

A Study on Malaysian Teacher Educators Consider Teaching at the University

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Abstract— The Malaysian educational system is experiencing, according to its Vision 2020, a major pedagogical change from a conventional teacher-centered approach to teaching and learning. The Malaysian government wants these educational reforms to happen in Malaysian high schools and its higher education system in teaching and learning growth. However, Malaysian study reveals that the approach to schooling and learning used in Malaysian schools and in tertiary institutions is constantly unclear. The adoption of Western ideas including student-centered models of learning seems to have led to friction among Malaysian teachers and students. Besides that, previous Malaysian research found that multiple cultures have diverse standards and beliefs, which have a strong effect on education. Therefore it is important, rather than believing that Western theories in each sense are productive and desirable, to recognise and establish suitable pedagogies for particular education traditions. The goal of this analysis is therefore to examine the comprehension of teaching of Malaysian teacher educators. This paper was carried out in a teacher education programme for a Malaysian university. The key results of the research were that the participants in Malaysian teacher educators and student students had mixed conventional learning methods, based on teachers and students, due to the advantages that both approaches could bring to them.

Keywords— Malaysian Education, Conventional learning, Pedagogies

I. INTRODUCTION

In the last limited decades, numerous universities, faculty, schools and higher education institutions throughout many parts of the world have witnessed a drastic change from a traditionalized approach to teaching and learning focused on the student (Lea, Stephenson, & Troy, 2003; Lee, 2002; Jansen & Christie, 1999; Barr & Tagg, 1995). The instructor method relies on the teacher as the specialist in the conversion of knowledge to the student as the beginner (Harden & Crosby, 2000; Garfield, 1995; Pratt, 1998; Moore, 1997). The student-centered approach instead emphasises on students (Coombs & Wong, 2000; Hesson & Shad, 2007; Estes, 2004; Cannon & Newble, 2000) and usually seeks to allow students the autonomy to consciously search for and create sense from knowledge and previous experiences (Harden & Crosby, 2000; Gibbs, 1992; Weimer, 2002). This transition in the teaching and learning approach to a student-centered approach is important and rather than focusing on curriculum (teacher-centered approach), the student-centered approach explores the building of learning in a self-discovery by the student and emphasises on learning outcomes for the student.

This global trend can also be seen in the education reforms in high schools and the higher education system in Malaysia. In accordance with its Vision 2020, Malaysia expects to change its education system. Vision 2020 is a strategic development plan with concrete long-term

planning priorities and objectives (Rahman, 1993; Kassim, 1993). The Malaysian Government in 1991 proposed a Vision 2020, a year in which Malaysia will achieve its economic status, national unity, social harmony, social justice, political stability, the framework of the government, standard of living, social and spiritual values, national pride and confidence (Mohamad, 1991). The government has prepared proposals to resolve the next nine priorities in order to reach Vision 2020:

1. Build a single Malaysian country with a common and common sense of destiny.
2. To establish a mentally stable, safe and developed community in Malaysia.
3. Promoting a democratic society.
4. To create a fully moral and ethical society.
5. A mature, liberal and tolerant culture is created.
6. Build a scientific and democratic culture.
7. Build a loving community and a caring culture.
8. To maintain a society that is socially just.
9. Build a stable society. (Mohamad, 1991)

The creation of technology-based intelligent schools and student-centered education was the secret to this education reform. 2020 vision has been achieved (Ministry of Education, 1997b). The Malaysian Smart School is defined in terms of learning methods and school management, as an institution which has been systematically revamped to prepare children for the age of knowledge (Smart School Project Team, 1997a). The key aim of these Smart School

programmes is to help the country achieve its priorities and to encourage the development of a workforce equipped for the challenges of the 21st century. In addition to the purpose of the IT, science and technology motivated students (Minister of Education, 1997a), the project aimed to help change education, to transform an exam culture into a thought-culture and an innovative information culture.

This modern culture, which must be integrated into the school system can be defined as one of the active and not a passive learning methods of the pupil. The role of the student shifts from the role of a passive consumer of experience to a student who "learns how with courage to take decisions and responsibilities (Smart School Project Team, 1997b). Teachers must be educated in curriculum that stresses thought. You will know how to prepare instructional methods including problem solving, strategic thinking, research and decision-making (Ahmad, 1997). Teachers are often required to embrace, rather than their conventional role as a sage on stage," the role of "guide on the side" in the new setting (Smart School Project Team, 1997b). In other words, an instructor no longer is the only source of information in the classroom, but also a facilitator and mentor. In addition, one of the teaching and learning outcomes of Smart Schools is for students to be inspired by elements of the student-centered approach in their teaching practises to be good students (Smart School Project Team, 1997a). The government in Malaysia has increased its attempts to develop the education system through the integration of soft skills into curricula from traditional teacher centres to student-centered (passive to active learning (Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia, 2006).

