

Teacher Training and Curriculum: Developing Teachers' Understanding of Inclusive Principles

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Disability-Inclusive Education in Asia-Pacific Working Group Regional Webinar

Teacher training and curriculum: Developing teachers' understanding of inclusive principles

Complied Q&A

General questions:

1. What are the possible motivating factors to teachers in practical level to use pedagogical skills and knowledge in classrooms?

Nguyen Xuan Hai, Ha Noi Metropolitan University

Achievements of children with disabilities, respected and encouraged from others as colleagues, school managements, parents, etc, and more salary.

Hanani Harun Rasit, SEAMEO SEN

Administrators should do whatever they can to help teachers, in practical level to stay motivated or become even more motivated throughout the years in order to use pedagogical skills and knowledge in classrooms. This is because, the strategies of providing teachers with what they need to remain resourceful, relevant, keen and enthusiastic in the classrooms, by teacher training institutions, public and private universities, Teacher Training Centre, Teacher Professionalism Division of the Ministry of Education (MoE) Malaysia, as well as SEAMEO SEN, will benefit students, schools and teachers themselves. Moreover, teachers become motivated when their effort is acknowledged and supported by the administrators, through service awards given by the MoE, Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn award for outstanding teachers in ASEAN and McDonald's Teacher Awards, to name a few.

Subsequently, with these efforts, teachers' own desire to work with children and their own motivation to impart knowledge can be increased. On the other hand, teachers who realise that their skills and competencies are significant, will also equip themselves accordingly to continue their service to the society by attending courses and training which will consequently become another possible motivating factor for them to persevere in the implementation of the pedagogical skills and knowledge in classrooms.

2. How can the education sector become more equipped in terms of admission without prejudice to marginalized students?

Nguyen Xuan Hai, Ha Noi Metropolitan University

More participation of community members and parents in schools, and educational socialization to mobilize more resources for the school. Enact more legal documents in the field of inclusion.

Hanani Harun Rasit, SEAMEO SEN

The Ministry of Education Malaysia has provided a few initiatives for marginalized students to ensure their readiness to undergo schooling. The students from low-income families (household income <RM4850) are eligible to get Early School Aid. The primary school students will receive RM 100, whereas the secondary students will receive RM 150.

Other than that, the MoE has also implemented Zero Reject Policy (ZRP) to ensure marginalized students have the right to register for school regardless of who they are. For example, the school will assist the students who do not have birth certificates to get the letter of oath from the District Education Office to enable them to register for school.

In Malaysia, it is compulsory for parents to register and send their children to school starting at seven years old up to 12 years old as stipulated by the Education Act (1996). However, financial problem is one of the causes of dropouts especially for students in rural areas. In response, the MoE has initiated an incentive called Trust Fund for Poor Students, which provides financial aid for low-income families. The aid consists of three (3) categories: i.) general aid: the students will receive cash or school equipment like school attire, ii.) monthly aid: the money will be credited to the student's account monthly or lump sum (twice a year) and iii.) emergency aid.

Furthermore, students with disabilities at all levels of education, namely, pre-school, primary, secondary and upper secondary, are also given an allowance of RM 150 per month, on the condition they are registered as Disable Persons and hold Disability cards endorsed by the Department of Social Welfare Malaysia.

Furthermore, the Textbook Loan Scheme is also implemented in Malaysia. The schemes cover all levels of education from primary to upper secondary in government schools and government-aided schools. The objectives are to lessen the financial burden of parents, especially from the lower-income group, and ensure access to education for every child.

3. what can schools do to influence enrolment and retention of children with disabilities?

Nguyen Xuan Hai, Ha Noi Metropolitan University

Involve participation of parents and educational support workers into supporting children with disabilities in classrooms. Encourage children with disabilities to learn and enjoy school activities. Praise achievements of children with disabilities, no matter how small.

Hanani Harun Rasit, SEAMEO SEN

Enrolment and retention of children with disabilities is a complex issue which is affected by many diverse factors. Existence of policy that made it mandatory for children aged 8-12 to receive proper education namely stipulated in the Malaysia Education Act (1996) and the reinforcement of the Zero Reject Policy (ZRP), will ensure that monitoring by the MoE, schools alongside State Education Department, District Education Office on the implementation of the act will be adhered by parents in ensuring that their children enrol in schools. Other unique approaches need to also be developed by schools in order to address

the issue. Schools can identify the students' background through the engagement of law makers, and ensure parental engagement to achieve the aims for children to return to school. Awareness programme from Parent-Teacher Association (SARANA) in providing group support and empowerment for parents who need the kind of support system from school. Teachers need to also ensure that school programs and classroom activities are designed and delivered accordingly. For example, pedagogical approach, differentiated and inclusive education, universal design of learning, various inputs of all the components in teaching and learning - among teachers, students, and parents to ensure sustainability and support inside and outside the classroom, in the context of curricular and extra-curricular activities. will result in an atmosphere that supports their teaching and learning, will also influence enrolment and retention of learners with disabilities.

