AN EVALUATION OF POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL-BASED TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAM IN MALAYSIA

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2011

AN EVALUATION OF POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL-BASED
TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAM IN MALAYSIA

by

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Thesis submitted in fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

January 2011

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I should like to begin by saying that God is Most Merciful Who by His Grace and Will alone has made this journey possible.

First and foremost, I should like to express my sincere and heartfelt gratitude to my supervisor, Dr Ong Saw Lan for developing my understanding of "Program Evaluation" and guiding me through this arduous journey. I could not have made it without her guidance, support, and encouragement.

My deepest and most heartfelt gratitude also goes to my co-supervisor, Dr Hashimah binti Mohd. Yunus, for her support and help seing me through difficult times while I was under her supervision.

I thank Professor Huey-Tsyh Chen (University of Alabama, Birmingham, USA), the pioneer and leading person of "theory-driven evaluation", for his support and encouragement, and for having recommended me most of his books and articles regarding "theory-driven evaluation". I am privileged to know this brilliant and kind individual.

I thank Dr Lim Chin Lam, the famous columnist of "Mind Your Language"of the Star newspaper, for proof read my English. I greatly appreciate his kindness and help.

To the lecturers and staff of the School of Educational Studies, USM, I express my deepest appreciation for their guidance and support.

I am also mindful of my friends and colleagues, whose support and encouragement I greatly appreciate. My special thanks and sincere appreciation also go to Dr Haji Abdul Razak Othman, my colleague and good friend, who has given me

tremendous support and encouragement and has helped me through some of the most difficult moments in the writing of this thesis. I shall never forget his kindness. My sincere and heartfelt gratitude is also extended to Rev. Choo Kien Wai, for his prayers, support, and assistance.

Last but not least, to my family, I owe a debt of deepest gratitude for their unwavering support, patience, and encouragement; and to my beloved parents and husband, who have shown me great love and devotion, I dedicate this thesis to you all.

Tan Cheng Im

April 2010.

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ABSTRAK

Tujuan utama kajian ini adalah untuk menilai kekuatan dan kelemahan program LPBS lepas ijazah sebagai satu kaedah alternatif dalam melatih guru. Program LPBS lepas ijazah dilaksanakan dengan menggunakan modul-modul melalui pembelajaran arah kendiri dan tutorial, dengan kolaborasi guru pembimbing di sekolah. Demi merapatkan jurang amalan dan teori, kajian ini menggunakan "mixed-method" dalam "penilaian-berlandaskan-teori" yang diperkenalkan oleh Chen (1990). Sampel untuk soal-selidik ialah seramai 100 orang Guru Dalam Latihan (GDL), 100 orang Guru Pembimbing dan 48 orang tutor. Temu bual telah dilaksanakan dengan lima orang GDL, lima orang guru pembimbing, lima orang tutor, seorang timbalan pengarah dan seorang pengarah dari Institut Pendidikan Guru, dan tiga orang pegawai BPG. Instrumen kajian ini ialah Soal Selidik GDL, Borang Penilaian GDL, Borang Penilaian Guru Pembimbing, Borang Penilaian Tutor dan Borang Kompetensi GDL. Data dianalisis dengan membandingkan min keseluruhan serta peratus setiap konstruk, dan min bagi setiap item. Dapatan kajian menunjukkan kekuatan program daripada perspektif GDL atau peserta program ialah: (i) GDL didedahkan dengan lebih banyak pengalaman sekolah dari segi teori pengajaran dan pembelajaran; dan (ii) mentoring dan bimbingan yang diberi oleh guru pembimbing adalah membantu. Kekurangan program LPBS daripada persepsi GDL ialah: (i) terlalu banyak modul dan sesetengah perbendaharaan kata mengenai kandungan adalah di luar pemahaman mereka sebab mereka tidak mempunyai pengetahuan sedia ada tentang

kandungan; (ii) interaksi tutorial adalah pendek dan tidak berkesan; dan (iii) tahap komitmen tutor adalah rendah. Langkah-langkah untuk peningkatan harus diambil demi mencapai objektif-objektif program ini. Sebagai contoh, menyediakan modul-modul latihan dalam CD-ROM supaya modul-modul menjadi lebih interaktif, menyediakan glosari dalam modul-modul, memanjangkan tempoh tutorial dan memilih tutor-tutor yang sesuai.

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ABSTRACT

The primary purpose of this study was to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the postgraduate SBTE program as an alternative route in training teachers. The post graduate SBTE was conducted by using modules through self-directed learning and tutorials, with the collaboration of the school mentor teachers. To bridge the gap between theory and practice, this study applied a mixed-method in theory-driven-evaluation which was developed by Chen (1990). The samples for questionnaire were 100 Teachers-in-Training (TiTs), 100 mentor teachers, and 48 tutors. Interviews were carried out with five TiTs, five mentor teachers, five tutors, one director, one deputy director from teachers training institute and three officers from Teachers Education Division. The instruments for this study were: (i) TiTs Self-assessment Questionnaire, (ii) TiTs Program Evaluation Survey Form, (iii) Mentor Teachers Program Evaluation Survey Form, (iv) Tutors Program Evaluation Survey Form, and (v) TiTs Competency Forms. Data were analyzed by comparing the overall mean rating and the percentage of each construct, as well as the mean rating for each item. Results showed that from the perspectives of TiTs or the receivers of the program, among the strengths of SBTE program were: (i) more school experiences were exposed to the TiTs with teaching and learning theories; (ii) the mentoring and guidance provided by the mentor teachers were helpful. The weaknesses of SBTE program from the perception of TiTs were: (i) too many modules and some of the terms in the contents were beyond their understanding as

