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Teacher Effectiveness: The Beliefs of Effective Bahasa Melayu Teachers

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ABSTRAK

Kepercayaan mempunyai pengaruh yang besar pada penerimaan guru terhadap sesuatu inovasi pendidikan seperti Kurikulum Bersepadu Sekolah Menengah (KBSM) di Malaysia. Kertas ini menerangkan tanggapan guru yang berkesan terhadap makna gagasan keberkesanan guru yang berasaskan kepada pemahaman teori dan amalan pengajaran mereka. Dua belas orang guru Bahasa Melayu yang dikenal pasti oleh pihak berwibawa pendidikan sebagai berkesan dalam pengajaran dikaji dengan menggunakan soal selidik berstrukstur separa yang kemudiannya diperjelas dengan temu bual. Dapatan menunjukkan sebahagian kepercayaan mereka tidak sama dengan apa yang disarankan dan dijangkakan oleh KBSM. Hasil kajian ini mencadangkan agar kepercayaan guru diambil kira dalam perancangan dan pelaksanaan program-program pendidikan guru untuk memastikan pembangunan profesional mereka lebih bermakna.

ABSTRACT

Beliefs play a major role in the way teachers respond to an educational innovation such as the Integrated Curriculum for Secondary Schools (KBSM) in Malaysia. This paper gives an account of the effective teachers' perceptions of the notion of teacher effectiveness based on the teachers' theoretical understanding and their classroom practices. Twelve Bahasa Melayu teachers who were identified as effective in their teaching by the education authorities were studied through a semi-structured questionnaire which was later clarified through interviews. The results indicated that some of their beliefs are not parallel with those recommended and expected by the KBSM. This paper suggests that there is a need to consider teachers' beliefs in the planning and implementation of meaningful teacher education programmes.

INTRODUCTION

Mohd. Majid (1997) argues that effective teachers of Bahasa Melayu tend to follow only some of the classroom prescriptions of the Integrated Curriculum for Secondary Schools, better known by its Bahasa Melayu acronym, KBSM. The prescriptions include maintaining the engagement of pupils on the task and utterance of the various types of teachers' questions. He elaborates that neither the teaching nor the learning processes underlying the KBSM curriculum of inculcating knowledge, skills and values are being implemented. According to him, the KBSM cannot be considered as giving new status to the teacher as counsellor and the pupils as the key players, let alone the pupils becoming active actors and the teacher a source of stimulus and a mover of teaching and learning, as claimed by the Ministry of Education (Ministry of Education 1990a). Why, then, has an educational innovation such as the KBSM failed?

For an educational innovation to be successfully implemented, Fullan (1991) has suggested three aspects that should be changed in practice. They are the alternation of beliefs on the theories and pedagogical assumptions underlying the new curriculum, the use of new teaching strategies, and the use of new or revised teaching materials. Accordingly, both the teachers' beliefs as well as their practices ought to be changed. Since changes in the classroom involve changes in the teachers' conceptions and role behaviour, the question of whether the teachers can work on the perception and definitions that relate to teacher effectiveness in line with Fullan's (1991) three dimensions can be investigated from the perspective of the development, dissemination and implementation

of the notions. The KBSM existing teachers' own beliefs about teacher effectiveness might hinder their understanding of the concepts being pursued in the KBSM. As a result, they might be resistant to change through such in-service teacher education programmes. Thus, in order for meaningful professional development to take place, there is a need to consider the existing teachers' beliefs about the notion of teacher effectiveness.

Teachers' Belief in Effectiveness

Over the years, attempts to define teacher effectiveness by researchers (Ornstein 1991; Wang and Walberg 1991; Cullingford 1995) reveal that the concept is contentious. The failure to arrive at an agreed definition of the concept can be predicted from the various problems inherent in defining teaching.

For the past four decades, Western theories of teaching have been dominated by the "progressive" method (Alexander 1992). Particularly, the dominant progressive prescription in which teaching is posited as "neutrally" (Knight 1993) fails to consider that "effectiveness" entails value judgement about "... the nature of teaching and what is educationally worthwhile" (McNamara 1992: 280). Prescriptive views of good practice are not necessarily compatible with the "root definition" of effective teaching which is based on teachers' espoused theory and good practices and in which the "practicality ethic" (Doyle and Ponder 1977) looms large. The failure is especially significant since the progressive view seldom recognizes the practitioners' point of view (Fullan 1992; Sikes 1992) and raises the issue of whose values are represented in any particular notion of teacher effectiveness.

