

TOPIC 5	CREATING A CULTURE FRIENDLY CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT
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Synopsis

The purpose of this module is to give exposure to students on several topics in creating a conducive classroom environment for the diverse ethnic groups. It covers topics on the relationships among ethnic groups, the management of physical and socio-emotional and sociolinguistic aspects of the classroom environment. In addition, students are also given exposure with regards to appropriate management of teaching and learning process for students of various ethnic groups in the classroom. Apart from that, it also discusses aspects on cultural and indigenous relevant pedagogy and cultural diversity as well as the combined classes often found in remote or rural areas. Finally, students are given exposure to the culturally responsive assessment so that students can equip themselves to deal with multi-cultural classroom situations.

- Relationships among ethnics
- Managing physical environment
- Managing socioemotional environment
- Sociolinguistic
- Managing teaching and learning
- Cultural and indigenous relevant pedagogy
- Pedagogy for combine classes
- Culturally responsive assessment

Learning Outcomes:

1. Explain the relationships among ethnic groups.
2. Define the concept, purpose and the physical components in the management of a culture-friendly classroom environment.
3. Explain the concept, development and management of socio-emotional atmosphere in a multicultural classroom.
4. Explain the concept, development and management of socio-linguistic aspect in a multicultural classroom.

5. Explain concepts, features and important aspects of the management of teaching and learning.
6. Discuss concepts, purposes, characteristics, methods and techniques of cultural and indigenous relevant pedagogy.
7. Describes the concepts, features and importance of combined classes.
8. Defining the concept of culturally responsive assessment.

Topic 5.1	Relationships Among Ethnic
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5.1.1 Introduction

This topic is considerably wide, but for the purpose of our discussion, we will narrow it in the context of ethnic relationships in Malaysia, focusing on the teacher's roles in the classroom. The findings of a study carried out by Salfarina, Mohd Zaini and Azeem Fazwan (2009, as cited in Modul PGSR, 2010) showed that ethnic groups in Malaysia, like many other developing countries have gone through various historical and development changes. Besides that, influence from immigration and emigration has shaped ethnic relations into a complex, dynamic and fluid situation. Thus, teachers teaching in a classroom where diversity of culture becomes an integral part of the student population, have an important role in creating acceptance among the diverse ethnic groups. The feelings of acceptance towards each other's cultural and ethnic difference can be inculcated by creating a culturally conducive classroom environment. In fact, it is the best and most important place to teach about different cultures, since it is in the classroom that students from diverse cultures grow up and learn together. If children are exposed to a multicultural classroom environment where they learn to appreciate each others' differences and respect each others' strengths and weaknesses, right from the beginning of their academic years, it will be easy for them to get along with children from other cultures and this would eventually strengthen the relationships of the diverse ethnic groups in the classroom.

5.1.2 Creating a United Malaysia

Since the 1969 ethnic riots, the need to build a harmonious relationship among the diverse ethnic groups in Malaysia is inevitable. The necessity to create a united Malaysia arises from the idea of creating a “*Bangsa Malaysia*”. This term was first coined by the previous Prime Minister, Dr Mahathir Mohamed who in the 1990s put forth a challenge in his Vision 2020. According to him, apart from its emphasis on economic development, the idea is to create a united Malaysian which is ethnically integrated and harmonious, a liberal and tolerant society in which Malaysians respect each other’s creeds and customs” (Heidi, 2002 cited in *Kajian Malaysia*, Volume 29, No 1, 2011). Mahathir Mohamad argued that the first challenge of being highly industrialised nation was “to establish a united Malaysian nation, with a sense of common and shared destiny. This must be a nation at peace with itself, territorially and ethnically integrated, living in harmony and in full and fair partnership, made of one *Bangsa Malaysia* with political loyalty and dedication to the nation (Mahathir, 1991). This vision did not end with Dr Mahathir’s tenure as the Prime Minister because in 2009 the present Prime Minister, Najib Razak declared a rebranded version of *Bangsa Malaysia* under the slogan 1Malaysia. The core of the 1Malaysia campaign is mutual acceptance, understanding and appreciating the diversity among the races and people of Malaysia.

5.1.3. Roles of the Teacher

Based on the discussion, it is clear that, Malaysia being populated by diverse races and ethnic groups, needs to bridge the gap between the ethnic groups. As such, the government has designed policies and taken measures to ensure a harmonious relationship among the various groups and as teachers, we have important roles to play to realise these goals. We should take up the challenge to create a united Malaysia and thus create a harmonious relationship among the ethnic groups. In order to accomplish this role, teachers themselves must believe in the importance of creating a healthy multicultural environment which treats everyone as equals. The following are some suggestions which teachers can consider in creating a harmonious relationship among ethnic groups.

- i) Learn and understand about different cultures for ignorance may lead to intolerance.
- ii) Encourage a multicultural view and perspective in the students' minds by embedding elements of different cultures in the curriculum.
- iii) Bring students together by having a variety of cross-cultural activities which enable students to appreciate each others' cultures.
- iv) Adopt and adapt varieties of instructional approaches to meet the needs of students from various cultural groups.
- v) Building relationship among students from diverse ethnic groups on the basis of understanding and appreciation.
- vi) Avoid racist comments



Stop and Reflect

Based on your experience as a teacher, what other roles have you played in creating a harmonious relationship among ethnic groups?

5.1.4 Conclusion

Based on the discussion on relationship among ethnics, it is clearly seen that teachers play an important role in narrowing the gap between the ethnic groups so as to create a united Malaysian. In order to achieve this goal, teachers need to understand and appreciate the cultural diversity among the ethnic groups before they can encourage and inculcate such feelings amongst the students in the classroom. Hence, creating a conducive atmosphere whereby students from all ethnic groups can work together in peace and harmony is the responsibility of the teachers since, as we can see there are many benefits associated with creating a harmonious, culture-friendly environment in the classroom. First, it encourages collaboration, teamwork and cooperative social skills among the students irrespective of their race and ethnics. Besides that, it also creates the feeling and understanding of unity in diversity among students from the diverse ethnic and cultural groups. It also helps the students from different cultural background to be comfortable and respect with each other and in a way, this boosts their self-

esteem. All of this in turn will benefit society on a whole for it helps to develop united Malaysian citizens.

Topic 5.2

Concept, Purpose and Components in the Management of a Culture-Friendly Classroom Environment.

5.2.1 Physical Components

Among the many roles of a teacher is that of creating a positive and supportive classroom environment and one of the components that needs to be taken into consideration is the physical component. Why do teachers have to organize the classroom in such a way? What are the elements that should be considered when you want to organize your classroom so as to optimize learning and create a culture-friendly environment. Of course you are able to answer these questions based on your experience as a teacher and you will realize that there is no one right answer to these questions. However, we can find relevant information and relate them with our experiences to generate ideas which could be suggestions to all these questions. This is necessary for a teacher so as to create a conducive teaching and learning environment in a classroom with students of diverse ethnic groups. This is because, research on the classroom environment has shown that the physical arrangement can affect the behavior of both students and teachers (Savage, 1999, cited in Modul PGSR, 2010)

5.2.2 Concept and Purpose

Physical management concepts does not only involve its infrastructure and physical facilities. It is also the results of the management of the physical environment of the classroom so as to create a conducive learning climate for students from various cultural and social backgrounds. There may be varying views regarding the meaning and purpose of physical environment. For the purpose of this module, let me quote the views by Fred Steele (1973, cited in Modul PGSR, 2010) who mentioned that "the effects of physical settings in a classroom is a setting for social interaction, symbolic identification, growth, security, shelter and pleasure". The statement raised by Steele (1973) was supported by Lambert (1994, cited in Modul PGSR, 2010) who stated that aspects of the physical environment as to who and

where students sit can help in the interaction between students from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

This means that there are some general physical criteria needed to create a culture friendly environment in a classroom. Among some of the criteria that a teacher should give consideration are:

- The arrangement of tables and chairs suitable for students and can be modified
- according to the needs of the activity.
- Have good lighting and ventilation.
- Paint the walls with cheerful colors and soft hues.
- Installing curtains with vibrant color, light and soft.
- Safety guaranteed such as fire plans and fire extinguishers.
- Reading/learning/Multimedia corners

Activity



Learning in the physical environment which is culture-friendly will stimulate students to acquire knowledge effectively.