they did not have prior knowledge about the content; (ii) the tutorial interactions were short and ineffective; (iii) the commitment level of the tutors was low as they just used "chalk-and-talk" strategies. Steps need to be taken to improve this program in order to achieve its objectives. For example, prepare training modules in CD-ROM so that the modules would become more interactive, prepare the glossary in the modules, lengthen the duration of tutorial and select suitable tutors.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1   Introduction

Education is regarded as an important factor contributing to the growth of the economy of Malaysia in the 21st century. With the shift to a knowledge economy, globalization, and flexible organizations of production, Malaysia requires a highly knowledgeable and skilled workforce not only to preserve its current and traditional economies, but also to develop new technology-based industries and innovations in order to remain competitive.

High-quality learning demands highly qualified teachers. Teacher quality is very important to students' achievements (Sanders & Rivers, 1996). How to prepare qualified teachers has become the center stage of the educational reform movement (Chen, 2003). Malaysia is striving to ensure the quality of its education in order to realize vision 2020. Teachers Training Institutes are the ground for training teachers and the vision is focused on the need to develop a system that is compatible with world standards, in order to produce teachers who are dynamic and are constantly innovating and striving for excellence (Ministry of Education, 2004). Hence, the success of training skillful teachers relies on how well the system of teacher training functions.

1.2 Overview of Teacher Education Programs in Malaysia

Malaysia has a dual system of teacher training which involves two main types of institution, the teachers training institutes under the Ministry of Education (MOE) and the universities under the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE). The non-graduate teacher

training is under the responsibility of MOE, where the twenty-seven teachers training institutes in the country prepare the non-graduate teachers for both the primary and the secondary schools. All these institutes follow a common curriculum and trainee teachers sit for a common examination, which is prepared by the MOE.

The MOE conducts two types of teacher education programs, pre-service and in-service programs. There are four basic categories for the pre-service programs:

(i) the Malaysian Diploma in Teaching (MDT), a three-year or six-semester program, which includes interaction and practicum for the training of primary school teachers;

(ii) the Postgraduate Diploma in Teaching (PDT), a one-year program for the training of secondary school teachers. Candidates to the PDT program are holders of a Bachelor degree from an accredited university. They must be 35 years of age or below at the time of intake and are required to opt for only one major area of study.

(iii) a three-year twinning program that leading to a Bachelor of Arts (TESL) certification between a local teacher-training institute and a university in the United Kingdom or New Zealand.

(iv) a three-year twinning program for non-graduate teachers to become graduate teachers. This entails a one-year study in a local teacher-training institute followed by two years of study in a local university. On successful completion of the program, participants are awarded the Bachelor of Education (B Ed) (Lee, 2002; MOE 2004).

It must be noted that most of the local training programs pass through the National Accreditation Board or *Lembaga Akreditasi Nasional* (LAN), whilst the overseas twinning programs are accredited by the overseas universities concerned (MOE, 2004). However, the Government on 21 December 2005 approved a new entity, which

merges the National Accreditation Board (LAN) and the Quality Assurance Division (QAD), Ministry of Higher Education, known as Malaysian Qualifications Agency or MQA. This entity is responsible for the quality assurance of higher education for both the public and the private sectors since then (MOE, 2007).

Typically, there are three main components in all these teacher education programs, which comprise: (i) Curriculum Studies, (ii) Practicum, and (iii) Co-curriculum. In each semester, the trainees are assessed on the coursework as well as on a written examination. A pass in each of the assessment components is mandatory for a candidate to proceed to the next semester. Besides coursework assessment and the formal written examination, practical examinations are also conducted in subjects such as Science and Music, oral examination for languages, and assessment of teaching practice or practicum. The weightage for each of these components of evaluation is dependent on the nature of the subjects concerned. For example, for Physical Education, greater emphasis will be given to the practical than the theoretical aspect.

In addition, the trainee gains initial school experience during the second semester through the School Orientation Program or *Program Orientasi Sekolah*. This is a familiarization visit to a school to afford the candidate an overview of the culture and general setup of the school system. Trainees have to undertake practicum twice during their three-year course. The first practicum is carried out in Semester 4, which lasts eight weeks whilst the second practicum lasts twelve weeks during the last or sixth semester (MOE, 1999).

In short, the Teacher Education Division (TED) as the central agency of the teachers training institutes is responsible for the recruitment of candidates, providing training to selected teacher trainees and subsequent certification.

The initial teacher education programs falls into two categories: (i) the post-graduate program or *Kursus Perguruan Lepasan Ijizah (KPLI),* a one-year Postgraduate Diploma in Education (PDE) which is offered to candidates who have already obtained their first degree; and (ii) the concurrent program which takes in candidates for teacher education at the beginning of their undergraduate study (Lee, 2002).