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Any student views advances in models of curriculum and learning as paradigm changes (Barr & Tagg, 1995; Fink, 2003). This go from the "learning paradigm" to the "learning paradigm" (Barr & Tagg, 1995). The American higher education model is claimed to be a learning paradigm by Barr and Tagg (1995). The learning paradigm examines how the students learn through their own discovery and stresses learning outcomes for students instead of stressing instruction. This provides an experiential and active atmosphere that encourages teachers to understand.

Barr and Tagg (1995) argued that the instructional model and the learning paradigm should come from separate directions. The teaching model produces nuclear learning and knowledge is developed and disseminated by experts. Students are referred to as passive boats that absorb test recall information. The learning theory on the other hand, holistically structures learning and promotes student engagement to foster learner empowerment and experience-

centered and regulated behaviours. Students must also be involved discoverers and creators of their own knowledge.

The new paradigms of learning challenge and facilitate cooperative learning. The model of learning makes the classroom competitive as well as individualistic (Fink, 2003). The learning paradigm allows students to co-operatively build up, discover and finally convert information to their own particular intent, to construct knowledge architecture (Campbell & Smith, 1997).

Cheng and Mok (2008) have recently added that the theory of learning has core influences such as optimistic learning habits, various learning approaches, successful learning practises, multiple learning thinking and school life satisfaction. The definition is non-traditional and active curriculum methods that encourage students to believe in the process of learning. It is an open, flexible world which offers unlimited opportunities for students, locally and internationally networked (Mok & Cheng, 2001).

Teachers are central players in search of agendas for educational reform, such as those in Malaysia, which play a crucial role in transforming schools and classrooms. Changes in education can be defined as changes to experience, conviction, place, perception, self-awareness and teaching (Darling-Hammond, 1990). A literature review on educational change shows that educational theorists link educational changes to changes in the opinions, skills, attitudes and expectations of teachers (e.g., Doyler & Ponder, 1977). In addition, it has been well recognised in the field of teacher education that practical improvements by school teachers represent their values and education ideologies and that principles play an important role in conceptualising education tasks and practises (Dobson & Dobson, 1983;).

Malaysian student teachers' present awareness and convictions should be discussed in this study in Malaysia on educational improvements for student pedagogy. The research of the teaching interactions of Malaysian teachers and the students of Malaysian education is intended to lead to an interpretation of how Malaysian teachers and educational students can or cannot change their educational confidence. Their values, as teacher teachers and potential teachers, are vital to Ministry efforts to integrate learning practises targeted at students. Although instructional improvements can take place at a number of degree levels, such as the level of individual teachers (Richardson, 1990), student teachers and teachers are considered crucial players in transition and play an integral role in transforming schools (Beck, Czerniak, & Lumpe, 2000). Therefore it is important to consider the teachers' belief system to strengthen their teaching practise as well as to enhance competent teacher readiness (Nespor, 1987). As suggested

by Pratt (1998), "Credences and values are not insignificant, they are fundamental, but they constitute an immersed 'iceberg bulk' on which any particular teaching technique rests" (p. 16). Dobson and Dobson (1983) maintained that we establish and invent our own system of belief and that the system of belief serves as the norm to govern our everyday lives.

Eisenhart, Cuthbert, Shrum and Harding (1988) carried out a survey to study the impact on the work of teachers of policy reforms. Their results indicate that curriculum policies adopted without taking the beliefs of teachers into account are rarely implemented in the manner policy makers expect.

In a more recent debate on learning, Pillay (2002) proposed that the individual viewpoints and beliefs of students could impact how they view the notion of student-centeredness. The result was that both the formal and informal interpretation of the nature of education and the process of learning deeply influenced students' perceptions of valuable learning. Students originating from backgrounds where epistemological principles do not adhere to the student methodology cannot therefore succeed in an educational atmosphere. As Schommer (1990) points out, personal epistemological beliefs include a strong confidence in truth certainty, the structure of knowledge and the ability of persons to manage their learning. This indicates that students are more likely to accept learning as an instructional method when they see learning as an information accumulation relative to those who see learning to be knowledge generation and more likely want a student-centered learning approach.

