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Teachers' Challenges in the Implementation of School Based Assessment in Physical Education

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Abstract

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This paper discusses the concept of assessment and the move to School-Based Assessment (SBA) within Malaysian current schooling system, which was very much examination-oriented. SBA was previously partially implemented in Malaysia. Nevertheless beginning 2011, SBA was made as an educational policy that needs to be implemented in primary as well as lower secondary schools. It presents the understanding, preparation and experience of Physical Education (PE) teachers with regards to the change in the schools assessment approach and how they had implemented SBA in this subject, namely Health and Physical Education (HPE) for lower secondary school. This paper discusses the case of SBA in Physical Education because this subject covers the theoretical as well as the physical implementation aspects. This qualitative study was recently carried out to explore the challenges faced by the teachers when implementing SBA in PE. The paper highlights the challenges faced by the teachers and how they overcome these challenges. The findings show that PE teachers faced three major challenges, namely core knowledge of the subject, assessment facilities and equipment, and PE classroom management. The study contributes towards the knowledge about PE teachers' orchestration and design of classroom instructions within the context of SBA.

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Keywords: Physical Education; School Based Assessment; Core knowledge; Assessment facilities; PE Classroom Management.

1. Introduction

SBA was implemented in the Malaysian system of education in 2011 in both primary and secondary schools. This paper only discusses the secondary school level specifically the Physical and Health Education subject. MOE takes seriously the issue brought up by teachers regarding the implementation of SBA. SBA is a policy which involves holistic assessment of students' achievement through four



components of assessment namely School Assessment (PS), PAJSK, Psychometric Assessment (PPsi) and Centralized Assessment (PP). SBA was implemented as part of the education transformation program and was first introduced in the primary schools in the year 2011 followed by the secondary schools in 2012. Generally, Health and Physical Education (PJK) teachers know that they need to implement SBA. However, their understanding of SBA is limited and they had differently interpreted SBA which had resulted in issues pertaining to provision of appropriate evidence for the SBA achievement band (Band 1 – 6).

1.1. Health and Physical Education

Health and Physical Education (HPE) is an important subject in the Malaysian system of education (Safani & Hamdan, 2005). HPE has been made a core subject since 1989 because it is believed to contribute towards the holistic development of students through their learning experience in the cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains (Abdullah, 2003; Darst & Pangrazi, 2006). HPE is made a compulsory subject because it aims to produce healthy, active and productive future generations. Knowledge, skills and experience obtained through PJK indirectly enable students to practice a healthy culture and lifestyle. HPE consists of two main components that are Physical Education (PE) and Health Education (PE). The elements of PE are related to athletics, games, movement, artistic and gymrama education whereas for HE, the elements are conservation, control and health development. This chapter will only focus on assessment on health education (PE) in the lower secondary schools.

1.2. School Based Assessment (SBA) in Physical Education (PE)

SBA was conducted by the teachers to measure students' achievement in PE based on the assessment transformation system in Malaysia which does not depend on centralized public examinations alone. Teachers need to effectively carry out the assessment process in PE (Payne, 2003). Thus, the assessment process towards this subject has to be done holistically. At present, there is no standard test that can be used continuously to assess PE (Idris, 2005). There are three types of assessments for PE namely summative assessment, physical activity assessment and psychometric assessment. Knowledge understanding assessment is based on PE Standard Teaching Document (DSP) supplied by MOE. The activities involved in this aspect are formative and summative evidence, SEGAK activities, BMI report and portfolio (Fig 1).

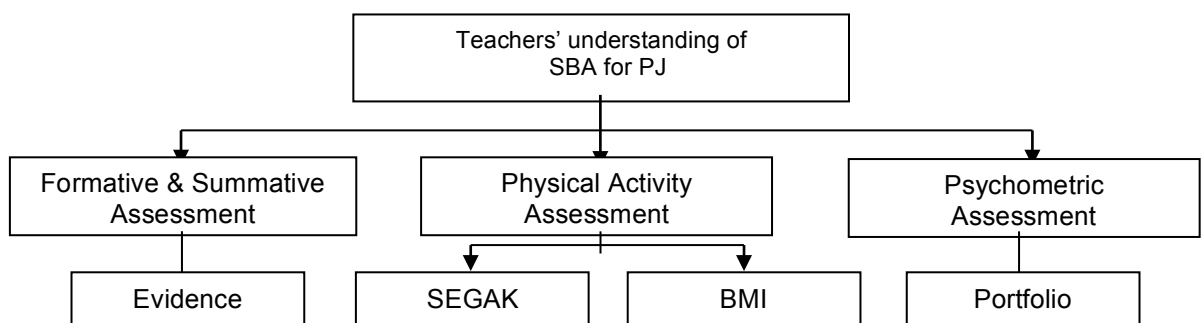


Fig 1. Guidelines by the Malaysian Examination Syndicate for Assessment of PJ through SBA