However, the socio-economic and political development as well as the global trends has an influence on the development of teacher education in Malaysia as the country moves towards achieving its Vision 2020 target. The vision statement of teacher education in Malaysia also focuses on the need to develop a system of teacher education that will produce teachers who are dynamic, innovative, striving for excellence, and diligently working towards fulfilling the aspirations of the nation. Actions have been taken in order to realize the vision and mission of teacher education; for example the TED of the MOE and the set-up of the "Malaysian Teacher Standard" or "*Standard Guru Malaysia*" to ensure that all teachers achieve the professional competency in order to have quality teachers (KPM, 2006) as stated in the Educational Development Plan:

> "…as the most significant and costly resource in schools,
> teachers are central to school improvement efforts. Improving
> the efficiency and equity of schooling depends, in large measure,
> on ensuring that competent people want to work as teachers that
> their teaching is of high quality, and that all students have access
> to high quality teaching."

In addition, all teacher-training colleges were upgraded to teachers training institutes in 2006. The MOE has also restructured some of the teacher education programs. In order to fulfill the vision of the country to upgrade the quality of primary education through the placement of graduate teachers in primary schools, MOE has embarked on a program, which leads to the B Ed. beginning 2004 (MOE, 2004).

1.3 The Postgraduate School-based Teacher Education (SBTE) Program

The Postgraduate School-based Teacher Education (SBTE) program is one of the strategies which have been proposed for the nation's teacher education. It is also one of the programs offered to train temporary teachers who are teaching in schools, in order to overcome the shortage of teachers. This program helps to achieve the vision of upgrading primary school teachers to degree holders. The proposal was accepted at the 167th Meeting of the Educational Planning Committee on 26 September 2002 (KPM, 2004). The first cohort began the Postgraduate SBTE program in 2004.

The curriculum structure for Postgraduate SBTE is adapted from the full time Postgraduate Diploma Teacher Education program. However, the unique characteristic of this program is that it is implemented in the belief that Teachers in Training (TiTs) or *Guru Dalam Latihan (GDL)* who have already obtained a first degree, are able to conduct and plan their own studies, grasp the theoretical and practical knowledge of teacher education through using the modules by self-directed learning and eventually graduate to become qualified teachers after 18 months (KPM, 2004, 2005b, 2007a).

During the three phases of the program, modules are given to the TiTs. The module is written in units, which usually cover a certain number of topics based on the credit hours of the subject. The modules have been prepared to assist TiTs in organizing their own learning so that they may learn more effectively. These modules give TiTs an opportunity to manage their own learning and manage the way in which they use their resources and time. The amount of time the TiTs take to go through a unit or topic depends on their own learning style and personal study goals. There are tasks set within each unit to help TiTs revise what they have learnt or to make them think over what they

have read. Some of these tasks provide suggested answers at the end of the modules. Tasks that have been set for tutorial discussion or to be handed in during tutorial sessions need to be completed before the tutorial takes place. As stated in the modules, the TiTs are informed that the process of learning they go through is as important as any assignments they hand in or any tasks that they have completed. So, instead of racing through the tasks and the reading, TiTs are advised to take their time to reflect on their teaching performance. Lists of textbooks and reference are also provided at the end of every topic as an additional reading resource for TiTs (KPM. 2004, 2005b, 2007a).

1.3.1 SBTE Program Structure

The SBTE has a total of 41 credits, or 615 hours, for the certification of "Diploma of Education". One credit is equivalent to 15 hours, with 10 hours on tutorial interaction and five hours on module learning through the practice of self-directed learning. The program consists of four major components: (i) School Curriculum Studies (eight credits of Major subject + four credits of Minor One + four credits of Minor Two); (ii) Professional Studies (seven credits); (iii) Practicum (six credits) and (iv) Co-curriculum (three Credits). The performance in each of the four components contribute to the final grading ---- Distinction, Merit or Pass ---- of the awarded diploma. The SBTE program structure is shown in Table 1.1, while the detail of the School Curriculum Studies is elaborated in Section 1.3.1 (a) below.

1.3.1(a) School Curriculum Studies

This component consists of eight credits on the major subject; four credits each for two minor subjects (8C + 4C + 4C) as shown in Table 1.1. The total credit for this component is 16, or 39.02 %of the total 41 credits of the program.

This component recognizes the fact that subject matter knowledge is an important aspect of learning to enable a teacher to teach in the classroom. Besides the written examination, the TiTs overall assessment performance is also based on the assignments in the major subject (MOE, 2004, 2005b, 2007a).

Table 1.1: SBTE Program Structure

Component	Subject	Modules			Teaching Experience			Total
		P1	P2	P3	P1	P2	P3	(Credits)
Basic Studies	Malay Language Communication	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
	English Language Communication	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
	Arts in Education	-	1	1	-	-	-	2
	Information	-	1	1	-	-	-	2

	Management					-		
	Teachers Self Enrichment	1	2	-	-		-	3
Professional Studies	Educational Studies	2	2	1	1	1	-	7
School Curriculum Studies	Major	2	2	1	1	2	-	8
	Minor 1	1	1	1	-	1	-	4
	Minor 2	1	1	1	-	1	-	4
Co-curriculum	Co-curricular Activities	1	1	-	-	1	-	3
Practicum	Practical Training	-	-	-	-	-	6	6
Total Credits		9	12	6	2	6	6	41

P1 - Phase 1
P2 - Phase 2
P3 - Phase 3
TE - Teaching Experience carried out in schools based on the given tasks
(Source: KPM, 2004, 2005b, 2007a)

1.3.1 (b) Professional Studies

Besides the major subject, another important component of the SBTE program is the Professional Studies or Educational Studies component; which comprises seven credits or 17.07% of the total 41 credits.