This paper therefore seeks to investigate the perceptions of students and teachers in Malaysia as argued that it is important first to consider how students and teachers of various cultural backgrounds view learning, before assuming that student-centered learning is appropriate for all students. This segment analyses cultural factors of schooling and learning.

III. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

While the government policies require Malaysian teachers to follow student-centered learning methods in schools and in higher education establishments, studies have shown varying degrees of approval of the approaches. Some surveys have shown that teachers support the approach to student-centered learning but others have shown that teachers favour the conventional approach. This indicates that the literature still has a discussion on the subject. This situation has stimulated this study of the teaching and learning experience of teaching teachers in a teacher education programme in Malaysia.

1. How do Malaysian teacher educators consider teaching in a university programme at the university?

IV. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

There are many parameters listed as important for this analysis. First, it is expected this study to contribute in Malaysian tertiary teaching research to the advancement of educational teaching and learning theories. There is a need to objectively analyse these viewpoints in the Muslim sense to discuss the disparities in teaching and learning between western and Muslim perspectives.

V. QUALITATIVE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Although the outcomes of this research are informed by a constructivist paradigm, the teaching and learning experiences are analysed by a relational approach in the course of teacher training. The construction model is focused on qualitative empirical approaches (Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

The thesis uses qualitative study which uses a naturalistic approach to describe in situations such as the real world phenomena [which do not try to exploit the importance phenomenon" (Patton, 2002). Qualitative analysis has an existing environment; thus it gives a real-life perspective (Creswell, 2005). It is a research system that aims to generate whole hypotheses, mostly narration, in order to inform the researcher on a social or cultural phenomenon (Wiersma, 1995). I had the ability to research the process of teaching and learning efficient and properly in a teacher training programme with the essence of qualitative analysis and holistic clarification.

Qualitative analysis requires a detailed understanding of when and how individuals chose their acts (Stake, 1995). It seeks to achieve a more complete understanding of the thoughts, emotions, motivations and values behind the actions of individuals. "Qualitative research essentially focuses on the quest for meanings, i.e. the perceptions and meanings people offer in their environment to activities, things, people and circumstances" (Stainback & Stainback, 1988, p. 7). Since it stresses the perspectives of individuals, this approach is perfect for seeking the significations that people put on their life events, processes and systems (Creswell, 2007). Over everything, a holistic technique has given me the means to obtain a vast variety of different forms of data in order to achieve an inductive analysis strategy. An inductive approach uses 'detailed raw data readings' to derive from the assessor or investigator's findings of raw data hypotheses, subjects or models (Thomas, 2006).

VI. SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

This paper employed semi-structured interviews as the main mode of data gathering, owing to its versatility in amending the questions to clarify the studied phenomena. Robson (2002) suggested that the interviewer's interpretation of what seems most fitting might affect the order of questions.

The most recent review contains a total of 36 interviews (Table 1). Semi-structured interviews with educators and educational students was conducted, focus group interviews with educational students, and enabled teacher educators to find out about their actual teaching. In order to find the synths of the knowledge examined, the data were triangulated by using multiple sources of proof.

Table 1: Interviews Participants

Type of Interview	Participant	Number
Individual	Teacher educator	10
Individual Stimulated Recall	Teacher educator	7
Individual	Education students	16
Focus Group	Education students	3
Total		36

Stage 1: Reflection of Manual Review

The first phase of the data collection was a manual assessment and reflection of data from 19 interviews; 3 focus group interviews; 7 evaluations at classrooms; and seven stimulated reminder interviews. The original review was based on the interview results (individual and focus group) carried out after the transcripts were finished. This was accompanied by assessment data from classrooms (classroom observation sheets) and stimulated data from the interview.

The key goal was to define issues that the participants posed. At first I listened attentively to the interviews reported and read the transcripts many times. I have studied the observation sheets for the school. The details, paragraph by paragraph, I read, edited, and tested for accuracy. The search was carried out manually at this early stage.

This first stage described different categories of subjects, most of which had a descriptive aspect, in the data of the participants. For example, the first form of transcript that has been raised was the preparatory phases for teaching, including "continuing self-preparedness," "learning plan," "classes" and "teaching objectives." Another type of learning experience, which involves "own experience learning from other experiences," and "reason learning from the others," was also linked to teaching, such as 'forms of tasks,' "learning from other teaching experiences," "characteristic of teaching activities." There were also forms

of data concerning evaluation as well as learning behaviour, evaluation, including "exam orientated," "test," "examination" and "allocation of marks." In addition, some statistics on the actions of students were given, which were "respective," "shy," "active," "passive," "cooperative" and "demanding." Two styles of interpretation of learning characteristics and learning characteristics, including "teaching from new information," "differences in learning," "knowing the style of learning of students and student learning" have also arisen and have appeared for teaching characteristics, including "explanation of knowledge," "providing understanding," "focus on learning for the student."