1. Draw a floor plan of a classroom which you think is "culture- friendly".
2. Based on your readings and discussion with members of your group, answer the following questions.

List down the physical characteristics of a classroom which is conducive for teaching and learning students from diverse ethnic groups.

1. _____

2. _____

4. _____

5. _____

5.2.3 The Role of the Teacher

Creating a conducive physical classroom environment is necessary to encourage participation and cooperation among students from diverse cultural groups in the classroom. Besides, it is also to maintain a positive and productive learning environment (Woolfolk, 2001, cited in Modul PGSR, 2010). Indeed, the physical arrangement of the classroom reflects the teacher's level of professionalism in managing the classroom. The teacher should be aware of the fact that the design of the physical aspect of the classroom leaves a certain impact on the teaching and learning environment and the teacher as the manager is responsible for the consequences. What is the role of a teacher in designing a conducive physical classroom environment with students from diverse ethnic groups? Some of the roles of teachers are as follows:

- i) Sitting arrangement - to enable students from diverse ethnic groups to interact with each other.
- ii) Providing reading materials which are suitable for students from diverse ethnic groups
- iii) Forming groups comprising of students from diverse ethnic groups.



Stop and Reflect

“A well-laid physical arrangement of the classroom optimises teaching and learning.” Based on your experience, discuss your role in designing a conducive physical arrangement of the classroom in achieving optimal teaching and learning.

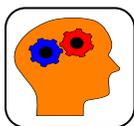
5.2.4 Socio-Emotional Management Strategies

Little research exists on the socio-emotional environment of the classroom (Mill & Romano-White, 1999) and how teacher practices can facilitate the development of emotion regulation in natural settings (Campos et al., 2004). However, within the relationship that a teacher puts in between them and their students, there is a social interaction that bonds them and emotional foundation which enables each party to understand each other (Leonard & Leonard, 2006). Thus, as a teacher, you have a significant role in guiding your students and assisting them in their needs, social

interactions and group dynamics. Certainly, in an attempt to help them, there could be many issues that you might have encountered related to this topic and in addressing these issues, you might have asked yourself many questions. Among them are: what is the importance of socio-emotional environment in the learning progress as well as classroom that you are teaching? How would you implement the socio-emotional environment and what are the perceived impacts? How do you address all these issues? You may have addressed all these issues based on your experience, but it is necessary to have a strong epistemological basis which feeds you with the different schools of thoughts related to classroom management. This topic will discuss some aspects of the socio-emotional needs in the classroom management.

5.2.4 Concept and Purpose of Socioemotional Management

First, let us try to understand the term socio-emotional classroom management. By this it means that set of teaching behaviours by which the teacher develops good interpersonal relationships and a positive socioemotional classroom climate. Socioemotional is a process that consists of variations that occur in an individual's personality, emotions, and relationships with others during one's lifetime (Santrock, 2007 cited in Modul PGSR, 2010). Socioemotional development is the combination of learning diplomacy and truthfulness to interact with individuals or groups in a manner that contributes positively to members of society. The social aspect relates specifically to interaction with people (external). The emotional aspect relates to understanding and properly controlling one's emotions (internal). A proper combination and coordination of social and emotional development is critical to leading a purposeful, fulfilling life. (Virginia A. Gorg,).



Stop and Reflect

“An effective management of socioemotional classroom environment optimises learning.”
Discuss with members of your group.

5.2.5 Development and Management of Socioemotional Environment in the Classroom

The development of socio emotion is important for an individual's well being. According to Woolfolk (1990 cited in Modul PGSR, 2010), motivation or the internal drive of an individual arouses, directs and controls the individual's behaviour. As such, the student's emotions should be managed effectively since it influences the student's ability to control his or her emotions, thoughts and behaviours and thus affects learning in the classroom. Socioemotional development begins with the child's ability to understand and manage his or her own emotions. This enables the child to understand the emotions, needs and views of others. By doing so, the child will be able to develop a strong social relationship with others in the classroom as well as anywhere out of the classroom. The teacher should be sensitive to these needs and thus create a conducive environment to foster the development of socioemotional relationship among students. In the Malaysian context, the role of the teacher is even more challenging whereby teacher should address the socioemotional development of students from various ethnic groups of different cultural background. Thus in an attempt to manage the socioemotional atmosphere of the classroom, it is essential for the teacher to acquire a strong epistemological framework on developmental theories of the children. This enables the teacher to have a better understanding of the students. Among the theories are Bandura's Social learning theories and Erik Erickson's Psychosocial development theories.

Bandura's Social Learning Theory (1987) posits that people learn from one another, via observation, imitation, and modeling. His theory, which is known as observational learning (or modelling) added a social element, arguing that people can learn new information and behaviors by watching other people. According to Bandura, there are three core concepts at the heart of social learning theory. First is the idea that people can learn through observation. Next is the idea that internal mental states are an essential part of this process. Finally, this theory recognizes the fact that even if something has been learned, it does not mean that it will result in a change in behavior.

The next theory that is also useful for the teacher to understand his or her students better is by learning more about Erik Erikson's theory that describes an individual's development throughout the life span. The following chart shows Erik Erikson's stages of psychosocial development in an individual.

Chart 1 : Erikson's Psychosocial Stages Summary Chart (Source : Erikson's Stages of Psychosocial Development from http://psychology.about.com/library/bl_psychosocial_summary.htm, 2012)

Stage	Basic Conflict	Important Events	Outcome
Infancy (birth to 18 months)	Trust vs. Mistrust	Feeding	Children develop a sense of trust when caregivers provide reliability, care, and affection. A lack of this will lead to mistrust.
Early Childhood (2 to 3 years)	Autonomy vs. Shame and Doubt	Toilet Training	Children need to develop a sense of personal control over physical skills and a sense of independence. Success leads to feelings of autonomy, failure results in feelings of shame and doubt.
Preschool (3 to 5 years)	Initiative vs. Guilt	Exploration	Children need to begin asserting control and power over the environment. Success in this stage leads to a sense of purpose. Children who try to exert too much power experience disapproval, resulting in a sense of guilt.
School Age (6 to 11 years)	Industry vs. Inferiority	School	Children need to cope with new social and academic demands. Success leads to a sense of competence, while failure results in feelings of inferiority.
Adolescence (12 to 18 years)	Identity vs. Role Confusion	Social Relationships	Teens need to develop a sense of self and personal identity. Success leads to an ability to stay true to yourself, while failure leads to role confusion and a weak sense of self.
Young Adulthood (19 to 40 years)	Intimacy vs. Isolation	Relationships	Young adults need to form intimate, loving relationships with other people. Success leads to strong relationships, while failure results in loneliness and isolation.
Middle Adulthood (40 to 65 years)	Generativity vs. Stagnation	Work and Parenthood	Adults need to create or nurture things that will outlast them, often by having children or creating a positive change that benefits other people. Success leads to feelings of usefulness and accomplishment, while failure results in shallow involvement in the world.
Maturity(65 to death)	Ego Integrity vs. Despair	Reflection on Life	Older adults need to look back on life and feel a sense of fulfillment. Success at this stage leads to feelings of

			wisdom, while failure results in regret, bitterness, and despair.
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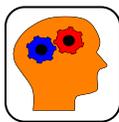
This is just to name a few of the many theories that may assist a teacher to understand the development of the students better. As an example, Erik Erikson's stage theory of psychosocial development contributed to our understanding of personality development throughout the lifespan. Nurturing relationships between young children and adults can create a sense of safety and security that supports children's learning to trust (Erikson, 1950), to regulate emotions (Weinfield, Sroufe, Egeland, & Carlson, 1999; Campos, Frankel, & Camras, 2004), resolve interpersonal conflicts, develop empathy, and learn how to relate to others in socially appropriate ways (Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000; Weinfield et al., 1999). These abilities are generally seen as critical not only for student's social emotional well-being but also for their cognitive development and later success in school (National Scientific Council on the Developing Child, 2004, 2007, 2008, cited in Gloeckler & Niemeyer, 2010). Teachers set the daily emotional tone and climate of their classrooms, thereby influencing children's development of social skills, including the early development of emotion regulation (National Scientific Council on the Developing Child, 2004, 2007, 2008; White & Howe, 1998; Thompson, 2001).

