related to their sense of professionalism?

### **1.4 The Research Objectives**

1. To identify a framework to set up Teachers' Readiness for SBA.
2. To determine the strategies for the implementation of SBA for teachers

## **1.5 Implications of the Study**

1. Research indicates that in order to influence students' health knowledge, skills, and behavior, well-prepared teachers must implement developmentally and culturally appropriate instructional strategies that provide basic information, engage participants to practice and apply relevant skills, and are of sufficient duration (Parker, 2001; USDHHS, 2000).
2. The study will comprise certain amount of teacher that will be observed in the classroom. The Table Morgan will be use for determining the quantity of teachers that will be involved in this research. At lease different practical selected teacher will be observed. These included pre and post-laboratory sessions if they were implemented separately from the laboratory session proper. All lesson will be recorded via a wireless microphone attached to the clothing of the teacher. The researcher sat in a corner at the back of the classroom monitoring the recordings as well as jotting down notes of the events taking place.

## **1.6 Limitations of the Study**

This study addresses quite extensively the research problem of how SBA can be successfully implemented by all teachers in teachers training institutes for teacher training. However, it does not ignore the limitations of two qualitative method used. According to Steward and Shamdasani (1990), although focus groups and interviews are easy to set up, it is usually difficult for the researcher to moderate the process and even more difficult to interpret the data.

## CHAPTER 2

### 2.0 Literature Review

#### 2.1 What if Malaysia School Based Assessment System?

A new assessment system being crafted by the Education Ministry that aims to shift the emphasis from public examinations to more regular school-based evaluation of students. The new system will be a combination of the current system of central examinations (which may take on a different form) and school-based assessing methods, which will see teachers playing a vital role in assessing their charges. It is hoped that the move will empower teachers to really get to know their students, using various informal methods and psychometric testing such as diagnostic, general ability and aptitude tests. Under the new system, good students could progress faster and weaker ones take more time to learn under a more fluid and interesting education style. With teachers doing school-based assessments from Year One, there would be better understanding of students' capabilities

Quite a number of developed countries don't have central exams at the primary level or the secondary level. Finland, for example, is well known for not having a central exam for the first nine years of education. Theirs are all school-based. Countries like New Zealand, Australia and Hong Kong conduct more school-based assessments. Malaysia is a marriage between both, between the central examination system and the school-based assessment.

#### 2.2 What are teacher beliefs and their practice?

There is a growing body of evidence supporting the premise that teachers do have theories and belief systems which play an important part in their cognition and behavior in teaching (see for example Briscoe, 1993; Fischler, 1994).

#### 2.3 Teacher Professionalism and Educational Reforms

One of the assumptions underlying centrally directed educational reforms is that teachers, where necessary, will be both willing and able to adapt their teaching in appropriate directions. Yet there is considerable evidence to suggest that is not so. Teachers mediate the external pressure upon them through the 'filter' of their own

professionalism. Indeed, the SBA reform was understood in very different ways (Yung, 1995)

Hargreaves (1994) defined teacher professionalism as the capacity to make discretionary judgments in the interests of improved student outcomes and transformative educational change. In an attempt to explain teacher's varying interpretations of the policy texts of a curriculum reform, Bowe et al. (1992) drew upon the work of Barthes (1976) and, in particular, the idea of 'readerly' policy texts, in which the user has minimal scope for creativity, and 'writerly' text, in which the reader assumes an interpretative role.

## **2.4 Difficulties and Challenges of School Based Assessment.**

The Prime Minister, the deputy prime minister and the education minister realize that there is a need to change because the scenario around us is fast changing. The assessment side of things can serve as a catalyst to this change. It must be translated into meaningful programmes and a well structured assessment system that places equal importance on expert judgment by those at the higher level at the ministry, and professional judgment by teachers who have daily contact with the students.

It is the marriage of these two systems which will provide not only the ministry and schools with data and information about the students, but also the stakeholders the opportunity to see how their children develop over the years, and to act before it is too late. The approaches the ministry is looking at is to have both the central examinations and school-based examinations where we empower the school and teachers to carry out more assessment at the school level. Combining the assessment done at the school level with what is centrally done will give a more holistic image of that individual.

## CHAPTER 3

### 3.0 Research Methodology

A study will conduct at Teacher Training Institute, Batu Pahat to investigate the teachers' readiness, as experienced by students (teacher training). The methodology utilized in this study is largely qualitative in nature, involving focus groups and semi-structured interviews. For triangulation purposes, questionnaire surveys are employed to collect some quantitative data to support the qualitative findings.

### 3.1 Data Analysis

Interpretations of the data collected were constructed using a method similar to that described by Erickson (1986), focusing on 'the immediate and local meanings of actions, as defined from the actors' point of view' (p.119). There should be a large of data collected from both the focus groups and interviews conducted for this study. Transcripts for the information collected must clearly typed out. As the data are qualitative in nature, a certain amount of subjective judgment should be used in the analysis (Morgan, 1993). For this research, a brief content analysis using the scissor-and-sort technique will utilize. A simple content analysis is appropriate if the purpose of using focus groups and interviews is for an in-depth exploration of a research topic about which little is known in a certain context (Steward & Shamdasani, 1990).

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