In the meantime, many topics were raised in the transcripts of pupils, including developmental experiences, "school learning experiences," as well as "university learning experiences." The next set of subjects relevant to learning experiences consists of different ways of constructive learning: group work, questions and answers, assignments, looking for articles and work with others, learning from others and learning by doing. Following this were issues of learning consisting of "time constraints," "financial problems," "cooperation between friends" and "course content." In addition, literacy terms such as "understanding," "memorising," "repeating" and "absorbing," like learning from new data, "reading from read," "learning from application," "learning by understanding and learning from beyond" have all been raised. Another form of concern raising students' familiarity with teaching methods was for example, "teaching styles," "note-taking," "direct lecture," and "active teacher problem." The final subject included the role of instructor, "teacher as knowledge transmitter," "teacher as knowledge expert," "teacher as facilitator," "teacher as skill builder," "teacher as active participant."

Stage 2: Coding with NVivo

In the second stage, data processing was carried out using the NVivo software kit, mainly for qualitative data analyses (Bazeley, 2007). In particular, NVivo was able to render the research more detailed, manageable, structured and co-ordinated, when one of the key challenges for qualitative science is the broad database required. Since quality data analysis collects crude data volumes, the data must be organised (Merriam, 1998; Stake, 1995).

They were imported into NVivo for review after all the data had been read, reviewed and edited. The divisions were consequently coded by key words, key events or acts. The codes for the data were not conceptually oriented as a constructivist case study, so I wanted to build a data-driven viewpoint and interpretation. This was the beginning of the

coding. The data were labelled and classified into free nodes in NVivo according to their significance. In NVivo, the data were first coded as "free nodes," which was the easiest approach to suggesting a collection of materials that shared a fundamental sense, idea or definition. Qualitative analysis coding is a way to classify (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

The data were carefully read to encrypt an occurrence or idea in the 'free nodes' or the 'open coding' stage. Any word was coded and the data were analysed line by line. The same thought is coded with a certain node in passages or phrases. The codes are then repeatedly tested for overlaps or repeats compared with other codes. The nodes with the same meanings were then united to form a new node. With the progression of the analysis there were nodes and nodes explained. New nodes have been introduced and the nodes continually refined during this process. In interviews, reflective notes were commonly used to help identify the possible coding styles (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998).

Stage 3: Interpretations of Data

In the third step of this analysis, groups or subjects were identified which could provide answers to the research questions. Whilst the NVivo helped coordinate and monitor the numerous disordered papers and documents, I know NVivo only supported mechanical checking activities, such as data storage, data processing and database auditing, whilst I was responsible for analytical and interpretative work. As Stake (1995) points out, qualitative analysis requires a major focus on the researchers' understanding. I thus proceeded to view the data as the third stage in the process. This method was more analytical and theoretical than the 'free nodes' and 'tree nodes' of the second level. It concerned the quest for relations between the large conceptual categories and the choice of the topics that resulted from previous analyses.

VII. TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVES OF TEACHING

My interpretation of the data indicated that Malaysian educators participants combine didactic teaching methods with active teaching approaches. It was found that teachers felt that teaching should not only be an instructor, but should also be student-centered. The two techniques were both complementary and did not clash. This highlighted the change between the teaching convictions and actions of Malaysian teacher educators. As argued by Bailey (1992), improvements in teachers' activities are the result of changes in the opinions of teachers. According to Bandura (1986), a person's lifelong decisions are heavily affected by his conviction. Pajares (1992) has affirmed that values "are the most appropriate indicators of individual decision-making over their lifetime" and that the beliefs of teachers impact

their attitudes which in essence, affect their classroom behaviour. This was mirrored in the experience and practise of the participants.

There was evidence that teaching perspectives from Malaysian teacher educators as both the diffusion of knowledge and the facilitation of knowledge were mirrored in their real teaching activities. I observed from class findings that both transmissive and interactive techniques were embraced. They began their lessons with a lecture and proceeded with active teaching strategies following the lecture which required students to participate in the activities.