4. How mainstream assessment practices and policies can ensure students who are out-of-phase can be assessed appropriately?

Nguyen Xuan Hai, Ha Noi Metropolitan University

Self-school assessments every year using national criteria. National guidelines for assessing learning outcomes of children with disabilities. Involve others like friends or parents in assessing learning outcomes of children with disabilities.

Hanani Harun Rasit, SEAMEO SEN

Teachers in Malaysia are using Classroom Assessment to assess their students' competency effectively for all subjects at all levels of education. This assessment is good to use before the pandemic, during the pandemic when the schools are closed (remote learning) and when the schools reopen to assess learning loss. The Classroom Assessment requires professional judgement from the teachers as it informs the development of students' competencies and will help the teachers plan and improvise their teaching plan. The students can be assessed through three (3) methods which are: i.) observation, ii.) written evaluation and iii.) oral evaluation. The students are evaluated based on several aspects like thinking skills, language skills, computational skills, social skills, manipulative skills, creativity, behaviour, kinaesthetic skills and physical fitness. The teachers will categorize the students based on their level of mastery which is level 1 to level 6 for each subject, where the level 1 is the lowest (less competent) and level 6 is the highest (highly competent).

5. How to address the inclusiveness in the program design and implementation?

Nguyen Xuan Hai, Ha Noi Metropolitan University

National, local, and school policies, curriculum and syllabuses, teaching and learning methods, teaching and learning equipment, yearly school plan.

Hanani Harun Rasit, SEAMEO SEN

The Ministry of Education Malaysia has introduced the Inclusive Education Program to meet the Malaysian Education Blueprint's (2013-2025) target of 75% of children with disabilities entering mainstream classes for all levels of education. The objective is to provide full and equal participation to those students with disabilities to enter the mainstream classes.

There are two (2) types of inclusive education available; i.) full inclusion and ii.) partial inclusion. In full inclusion, students with disabilities who require minimum support are placed in the mainstream classrooms full-time with other students for all subjects. For partial inclusion, the students with disabilities who require moderate support are included for elective subjects like physical education, music and art class based on their abilities with guidance from the special education teachers. Students with disabilities are encouraged to be placed in the mainstream classes which have not more than thirty-five (35) students and not more than five (5) students with disabilities. This is to ensure students with disabilities received attention and support needed from the class teacher.

6. Adapted P.E during pandemic, how these learners can adapt and giving extra activities if they have modular and virtual learning?

Nguyen Xuan Hai, Ha Noi Metropolitan University
Support from their parents or adults are needed.

Hanani Harun Rasit, SEAMEO SEN

Adapted P.E. during pandemic ameliorates one's self-esteem and provides a sense of well-being by reducing stress, particularly for learners with disabilities. Hence, learners can adapt variety of activities and progressive approaches comprise of passive, active-assisted or active exercises by following a guided self-assessment which should be administered by their parents or guardians at home. No formal instructions and place are necessarily required. If the learners with disabilities live in a flat, the stairs between two floors could be used to do the exercise. On the other hand, if the learner lives in a landed house, using any suitable tools and equipment may be an option. In Malaysia for example, teachers and therapists of GENIUS Kurnia implement the adapted PE approach through their online teaching platform namely by initially calming them down, get them to stay focus, and by providing guidelines for parents to create home-made obstacles course using furniture or any tools available. Coaches from Pan-Disability Football, an NGO in Malaysia. on the other hand, provide adapted football activities virtually where players with cerebral palsy are instructed to follow through fundamental skills of football, namely kicking the ball and stopping the ball from rolling with one leg while using their mobility aids.

Most importantly, during pandemic, adapted P.E. activities must be conducted in manners that allow learners with disabilities to benefit their health, gain new skills which are beneficial for them, and not just to replicate what others had done before.

7. Practical tips on how to introduce differentiated learning & individual plans in low capacity, under resourced areas?

Nguyen Xuan Hai, Ha Noi Metropolitan University
It depends but often appropriate with concrete conditions.