The progressive view can best be represented by the Plowden Report (1967) which described it as an approach of teaching based on child-centred teaching strategies which departed from the traditional teacher-centred teaching. According to pupil-centred teaching and learning strategies, learning can best be achieved through pupils' own inquiries (Bennett 1987). It is a teaching strategy based on flexible, informal, individualized teaching methods (Galton 1989; Knight 1993). In essence, with the good teacher acting as their guide, pupils are responsible for their own learning. The teacher's responsibility is primarily facilitating learning via appropriate classroom and curriculum organization, and through individualized motivation. The progressive Plowden strategy has had a major influence on the KBSM (Ministry of Education 1990a).

The Plowden teaching strategy, however, has been treated with scepticism, especially in the past two decades (Galton *et al.* 1980; Bennett 1987; Galton 1989; Alexander 1992). In particular, most teachers have difficulty in understanding and accommodating the recommended practices, especially when their meanings are unclear, as frequently is the case with general prescriptions for teaching practice (Doyle and Ponder 1977; Fullan 1992; Sikes 1992). What is needed, accordingly, is an empirical work to examine how teachers assign meaning to the notion of teacher effectiveness.

Beliefs play a major role in how teachers respond to an educational innovation such as KBSM. Research indicates that teachers' beliefs reflect their practices (Pajares 1992; Ross 1995; Fang 1996; Ennis *et al.* 1997). Teachers would consider the prescriptive provisions of teaching strategies in terms of the diversity encountered in their classrooms. Their belief structures give form to the incoming information that they receive and direct their information process. In essence, beliefs significantly influence how teachers understand the innovation and how they teach. A challenge for research is, therefore, to establish the meanings that teachers assign to any prescription of effective teaching, such as that explicit in the KBSM and the interplay of those meanings with their notion of teacher effectiveness grounded in cultural norms and in practicality of the teachers.

Effective teaching entails using methods that are fit for learning purposes. Since different subjects, different operations within a subject and different contexts all affect the learning purposes, it is argued that effective teaching involves the strategic use of multiple teaching methods. This reflects general ambiguity about the nature of teaching itself. It implies that empirical investigation is necessary to describe embedded teacher beliefs that are characteristics of effective teaching and teacher effectiveness and, hence, to illuminate the progress of curriculum implementation. The gap between the KBSM's provisions and the teachers' concepts of effectiveness could best be evaluated by the beliefs of effective teachers, the ones who are

considered by the education authorities as effective by the KBSM's standards.

OBJECTIVES

The main objective of this study was to examine and describe the beliefs of effective Bahasa Melayu teachers about teacher effectiveness. It examined, firstly, how the meanings of effective teachers of Bahasa Melayu are attributed to the term "an effective teacher" and their perceptions of such teachers' characteristics. Secondly, it detailed their accounts of the things that they do, the things that they would not do and the things that normally happen in their classrooms. Thirdly, it explored their opinions on whether an effective teacher can or cannot influence pupils' academic achievement and development, and the extent of such an influence. Finally, the study probed whether their notions of teacher effectiveness are distinguished from their notions of good and average teachers of the KBSM. The study also considered the implications of the findings on educational reform and teacher education.

DESIGN

The study focused on the beliefs of the effective Bahasa Melayu teachers about teacher effectiveness. As the national language, Bahasa Melayu has been promoted as the main medium of instruction in the Malaysian schooling system. All pupils of the KBSM have to take the subject as a core subject in the Lower Secondary School Evaluation, and a pass in it is compulsory.

The approach for eliciting the teachers' beliefs followed the idea that beliefs can provide a measure of whether the teachers understand and work on the new meaning of educational change and teacher effectiveness as prescribed in KBSM (Fullan 1991; Vulliamy and Webb 1991; Ross 1995; Ennis *et al.* 1997). This approach was based as far as possible on the ways the teachers themselves thought and talked about their beliefs about teacher effectiveness. Hence, the notions are derived from the bottom upwards, although the research instruments that guide their reflections were developed from the review of the literature and preliminary interviews.