Reviewing both the theories, it is clear that the social and affective domain (emotions) are of utmost importance for the development of social competence (Garner, Jones and Miner, 1994) and learning. It helps young children to identify and understand basic feelings for themselves and others. As for the teacher, an indepth understanding of the students' development is crucial so as to play an effective role in fostering socioemotional development of students in the classroom. The teacher should closely guide the students towards adopting and adapting the desired behaviours in developing a desirable socioemotional atmosphere amongst students of muticultural background.

5.2.6 Roles of the Teacher

There are several ways a teacher can do this. Some of the ways which a teacher can implement in developing the socio emotional environment in the classroom are as follows:.

- i) Establish relationship with each individual based on trust and mutual respect.
- ii) Teachers can help children to understand themselves and others through classroom experiences (the hidden curriculum) and by using activities (discussion, singing, poetry, language scripts, stories, art and craft) which promote social competencies.
- iii) Provide opportunities for social interaction and providing more structures for learning social relationship skills. Teachers can help children attain social competence by looking at the total environment – the social environment, the physical and the content of teaching.
- iv) Create a conducive socio emotional learning environment which is a friendly, non-threatening environment where the children feel that they are supported by both peers and teachers; such environment make the students feel confident, comfortable, appreciated and valued. In addition, they listen to one another and welcome a diverse number of views from their peers from diverse cultural groups.
- v) Teacher as the role model where students of diverse cultural groups can modeled behaviours that are appropriated in the classroom.



Stop and Reflect

Based on your experience, discuss other ways you can help to develop a desirable socioemotional atmosphere amongst students of multicultural background in your classroom.

Here is the list of readings you can read further:

Jones, B. F. (1995). *Comprehensive classroom management: Creating positive learning environments for all students*. Massachuset: Allyn & Bacon.

Woolfolk, A. (2004). *Educational psychology*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon

<http://ecrp.uiuc.edu/v12n1/gloeckler.html>

What is a definition of emotional, personal and social development? (n.d.) Retrieved September 19, 2012, from <http://uk.answers.yahoo.com/question/index?qid=20090608104439AAMUXPv>

A. Gorg, Virginia.(1999-2012). *Definition of social eEmotional development*. Retrieved September 19, 2012, from http://www.ehow.com/about_5042688_definition-social-emotionaldevelopment.html

Cherry, Kendra.(n.d). *Social learning theory, An oOverview of Bandura's social learning theory*.Retrieved on September 20, 2012 from <http://psychology.about.com/od/developmentalpsychology/a/sociallearning.htm>

Gloeckler , Lissy (Phyllis) & Niemeyer, Judith. (2010). *Social-Emotional Environments: Teacher Practices in Two Toddler Classrooms* Retrieved September 20, 2012, from <http://ecrp.uiuc.edu/v12n1/gloeckler.html>

Modul Pensiswazahan Guru Sekolah Rendah, 2010 *Budaya & Pembelajaran*, IPGM

A multicultural –classroom environment.(n.d.) Retrieved September 24, 2012, from <http://www.buzzle.com/articles/creating-a-multicultural-classroom-environment.html>

Topic 5.3	Teaching and Learning Management
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As an experienced teacher, reflect what you understand by management of teaching and learning. What are the aspects you need to consider to ensure a conducive teaching and learning environment? Have you ever given a thought as to how you could manage a classroom so as to create a culture-friendly classroom environment? This topic will discuss the management of teaching and learning by focusing on the concept and roles of teachers in managing teaching and learning in the classroom.

5.3.1 Concept of Teaching and Learning

“Teaching” means how teachers deliver lessons or knowledge to students. It is the process of preparation, implementation and assessment. Teaching is a systematic plan whereby teachers assist students in the learning activities. Learning is the process of building a mental structure and a change of behavior with different capabilities. However, from the cognitive point of view, learning can occur without prompt change in behavior. Mental structural changes occur when there is a change in beliefs, expectations and goals. Santrock (2006, cited in Modul PGSR, 2010) stated that effective teaching depends on two main factors, that is teacher’s professional knowledge and commitment to plan and organise lessons effectively. In fact, there are other characteristics that a teacher that a teacher need to possess in order to ensure an effective teaching and learning process. We shall discuss some of the characteristics of an effective teachers as follows.

5.3.2 Characteristics of Effective Teachers

First, according to Salhah Abdullah (2006, cited in Modul PGSR, 2010) "the teacher as a facilitator plays the role as planners, managers and implementers have guided systematic management. Accurate planning principles should be followed by appropriate delivery principles based on the principles of right action "(P.43).

Besides that, "effective teachers have good command of their subject matter and possess effective teaching skills. They have excellent instructional strategies supported by methods of goal setting, instructional planning, and classroom management. They know how to motivate, communicate, and work effectively with students who have different levels of skills and come from culturally diverse backgrounds. Effective teachers also understand how to use appropriate levels of technology in the classroom. " (Santrock, 2006 cited in Modul PGSR, 2010)

Other than that, effective teachers set appropriate teaching goals. Some of the teaching goals are as follows:

- To deliver information in the form of knowledge
- Enable students to master the learning skills in the various aspects, that is cognitive, affective and psychomotor.
- Assist students to possess and practise values and good attitude.
- Encourage students to think critically and creatively.
- Helping students to be independent.

5.3.3 Concepts

5.3.3.1 Management of Teaching and Learning

Management involves the processes of planning, implementing, evaluating and taking initiative to improve the process.. Management of teaching and learning is related to the following aspects:

- Plan effective teaching and learning for students from different cultural background.
- Implement teaching and teaching as planned and making necessary modifications.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of teaching and learning process

- Take follow-up action based on the evaluation and making necessary changes.



Stop and Reflect

Reflect on your role as a teacher in a multicultural classroom. What are the aspects you need to focus on? Share with your friends

5.3.4 Managing of Teaching and Learning in the Multicultural Classroom

A teacher is also a 'manager' in the teaching learning process. The ability of the teacher to manage the classroom effectively is vital in order to create a conducive teaching and learning environment. Here are some characteristics of an effective teacher who are able to create a conducive and effective teaching and learning environment:

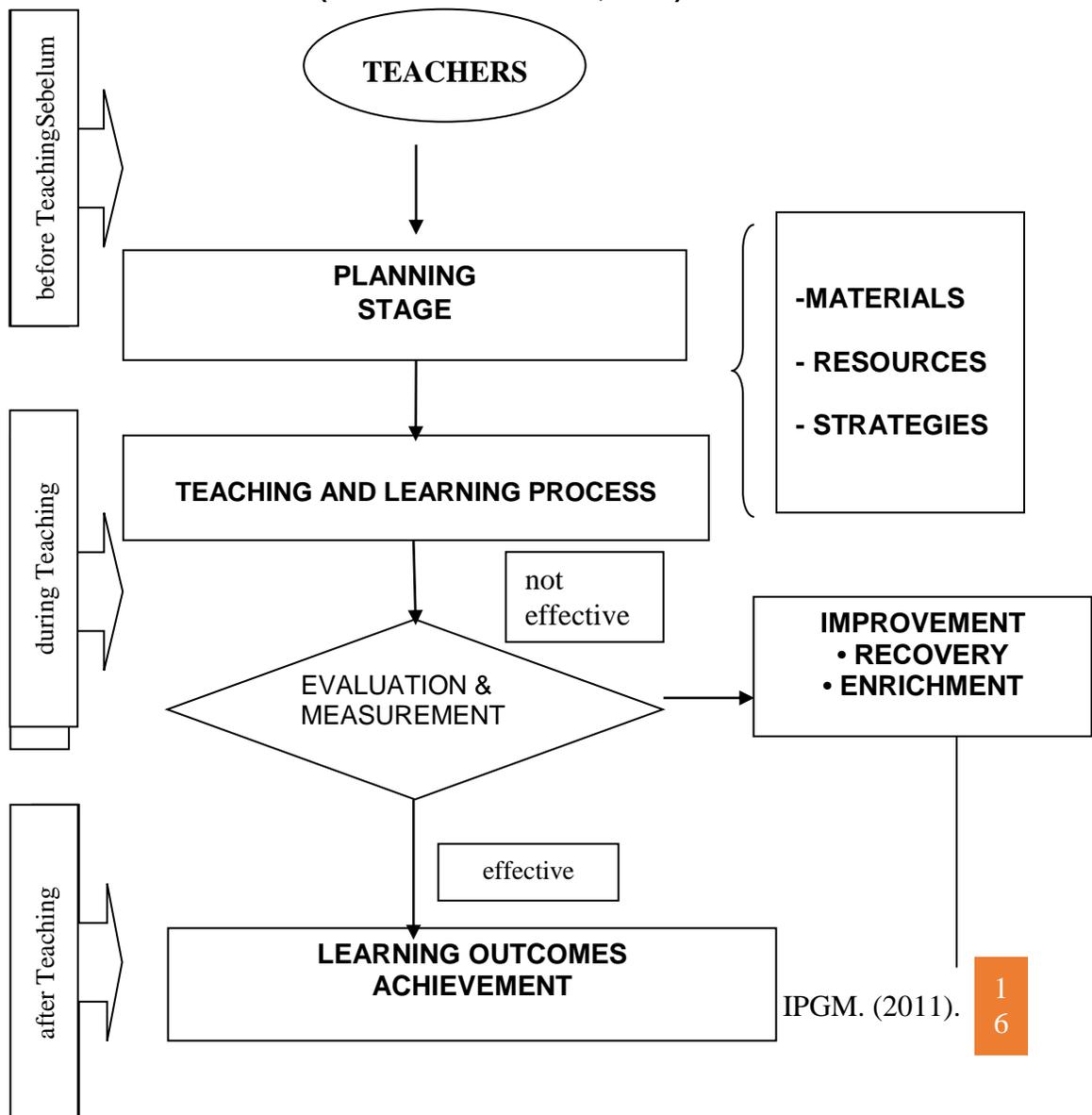
- Stay alert and aware of surrounding situation
- Systematic in planning and evaluating
- Patient in handling students from all backgrounds
- Good time management
- Be prepared to change and flexible
- Effective communication
- Vision oriented

5.3.5 The stages of management of teaching and learning

The stages of the management of teaching and learning are as follows:

- I. Before the teaching and learning process
- II. During the teaching and learning process
- III. After the teaching and learning process

Figure 1: MANAGEMENT OF TEACHING AND LEARNING
(cited in Modul PGSR, 2010)





5.3.6 Before the teaching and learning process

As a teacher who is dealing with multi-cultural students, teachers need to make thorough preparation before starting teaching and learning sessions. Preparation prior to teaching and learning, including planning of teaching in the Daily Lesson Plan includes the following aspects:

- learning outcomes must be accurate and clear
- appropriate teaching methods for students from diverse cultural groups.
- adequate and appropriate teaching resources
- effective teaching aid materials
- steps in the teaching and learning process must be clear

(a) The Use of Teaching Aids

Teaching and learning management begins with the planning and preparation of appropriate teaching aids. The use of effective and appropriate teaching aids is very important to help teachers explain difficult and abstract concepts to students. "The use of teaching aids can help to explain a concept" (Hiebert, Weame & Taber, 1991; Kozma, 1991 cited in Modul PGSR, 2010,). Among the examples of teaching aids that are often used are material, photographs, graphics, mind maps, diagrams, radio, computer, video, flash card, diagrams, newspapers, magazines, audio visual aids, model, prototype or historical materials. However, there are certain characteristics of effective teaching materials, that is the nature, practicality and its

safety to use. The selection of appropriate teaching aids is very important to enable teachers to use them to explain abstract concepts effectively. A creative teacher will adapt teaching aids with the lesson so that students can easily master a complex abstract concept. This is acknowledged by Mayer & Gallini (1990, cited in Modul PGSR, 2010) who argue that "teachers should clearly explain and give examples related to improving the effectiveness of teaching". While Slavin (1994, cited in Modul PGSR, 2010) suggested that "teachers need to provide instruction that may be of interest to students with various teaching methods and teaching aids.

(b) Selection of Teaching Resources

Teachers who are prepared with information from various sources are not only able to give clear explanation to the students but also to make connections between ideas, propose new ideas and challenge students with high order thinking questions. Among the learning resources that can be used are textbooks, reference books, the Internet, information newspapers, magazines, radio and television, journals, prospectus, pamphlets and brochures, research reports, official statistics and informations from interviews and questionnaire. Sources that are accurate, appropriate, and sufficient can challenge students' minds and inspire their interest to understand the subject better. Thus, in the planning stage, it is important for the teacher not only to obtain sufficient information from various sources before starting each lesson but the selection of the teaching and learning resources has to be appropriately done.

5.3.7 During the teaching and learning process

Culturally Relevant Teaching Strategies

As a teacher who is dealing with multi-cultural students, teachers need to make thorough preparation before starting the teaching and learning sessions. The selection of appropriate teaching strategies can also ensure that the delivery of information and implementation of teaching to be more effective, especially activities that involve active interaction of students from different cultures and backgrounds. As such, a teacher needs to give considerations to several aspects of the teaching and learning process so as to create an effective and condusive teaching and learning atmosphere for students from diverse cultures.

Some of the important aspects that need to be given consideration are as follows:

- achieving the learning outcomes
- the use of appropriate assessment procedures
- inculcation of appropriate cultural values
- creating a physically and psychosocially conducive teaching and learning environment for students from diverse cultural background
- practising a good disciplinary procedure based on students from diverse cultural background
- conducting remedial and enrichment classes



Reflect and discuss

Based on your reading and experience, discuss relevant teaching strategies for students from diverse cultural background

5.3.8 After the teaching and learning process

In this context, we shall discuss the necessary steps that need to be taken toward the end of the lesson for further improvement. At this stage of the lesson, the process of assessment, measurement and evaluation has to be carried out by teachers to determine the effectiveness of teaching. Measurement, assessment, and evaluation mean very different things but from the educational point of view, they are somehow related in some ways or others.

Evaluation is perhaps the most complex and least understood of the terms. When we evaluate, what we are doing is engaging in some process that is designed to provide information that will help us make a judgment about a given situation. Generally, any evaluation process requires information about the situation in question. A situation is an umbrella term that takes into account such ideas as objectives, goals, standards, procedures, and so on. When we evaluate, we are saying that the process will yield information regarding the worthiness,

appropriateness, goodness, validity, legality, etc., of something for which a reliable measurement or assessment has been made. (Kizlik, 2012)

Measurement refers to the process by which the attributes or dimensions of some physical object are determined. One exception seems to be in the use of the word measure in determining the IQ of a person (Kizlik, 2012)

According to D. Stufflebeam's (1972, cited in Modul PGSR, 2010) "assessment is a process of defining, obtaining and providing useful information to make further consideration. Gay (1985, cited in Modul PGSR, 2010) further added that assessment is a systematic process of collecting and analyzing data to determine whether any of the objectives have been achieved.

This means that assessment is carried out to :

- track the progress of students' mastery and identify the strengths and weaknesses of students in learning to plan for enrichment and remedial activities
- identify the effectiveness of teaching that allows teachers to improve teaching
- take action to address the weaknesses & improve the teaching and learning process.

Formative assessment is carried out after the completion of each chapter whereas summative assessment is carried out holistically at the end of the semester to evaluate students' achievement. Assessment of students' performance is vital because it allows teachers to determine the effectiveness of the teaching strategies for the purpose of improvement. Overall assessment of the students is made possible through quantitative and qualitative data measurement. Measurement is a systematic process to obtain quantitative information to determine students' achievement. The main purpose of measurement is to quantify academic achievement of students in learning and making improvements to the teaching

methods. There are several measurement tools in the teaching and learning process such as monthly tests, quizzes, exams, interview students/co-workers, questionnaires, checklists, anecdotal records, rating scales and sosiogram. The selection and use of appropriate measurement tool in the evaluation process will give the teacher a useful information to determine the effectiveness of the teaching and learning process. In fact, accurate measurement tool in the evaluation process can provide valuable information to teachers to measure students' learning and evaluate the effectiveness of teaching.

