

PERCEPTIONS OF SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS
REGARDING THE NEED TO DEVELOP THE INFORMATION
SKILLS OF THE FORM SIX STUDENTS

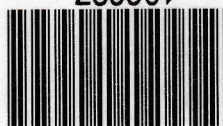
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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to describe the perceptions of secondary school teachers regarding the need to develop the information skills of the Form Six students. A survey study was conducted to achieve their purpose. The secondary school teachers were randomly selected to participate in the study. Each respondent was asked to complete a questionnaire which consisted of ten items on the perceptions regarding the need to develop the research skills of the Form Six students and ten items to measure their degree of preference towards the teaching of the research skills. Findings from the study showed that secondary school teachers believes that there is a critical need to develop the research skills of the Form Six students. The study also discovered that secondary school teachers have positive attitudes towards the teaching of research skills and believes that the best way to develop the research skills of the Form Six students is to integrate them within the content.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

One of the main challenges in Malaysia's Vision 2020 is the challenge that involves the expansion of learner's minds as well as the acquisition of knowledge and skills (Ungku Aziz, 1994). By the year 2020, it is the goal of Malaysia to become a regional hub not only in the area of economics but also for education.

Malaysia and Malaysians should start preparing for research and development. The students need to learn research skills which include the ability to locate, analyze, and synthesize information, to function capably in an information age. Thus, this need should be incorporated into the education system as an essential ingredient.

Form Six is a preparatory stage for higher education. This stage gives students the opportunity to learn the skills that enable them to acquire information on their own effectively before they proceed to universities or other institutions of higher learning. They must be given the appropriate skills to acquire information.

Realizing the importance of research skills, there has been a move from the traditionally, didactic methods of teaching toward resource-based learning. This movement has great implications for the role of research skills in schools. Teaching methods based on the use of resources by pupils, is essential to the learning process (Wray, 1985).

The cardinal principle of Malaysia's education policy and philosophy is that the basic skills for life-long learning shall be developed in the school-going child. The three basic skills include the literary skills (reading, writing, and skills pertaining to the development of critical thinking), inquiry or research skills, and information presentation skills (Abdul Rahman, 1989).

These descriptions conform to the definition of information skills given by the Canadian School Library Association (1989) which include those processes in research, thinking, and communication that form the foundation for critical thinking and problem solving. These processes comprise the skills and strategies needed to retrieve, evaluate, organize, share and apply information effectively and independently.

The operational definition of information skills in this study refers to research skills. A study on the teachers' perceptions regarding the need to develop the research skills of the Form Six students would indicate their awareness regarding the importance of research skills, their role as teachers of research skills, and their tasks to guide and direct information skills to effective use. The finding from this study will assist educators to rethink the aims and content of Form Six curricula.

Need for the Study

Research studies by Rudduck in the LASS (Library Access and Sixth form Studies) projects in England indicate that the Form Six students do not practice independent learning though the idea that the students should become independent learners has found expression in a movement toward resource-based learning (Avann, 1984).

The general atmosphere of the Form Six education in Malaysia is similar to that of the British. Research study by Dr. Hussein (1990) suggests that the content of the Form Six curricula should emphasize the function of the Form Six education as a preparation for higher education. Research skills are crucial for those students to be able to make the most