Hanani Harun Rasit, SEAMEO SEN

During this pandemic, since face-to-face learning can no longer occur, the teachers need to initiate new teaching and learning methods for the students, especially for those who are living in under-resourced areas. In Malaysia, the teachers have provided learning materials

in the form of modules for the students. The teachers will work closely with the parents and guardians to ensure the students' level of mastery. Another initiative by the teachers is off-site learning, where the teachers will do the home visit in the rural areas. For example, for indigenous children who live in a place with no internet connection, the teachers will reach the students through the 'Tok Batin' (head of the village) to help in distributing the modules or gather the students to carry out the learning session. However, in some cases, the teachers are also received additional support by the Department of Indigenous People Development in ensuring all students receive the learning materials and no students should be left behind.

8. How do we give quality education to the less privilege society?

Nguyen Xuan Hai, Ha Noi Metropolitan University

Focus on the competency of the learners.

Hanani Harun Rasit, SEAMEO SEN

In Malaysia, children from low-income families, homeless, abandoned as well as refugees and orphans are defined as the less privilege society which need to be given more emphasis in education. Great initiative from the MoE by the setting up of Sekolah Bimbingan Jalinan Kasih, and by the NGO such as Yayasan Chow Kit, are great examples that can be replicated by more organisations and institutions.

Additionally, in order to give quality education to the less privilege society, recruitment of teaching staff, and the introduction of monetary incentives for teachers who are willing to teach to the less privileged should be magnified. The level of preparedness by schools without compromising quality of education need to also be put into consideration. Issues surrounding the less privilege society namely the lack of current and relevant learning materials, inadequate use of internet and general lack of learning space and facilities, are important to be highlighted and resolved in order to provide quality education for them. The source of education is not only obtained from the teacher, but also many useful resources such as books, educational films, videos, magazines, internet, and others should be made accessible for them too.

9. Are there any efforts to include special needs candidates becoming an educator in the teachers training institutions?

Nguyen Xuan Hai, Ha Noi Metropolitan University

Not yet in training institutions but already in special schools in Vietnam.

Hanani Harun Rasit, SEAMEO SEN

The Ministry of Education Malaysia (MoE) has initiated a special program/track to provide opportunities for students with disabilities to enable them to become educators. The special track means the students are only required to fulfil minimum requirement to apply. Students who passed the Malaysian Certificate of Education (SPM) and fulfil the specified minimum requirements set by the MoE are eligible to apply for the teaching courses offered at the Malaysian Institute of Teacher Education. This programme prepares the students for a teaching career in various specializations at public primary schools. Students who are

eligible to enter the institution are required to attend the Inventory Programme for bachelor's degree for Education for twelve (12) months or three (3) semesters. After the completion of the inventory programme, the students will proceed with the bachelor's degree for four (4) years or twelve (12) semesters at any Malaysian Institute of Teacher Education as set by the Ministry of Education Malaysia (MoE).

10. As the education system is disrupted because of the pandemic, how do you view the effort the government and other NGOs taking to reach the goal of engaging the children? Is it effective? What would be the approach we, well-wishers to take to reach the children with quality education?

Nguyen Xuan Hai, Ha Noi Metropolitan University

The education system, of course, is affected by the pandemic and adapted to the situations. The goal of engaging children does not change; however for the curriculum, use only the core and cross-out unnecessary contents.

Hanani Harun Rasit, SEAMEO SEN

All kinds of change in the education system need time – especially after the pandemic. For successful implementation of the curriculum in schools, government, NGOs and all those involved need to re-conceptualize the content, teaching and the goals of education. During pandemic, Didik TV, an initiative by the MoE is an example to reach out to more students who are learning from home, particularly with limited digital access. In addition, 150,000 gadgets to support online learning were distributed to families who could not afford to provide the device for the children at home. Notably, internet data subsidies and installation of internet line by mobile operators in Malaysia take place in ensuring equal access to learning for all. Distribution of food basket and organising virtual home visit by the NGOs to provide psychological and moral support for families with children with disabilities was also executed.

Education which are implemented in remote areas need to be expanded to reach more learners for better education. Collaborative effort between stakeholders is highly needed to support the advancement of special educational needs and development of affordable quality education can be done through informal and non-formal education. To accommodate to more engagement and to minimise learning loss and 'lost children' of learners with disabilities would first require that the capacity of teachers who are trained, qualified and exposed to adequate technology to facilitate quality of delivery.