A reasonable period of time is needed for the practitioners to practise the KBSM in order to eliminate the effect of "implementation dip" (Joyce and Showers 1988) in which, in the words of Fullan (1992), "things get worse before they get better as people grapple with the meaning and skills of change". Attention was focused on Form One teachers. Not only had the teachers more than four years of KBSM teaching experience but also concentrating on one group of pupils controls effects that might be derived from pupil motivation. Furthermore, as their pupils had been exposed to pupil-centred teaching in their six years of primary schooling, the Form One secondary school teachers can work to KBSM prescriptions without first needing to induct their pupils into new ways of learning.

INSTRUMENT AND DATA COLLECTION

The study used a semi-structured questionnaire which was later followed by and clarified through interviews. Researchers such as Cohen and Manion (1994) have stressed the advantages of using both methods for soliciting beliefs, using each approach to compensate for the inherent weaknesses of the other. The development of items in the semi-structured questionnaire and interview schedule were planned to stimulate the teachers' responses to the eight main questions associated with teacher effectiveness.

The schedule was then evaluated, especially in terms of its face and content validity as well as its usability, by a group of three lecturers in the teaching of Bahasa Melayu as the First Language. The improved schedule was piloted with three teachers of Bahasa Melayu who had been identified by their school authorities as effective in their teaching of the subject. The three teachers were not included in the main study. The questions were asked in Bahasa Melayu.

The inter-observer reliability of the schedule was established by employing another trained professional education observer. The teachers' responses gathered from the questionnaire and interview were independently classified according to the categories derived from iterate content analysis. Forty-six categories were derived and were classified under four main divisions, namely, teachers' personal qualities, knowledge base for effective teaching, behaviour and actions, and teaching outcomes. Using these categories, the other observer was asked to categorize the responses gathered from the piloted three teachers. Except for "justice" which has percentage agreement values of 0.72, the inter-observer consistency for all 46 categories was satisfactory with a value above 0.8 (Croll 1980). The Spearman Rho correlation coefficient for

overall categories of effective teachers' characteristics was satisfactory with a value of 0.94. The coefficients for all the four main categories were significant at least at 0.01 level of significance.

A tape recorder with built-in time index recording was used to tape the interview. This tape recording constituted an archive, which serves both as an *aide memoire* to the researcher and as a source against which the adequacy of the research methods may be judged. The archive is available for inspection.

SUBJECTS

The study employed the evaluative judgement of the education authorities to identify a sample of effective Bahasa Melayu teachers (Berliner 1986; Mohd. Majid 1997). All the 12 secondary schools authorities in one education district were asked to nominate, if any, the most effective Bahasa Melayu teachers of Form One pupils. It was stipulated that the teachers must have had professional education training in the subject. The authorities were also asked not to reveal to the nominated teachers that they had been selected because they were "effective" teachers. Some of the schools could not nominate any teacher because there was no teacher who met the criteria. Other schools had difficulty in selecting only one teacher and nominated two instead.

Asked about the criteria used for the selection, there was an agreement among the principals that the teachers had over several years "produced pupils with good examination results" in their subject. As revealed later at the end of the field-work, all the teachers (five male and seven female) failed to realize that they were selected for the study because they were effective according to their respective school authority's own criteria. When asked a question at the end of the field-work on why they participated in the study, most of them, except three replied that their principal requested them to "represent the school". The three other teachers did not bother to find out, even at the end of the field-work, why they were involved in the study.

DATA ANALYSIS

The analysis was based on the parallel case study approach (Glaser and Strauss 1967). The effective teacher information was organized into a case study. The data were then summarized by searching for patterns and regularities in each of the four major categories. The first category related to personal qualities, including the noble values embodied in KBSM. The second category comprised the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes needed for effective teaching. Shulman's (1987) seven categories of knowledge base for effective teaching were used as a guide to categorize the data. The third category was teachers' reported behaviour and actions, drawing on Shulman's (1987) six aspects of pedagogical reasoning and action. The fourth category comprised the teaching outcomes the effective teachers believed they promoted, including pupils' academic achievement as well as their spiritual, moral, social, emotional, attitudinal and skills development (Ministry of Education 1990a).

A constant comparison method (Glaser and Strauss 1967) was used to sort responses in each category. The researcher coded and compared the codes, recording agreements and disagreements. Then, a cross-case analysis was employed by investigating patterns and themes common to teachers over all cases. The procedures to analyse documents and the interview were designed to ensure systematic and reliable coding of effective teachers' responses by theme as well as to capture holistic impressions over time for each teacher. The data were summarized and presented as descriptive statistics.