As a result of accurate evaluation procedures, improvement can be made by teachers. This includes improvement in the teaching approaches, strategies and methods. Mastery teaching approaches for example, emphasizes that teachers must ensure that the students are able to master a skill before new skills are delivered. Based on the students' results, teachers can reflect on their teaching methods and approaches to review it's effectiveness. In fact, after the lesson, teachers should set aside time to reflect on their teaching performance. This is necessary to enable teachers to review the effectiveness of the teaching strategies, use of teaching aids, information and learning resources, student achievement and the effectiveness of teacher-student communication.



- i) Use the internet to get more information about the management of teaching and learning in a multicultural class. List down the features of an effective teaching and learning process other than those discussed.
- ii) Based on your experience, discuss these features in relation to a classroom with students from different cultural background.

5.3.9 Summary

We have reached the end of the topic. Let's make a summary about what you have learned.

- Teaching is a systematic plan whereby teachers assist students in the learning activities.
- Learning is a process of building a mental structure change behavior of different capabilities.

- The teacher as a facilitator plays the role as planners, managers and Implementers.
- Some characteristics of effective teachers are as follows: They have good command of their subject matter, possess effective teaching skills and excellent instructional strategies supported by methods of goal setting, instructional planning, and classroom management, able to motivate, communicate, and work effectively with students who have different levels of skills and come from culturally diverse backgrounds. Effective teachers also understand how to use appropriate levels of technology in the classroom, able to manage time well and have the skills of the 21st century.
- The management of teaching and learning involves several processes, that is planning, implementation, evaluation and follow-up activities which include remedial and enrichment.
- The stages of the management of teaching and learning are as follows:
 - Before the teaching and learning process
 - During the teaching and learning process
 - After the teaching and learning process
- Assessment, measurement and evaluation are of great importance in the teaching and learning process for the purpose of improvement of the students' learning and teachers' teaching.



Here is the list of readings you can read further

Santrock J.W (2006) *Educational psychology: A tool for effective teaching*(3rd ed).New York: Mc Graw – Hill

Burden, P.R. & Byrd, D.M. (1994). *Methods for effective teaching*. Boston: Allyn Bacon.

Good, T.L.& Brophy, J.E.(1997). *Looking in classrooms*. New York: Addison Wesley Educational Inc.

Gredler, M.E. (2001). *Learning and instruction. Theory into practice.*(4th Ed.) New Jersey: Merrill Prentice Hall.

Bob, Kizlik (2012). Measurement, Evaluation and Assessment in Education. Retrieved October 15, 2012, from <http://www.adprima.com/measurement.htm>

Modul Pensiswazahan Guru Sekolah Rendah, 2010 Budaya & Pembelajaran, IPGM

Topic 5.4	Culture and Indigeneous Relevant Pedagogy
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This topic discusses the cultural and indigeneous (The Orang Asli) relevant pedagogy. The scope of the discussion covers a variety of teaching and learning strategies which are suitable for use in a multicultural classroom. In addition, the teacher's role in addressing the challenges in selecting culturally relevant pedagogy for various ethnic groups in the classroom are also discussed. However this topic will discuss the pedagogy which are relevant for all students, may they come from the various races or belong to the indigenous group without any specific mention about any particular group.

5.4.1 Concept of Culture and Indegenous Relevant Pedagogy

As an effective teacher in the 21st century, it is important for us educators to understand the concept of students' diversity (individual differences) and culture relevant pedagogy. According to Gloria Ladson-Billings (1994, cited in Modul

PGSR, 2010) culture-relevant pedagogy can be defined as “a pedagogy that empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically by using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes.” Malaysia as a multicultural nation requires teachers’ sensitivity to create a culturally responsive teaching as described by Gay (2000) who defined “culturally responsive teaching as using the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, and performance styles of diverse students to make learning more appropriate and effective for them; it teaches to and through the strengths of these students”. The views proposed by Gay(2000) remind teachers to be more sensitive when dealing with students with different cultural background so as to create a multi-cultural conducive environment for all students from the diverse cultural background.

5.4.2 Purpose of Culture and Indegenous Relevant Pedagogy

In the implementation of culture relevant pedagogy among multicultural students. teachers need to be sensitive to the socio cultural elements. This is consistent with the view that culture relevant pedagogy “calls for instruction to be made relevant to the student by finding an intersection between (a) the student's knowledge and skills and (b)the school's knowledge and skills by engaging the student in active investigations so she can discover the connections between what she knows and what teachers want her to know " (Lee 1992, cited in Modul PGSR, 2010). Culture relevant teaching enhances understanding and collaboration between teachers and students so that the acquisition of knowledge, skills and attitude can be holistically integrated in order to achieve the goals of the National Education Philosophy.



Stop and Reflect

Interpret the definition given by Gloria Ladson-Billings and discuss with your friends. Relate what you understand with your experience as a teacher

A teachers who serves in a school with students from different cultural backgrounds, should play the role of an intermediate between. Teachers teaching in different cultural situations should use the features of cultural differences,

background, knowledge and varying experiences of students to strengthen and enhance the teaching and learning process.

5.4.3 Characteristic of Culture and Indigenous Relevant Pedagogy

Once we understand the concept and purpose of the culturally relevant pedagogy, discuss with your partner characteristics of culturally relevant pedagogy.

Compare the features you provide with the views proposed by Guittierez (1994, cited in Modul PGSR, 2010) and Ladson-Billings (1994, cited in Modul PGSR, 2010) as follows:

- i. Learning is more effective when students understand the knowledge, concepts, procedures, skills and strategies that they have learned in an environment where there is an integrated multicultural knowledge, without prejudice to the other culture.
- ii. It is important for students to understand their different cultural backgrounds and create active learning across cultures, in order to achieve unity among cultural diversity.
- iii. Apart from helping students to gain the knowledge, culturally relevant pedagogy is to motivate students toward contextual learning, taking into account the experiences of different students.

5.4.4 Management strategies of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy

If you encounter students from diverse cultures, you would need to take note of the diversity/individual differences in the classroom. Teachers need to plan and organize teaching taking into consideration several aspects as follows:

5.4.4.1 Methods and Techniques of Teaching and Learning

Organizing pedagogy in a multicultural classroom should be seen as "an art rather than a science" (cited in Modul PGSR, 2010). Thus, teachers must acquire the art and craft of a culturally relevant pedagogy so as to create a conducive teaching and learning environment for the multicultural students. Teachers must also think

positively that all students can learn and achieve success. Teachers can also connect and communicate with the parents of students of different cultures. In addition, teachers need to be friendly with their students and are always willing to share information, knowledge and skills with students of various cultures. For classes with multi-cultural students, teachers need to diversify teaching methods and techniques based on the concept of individual differences. For example teachers are encouraged to use the following methods and techniques:

i. Collaborative and cooperative learning methods

Teachers who use student centered strategy, encourage students to discuss with members of multicultural groups. For example, in a discussion group composed of members like Hassan, Yoo Chin and Kumaran, they are encouraged to interact and work together in an atmosphere of mutual respect. Group presentation is an indication of the existence of team spirit. Teachers need to facilitate the group in order to create multi-cultural harmony. Collaborative and cooperative elements need to be nurtured during primary school level in order to create a healthy learning environment which can integrate pupils of various cultures in the classroom.

ii. Discovery Method

Teachers can also plan lessons using the discovery method. For example, a discussion of the topic on “Elements of Multicultural Society”. The teacher can allocate the different topics about the different cultural groups to members of another cultural group. Fauzi and Rahimah are assigned the topic on Chinese Culture, Ah Kim and Leng Hai are asked to find the elements of the Indian Culture whereas Selva and Saroja are given the topic about Malay Culture. Cross-cultural strategy requires students to explore and develop the knowledge and experience of other cultural groups. Such strategy encourage students to mingle with each other and by obtaining information about each other’s cultural practises, they will be able to understand each other better and this will lead to a harmonious living among members of different cultural background.

iii. Project

This method requires each group to comprise of students of all races and cultures. Priority should be given to topics that symbolize cultural diversity. For example students can be asked to find informations on the topic related to marriage customs. Members of the group which consist of students from different races can share experiences and informations based on the different communities. This way, students gain further knowledge about the different cultural practises. Thus it is important for teachers to avoid putting students from the same cultural background in the same group.

