

Dedication

I dedicate this thesis,
to my husband Prem Narayanan, who has been considerate, supportive and
cooperative throughout the duration of my study;
to my family, especially Usha who made this journey with me;
to my relatives who have patiently tolerated my absence in various functions during
my quest for certificates and knowledge;
to my nephew Srijan, and nieces Ashwini, Keerthana, Dhannya, Pooja, Jayshree and
Medha who understand and accept people with special needs;
to all my friends at Pascasiswazah, University of Malaya;
to all children with special needs, who have motivated me to do this study;
to all the people who have been steadfast in fighting for children with special needs;
and last but not least,
to the people who have been providing education to these children.

Above all I dedicate this thesis,
to my father Krishnan Adiyodi, who shared a dream with me; and
to my mother Padmini whose encouragement and prayers have guided me, without
whom I would not have come this far. This thesis is for all that you have gone
through for me and with me.
Amma, it is your achievement.

Synopsis

Preschool aged Children with Special Needs (CSN) in Malaysia have been receiving instruction in classrooms for the past two decades. Various government and non-government organisations as well as private individuals have been providing this instruction. The latest to join this list of service providers is the Ministry of Education. The ministry has been actively involved in this exercise, recruiting teachers, opening new preschools, equipping them with teaching material, and organising courses as well as seminars on classroom instruction for the teachers. Information and materials used during these courses and seminars are based on the research carried out in developed countries which promote the use of recommended practices in classroom instruction for maximum effect. The purpose of this study was to investigate how the three stages of classroom instruction: assessment, planning and implementation were carried out and how recommended practices were incorporated into these stages.

This research was carried out using the qualitative case study methodology. Three preschools, using the programme designed by the Ministry of Education, were selected. Observation, interviews and document analyses were used to collect data. NVivo 7, a computer software programme was used to manage the interview transcripts, the expanded observation notes and summaries of the document analyses. The same programme was used to code data and form categories within the case analyses, to derive individual reports of how classroom instruction took place in these three preschool classrooms. Constant comparative technique was used for the cross-case analysis, to discover the similarities and differences in the classroom instruction. The individual case reports and the cross-case analyses are described.

This study brought forth pertinent findings that relate to instruction provided for preschool CSN in the classroom. The three teachers used recommended practices during instruction in the classrooms but, the use of recommended practices was not constant, consistent nor followed through in the three preschools. The study also discovered that the instruction did not hold to the core principle of providing classroom instruction, that is, to meet the individual needs of the students. The teachers lamented that constraints of time and number of students prevented them from catering to the individual needs of the students. This relates to two main findings closely related to two recommended practices that have to be addressed. First, non conformance to the established sequence of instructional stages; and second the absence of the important document, the IEP.

The recommended practice to begin designing classroom instruction for preschoolers with special needs is to first, ‘assess the student’, then ‘plan the lesson for the student’ and ‘implement the lesson for that student’. The study found that often the sequence for designing the instruction was ‘plan’, ‘implement’ and ‘assess’. Where the Individualised Education Plan (IEP) was key in the recommended practice, there was only one lesson plan for the whole class, which had children of diverse abilities. However, teaching materials, especially worksheets were prepared to cater to the students of varying abilities.

The study concluded that individualised instruction could be ensured through a rearrangement in the classroom instruction hierarchy to an “assessment-planning-implementation” structure, whereby an Individualised Education Plan is prepared for each student, before designing activities that incorporate the Learning Outcomes, for their individual learning needs.