RESULTS

Beliefs about Effective Teachers' Personality

It is expected that effective KBSM Bahasa Melayu teachers use teaching and learning strategies which instil a spirit of nationalism and also inculcate 16 noble values of the society (Ministry of Education 1989). Before the teachers could promote these values in their teaching, they themselves are expected, as all of the respondents in the study said, to possess the personal characteristics which are seen as *sine qua non* for an effective KBSM Bahasa Melayu teacher (Ministry of Education 1990a).

Seventeen effective teachers' personal qualities were identified from the documents and interview (Table 1). Twelve are the noble values in the KBSM, namely "kindness", "self-reliance", "self-respect", "mutual respect", "caring", "justice", "courage", "physical and

TABLE 1
Frequency with which 12 respondents cited categories of teachers' personality when describing effective Bahasa Melayu teachers

Category	Percentage of all respondents
1. Courage*	75.0
2. Model for pupils	66.7
3. Physical and mental purity*	58.3
4. Kindness*	50.0
5. Diligence*	41.7
6. Honesty*	33.3
7. Respected by others	33.3
8. Self-reliance*	25.0
9. Rationality*	25.0
10. Moderation*	25.0
11. Caring*	25.0
12. Creativity	25.0
13. Innovativeness	16.7
14. Self-respect*	8.3
15. Mutual respect*	8.3
16. Justice*	8.3
17. Progressive	8.3

Note: * denotes the "noble values" which are explicitly prescribed by the KBSM.

mental purity", "honesty", "diligence", "moderation", and "rationality". The other five noble values are "model for pupils", "respected by others", "creativity", "innovativeness", and "progressive". Among the noble values, "courage" (75.0% of all respondents), "model for pupils" (66.7% of all respondents), "physical and mental purity" (58.3% of all respondents), "kindness" (50.0% of all respondents) and "diligence" (41.7% of all respondents) were the most frequently mentioned. Least mentioned are "self-respect", "mutual respect" and "justice" which were cited by 8.2% of the respondents. It is surprising, however, that the analysis failed to detect four of the noble values commended by the KBSM, namely "co-operation", "public spiritedness", "gratitude" and "independence".

Beliefs about Effective Teachers' Knowledge Bases for Teaching

The effective Bahasa Melayu teachers possess a number of knowledge bases for teaching (Table 2). They cited as important knowledge of "content" (83.3% of all respondents), of "general pedagogy" (66.7% of all respondents), of "pedagogical content" (75.0% of all respondents), of "learners and their characteristics" (75.0% of all respondents) and of "educational goals" (75.0% of all respondents). Least mentioned, however, were "knowledge of curriculum" (50.0% of all respondents) and "knowledge of educational contexts" (25.0% of all respondents).

Knowledge of Content

The primary source of pupils' understanding of the Bahasa Melayu curriculum is the teachers. Not only should teachers have in-depth understanding of the subject matter as stated by 50.0% of the respondents, but, said 83.3% of the respondents, they also should have good general knowledge. Said Teacher 7:

> General knowledge, including the knowledge about the origin of the planet and its substances, will complement the teaching of Bahasa Melayu in order for the teachers to guide their pupils towards truth.

Knowledge of General Pedagogy

Effective teachers, they said, comprehend broad principles and strategies of classroom management (50.0% of all respondents) and organization (41.7% of all respondents). In terms of classroom organization, not only should effective teachers be knowledgeable about pupil-centred strategies, as demanded by the KBSM (41.7% of all respondents), but they should understand teacher-centred strategies as well (33.3% of all respondents).

Knowledge of Curriculum

Effective Bahasa Melayu teachers should understand the Bahasa Melayu programmes and materials, and those for other subjects too (Ministry of Education 1990a). Effective teachers, said 50.0% of the respondents, should know the "vertical curriculum", that is the content in the Bahasa Melayu curriculum that precedes and follows Form One work. Only 25.0% of the respondents said that they should know the "lateral curriculum", that is the content of other subjects studied by pupils in Form One, although this is explicitly commended in KBSM.