The Educational Studies component comprises three subjects, (i) Pedagogy, (ii) Psychology and (iii) Teachers and Teaching Profession. These three subjects provide guidance for preparing prospective teachers, and define the knowledge that beginning

teachers should have and value. These three subjects have the following purposes: (i) provide TiTs a positive and productive learning environment to motivate their engagement in learning; (ii) encourage TiTs to use effective communication skills to enhance the student learning; (iii) encourage TiTs to engage in self-reflective practice in teaching; (iv) provide TiTs an understanding of how an individual's growth and development affect student learning; (v) provide TiTs the knowledge of how individuals differ in terms of skill, cognitive, social, emotional, and cultural aspects; and how to meet students' diverse needs; (vi) help TiTs to plan appropriate learning experiences and to use appropriate instructional strategies to facilitate the students' ability in order to achieve instructional objectives; (vii) help TiTs in assessing, analyzing and monitoring students' cognitive understanding, performance, and social development; (viii) encourage TiTs to apply Information Technology into teaching and learning processes; and (ix) encourage TiTs to work collaboratively with colleagues, parents and communities to support the students' learning process (KPM, 2003a, 2004, 2005b, 2007a).

1.3.1 (c) Practicum

The component of practicum or practical teaching is one of the important components in the curriculum of teacher education based on the aim of Philosophy of National Education and Philosophy of Teacher Education. It comprises six credits or 14.63% of the total 41 credits of the program.

Since 1993, cooperating schools have played a more important role in guiding and supervising pre-service teachers. The recommendation and implementation of pre-service teacher training through SBTE program further involved the cooperating schools in training teachers. The mentor teachers need to observe the TiTs teach their Major subject

for four times and Minor subjects three times during the 12 week practicum, plus one final observation of Co-supervision (*Penyeliaan Bersama)* on the Major subject together with the tutor. Altogether, the mentor teachers observe the TiTs teaching performance in the classroom eight times. Comparatively, the tutors' supervision and observation of the TiTs are very much less, as the tutors only observe the TiTs four times for both the Major and the Minor subjects. This is also inclusive of the one time Co-supervision (*Penyeliaan Bersama*) with the mentor teachers for the Major subject as mentioned above (KPM, 2005a).

Co-Supervision requires effective planning and coordination by both teacher education institution and the cooperating school. The potential for developing good future classroom teachers is enhanced by the sincere desire of cooperating school teachers, or mentor teachers, student teachers or TiTs to work together to achieve teaching proficiency, while maintaining effective classroom instruction for students. After all, the priority of everyone involved must be the students in the classroom.

The objective of the practicum is to develop "school teachers", in the areas of teaching and classroom experience; teaching and experience outside classroom; and develop suitable attitudes toward teaching profession. Therefore, practicum is carried out with the efforts of both the teacher training institution and the school (KPM, 2005a). Practicum for SBTE program is conducted in "Phase 3" for duration of 12 weeks. TiTs carry the same workload during these 12 weeks, as they are the temporary teachers in the schools.

TiTs' experiences are not limited to classroom activities but are also acquainted with the total program of the school and its relationship to the community it serves. Mentor teachers take an active part in the TiTs teaching experience, providing guidance

and feedback. Mentor teachers are important in the TiTs teaching program because they work closely to help the TiTs. Much of the success of the TiTs is dependent upon the mentor teachers' supervision and direction of the TiTs' activities, methods, and techniques employed. The TiTs' teaching experience typically has a lasting effect upon a teacher's perception toward teaching, and as a consequence, it greatly affects future generations of students.

The dynamics of the three-way partnership among TiTs, mentor teachers and tutors ultimately promote the growth of each of the partners as professionals. This partnership affects the learning of the students in the classroom. The intellect, energy, and skills are multiplied three-folds as the TiTs, mentor teachers, and tutors work together to actualize their goals as professional educators.

1.3.1 (d) Co-curriculum

The component of co-curriculum or co-curricular activities comprises three credits or 7.32% of the total 41 credits of the program. This component is important in order to prepare future teachers as a whole in optimizing the development of psychomotor, cognitive, and affective domains, besides improving their pedagogical knowledge in primary school education ---- in the hope of producing teachers who are active, healthy, smart, and productive (KPM, 2003b, 2006, 2007a).

The objective of co-curriculum or co-curricular activities is to ensure that TiTs: (i) are equipped with knowledge, basic skills and teacher professionalism value, especially in co-curriculum; (ii) become a knowledgeable and smart educators in the field of co-curriculum and leadership in order to inculcate and develop students' potential; (iii) play

the role as effective teachers and facilitators in schools; (iv) develop and appreciate good value and positive attitude continuously through their involvement in co-curricular activities; and (v) build endurance, creativity, innovation, and self- confidence to compete through knowledge and critical and creative thinking skill in decision-making and solving professional teaching problems (KPM, 2006, 2007a, 2007b).