VIII. USING TEACHER-CENTRED APPROACHES

My research indicated that instructor-centric methods that convey information were used by Malaysian teacher educators. The educators spoke about their positions as knowledge transmitters and their values in the dissemination of teaching. From a transmissive viewpoint, teachers are called information transmitters (Fink, 2003; Harden & Crosby, 2000). From that point of view, teachers (as knowledge transmitters) have a significant obligation to provide a certain knowledge or devotion to the topic or material. Teacher-centered practises use conventional instructional techniques including structured classes, workshops and assessments and assignments, exams and graduation, where students listen as they take notes.

They endorsed Fink (2003) and Mascolo (2009), who argued that teachers are supposed to be an "expert" and competent in their subject areas in teacher-centered approaches. In other words, the result of teacher-centric methods includes the spread of the teacher's expertise. If a teacher assumes that he or she transmits information, comprehension determines his/her choice for teaching techniques. The data revealed that the participants accepted that communications methods such as direct instruction/reading and note writing are valuable. Dollard and Christensen (1996, p. 3) supported in their replies that the authority is transmitted hierarchically" in the teacher-centered classroom, suggesting that teachers can exercise power over students. Similarly, Freberg (1999) and Fink (2003) argued that conformity is respected instead of effort in a teacher-centered classroom, and students are valued as passive learners over active learners. This was seen in the results. This indicates that teachers in Malaysia remain teacher-centric. Several teachers tended to exercise more autonomy of their teaching approach and decided to obey and agree with their choices on teaching practises. Malaysian education systems, based on classical teaching approaches, may have affected teachers as passive students waiting for instillation of knowledge in their students.

The second impact that the data indicated on Malaysian teacher educators who follow teacher-centric methods was their assumption that teaching was a mechanism of information transfer. My research proposed embracing the conviction that teachers were directly responsible for transferring information to pupils. Teacher-centered models are often represented as an active teacher versus a passive student model in which the teacher is mainly responsible for transmitting information to the students. My analysis confirmed claims from other studies that teachers' teaching practises in the schools represent their values and teacher ideologies and play a major role in the conceptualization of educational tasks and activities. My analysis revealed that in Malaysia, teachers used traditional teaching approaches in line with their traditional teaching principles. This indicates that it is important to examine and respect teacher values to fulfil Malaysia's government goals for transforming education culture into student-oriented learning.

IX. STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVES OF LEARNING

This segment addresses the interpretation of learning among Malaysian student participants. A variety of findings about learning have arisen from my review of the evidence provided in the study through the participant and focal group interviews with the students. The findings of this study show that the experiences and practises of learning among participants in Malaysian education originate both from a conventional approach and from a student focus.

It was observed that the learning methods of participants were a combination of conventional learning and learning methods focused on students. Although some students demonstrated their expectations for studying through conventional learning methods, the results also recommended the use of learning approaches that concentrate their students. Your learning methods appear to be mixed. Several participants showed a preference for mixing memorization and constructive learning techniques. This indicates that conventional learning methods have been combined with learning strategies focused on students. They also revealed that their awareness improved by involvement in class exercises and other constructivist methods, including their preference for direct teaching and memorization. Their responses suggest that learning techniques based on students may enhance their interpretation of the knowledge and enable them subsequently to store it. This illustrates that both methods are complementary and not incompatible. Every technique is discussed in the following two parts.

X. ADOPTING TRADITIONAL LEARNING APPROACHES

My student data study indicated that the students employed conventional approaches to learning. Their answers indicated that the conventional one-way direct guidance was a successful method in fostering subject mastery between students. In a conventional learning approach, information is characterised as an object that students can provide or transfer and absorb. Some students said they favour conventional teaching methods like direct teaching (readings), because the teachers know how to pay attention and focus. Any participants shared an attitude that conventional schooling would have greater comprehension of the lesson they were teaching. My research also indicated that students viewed their teachers as specialists in conventional direct lectures to provide information and stated their expectations for the storing of teaching notes. This reflects their appreciation of the value of knowledge instillation experts. Their response followed Garfield (1995) and Moore (1997), who identified students as empty boats to be filled with expert expertise to have teacher-centered approaches.

However the results from my research show that the memorization of participants was not thoroughly mastered, since they were often memorised for comprehension and not solely for testing. My review of the data showed that their memorization learning technique was not surface learning or merely training them for competitive tests, but can be considered a profound understanding which helped them understand. Ramsden (1992, 2003) believed that choosing the surface or profound method to learning depends on their learning circumstances. The answers of Malaysian students in my research revealed that the educational background or atmosphere they studied strongly influenced their perception and behaviour. Ramsden (1992, 2003) was therefore reinforced by the claim that the level of learning depends on the method, since what students learn is directly related to how they interpret their learning environment.

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