TABLE 2
Frequency with which 12 respondents cited categories of teachers' knowledge bases for teaching when describing effective Bahasa Melayu teachers

Category		Percentage of all respondents
1. Knowledge of Content:		83.3
a. Knowledge of general, liberal education	83.3	
b. Knowledge of subject matter	50.0	
c. Attitude towards subject matter	50.0	
d. Attitude towards general knowledge	33.3	
2. Knowledge of Pedagogical Content:		75.0
a. Adaptation to pupils' characteristics	58.3	
b. Representation	50.0	
c. Preparation	25.0	
d. Instructional selection	16.7	
3. Knowledge of Learners and Their Characteristics:		75.0
a. Pupils' development	50.0	
b. Pupils' motivation and interest	41.7	
c. Pupils' ability	25.0	
d. Pupils' aptitude	25.0	
e. Pupils' prior knowledge	8.3	
f. Pupils' prior skills	8.3	
4. Knowledge of Educational Goals:		75.0
a. Of developing pupil's behaviour*	75.0	
b. Of achieving truth*	58.3	
c. Of improving pupil's knowledge*	58.3	
5. Knowledge of General Pedagogy:		66.7
a. Classroom management	50.0	
b. Classroom organization:	41.7	
1. Pupil-centred strategies*	41.7	
2. Teacher-centred strategies	33.3	
6. Knowledge of Curriculum:		50.0
a. Vertical curriculum knowledge	50.0	
b. Lateral, integrated curriculum knowledge	25.0	
7. Knowledge of Educational Contexts:		25.0
a. Knowledge of workings of the culture	16.7	
b. Knowledge of workings of the parents	16.7	

Note: * denotes teacher's disposition of knowledge base or teaching as explicitly recommended by KBSM.

Knowledge of Pedagogical Content

Effective teachers have, they said, an understanding of pedagogical content, that is, knowledge of ways of representing and formulating the subject to make it comprehensible to the pupils. In particular, the teachers should have in-depth comprehension not only of representation of the Bahasa Melayu subject matter's ideas (mentioned by 50.0% of all respondents), but they also know how to adapt the material to the pupils (58.3% of all respondents). However, it is surprising that effective teachers give less emphasis to knowledge of preparation and instructional selection. They were mentioned only by 25.0% and 16.7% of the respondents respectively.

Knowledge of Learners and Their Characteristics

Given the importance of adapting the subject to the pupils, it follows that effective teachers should have immense knowledge about the pupils and their characteristics. Seventy-five per cent of all respondents said that effective teachers do have this knowledge. Yet, effective teachers placed little emphasis on understanding pupils' prior knowledge and skills (mentioned by 8.3% of all respondents), although they stressed the

importance of considering pupils' motivation and interest (41.7% of all respondents) and pupils' development (50.0% of all respondents).

Knowledge of Educational Contexts

Although knowledge of educational contexts is commended in KBSM in-service training modules (Ministry of Education 1990a, 1990b), only very few respondents perceived it as such (see Table 2). In fact, there was no mention of knowledge of the workings of pupil groups, nor of the classroom, which are important according to the KBSM materials.

Knowledge of Educational Goals

One finding is that the effective Bahasa Melayu teachers possess immense knowledge of educational goals, that is, of the purposes and values of education. All three sub-categories of knowledge of educational goals, that is, of achieving truth, of improving pupils' comprehension, and of developing pupils' behaviour were mentioned frequently (58.3, 58.3 and 75.0% of all respondents respectively). The effective teacher, said Teacher 10, is one:

> ... who has assimilated the integrated educational concepts which place knowledge and practice in a harmonized and sturdy association incorporating her/his cognitive, spiritual and physical aspects.

To summarize: the results of the effective Bahasa Melayu teachers' beliefs indicated that effective teachers emphasize knowledge of content, pedagogical content, learners and their characteristics, educational goals and general pedagogy. However, they place little emphasis on knowledge of curriculum and educational contexts. In fact, they did not make much of some areas of classroom management, preparation, instructional selection, pupils' prior knowledge and skills, and knowledge of educational contexts. If effective teachers give such a low priority to such knowledge, it can be postulated that the complete KBSM programme has not been internalized by the respondents in the study.

Beliefs about Effective Teachers' Behaviour and Actions

The introduction of KBSM had implications for teachers' behaviour and actions. In order to clarify their perceptions, six major categories of pedagogical reasoning and action, suggested by Shulman (1987), were employed. Table 3 summarizes the findings.