1.3.2 Implementation Structure of SBTE Program

The duration of Postgraduate SBTE program is 18 months. However, the tutorial interactions between the tutors and TiTs run for nine weeks ---- three weeks in Phase One, four weeks in Phase Two, and two weeks in Phase Three.

The tutors for SBTE tutorial interactions are lecturers from the teachers training institutes. As the tutorials are conducted during the semester break, the tutors are paid hourly. The range of the payment is from RM 120 per hour to RM 150 per hour in accordance with the respective salary scales of tutors. The program co-ordinator and the assistant co-ordinators from the different departments at the teachers training institutes identify the tutors to be involved in SBTE program. No specific training is provided to the tutors, other than attending the briefing given by the co-ordinator. However, there are cases where some of the lecturers are not able to attend the briefing owing to circumstances like attending seminars or activities outside the teachers training institutes. Because of the monetary return for conducting the tutorial interaction, most of the lecturers in the teachers training institute are keen to volunteer as tutors for SBTE. There is no mechanism in the selection of appropriate and quality tutors, some of the lecturers who are not familiar with the subject of the tutorial or do not have the subject matter

knowledge have been appointed as tutors for the SBTE program. This has affected the quality of the tutorial interaction provided to the TiTs.

Table 1.2 shows the implementation of tutorials and Teaching Experience (TE) of Postgraduate SBTE program. The tutorial interaction for Phase One is three weeks or 90 hours; two weeks during the May-June school holidays, which comprise (i) 10 hours of Malay Language Communication; (ii) 10 hours of Teachers Self-enrichment; (iii) 10 hours of Educational Studies; (iv) 10 hours of the Major subject; (v) 10 hours of Minor 1 in School Curriculum Studies; and (vi) 10 hours of Co-curriculum ---- all making of 60 hours of the tutorial interaction. The other one week of the tutorial interaction for Phase One is conducted during the August school holidays, which

Table 1.2: Implementation Structure of Tutorial and Teaching Experience of SBTE

| Phase/Subjects | P1 | | | | P2 | | P3 | Total |
	May/June 2W	Aug 1W	TE	Nov 2W	Dec 2W	TE	May 2W	(hours)
(A) Basic Studies								
Malay Language Communication	10	-		-	-		-	10
English Language Communication	-	-		10	-		-	10
Arts in Education	-	-		-	10		10	20
Information Management	-	-		-	10		10	20
Teachers Self Enrichment	10	-		20	-		-	30
(B) Professional Studies								
Educational Studies	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	70

(C)School Curriculum Studies								
Major	10	10	10	10	10	20	10	80
Minor 1	10	-		10	-	10	10	40
Minor 2	-	10			10	10	10	40
(D)Co-curriculum	10	-	-	-	10	10	-	30
(E)Practicum (12 W = 6C)						Jan-April 12 Ws		12 W 6C
Tutorial Interaction	60	30	20	60	60	60	60	350

P1 - Phase 1
P2 - Phase 2
P3 - Phase 3
TE - Teaching Experience carried out in schools based on the given tasks
C - Credits
W – Week(s)
(Source: KPM, 2005b, 2007a)

consists of: (i) 10 hours of Educational Studies; (ii) 10 hours of Major subject; and (iii)

10 hours of Minor Two of School Curriculum Studies, making up a total of 30 hours. The

other 20 hours ---- 10 hours for Educational Studies and 10 hours of Major subject

---- are under Teaching Experience (TE), which is carried out in the schools based on the

tasks given by the tutors.

For Phase Two, TiTs will attend four weeks or 120 hours tutorial interaction

during the November and December school holidays. In November, five subjects will be

carried out: (i) 10 hours of English Language Communication; (ii) 20 hours of Teachers

Self-enrichment; (iii) 10 hours of Educational Studies; (iv) 10 hours of Major subject;

and (v) 10 hours of Minor One of School Curriculum Studies, all of which make up 60

hours of the tutorial interaction. In December, six subjects will be carried out. These six

subjects are: (i) 10 hours of Arts in Education; (ii) 10 hours of Information Management;

(iii) 10 hours of Educational Studies; (iv) 10 hours of Major subject; (v) 10 hours of Minor Two of School Curriculum Studies; and (iv) 10 hours of Co-curriculum, making up a total of 60 hours of the tutorial interaction. The other 60 hours, carried out as TE for the subjects are as follows: (i) 10 hours of Educational Studies; (ii) 20 hours of Major subject; (iii) 10 hours of Minor One of School Curriculum Studies; and (iv) 10 hours of Minor Two of School Curriculum Studies. All these TE components are carried out in the schools based on the tasks given by the tutors.

There will be two weeks or 60 hours tutorial interaction in Phase Three, which will be carried out during school holidays in May. The subjects are: (i) 10 hours of Arts in Education; (ii) 10 hours of Information Management; (iii) 10 hours of Educational Studies; (iv) 10 hours of Major subject; (v) 10 hours of Minor One of School Curriculum Studies; and (vi) 10 hours of Minor Two of School Curriculum Studies. After this phase of tutorial interaction, there will be a written examination for the major subject and Professional Studies, or Educational Studies. After sitting for the written examination, the TiTs will then begin their practicum at the schools where they teach.