5.4.4.2 Use Reading Material for Culturally Relevant Pedagogy

Teachers should accept the concept of individual differences in teaching and learning. For example when teaching reading skills teachers select reading materials that are culture-friendly. This is important because the selection of reading materials that are culture biased may lead to a conflict among students. An effective reading program must bridge cultural differences and give students space to think positively about cultural differences. As a teacher who is sensitive to this issue, must:

- Choose reading materials that can be associated with the experience of every student in your classroom.
- Able to use appropriate teaching and learning strategies.
- Sensitive to the use of statements that may offend students' cultural understanding
- Create or find appropriate reading materials for all students with different cultural background.
- Encourage students to read and understand the cross-cultural materials.

5.4.4.3 Culturally Relevant Pedagogy Using Computer-Based Learning

Technological developments has a great influence on teaching and learning. Integration of information technology into teaching and learning should also take into account the individual differences, especially in terms of social and cultural background. Teachers should be aware that technology-based teaching and learning is particularly helpful if the teacher can plan appropriate steps which are

suitable for students from different cultural background. Computer-based learning environments should display culture-friendly elements.

The following are suggestions that can be considered by the teacher:

(a) The development of technology can be used by teachers and students because it can transform teaching and learning patterns. An effective teacher will use technology to improve teaching effectiveness. Computer-based materials should be appropriate to the cultural background of students.

(b) All students should be given opportunities to explore the internet for getting relevant informations and teachers need to adopt individual and cultural differences in a positive way.

Thus, as a teacher, you have to acquire and master the technological skills to enable you manage students from different cultural background. For example, before you bring any softcopies of teaching and learning materials into classroom, you need to check the content first, in order to make sure that it does not affect a student culturally or create controversy among them.

The final aspect that you need to consider about the culturally relevant pedagogy is an effective teacher communication.



Reflect and discuss

Try to work with a partner and list the words or sentences that are not suitable for a particular race.

Bil	Ethnic group	Word or sentence which is less suitable for use during teaching & learning

Generally teachers should use language that is easily understood by all students. Teachers should also give the opportunity to students to voice out their opinions. Teachers should correct pronunciation/accent. Teachers must not imitate/laugh at the students' accent/pronunciation. Teachers should also try to learn and understand the different native languages of the students



Exercise/Activity

In ensuring the effectiveness of culturally relevant pedagogy, teachers should use a variety of teaching methods. Choose any of the methods and explain its effectiveness?

5.4.5 Summary

We have reached the end of the topic. Let's make a summary of what you have learned.

- Teachers can create a culture and indigenous relevant pedagogy which is similar to “culturally responsive teaching” by using the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, and performance styles of diverse students to make learning more appropriate and effective for them; it teaches to and through the strengths of these students”.
- One of the features of effective learning is infusing knowledge, concepts, procedures, skills and strategies an integrated manner to suit the needs of students from multi-cultural background without prejudice.

- Among the teaching methods/techniques that are suitable for culture relevant pedagogy include cooperative teaching strategies, discovery method and project.
- Integration of information technology into teaching and learning should also take into account individual differences, especially in terms of social and cultural differences.



Reading text and reference list are given below

Here is the list of readings you can read further:

Gay, G. (2000). *Culturally Responsive Teaching: Theory, Research, & Practice*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Gredler, M.E. (2001). *Learning and instruction. Theory into practice. 4th Edition*. New Jersey: Merrill Prentice Hall.

Burden, P.R. & Byrd, D.M. (1994). *Methods for effective teaching*. Boston: Allyn Bacon.

Good, T.L.& Brophy, J.E.(1997). *Looking in Classrooms*. New York: Addison Wesley Educational Inc.

Modul Pensiswazahan Guru Sekolah Rendah, 2010 Budaya & Pembelajaran, IPGM.

Montgomery,W.(2001). Creating culturally responsive, inclusive classrooms. *Teaching Exceptional Children, Vol.33(4) pp 4-9*.

Topic 5.5	Pedagogy Combined Classes
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Reflect on your personal experience related to teaching a combined classes. For example, preparing a lesson plan to teach the combined classes. What are the common features of combined classes pedagogy?

Let us discuss ways to organize a lesson in the combined classes.

5.5.1 History and Concept of Combined Classes

Each student in the country should be given the opportunity to acquire education in line with the democratization of education. Since a large number of schools in the rural areas have less number of students, combined classes are being held. In addition, the number of teachers in these schools are minimal and therefore, there is a need to teach more than one class at any given time.

The history of combined classes is dated back to British colonial rule in the country. The implementation of combined classes is as a result of several conditions like minimal number of teachers, students and inadequate basic facilities such as classrooms and blackboards.

5.5.2 The concept Combined Classes

Combined classes refer to classes in primary schools containing pupils who are of almost the same age group, for example year one and two, year three and four and year five and six .

Combined classes can be defined "as a form of teaching in which a teacher teaches students comprising of several grades or more than one grade in a classroom." (UNESCO, 1988, cited in Modul PGSR, 2010).

Reflect

Discuss with your partner the characteristics of the combined classes.

5.5.3 Features of Combined Classes

- Teaching and learning strategies are different from regular classes
- Combined classes exist only in the primary school.
- Students of different ages and years are combined in the same class.
- Number of students is less than 10 and thus, a normal class is not possible.



Teachers teach more than one year because the allocation of teachers is in accordance with the number of students.

- Teaching and learning strategies are different from the regular classroom.

You should know that organizing combined classes requires planning and a skillful implementation on the part of the teacher. "Multi-tasking" and teacher's skills are necessary to create an effective teaching and learning atmosphere.

5.5.4 Pedagogy for Combined Classes

Teacher needs to be sensitive to the concept of individual difference and students' cultural diversity in selecting an appropriate pedagogy. This is because their perception, imagination, enthusiasm and concentration vary even though they are in the same age group. Thus, these students need to be divided into small groups. The principles of the group breakdown are as follows:

- (i) Group Of Same Ability
- (ii) Group of Multiple Abilities
- (iii) The Same School Year
- (iv) Social Group
- (v) Individual Group

i) Group of the Same Ability

A group of the same ability is known as academic group. Mathematics and language are suitable subjects to be taught to this group. Teachers observe and record students' achievements in the teaching and learning activities, and then carefully divide the students into groups according to their abilities. By doing this, it is more likely that there will be more average students than excellent and weak ones. However, teachers should be more concerned with the needs of the weak students.



Reflect and Think

Discuss how you can organize teaching sessions based on groups according to students' abilities

ii) Multiple Ability Groups

This group consists of mixed ability students. If students are divided into multiple ability groups, in every group there will be students who are capable in many activities. Some are good in reading, others in drawing, some are writers and some are active in practical work. Intelligent students can help students who are lagged behind. Usually this group are assigned to carry out a project. Groups with multi ability students have the ability to produce a successful project work. Home work is prepared according to student's abilities.

iii) Groups According to the Same School Year

Teachers teach according to the school year. While the teacher teaches one class, the other class will be assigned with relevant teaching and learning activities. Each class has its own group:

- slow
- average
- intelligent

iv) Social Group

This group is different from the multiple ability group. This group is formed based on the students' ability to adapt themselves. The students are allowed to choose their own group. Among the activities are games, music lessons, drama or education-oriented recreation and relaxation.

v) Individual Group

This method can be used when the students in all groups are engaged in the learning activities. Teachers can take the opportunity to guide them individually.



Use the internet to get more information about combined classes. Share the informations with your friends.