It can be noted that effective teachers gave priority to "understanding educational goals" (75.0% of all respondents), transforming their understanding into understanding of the pupils (91.7% of all respondents), "managing, organizing, and presenting" their lessons (all respondents), and "evaluating" their teaching acts (91.7% of all respondents). They, however, put less emphasis on "reflecting" on their teaching (58.3% of all respondents) and "understanding the limitations of teacher effectiveness in the KBSM context" (16.7% of all respondents).

Comprehension and Reasoning

Effective teachers, they said, must first understand the educational goals and the ideas to be taught (58.3 and 41.7% of all respondents respectively). The goals, they said, are to produce pupils who are not only knowledgeable but also possess virtuous values.

Delivery

Effective teachers, they said, must transform the ideas and goals into forms which are not only pedagogically powerful, but also adapted to pupils' understanding. This delivery requires the teachers to prepare by critically examining the choice of teaching materials for their lessons (41.7% of all respondents), and to represent the key ideas to be taught either in the form of analogies, examples, metaphors, and the like, or in combination (50.0% of all respondents). An example of how effective teachers prepare and represent their goals and the ideas to be taught was given by Teacher 1 who explained that:

> Before teaching, I would think first what ideas I want to teach and the objective to be achieved. I then try to relate the topic to the environment the pupils are living in. Besides that, I would instruct the pupils to use objects around them. For example, for teaching a writing topic such as an essay "I am a car", I would bring the pupils to see for themselves the components of a car.

Furthermore, as evident from Teacher 1's description, the delivery of the ideas requires

TABLE 3
Frequency with which 12 respondents cited categories of teachers' behaviour and actions when describing effective Bahasa Melayu teachers

Category	Percentage of all respondents
1. Instruction:	100.0
a. Presentation	100.0
b. Organization:	83.3
1. Teaching style:	83.3
Whole class	83.3
Group	25.0
2. Teaching strategies:	75.0
Conventional methods	75.0
Pupil-centred*	50.0
c. Management	75.0
d. Interaction:	58.3
1. Teacher-centred discussion	58.3
2. Pupil questioning	25.0
e. Other features of instruction	50.0
2. Delivery:	91.7
a. Adaptation	91.7
b. Instructional selection	66.7
c. Representation	50.0
d. Preparation	41.7
3. Evaluation:	91.7
a. Interactive assessment	75.0
b. Summative assessment: end of lesson or topic, evaluation on pupils	50.0
4. Comprehension and Reasoning:	75.0
a. Of teaching purposes	58.3
b. Of ideas to be taught	41.7
5. Reflection: Comparing performance and achievement with teaching objectives	58.3
6. Understanding Limitations of Teacher Effectiveness: Of teaching purposes, subject matter, pupils, teaching and self, and consolidation of new understandings from experience	16.7

Note: * denotes teacher's behaviour and actions as explicitly commended in the KBSM.

effective teachers to select from the available instructional approaches. The importance of instructional selection for effective teachers was mentioned by 66.7% of the respondents. The process of delivering the ideas also demands that teachers adapt them to their pupils by tailoring the input of teaching not only to the group's ability and requirement (25.0% of all respondents), but most evidently, as mentioned by 91.7% of the respondents, to the needs and capabilities of the individual pupils.

Instruction

At least five aspects of effective teachers' behaviour and actions during the teaching act can be identified from the effective teachers' perceptions; those related to management (75.0% of all respondents), organization (83.3% of all respondents), presentation (all respondents), interaction (58.3% of all respondents), and other features of instruction (50.0% of all respondents).

In terms of classroom organization, most of these effective teachers used conventional

teaching strategies (75.0% of all respondents). In contrast, only a few effective teachers employed the commended pupil-centred teaching and learning strategies such as role play (8.3% of all respondents), inquiry approach (25.0% of all respondents), discussion (33.3% of all respondents) and brainstorming (8.3% of all respondents).

It is also evident, as revealed in Table 3, that the majority of the effective teachers (83.3% of all respondents) employed whole class teaching, contrary to the recommendation of the KBSM. Only a few teachers said they used the recommended group teaching strategies (25.0% of all respondents).

In presenting their lessons, effective teachers, said 83.3% of the respondents, are concerned with maintaining pupils' attention and interest. For example:

> I like to discuss current issues, especially those related to adolescence such as smoking and drug abuse to attract their attention to the lesson. [Teacher 11].