Pengajaran di Tiga Buah Prasekolah untuk Kanak-Kanak yang Berkeperluan Khas

Sinopsis

Sejak dua abad yang lalu, kanak-kanak prasekolah yang berkeperluan khas di Malaysia sedang menerima pendidikan formal dalam bilik darjah. Perkhidmatan ini disediakan oleh pelbagai organisasi kerajaan, bukan kerajaan dan individu. Kementerian Pelajaran Malaysia (KPM) pun telah mula menyediakan perkhidmatan pendidikan prasekolah untuk kanak-kanak yang berkeperluan khas. KPM sedang giat memilih guru untuk prasekolah, menambah bilangan prasekolah, menyediakan peralatan dan alat bantu mengajar serta menguruskan kursus berkaitan kaedah pengajaran. Maklumat dan bahan-bahan yang digunakan dalam kursus ini adalah berasaskan kajian-kajian yang telah dijalankan di negara-negara maju. Kajian-kajian ini mengesyorkan penggunaan strategi yang tertentu semasa pengajaran dalam kelas untuk mendapat kesan yang maksimum. Tujuan kajian ini adalah untuk menyiasat bagaimana tiga langkah menyediakan pengajaran dalam kelas iaitu penilaian, perancangan dan pengendalian dijalankan bagi kanak-kanak prasekolah yang berkeperluan khas serta bagaimana strategi-strategi yang disyorkan digunakan dalam setiap langkah.

Metodologi kajian kes kualitatif digunakan untuk kajian ini. Tiga buah prasekolah yang menggunakan program prasekolah KPM dipilih. Ketiga-tiga teknik metodologi kualitatif, iaitu pemerhatian, temu bual dan analisis dokumen digunakan untuk mengumpul data. NVivo 7, program komputer digunakan untuk mengurus transkrip temubual, nota pemerhatian dan ringkasan analisis dokumen. Program yang sama digunakan untuk mengekod data dan membentuk kategori semasa menganalisis setiap kes. Laporan berkaitan pengajaran yang dilaksanakan di setiap

prasekolah disediakan. Kaedah perbandingan digunakan untuk mengenalpasti persamaan dan perbezaan dalam kaedah pengajaran dalam ketiga-tiga prasekolah .

Kajian ini mengemukakan beberapa dapatan yang berkait rapat dengan pengajaran yang disediakan untuk kanak-kanak berkeperluan khas di prasekolah. Dapatan kajian menunjukkan bahawa strategi-strategi pengajaran yang disyorkan digunakan dalam ketiga-tiga buah prasekolah tetapi penggunaannya tidak tetap. Dapatan juga menunjukkan bahawa pengajaran yang dilaksanakan tidak memenuhi keperluan murid. Guru-guru menyatakan bahawa kekangan masa dan bilangan murid dalam setiap kelas merupakan factor yang menghalang kepada penyediaan pengajaran mengikut keperluan murid. Kenyataan ini berkait rapat dengan dua dapatan kajian yang memerlukan perhatian, iaitu, pelaksanaan pengajaran yang tidak mengikut urutan yang disyorkan serta ketiadaan dokumen penting dalam pendidikan khas iaitu, Rancangan Pendidikan Individu (RPI).

Mengikut strategi-strategi yang disyorkan urutan pengajaran adalah penilaian murid, perancangan pelajaran dan akhirnya pengendalian pelajaran. Sebaliknya, kajian mendapati bahawa urutan yang diikuti di ketiga-tiga buah prasekolah adalah, perancangan, pengendalian dan penilaian. RPI merupakan dokumen utama untuk pengajaran di prasekolah tetapi dapatan menunjukkan bahawa hanya satu rancangan mengajar disediakan untuk sebuah kelas yang mempunyai murid yang berbeza kebolehan mereka. Walau bagaimanapun, alat bantu mengajar disediakan, bukan untuk pengajaran mengikut keperluan individu tetapi untuk mengajar mengikut kebolehan.

Kajian ini mendapati bahawa pengajaran individu boleh diamalkan dengan mengubah urutan langkah-langkah pengajaran kepada penilaian, perancangan dan pengendalian dan menyediakan RPI untuk setiap murid sebelum merancang aktiviti yang dapat menggabungkan hasil pembelajaran mengikut keperluan setiap murid.

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