Out of the total 615 hours of this program, 350 hours are used for tutorial interaction; 90 hours are used for practicum, having the rest of the 175 hours for the TiTs to do self-directed learning by using the modules. The concept of Postgraduate SBTE program can be represented in Figure 1.1. For example, with modules and tutorials providing the theory, TiTs can integrate the theory and practice in the schools. Whatever the TiTs practise in schools can be integrated with the theory they learn from the modules or tutorial. This is an integration of theory and practice. In addition, knowledge that TiTs learn can be integrated with the teaching in the schools; and, whatever TiTs teach in schools can be integrated with learning, through self-directed learning either by using

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modules or from the tutorials. In short, integration of learning and teaching is an important characteristic of SBTE.
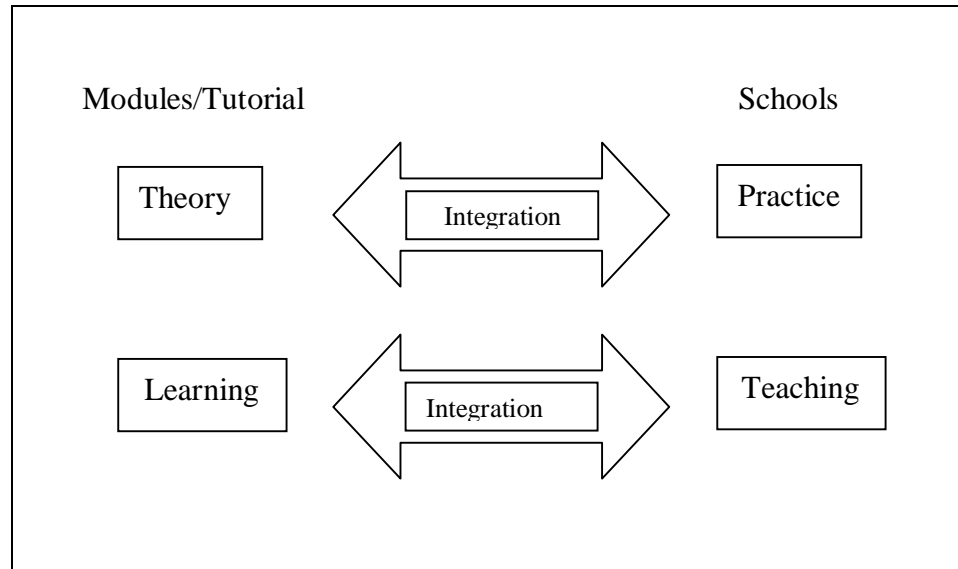
Figure 1.1 Concept of SBTE Program

1.3.3 Assessment and Evaluation in SBTE Program

The assessment and evaluation system for SBTE program is based on the curriculum structure that uses the "phase learning system". As mentioned earlier, TiTs have to complete 41 credits in order to obtain a Diploma of Education. One credit hour is equivalent to 15 hours; where 10 hours is conducted through tutorial interaction, and the other five hours through self-directed learning and doing the tasks given by the tutors. The marks obtained in every subject in order to calculate the Grade Point Value (GPV), the Grade Point Average (GPA) and the Accumulative Grade Point Average (AGPA)) is based on the total tutorial interaction hours.

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The AGPA, practicum, and co-curriculum results will rate the diploma under distinction, merit or pass. The regulation of examination, assessment, and certification is based on the Teachers Training Institute Regulation – Examination, Assessment and Certification year 1999 (KPM, 2004, 2005b, 2007b).

1.3.3 (a) The Mode of Assessment and Evaluation

Assessment and evaluation is carried out through assignments and examinations. Assignments are given to the TiTs based on the modules and tutorial interactions and TE, while the centralized examination will be carried out at the end of the program, or end of Phase Three. Only School Curriculum Studies or the majoring subject, and the Professional Studies or Educational Studies subject will be assessed by written examinations and assignments, the rest of the subjects are based on the assignment assessments throughout the three phases of the program. The assessment and evaluation structure for SBTE program is shown in Table 1.3.

Table 1.3: Assessment and Evaluation Structure for Postgraduate SBTE Program

Component	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3
Basic Studies (9 Credits)		Assignment = 100%	
Professional Studies (7 Credits)		Assignment = 50% Examination = 50 % (1 paper = 3 hours)	
School Curriculum Studies – Major (8 Credits)		Assignment = 60% Examination= 40% (Paper 1= 3 hours; Paper 2 = 3 hours)	
Minor 1 (4 Credits)		Assignment = 100%	
Minor 2 (4 Credits)		Assignment = 100%	
Co-curriculum (3 Credits)		Assignment = 100%	
Practicum (6 Credits)		Practical teaching = 100%	

With reference to Table 1.3, the written examination and assignment for Professional Studies contribute 50% each for the assessment; while the assignment of the Major subject contributes 60% and examination contributes 40% for the assessment. The rest of the components are assessed or evaluated 100% based on assignments, for example Basic Studies, Minor 1, Minor 2 and Co-curriculum. The practicum component is assessed based on the TiTs teaching performance during the three months of practical teaching.

