

MALAYSIA

'IMPROVEMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PRACTICE AND
ENVIRONMENT FOR STUDENT WITH INTELLECTUAL
DISABILITIES-
FOR ACTIVE PARTICIPATION IN SOCIETY THROUGH
EMPLOYMENT'

MALAYSIAN PERSPECTIVE

FOR

THE 25TH ASIA -PACIFIC INTERNATIONAL
SEMINAR ON SPECIAL EDUCATION
THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION JAPAN

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BACKGROUND

1. In Malaysia education and facilities for children with special needs is a shared responsibility among the ministries. The networking would promote to full contribution of maximum outcomes as well as nurturing the values of a caring society among Malaysians. The Ministry Of Education work hand in hand with the following ministries and agencies:

- a. The Ministry of Health
- b. The Ministry of Women, Family and Community
- c. The Ministry of Human Resources
- d. The Non-Governmental Bodies

2. The 70th Educational Research Committee Meeting in Jun 1981 agreed upon specific roles among government bodies in caring for children with special needs. Children with Visual Impairments, Hearing Impairments and Learning Disabilities (Educable) are to be the responsibility of The Ministry of Education while children with severe physical handicapped, moderate, severe mental retardation and multiple handicapped were to be placed under responsibility of the Ministry of Women Family and Community and Non- Governmental Bodies. This is to ensure that children receiving special education programs and services are considered and addressed properly.

3. 'Intellectual Disabilities' in Malaysia, is being defined as 'Learning Difficulties'. Children with Learning Difficulties include those who are diagnosed as Down Syndrome, Mild Autism, Attention Deficit Disorder, Mild Retardation and Specific Learning Disabilities (e.g Dyslexia). Children with LD have the access to the Public as well as the Alternative Curriculum depending on the program that they follow. The Alternative Curriculum is focused towards a holistic development, skills acquisition in order to secure quality life which would contribute in the future.

EDUCATIONAL ACCOMODATION

- Towards Active Participation In Society And Employment

4. The Ministry Of Education has adapted the 'least restrictive environment policy' to encourage social integration for children with LD. With the opening of the first integrated programme, children with LD are being placed in the main stream school where they are encouraged to interact socially and study together

wherever possible. The 2 educational approach being practiced for children with LD in integrated programme are:

- i) full inclusion (very limited, for all subject)
- ii) partial inclusion (commonly practiced, non academic subject)

CURRICULUM

5. As mentioned earlier, children with LD have the choice to choose from the 2 curriculum available. A well planned and structured curriculum at elementary level had contribute in building up potentials among students which would later help children with LD to access to vocational subjects. The alternative curriculum for children with LD in Malaysia is therefore aimed at providing educational competence and experiences towards a meaningful living. This curriculum is designed for LD children age 6 – 19 years comprising of social, academic and competency development. Children are being taught specific skills e.g Living skills, Functional Academic Skills, Moral and spiritual values, and Social – leisure, creativity skills.

PRE VOCATIONAL CURRICULLUM FOR CHILDREN WITH LEARNING DIFFICULTIES.

5. The 1st secondary programme for children with LD was initiated in 1995, therefore secondary education for students with LD is relatively a new endeavor in Malaysia. Students with LD in secondary schools continues where they left off at elementary level typically emphasized the promotion of prevocational skills in the elementary grades, but grater emphasis is being given to pre vocational training skills acquisition.

The Prevocational Curriculum has been recently approved by the Ministry Of Education Malaysia in September 2005. It consists of 30 percent academic skills and 70 percent vocational skills. Vocational skills and acquisition hopefully would lead to educational satisfaction and employment opportunities among children with LD. The courses available are cooking, sewing, agriculture/gardening, maintenance, service and Handcraft.

ADVANTAGES

6. There is continuity in the content of the pre vocational curriculum with the alternative curriculum practiced at elementary levels. Mastery of living skills in elementary schools would give LD children confident to follow the vocational programme at secondary schools.

MLVK curriculum (National Vocational Training Council) was used as a guide to develop the pre vocational curriculum. This is to enable children with LD to acquire the MLVK curriculum at upper secondary level. The pre vocational curriculum is also adaptable to the schools environment thus meeting the needs of students in their respective settings. Experiential learning is based on natural settings which are based upon the pre vocational subject offered.

SECONDARY SPECIAL EDUCATION VOCATIONAL SCHOOL INDAHPURA -2003

7. In recognition for students with LD to have equal opportunity in employment, the Ministry of Education sets up its first Secondary Special Education Vocational School in 2003. This secondary school provides training for all 3 categories of special needs under the jurisdiction of the MOE.(student with visual impairment, hearing impairment and learning disabilities). Courses provided for student with learning disabilities are:

Linen Attendance, Room Attendance, Hair Stylist, Assistance Beautician and Food Preparation. Courses for students with LD will begin early next year, and students are required to complete their lower secondary education for the admission to the programme.

9th MALAYSIAN PLAN

8. The opening of SMPKV Indahpura is a milestone in vocational education for children with LD. In the 9th Malaysian Plan 2 new vocational as being proposed, .sited in Kedah, and Pahang with an allocation of RM 75 million.. 21 courses have been identified, out of which 17 would cater for children with learning difficulties.

Conclusion

To meet the needs of vocational education for children with LD and to ensure education opportunities is being fully utilized, we believed that a joint collaboration among all parties concerned would be crucial. Thus hopefully would lead to increased employability of children with LD in the future.