5.5.5 Combined classes Lesson Plan

5.5.5.1 Syllabus .

Teachers involved in the combined classes should be aware that the syllabus provided by the Curriculum Development Centre is to be used in a normal class. Syllabus needs to be modified based on the requirements of the pupils in the combined classes. For example, teachers teaching Years 4 and 5 should study the content of the syllabus for both the years and make adjustments for each subject that can be taught simultaneously. (see Daily Lesson Plan, cited in Modul PGSR, 2010)

Subjects of the same topic can be taught simultaneously according to the principles of combined classes. However, teachers need to modify the schedule so that the subject can be taught simultaneously. But if two different topics are taught at one time, the teaching methods should be based on groups

TIME USE	THE PRIMARY /	SCHOOL YEAR
Time	Year 2	Year 3
15 minutes	Teaching	Students do their own work
15 minutes	Students do their own work	Teaching

Note: This method is practised when combined skills cannot be implemented

Cited from : BPG Modul (2007).

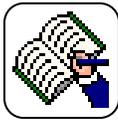
a) it is a reference for daily lesson preparations.

b) it can determine the progress of a class in a variety of subjects.

c) it is a guide on the progress and performance of a student.

- d) it serves as a record to review the tasks that has or has not been accomplished according to the yearly plan.
- e) It is a guide for other teachers who take over the class.

Daily Lesson Plan has always been considered to serve as an important reference for the preparation of daily lessons but gives more emphasis on a holistic approach and are inter-related for both the combined classes.



Exercise

Based on your experience, which of the factors (as described above) contribute to your success in the pedagogy of combined classes? Have there been any weaknesses? How did you overcome those weaknesses?

5.5.6 Summary

We have reached the end of the topic. Let's summarize the key points in this topic.:

- Combined classes refer to classes in primary schools containing pupils who are of almost the same age group, for example year one and two, year three and four and year five and six.
- Some of the characteristics of combined classes are, the class exists in primary school, pupils of different ages are combined in the same teaching and learning session; enrollment of less than 10 students and thus, not possible for a normal class to be opened, teachers teach more than one school year since the allocation of teachers is according to the number of students and finally, teaching and learning strategies are different from the regular classroom.
- The principles breakdown into groups are as follows: groups based on equal ability: groups of various ability, groups of the same school years, social groups and individual groups
- Daily Lesson Plan is an important record for teachers as a reference for daily.



Here is the list of readings you can read further

Arends, R.I. (2001). *Learning To Teach*. Boston : McGraw Hill.

Anthony Candia, (1989), *Pengurusan Bilik Darjah Dalam Konteks Kelas Bercantum*.

Asmah bt. Hj Ahmad, (1989), *Pedagogi 2*, Siri Pendidikan Logman. Bahagian Pendidikan Guru.(2007).

Modul Kelas Bercantum. Putrajaya.

Kementerian Pelajaran malaysia, (1982), *Buku Panduan Khas Kelas Bercantum Kurikulum Baru Sekolah Rendah*.

Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia, (1980 - pindaan, 1982), Pusat Perkembangan Kurikulum, Kementerian Pelajaran Malaysia, *Panduan Kelas Bercantum*.

Modul Pensiswazahan Guru Sekolah Rendah, 2010 Budaya & Pembelajaran, IPGM

Topic 5.6	Socio-linguistic
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In this topic, you will be exposed to the role of language in teaching and learning in the classroom. In addition, this topic also address the diversity of existing languages

in Malaysia as well as the teacher's role in bringing together students from different cultures and languages.

5.6.1 Role of Language in Multicultural Society

Teachers use language to convey his teachings. Teachers also use language to guide and advise students. Malaysia is a country with people from different ethnic groups. Thus, teachers need to understand the background of their students especially the cultural factors that influence students' behavior whether verbal or non-verbal conduct. Furthermore, the use of language is very closely related to the cultural background of pupils, particularly where students grew up and live their lives. The language spoken by a man is a gift from God to humanity because human language is a way they expressed and present their views.

Thus, language plays an important role in society. In the context of Malaysia's multiracial and plural society, the Malay Language is the official language spoken by the people of Malaysia. However, Malaysia has a wide variety of ethnic languages each carrying its own cultural identity. Although, the Malay Language is the official language which serves as the medium of communication among the various races in Malaysia, the multi-ethnic groups of Malaysia are allowed to speak their own language without any restrictions.

5.6.2 Importance of the Use of one Language as a Medium of Instruction

Malaysia has a multi-ethnic, multi-lingual and multi-cultural society and this is the biggest challenge to the country in building a united people. The national leaders saw language as an important tool to unite the people of the nation. Even though there are no restrictions on the use of the mother tongue of all ethnic groups, there has been a realization of the need to use a common language for the whole nation. What is the importance of the use of a common language as a medium of instruction to a country like Malaysia? Cheeseman (1946) Report found that in an English class at a school, there are various ethnic pupils who speak almost eleven languages. If these students do not master the same language as the medium of instruction, the teacher certainly face difficulties in their teaching and in guiding students in the acquisition of knowledge. A bigger difficulty will be to unite them.

Historical events have proved that the differences in language and cultural differences may lead to a segregation of the people in the nation and this will eventually lead to disaster as in the 13th May incident. Thus, teachers play an important role in realizing the national agenda of achieving unity. This national agenda should of course start in school. As discussed earlier, the teacher can take steps toward creating a conducive classroom environment by considering all the necessities of a harmonious classroom environment.



Stop and reflect

What do you understand about the use of one language as the medium of instruction? What is your role as a teacher to help unify students through this concept?

5.6.3 Role of the Teacher in Sociolinguistic Aspects

Before we proceed with the discussion of the teacher's role in the sociolinguistic aspect, we have to first understand the term sociolinguistic. According to Claire (1997, cited in Modul PGSR, 2010) "sociolinguistic is a word used to describe the appropriateness of language in different contexts. In other words, sociolinguistics is the study of how situational factors such as cultural contexts and setting of a speech event affect the choice of what should be said. This means that the ability to adjust one's speech to fit the situation in which it is said is called sociolinguistic competence and without this, even the most perfect grammatical utterances can convey a meaning entirely different from that which the speaker intended". Thus, what a student voices out from the context of one culture may not be appropriate in another culture. This may lead to misunderstanding and can cause a breakdown in the communication between students from diverse cultural background.

Thus, teachers play a very important role in creating awareness regarding sociolinguistic competence among students. That is why, some of the teaching strategies that have been discussed earlier, whereby teachers form groups comprising of multilanguage, multiracial and multicultural students can lead to

raising awareness and sociolinguistic competence among students. Besides that, the use of one language as the official language would also need teachers to enhance sociolinguistic competence among the students.

Thus, one of the teacher's role is to organize various activities of language, literature and culture among students. Activities can be done in the classroom or outside the classroom during the extra-curricular activities to uphold the national language and at the same time inserting elements of the cultural heritage of other ethnic groups in the teaching and learning process. For example, using the Iban ethnic folklore in teaching language and using Kadazan Dusun ethnic songs in teaching and learning music. In fact, many ethnic traditional games can be used as an approach of "games based learning" in teaching and learning. The use of various elements of culture in teaching and learning not only foster understanding among students of multi-ethnic, but it will encourage students to learn and master the vocabulary of ethnic languages of their friends. If teachers are able to pursue and administer this effectively, every ethnic group will not feel left out. At the same time, it helps narrow the gap between ethnic groups and thus create better understanding between ethnic groups.



Exercise/ Activity

Based on your experience, how you can enhance sociolinguistic competencies among students of various races and cultures?

5.6.4 Summary

- This topic discusses the sociolinguistic aspects of integrating students from diverse ethnic groups.
- The need to enhance sociolinguistic competency among students is due to the fact that Malaysia is a multiracial country with multiple languages.
- The Malay language being the official language is one of the tools for teachers to enhance sociolinguistic competency among students.
- Teachers need to play an effective role in organizing various activities of language, literature and culture including extra cocurricular activities in order to bridge the sociolinguistic gap among students from different cultural background.



Here is the list of readings you can read further

Bahagian Pendidikan Guru.(2007). Modul Kelas Bercantum. Putrajaya.

Modul Pensiswazahan Guru Sekolah Rendah, 2010 Budaya & Pembelajaran, IPGM.

Muhamad Kamarul Kabilan & Zaharah Hassn.(2005). Readings on ethnic relations in a multicultural society. Serdang: Universiti Putra Malaysia.