However, it is surprising to note that only 50.0% of the respondents said that they inculcated the noble values, even though inculcating the values is the prime concern of not only the curriculum but also the teachers themselves. In addition, contrary to the recommendations of the KBSM, teacher-centred discussion still dominated the pattern of classroom interaction and was employed by the majority of the teachers (58.3% of all respondents). Only 25.0% of the respondents said that classroom interaction centred on pupils' questioning.

Evaluation

Effective teachers put emphasis not only on the interactive phase of teaching assessment (75.0% of all respondents), but also on evaluation at the end of each lesson (50.0% of all respondents). In terms of interactive assessment, the majority of the teachers checked the pupils' understanding (75.0% of all respondents) through activities such as homework and additional verbal and writing exercises.

Reflection

Reflection on teaching and learning is a process through which a professional teacher learns from her/his experience. Fifty-eight per cent of the respondents reported reflecting on their own teaching by comparing their performance and achievements with their teaching goals.

Limitations to Teacher Effectiveness

Only 16.7% of the respondents said that they themselves develop new comprehension and skills from their teaching. This does not necessarily mean that effective teachers do not develop their knowledge and skills at all. On analysing the respondents' perceptions, it may be suggested that they have difficulties in explaining exactly how their knowledge and skills develop.

Almost all of the effective Bahasa Melayu teachers (91.7% of all respondents) reported some problems in implementing the KBSM's teaching strategies. First, the teachers themselves report difficulty in mastering and using the standard Bahasa Melayu language (66.7% of all respondents), although Bahasa Melayu is the official language of communication and knowledge of the country (Ministry of Education 1990a). In spite of the fact that the teachers are subject specialists, they are not able to properly use the standard Bahasa Melayu's pronunciation in their classroom teaching because, said 50.0% of the respondents, of a mixing between the standard language with the Johor-Riau dialect of Bahasa Melayu. The dialect is more established and commonly spoken in the area of the study. The problem was further exaggerated, 33.3% of the respondents said, by the various languages spoken by not only different ethnic groups but also within groups.

Second, although the teachers are encouraged, whenever appropriate, to use teaching materials and aids, they cannot utilize them fully (41.7% of all respondents). They say that they lack the necessary knowledge and skills for producing interesting and attractive materials appropriate to the topics (25.0% of all respondents). The problem was further complicated since relevant published materials are, as Teacher 4 declared, "almost un-available".

Third, the effective teachers seldom used educational technologies such as overhead projectors, educational television, video presentations and slides (83.3% of all respondents). While 25.0% of the respondents said that they lack the knowledge and skills in using the technologies, 50.0% of the respondents

said that there was not enough money available to buy or maintain the equipment. However, their main reason for not using the technologies, mentioned by 66.7% of the respondents, can be inferred in words of Teacher 10:

> The class timetable is not suitable for the TV [television] programme. Although the programme can be recorded, no particular officer is assigned and is in charge of recording. There is no socket in the classroom. The use of batteries is too expensive. To exchange classes with other classrooms which have a socket would create the problem of missing pupils' belongings in those classes and also waste much time during the exchange process.

Fourth, some effective teachers (58.3% of all respondents) have difficulty in organizing and maintaining the group work which is encouraged by the KBSM. The two main reasons mentioned by the respondents are the limited time available (41.7% of all respondents) and the size of the classes (33.3% of all respondents).

Fifth, the KBSM has commended an integrated, cross-curricular subjects teaching approach. Unfortunately, this recommendation cannot be fully implemented, claimed 66.7% of the respondents. Not only do some effective Bahasa Melayu teachers lack the knowledge of other subject disciplines such as science, mathematics and living skills (the curriculum structure of the Lower Secondary School itself, which comprises 11 core and two additional different subjects), they find them difficult, if not impossible, 50.0% of the respondents said. In addition, the emphasis on good examination results and the repercussions of failing to deliver them exert a tremendous pressure on the teachers, 41.7% of the respondents said, to finish the content of the Bahasa Melayu syllabus before the end of the school year.

Sixth, 41.7% of the respondents said that while they implemented the KBSM's recommendations, they also put additional emphasis on examinations. As Teacher 3 recalled, "[n]ormally after finishing a lesson on a topic, I would ask pupils to identify the topic in the examination paper".