For the assessment and evaluation of co-curriculum, the cooperating schools and teachers training institute play equal important roles, where each party contributes 50 marks of the total 100 marks of the assessment. For the cooperating schools, the mentor teachers are the key persons in judging to what extent the TiTs are able to implement what they have learnt from the modules and conduct the co-curriculum activities in the schools; while for the teachers training institute, the tutors in charge of the tutorial for co-curriculum subjects will assess the TiTs based on the TiTs' assignments. The assessment and evaluation method of the co-curriculum is shown in Table 1.4.

Table 1.4: Assessment and Evaluation Methods for SBTE Co-curriculum Component

Phase	Matter	Implementation	School	Teachers Institute	Total
1	Management of co-curricular activities	Assignments for the management of co-curricular activities	50 marks	50 marks	100 marks

2	Sport/ Society	Assignments for sport or society	50 marks	50 marks	100 marks
3	Uniform Unit	Assignments for Uniformed Unit	50 marks	50 marks	100 marks

(Source: KPM, 2004, 2005, 2007)

In Phase One, the TiTs are assessed and evaluated on their knowledge and competency regarding the "Management" of co-curriculum activities. For example, the cooperating school will assess the TiTs in respect concept, aim, and co-curriculum activities implementation; the component, structure, and co-curriculum organization chart in school; basic regulation of co-curriculum implementation and school co-curriculum assessment; while the teachers training institute assesses TiTs' record of reflection regarding co-curriculum; TiTs' proof of documents, and TiTs' attitudes. The aspects of assessment for SBTE co-curriculum are shown in Table 1.5.

As shown in the table, in Phase Two, the assessment is focused on either "Sport" or "Society". The cooperating schools assess how the TiTs conduct the co-curriculum activities, as well as how to make reports of the activities they conduct in Phase Two. While the teachers training institute assesses how the TiTs plan the co-curriculum activities, TiTs' record of reflections regarding planning the co-curriculum activities, TiTs' proof of documents, and TiTs' attitudes.

In Phase Three, the assessment is focused on "Uniformed Unit", where the cooperating schools will assess how the TiTs conduct co-curriculum activities; while the teachers training institute assess how the TiTs plan the activities, make reports of the activities, do reflections regarding the planning of the activities, TiTs' proof of documents, as well as the TiTs' attitudes.

Table 1.5: Aspects of Assessment for SBTE Co-curriculum Activities

Phase	School/ Teachers institute	Assessment aspects	Marks
1	School	i) Information regarding concept, aim and co-curricular activities implementation	20
		ii) Component, structure and co-curriculum organization chart in school	10
		iii)Basic regulation of co-curriculum implementation	10
		iv) School co-curriculum assessment	10
	Teachers institute	i) Reflection	20
		ii) Proof of documents	20
		iii)Attitude	10
2	School	i) Conduct co-curriculum activities	30
		ii) Report of the activities	20
	Teachers institute	i) Planning of the activities	20
		ii)Reflection	10
		iii)Proof of documents	10
		iv)Attitude	10
3	School	i) Conduct co-curriculum activities	50
	Teachers institute	i) Planning of the activities	10
		ii) Report of the activities	10
		iii)Reflection	10
		iv) Proof of documents	10
		v)Attitude	10

(Source: KPM, 2004, 2005, 2007)

1.4 Rationale of the Study

Among the aims of the Ministry of Education Malaysia is that in the year 2010,

50% of the primary school teachers will be baccalaureate graduate teachers and 100% of

the secondary school teachers would hold a masters degree. However, the issue

confronting Malaysia is that, in 2006, about 8.1% of 19,000 teachers and administrators who work in the primary schools were contract and temporary teachers (KPM, 2006). As the MOE blueprint is prepared every five years, the latest report of the statistics is still under preparation. However, according to the state and district education departments, the number of temporary teachers is still high.

In order to reduce the shortage of teachers, those who want to be teachers but without formal training are recruited to serve as temporary teachers. The SBTE program is meant to train temporary teachers who fulfill the requirements of the TED. The SBTE program is implemented by using modules through TiTs self-directed learning and tutorials. It started in year 2004 and is still in the infancy stage where evaluation activity is very much needed. Using modules through TiTs self-directed learning and tutorials to execute a teacher education program is a very challenging experience. This is in line with the engagement theory, which fundamentally proposes that students are intrinsically motivated to learn owing to the meaningful nature of the activities that involve cognitive processes such as problem-solving, reasoning, decision-making and evaluation (Shneiderman, 1994).

This is a study on the evaluation of a Postgraduate SBTE Program. It is important to know the strengths and weaknesses of this program since the government has already spent RM106 million on education programs in training new teachers and one of the programs is SBTE (JPM, 2006). Therefore, this study explores the strengths and weaknesses of the SBTE program in producing the desired outcomes through self-directed learning ---- the teachers that are competent in subject matter knowledge, pedagogical skills and disposition. Tutors, mentor teachers, institute directors as well as

officers of TED's feedback and comments will be discussed in justifying the strengths and weaknesses of the program.

Besides the impact brought forth by the Postgraduate SBTE program as the enhancement of disposition, pedagogy skills and subject matter knowledge by using modules through self-directed learning and tutorials, feedback and comments from tutors and mentor teachers are gathered to further justify the results.