1.3. Formative and Summative Assessment

PAJSK comprises of Psychometric Assessment and Physical, Sports and Co-curriculum Activities Assessment which is administered, executed, recorded and reported through students' participation, involvement and achievements in sports activities, co-curriculum and extra curricula activities. Meanwhile, the National Physical Fitness Standard (SEGAK) and Body Mass Index (BMI) are executed to evaluate and report students' physical activities. PAJSK teachers have to record students' SEGAK and BMI because assessment is done during the learning and teaching of Physical and Health Education subject.

Class teachers have to record their students' sports activities, co-curriculum and extracurricular activities. Psychometric test is also administered to identify the students' natural talents and talents that they have gained, thinking skills, problem solving skills, interest, career, attitude and personality. This type of assessment is not based on the curriculum or the process of teaching and learning. The information received through psychometric is used to identify the interests, strengths and weaknesses, talents and readiness of the students. This information can help teachers to prepare a suitable learning and teaching sessions and create a conducive and effective learning context. Information from Psychometric test also can be used to guide the students in their quests of syphoning themselves into either the arts or the science streams when they are in Form Four so as to help them determine their future career.

For students in the secondary schools, Personality Trait Inventory, Career and Interest Inventory and Specific Aptitude Test are administered by the school counsellors. They will prepare a report by interpreting each student's score. The report is kept in the counselling room. Counsellors will discuss the result of the Personality Trait Inventory, Career and Interest Inventory and Specific Aptitude Test scores with the class teachers to help students in terms of their career choice that the counsellors and teachers feel suitable for the students.

1.4. National Physical Fitness Standard Test

Being fit covers the physiology and psychology aspects believed to protect students from the dangers of hypokinetic illness (lacking in movements) such as heart disease, obesity and other ailments that involve the muscles and bones. Fitness in terms of performance refers to an individual's ability to compete in sports activities having sufficient energy, endurance, skills and function well as a human being. Malaysians are practising healthy life styles daily and as such; an optimum fitness level helps students to do their daily activities efficiently and effectively without feeling tired or exhausted. The country needs people who are healthy and active. Therefore, students should give serious thoughts about their level of fitness and agility.

According to Jamil (2008), to obtain a complete information about the development and potential increase of one's fitness, one needs to be assessed. Therefore, PJ teachers' role is to develop and increase the level of their students' performance and fitness in order to achieve the objective of Health Education.

The SEGAK assessment program for students in Malaysian schools was planned in tandem with the basic fitness found in the Physical and Health Education syllabus for secondary schools. SEGAK

was introduced by the MOE in 2005. This type of assessment was planned to be implemented fully on Form Five students starting from 2008. All SEGAK reports will become the fitness component for SBA. In the Malaysian context, the SEGAK program is planned to assess physical fitness through four activities which are (i) up and down the bench, (ii) pumping, (iii) star jump and (iv) sit ups.

*1.5. Body Mass Index (BMI) Assessment**

Body Mass Index (BMI) measure body mass against one's height. It is an indirect measurement of the body composition (Reilly, 2006). BMI is determined by dividing the body weight (in kilogram) with the height that is squared (in meters). BMI is also used by schools to check students' physical activities (Harris, Kuramoto, Schulzer & Retallack, 2009). Physical activities play very important role in maintaining healthy body weight (Hill & Wyatt, 2005) and systematic physical activities should be practiced at the children stage (Birch, 1998).

1.6. Portfolio

Portfolio is an assessment instrument that can portray a more systematic learning development compared to other instruments (Grace, 2006). However, portfolio can be made into a learning file that is used to assess students' learning process. This means that portfolio presents more benefits in administering SBA including the PJ subject (Jones, 2008).

Portfolio assessment involves a systematic record management which can be used to monitor students' development (Stiggins, 2004). Students' achievement is recorded in terms of exam marks, journals, mind maps and products of project work so that they can be easily accessed and evaluated periodically (Stefanakis, & Meier, 2010). In the Malaysian context, portfolio is used by students to keep their notes and additional information that represent as evidences for references so as to determine the highest band that is achieved by the students.

1.7. Objective of study

To explore the major challenges faced by PE teachers in their implementation of PE assessment within SBA in secondary School.

2. Methodology

The study involved 15 secondary day schools in one district in Kedah. A total of 25 teachers were purposively selected for the interviews that lasted for a duration of 45 minutes to 1 hour. These teachers are experienced physical education teachers who are oponent and non-opponent. The interview sessions was designed to collect information on the three broad themes in this study, that is teacher core knowledge of the subject, assessment facilities and equipments, and PE classroom management, teacher knowledge and teacher readiness to implement SBA. There were ten core questions which were adapted or modified based on FAQs (frequently asked questions) from the Examination Board, Ministry of Education Malaysia (2011).