It can be postulated that there is a tendency even among the effective KBSM teachers of Bahasa Melayu towards the examination-oriented type of teaching which was inherited from the preceding curriculum. Explained Teacher 8, "... now every school emphasizes academic achievement which means that the syllabus must be completed before the end of the school year".

Beliefs about Effective Teachers' Teaching Outcomes

All the effective Bahasa Melayu teachers believed that effective teachers influence pupils' academic achievement and development (Table 4). In terms of pupils' development, about 50.0% of the respondents perceived that effective teachers influence pupils' attitude and enthusiasm as well as their moral development. However, very few respondents believed that they influence pupils' spiritual, social, emotional and skills development, despite the priority they said that they give to these areas (see Table 1). However, the effective teachers' perception also indicated that they did not refer to the cognitive aspect of pupils' learning.

TABLE 4
Frequency with which 12 respondents cited categories of teachers' teaching outcomes when describing effective Bahasa Melayu teachers

Category	Percentage of all respondents
1. Academic, cognitive achievement	100.0
2. Pupil's development:	100.0
a. Moral	50.0
b. Attitude and enthusiasm	50.0
c. Spiritual	33.3
d. Social	16.7
e. Emotional	16.7
f. Skills	16.7

"Effective" Teachers versus "Good" and "Average" Teachers

All but 16.7% of the respondents of the study saw the difference between "effective" and "good" and "average" teachers of the KBSM. Effective teachers are good in many ways compared to both the good and the average teachers who excel in fewer of the qualities. Unlike good teachers, effective teachers are sometimes ferocious and firm, and will be appropriately infuriated. There is little difference between effective teachers and good and average teachers in terms of teachers' knowledge bases but

effective teachers' command of the knowledge base can be reflected in terms of their general knowledge.

Many of the differences between effective and good and average teachers are located in the teachers' behaviour and actions. Though both groups of good and effective teachers want their pupils to achieve the highest success possible, 83.3% of the respondents of this study said that they have different pedagogical reasoning and actions. For example, said Teacher 7, " ... other [good] teachers only deliver the knowledge. At the end of the school year, they [good teachers] just completed the syllabus". There are also differences between effective and good and average teachers in terms of teaching outcomes.

CONCLUSION

The effective Bahasa Melayu teachers believed that an effective teacher possesses most of the necessary qualities and knowledge bases for effective teaching. Though propositional knowledge is important for effective teaching (Shulman 1987), the teachers' possession of it is variable, as revealed in this study. There is evidence which suggests that little is known about how effective teachers develop new knowledge and skills from their teaching. Furthermore, it is also evident that they have no clear understanding of the relationship between teacher effectiveness and teaching outcomes, especially those outcomes associated with effective domains. They do believe that effective teachers are more goal-oriented, firmer and more committed to learning itself than are other teachers.

While not all factors that might influence teachers' beliefs about the notion of teacher effectiveness are studied, some of their beliefs, as revealed in this study, are not parallel with those recommended and expected by the KBSM such as in the areas of noble values, pedagogical content knowledge, knowledge of educational contexts, classroom organization, lesson presentation and classroom interaction. These findings tend to support those of Anderson and Burns (1989), who concluded that teachers vary on a wide variety of personal and professional characteristics, and that teachers' characteristics do not impact directly on pupil achievement.

The mismatch between the effective teachers' beliefs and the KBSM's demands of teacher effectiveness calls for improvement in teacher education, which should consider modifying teachers, especially their prior beliefs and images of teaching (Kagan 1992). Beliefs change gradually. Teachers need time to accommodate new information, accept and reject ideas, modify existing belief systems, and adopt new beliefs (Pajares 1993). Furthermore, the belief system of the school may influence the teacher by itself. Conventional acquisition of teacher knowledge whereby teachers are introduced to new ideas and information in the hope of altering their beliefs is unlikely to change beliefs. An experientially based programme that infuses knowledge and experiences about working with economically and culturally diverse pupils is critical in preparing teachers (Cabello and Burnstein 1995). Teachers' educational theory and practice must be systematically linked to the classroom experience with coursework to foster the acquisition of knowledge and skills. In addition, local research on teaching and learning strategies should be increased. Further curriculum reform should consider early involvement of teachers at the earlier stage of its planning. The reform ought to be based on a more limited set of educational goals supported upon teacher-defined view of good practice.

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