1.5   Aims and Objectives of the Study

Given the fact that the vision and mission of teacher education in Malaysia is to have a standard from quality aspect, the lack of evidence of the evaluation for this standard of quality in teacher education is of concern. The primary purpose of this study is to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the Postgraduate SBTE program as an alternative mode in training teachers. The Post graduate SBTE is conducted by using modules through self-directed learning and tutorials. The objectives of this study are:

(i) to examine to what extent does SBTE achieve the program objectives; (ii) to explore what are the strengths and weaknesses of post graduate SBTE program; (iii) to investigate the usefulness of the modules as a means for enhancing TiTs' subject matter knowledge, pedagogical skill and disposition; (iv) to explore the TiTs' perspectives regarding the usefulness of the tutorial in enhancing their understanding of the modules; (v) to examine the extent of the competency of the tutors in conducting the tutorials; (vi) to explore the extent of helpful mentoring and guidance provided by the mentor teachers; (vii) to investigate the extent of the practice of self-directed learning among the TiTs; (viii) to investigate the extent of the TiTs' capability in applying the disposition, subject matter knowledge, and pedagogical skill in the classroom.

1.6   Statement of the Problem

As mentioned earlier, education is viewed as central to the nation's continued role as an economic and political power in an increasingly globalized society. Without a well-educated citizenry, Malaysia will have difficulty competing in a world where knowledge, especially technological knowledge, and its use, will determine the future of individuals and nations.

The Ninth Malaysia Plan released in 2006 contains many references to globalization, the state of the readiness, and the many challenges the nation will be facing (Jabatan Penerangan Malaysia, 2006). Its call to raise the nation's capacity for knowledge and innovation is a call to education in Malaysia, and the importance of teacher education and higher education.

However, schools face enormous challenges where they are asked to educate the most diverse student body to higher academic standards (Darling Hammond, 1998). As the demand for the students to have higher levels of critical and creative thinking skills is greater, the nation must support the teachers in the classroom by equipping them with the best to enable them to execute their task with intellectual rigor, vigor and enthusiasm. As mentioned earlier, the problem and the issue confronting Malaysia is that, in year 2006 about 8.1% of 19,000 teachers and administrators working in the primary schools were contract or temporary teachers (KPM, 2006); and according to the state and district education departments, the number of temporary teachers is still growing.

Besides, another worrying issue is that high-performance candidates in secondary examination have better opportunities in such areas as pursuing higher and professional education, even though as a career in teaching is usually not in their priority list (Khalid, 1996; Ministry of Education, 1996).

SBTE is an alternative route of training graduate temporary teachers that started in 2004. This program is conducted through modules by self-directed learning. Lindner & Harris (1993), as well as previous researches, for example Borkowski, Carr, Rellinger & Pressley (1990), Jones & Idol (1990), and Zimmerman & Pons (1986) supported self-directed learning skills as an important component of successful academic performance. Self-directed learning has become one of the important focuses of educational practice and is one of the prerequisites for the acquisition of knowledge. It is important to life-long learning. If self-directed learning skills are found to be lacking, it is necessary to develop instruction, which is specifically aimed to counteract this deficiency by assessing the learners' readiness from a particular instructional intervention. However, the problem is that TED has neglected to take into account this dimension of the TiTs learning process when implementing the SBTE program.

Given that the duration for SBTE tutorial interactions between the tutors and TiTs is only nine weeks (KPM, 2005b, 2007a), the extent the TiTs would be able to apply to the disposition, pedagogical skills and subject matter knowledge practice is the fundamental issue.

SBTE is conducted based in the belief that TiTs will do their self-directed learning. However, the SBTE program did not provide any specific guidance and feedback to motivate the TiTs, as research done by Regan (2003) indicated that students need specific guidance and feedback to motivate them toward self-directed learning. Therefore, the extent to which self-directed learning has been practised among the TiTs is also one of the important issues.

Apart from that, as mentioned earlier, no specific training is needed for the tutors; no standard or any mechanism of selection has been articulated to measure the

competency of the tutors for this program. Therefore, as an alternative route in training teachers, is the SBTE program comparable to traditional teacher education program? As the SBTE program is still in the infancy stage, revising its implementation effectiveness is very much needed.

Evaluation is crucial to the development of any program (Mark, Henry & Julnes, 2000). As the quality of education is related directly to the quality of teachers, in order to determine whether a teacher education program is sound and good, an evaluation of the SBTE program is deemed necessary and important, especially for Malaysia where the vision and mission of teacher education is to achieve a high standard of quality.

1.7 Research Questions

The research questions are as follows:

1. To what extent are the SBTE program objectives achieved?

2. What are the strengths and weaknesses of postgraduate SBTE program?

3. Are the modules useful in enhancing TiTs disposition, pedagogical skills and subject matter knowledge?

4. Are the tutorials useful in enhancing TiTs' understanding of the modules?

5. To what extent are the tutors competent in conducting the tutorials?

6. To what extent have mentoring and guidance by mentor teachers been helpful for TiTs?

7. To what extent has Self-directed Learning been practised among TiTs?

8. To what extent are the TiTs able to apply the theory, subject matter knowledge and pedagogical skill in the classroom?