3. Finding and Discussion

3.1. Knowledge of the subject

The PE teachers suggested that SBA should be conducted on an ongoing basis. PE teachers must be able to understand the concept and process of PE assessment. PE teachers faced challenges when they implement the assessments and realized that they need to be knowledgeable to carry out the PE assessment. The choice of personnel selected to attend courses related to PE assessment could also affect the amount of knowledge brought back to be shared by other PE teachers in school. For instance, liquidity of information about PE assessment also happen when the person attending the course was the head of departments. According to PJ4:

"Teachers who are often called to attend the courses are the heads of the departments. After attending the courses, they failed to convey clear information to the other teachers" (PJ4, 2013).

"I rarely attend the course or meetings ...but if anyone went there ...it does not fully convey information appropriately ...so I do the assessment according to what I understand ... if there's anything I would do so later on" (PJ5, 2013).

3.2. Facilities and Equipment for PE Assessment

PE teachers face problems related to physical facilities and equipment when doing the assessment of PE activities. Equipment is costly and is usually not available in schools. The equipment that are in schools are usually in poor conditions and inadequate. Hence, PE Teachers sometimes have to use alternative equipment for the assessment of PE activities despite being aware that these alternative equipment would give different effects compared to when using the actual equipment.

"I usually need to borrow equipment from other schools when I want to carry out the assessment" (PJ13, 2013).

3.3. Psychometric Assessments in PE

Portfolios are the evidence files, comprising of notes and assessments related to the cognitive and affective aspects of students. According to PJ1:

"Sometimes the students are trained to learn on their own. I will instruct the students to gather notes and exercises are made to be kept in the portfolio." (PJ1, 2013).

The portfolio also serves as a record which can be referred to when monitoring the cognitive and affective development of students. This is illustrated in the following interview excerpt with PJ2:

"If all the duties are collected in the portfolio, it allows continuous monitoring. The material will also remain. It is an ongoing work and achievements can be seen by the students." (PJ2, 2013).

However, PE teachers face difficulties in assessing the portfolio, particularly in determining the attitude of the students meeting the criteria for Band 6 (describing the attitude of students who knows, understands and can show a civilized exemplary). However, before the implementation of SBA, 20% marks is allocated to the portfolio. This suggests that teachers' thoughts are still tied to the practice of awarding marks in the assessment system that is compared with the SBA assessment. PJ2 and PJ3's perspectives are as follows:

"I always have problems to assess students' attitudes for the qualifications of bands 6. With this folio work, it reflects the attitude of the students who knows, understands and can do with civilized exemplary." (PJ2, 2013).

"Prior to the PBS, the committee has allocated 20% of the portfolio assignment marks at the end of the examination. Now not anymore... only up to the discretion of the teacher alone to assess the psychometric attitude scores for achievement band six" (PJ3, 2013),

PJ3 further stated that the psychometric assessment based on Band 6 would be an advantage to students because the assessment is based on "the discretion of the teacher" (PJ3, 2013). As a conclusion, psychometric assessment is not an academic assessment but instead an assessment type that emphasizes attitude and the personality of students. The attitude and personality of students are measured by the notes, evidence of training activities and ongoing tasks included in the portfolio of each student.

3.4. PE Classroom Management

Another constraint that PE teachers include time management, whereby students take time to leave their classroom, changed their school uniform into proper attires for PE activities. In carrying out the assessment, PE teachers have to deal with this problem to complete the syllabus. This is because they have to allocate more time for the PE assessment. The PE teachers need to make appropriate adjustments in handling PE activities according to class size and interest of the students. When carrying out the assessment, PE teachers need to be focused throughout the process of assessment to avoid the dropout or omissions of students' scores based on evidence in the students' portfolios.

The impact of these constraints had caused PE teachers to feel that SBA assessment "bothers them and take up too much of their time" (PJ16, 2013). Moreover, PE teachers need to also complete other tasks in schools "such as stock management, landscaping, administration, etc." (PJ21, 2013). The PE teachers also view that "every student should be given the opportunity to do these PE assessment activities" (PJ4, 2013).

4. Conclusion

In general, PE teachers have an understanding of appropriate PE assessment in accordance with SBA. However, there are still differences in their understandings, and methods or approaches in implementing this assessment. Nevertheless, PE teachers in the study had indicated their willingness to enhance their knowledge about PE assessment within SBA, and were receptive and positive about the implementation of PE assessment.

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