We, well-wishers should advocate and encourage collaboration between government and private sectors – which are the integral ingredients to today's education to subsequently reach the children with quality education. Nevertheless, quality education is achievable for all learners with disabilities, however, it requires rethinking financing, and equal provision of resources for all. Additionally, another step that can be implemented is to increase students' understanding of their abilities, interests, values, and other personality traits and aid them to develop an acceptable self-image and realistic attitude to school which will lead to their empowerment and ability to self-advocate.

Malaysia:

11. What is the cost implication and home-based learning in Malaysia and what strategy has taken for its sustainability?

Hanani Harun Rasit, SEAMEO SEN

The implementation of home-based learning requires additional supports like electronic devices and internet coverage. Therefore, it has affected most families, especially low-income families. Some students are experiencing difficulties in attending online classes due to limited or no electronic devices at home. There are cases where the students need to use their parent's electronic devices or share with other siblings.

In response, the Malaysian Government has enhanced Jaringan Prihatin or Connectivity Program to address remote learning issues by giving subsidies in purchasing mobile smartphones devices or tablets and broadband internet plans. This initiative is expected to help low-income families afford the gadgets and internet plans at an affordable price to enable the children to undergo their learning process at home. SEAMEO SEN has no access to the total cost involved for this initiative, but it involves millions of Malaysia Ringgit.

Furthermore, the teachers are also actively taking part in ensuring that no students are left behind by identifying students who come from low-income families and reaching out to the families to help them apply for any aids provided by the Government.

Bhutan:

Pema Chhogyel, Ministry of Education of Bhutan

12. What tool that Bhutan is using to identify the children's disabilities and their types, as this is very important to design and implement educational interventions to them?

To identify the difficulties in children, we use tools such as Pre-Primary (PP) Readiness; Rapid Functional Assessment 9 (RFA); Brigance tools (assessing literacy, numeracy, reading and speaking abilities) and observations. We also rely on medical prescriptions and recommendations from health professionals.

13. May we know how do you ensure the active involvement of Organizations of Persons with Disabilities, parents' group, and other stakeholders in the development of your roadmap in the Ministry of Education in Bhutan?

To get greater roles of OPD, parents and stakeholders, we involve them in capacity building programmes, awareness, and advocacy programmes, in policy and planning consultations, activity implementations and responsibilities. We have also formed multi-sectorial Steering Committee and Technical Working Group for Inclusive and Special Education where all relevant stakeholders are members.

14. What type of school support system is implementing in Bhutan to ensure that teachers are getting proper professional support as per need?

Bhutan currently follows the twin-trek approach of Inclusive and Special Education considering the level of development, availability of resources, capacity, and infrastructure. However, we mobilize funding and provide periodical professional Development

programmes to teachers. We organize both school based and regional capacity programmes for teachers and other important members in disability education.

15. Paro College of Education (PCE) developing 2-year Diploma Program in Teacher Assistants in schools supporting SEN program. It is a 3-year project funded by Erasmus Plus and PCE is working with partners from Roehampton University (UK), University College Leuven Limburg (Belgium) and Evalag (Germany). We are about to finish the first year. This project will also produce Professional Standard for Teacher Assistants. The proposed diploma program will be developed using various research methods such as Delphi approach, world cafe, photovoice and appreciative inquiry. we have conducted information sharing workshop with stakeholders including ECCD and SEN Division, MOE. We will be conducting series of workshops in future again particularly with ECCD and SEN Division. Are you aware about this development?

Ministry of Education is aware of the development and have participated in their consultative meetings.

16. It is great to hear that Bhutan provided "adapted self-instructional materials" for learning for students with disabilities. In Cambodia, teachers face challenges to teach children with disabilities online (they say "children cannot keep concentrating online"). Can you briefly list up what contents/strategies are included in the materials?

In the adapted self-instructional materials for learners with disabilities, the teachers of the respective schools have developed learning materials based on individual child's abilities and reached home. Example, with simplified instructions, pictorial guides, models, with basic learning materials not really the academics, based on life skills learning and recorded audio materials. Also provided tablets stored with the materials. Involved parents/guardians for the online support to help the children with disabilities.

17. Governments and countries provide good opportunities for CWD at schools for learning but in view of the nature of the disability and its forms, how is Bhutan making sure that no children with disabilities are at home? How do these children access the schools that have facilities for CWD and continue their learning?

Reaching learning support to children/persons with disabilities at home is still a challenge in Bhutan too. However, with the initiatives of some schools having inclusive and special education programmes, the principals and teachers conduct outreach programmes if they know about some children with disabilities in their community. They also advocate the parents and community and bring the children to school. Some Organizations for Persons with disabilities also organize some home-based and outreach learning programmes for children/persons with disabilities.