Woolfolk,A. (2004). Educational Psychology. Boston: Allyn & Bacon

Topic 5.7	Culture-Based Assessment
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Think about your experience as a teacher in a multicultural school. How did you plan and implement the evaluation process for a class consisting of students from various ethnic groups? What are the aspects you need to take into account when preparing a test for your class? This topic will discuss the planning needed to perform culture-based assessment. This includes the concept of culture-based assessment, the characteristics of culture-based testing, the principles that should be taken into account and appropriate assessment strategies for a multicultural classroom.

5.7.1 Concept and Purpose of Culture-Based Assessment

i. Concept of Culture-Based Assessment

Assessment refers to a process of obtaining useful information to make judgments about further action. In other words, assessment is a systematic process to obtain information in making decisions on actions to be taken in the future. Meanwhile, according to Hall (1959, cited in Modul PGSR, 2010), culture is a set pattern experienced by individuals as a way to act, feel, and do something. Erickson (1997, cited in Modul PGSR, 2010) further added that cultural attributes associated with education are explicit (such as human habits) and implicit (such as values, assumptions and beliefs). So culture-based assessment means that the assessment performed by the teacher to gather information in decision-making, should take into account students' cultural diversity so that decisions made are valid and reliable. In fact, culture-based evaluation plays an increasingly important role in education. Collection of data about the knowledge and skills of students by using appropriate assessment tools/techniques taking into consideration the students' cultural diversities is crucial in order to obtain valid results.

ii. Purpose of Culture-Based Assessment

Teachers need to plan culture-based assessment based on the sensitivity of students from the different cultural backgrounds.

The focus of the evaluation should not discriminate against anyone and at the same time is able to make decisions about the student's progress as well as to identify or classify students according to their abilities. In addition, this assessment aims to provide feedback on the strengths and weaknesses of teaching and learning and the development of educational programs.

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Generally, the culture-based assessment aims to:

- (a) gather information for the development, diagnosis and further action
- (b) evaluate the use of authentic and alternative procedures
- (c) acquire data about learning opportunities for all students
- (d) collect information on whether it will take into consideration the linguistic and cultural relevance
- (e) determine the need of appropriate language for the formal assessment
- (f) reduce the bias in traditional assessment practices



Stop and reflect

As a teacher have you ever thought about culture-based evaluation? Discuss the importance of culture-based evaluation among students from different cultural background.

5.7.2 The Role of Teachers in Providing Culture-Based Assessment

Teachers need to have the ability in designing culture-based assessment tools that can provide opportunities for students to demonstrate their competence in a variety of ways based on local conditions, including the knowledge and skills related to the understanding of traditional cultural practices. Furthermore, teachers should take into account a variety of problem-solving skills in assessing the learning potential of the students under their care and provide appropriate opportunities for students to improve themselves. The teacher's role is to address the cultural issues when they teach and develop appropriate evaluation tools. Therefore, it can be said that

culture is not only affecting the daily practices (patterns of behavior, traditions, habits or customs) but also the way students understand and perceive cultural issues in the teaching and learning process. This is particularly important for teachers as the basis of teaching and learning and in designing the assessment tools.



Stop and reflect

Based on your experience, describe your contribution in ensuring a culture-based evaluation. Did you encounter any difficulties and how did you overcome those difficulties?

5.7.3 Principles of Culture-Based Assessment

Among the essential principles of culture-based assessment includes:

- (a) **Assessment should be based on students' learning.** It must play a positive role in developing students learning experience.
- (b) **Assessment should be able to portray the individual differences in learning.** It should be based on objectives so that student can demonstrate their achievements based on the learning outcomes in various ways. In this context, content modification should represent students' culture, students' background, major languages, family and community. Content knowledge and essential skills should be integrated across all subjects and all the time. Thus, the tasks should be based on activities, cooperative learning strategies and inquiry-based.
- (c) **Evaluation should be fair to all students.**

5.7.4 Important Characteristics of Culture-Based Assessment

We should be aware that even the most knowledgeable teachers may not necessarily be able to identify culture-relevant elements in the teaching and learning process or even design a culture-based assessment tools. As such, teachers must be sensitive to the fact that there are several characteristics that need to be given

emphasis when designing the assessment tools to accommodate the needs of students from diverse cultural backgrounds.

In the context of culture-based assessment, formative assessment that is designed or constructed should revolve around the same context or issues as in teaching and learning with the purpose of gathering data to assess the effectiveness of teaching. Besides that, the assessment tools design should focus on matters that are not sensitive to students from any cultural background. In fact, teachers should not create any kind of cultural sensitivity or biasness in the assessment procedures or even in any of the items.

One of the important characteristics that can affect the performance of students is the language used in the assessment tool. Language has a great influence on the way students respond to tasks.



Stop and reflect

Based on your experience, explain the assessment tools that you designed in your classroom.. Discuss other characteristics of a culture-based assessment that you have considered in designing assessment procedures in your classroom.

5.7.5 Types of Culture-Based Assessment

In a culture-friendly classroom, teachers need to use continuous and systematic evaluation to assess abilities, interests, attitudes, and social skills of pupils. The information obtained from such continuous and systematic evaluation will provide a basis for making instructional decisions and give meaning to what to teach and how to teach. Furthermore, assessment process can create pressure on the students. However, if students are given the opportunity to be involved in the assessment process, they can reflect on their progress and provide a new understanding that cannot be given by an adult.

Culture-friendly assessment includes the following:

i) Daily observations of students' behavior, learning and social encounters in the Classrooms situations

Observations can be made through a check list, record, or card to enable teachers to record observations of student behavior in a consistent and meaningful way. For example, teachers can use class names as an easy way to record daily observations. Teachers can create a column to identify projects, activities or behavior that they would like to observe.

ii) Portfolio Assessment

Pupils and teachers can choose a sample that reflects the diversity of tasks and students abilities that need to be assessed. Teachers, students and family members can make students reflect on what has been implemented, the level of their abilities and areas which need to be improved.

iii) Writing Journal

Writing journals provide an opportunity for students to share personal insight about things like literature in different cultural contexts to inform, clarify and explain the society. For example, teachers can assess the learning journal in which students record personal matters based on the characters in the literature they read. They can build an understanding of the character and this gives them the freedom to write about the characters and share with friends.

iv) Project

Project gives students the opportunity to contribute ideas according to their abilities. This type of assessment is good for students from different cultural backgrounds with individual difference because they are able to accomplish the task according to their own pace and readiness. They are also able to explore topics of their interest based on the topics of multicultural literature. They can choose to write a report or prepare an oral presentation or create drawings to illustrate key concepts hidden in the topics chosen.

v) Teacher-designed tests based on Teaching

Great attention should be given to cognitive style and academic skills of all students. For example, teachers can design a test to formulate appropriate questions for assessing items of knowledge or students' achievement in specific content areas in the culture-friendly curriculum. In other words, the test should be "culturally loaded" taking into consideration the culture of all students. The language used should be understood by all and not biased to the dominant groups of students. Instructions of the test should take into account the basic cultural and linguistic factors of students from all cultural backgrounds and students need to feel that a particular language and its culture is an asset not a liability in the assessment process.

vi) Student's Self-Assessment

Students can respond to questions about their learning regularly in teacher-pupil conferences. Portfolios can be used during the conference. For example, teachers show the student's work/assignments, discuss and students evaluate their own progress.

vii) Teacher Self-Assessment

Self-assessment is an important part of determining teaching effectiveness. Teachers need to ask himself/herself about the selection of behavior and teaching strategies, the effectiveness and relevance of cultural elements in their lessons and their respond to various cultural issues in the teaching and learning process in the classroom.

5.7.6 Summary

The topic above discusses some important aspects such as the following:

- There has been challenges in the assessment process but a greater challenge is related to appropriate teaching strategies and the development of teaching and learning.
- Culture-friendly process are ways that can be used to evaluate students without affecting its validity and reliability when making a decision.

- The type of assessment discussed can reduce bias elements against a particular ethnic group and suggestions posed by the teacher should be considered when preparing a formal or an informal assessment.
- If the curriculum is culture-friendly with relevant content for students, there will not be much problem when designing the assessment tools for students.
- We will succeed if we use all our resources and manpower to do the best for our students who are at risk and if we do justice to them despite their diverse cultural background.

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