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**DEVELOPING LEADERSHIP COMPETENCIES OF TEACHERS AND PRINCIPALS:
CASE OF MALAYSIA**

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Introduction

The government has constantly acknowledged the important role of quality teachers in nation building and in ensuring that the educational goals are met. This is because quality teachers are essential in order to provide quality education to the children of the country. It is observed that all of the major policy documents and the development plans of the Ministry of Education contain specific sections on teachers.

In the 9th Malaysia Plan (RMK9) for example, it is stated that the teacher training curriculum would be revised with emphasis on content improvement, increased focus on pedagogical skills as well as on the integration and application of the information and communication technology (ICT). In the Third Long-Term Perspective Plan (RRJP3), conscious efforts to promote students' thinking, innovation skills, ICT skills and knowledge have been strongly emphasized.

In the Education Blueprint 2001-2010, one of the four thrusts is improving quality of education and this relates directly to teachers as well. In the Education Development Master Plan (PIPP) 2006-2010, enhancing the teaching profession is one of the thrusts in the Plan.

Teacher Preparation Programmes

In striving to achieve quality education, MOE requires a competent teaching workforce to ensure effective implementation of the curriculum in schools. The role of preparing new teachers in government schools is undertaken by Teacher Education Institutes (TDI's), formerly known as Teacher Training Colleges (TTC's) of the Ministry of Education and the local public universities. Currently there are 27 TDI's and 12 public universities involved in the preparation of primary and secondary school teachers. These institutions also train and award post-graduate diploma in teaching (DPLI) for graduates from other fields who want to become school teachers. Beginning 2007, however, the pre-service training of primary school teachers has been entrusted to the TTI's while the pre-service training of secondary teachers to the universities.

The teacher education programs offer two types of certification - degree and diploma. The degree program is a four year full-time course conducted by the universities and the TTI's. At the moment degree programs at the TTI's are partially linked with local or overseas universities, while some are fully conducted overseas. Whereas, the diploma in education program, the main program at TTI's until recently, is a three-year program offered on a full-time basis to SPM/STPM holders.

Several types of pre-service programs include:

- Bachelor Degree in Education/Integrated Bachelor Degree with Education: This is the main program conducted at the public universities that supply teachers for secondary schools. The typical program takes four years except the special program conducted by universities abroad in cooperation with the MOE which takes five years.
- Post-graduate Diploma (DPLI): This one-year full-time program prepares trainees to teach in primary or secondary schools. It was first introduced to prepare teachers to cater for urgent needs due to the rapid expansion of secondary education in the past decades. It is a 38-week course aimed at developing trainees' pedagogic skills and knowledge of teaching in primary or secondary schools. The training program is conducted through several activities in the campus environment plus school-based teaching experience during practicum. The training curriculum comprises the Education Foundation Studies, Academic Studies, School Curriculum Studies, Co-curricular Studies, and Practical Teaching Experience.
- LPBS (School-based, on the job training): The LPBS is a special teacher training program that involves graduates in specialized areas who are temporarily employed to fill up vacant posts in schools and given on the job training by the TTI's in cooperation with the schools. Trainees will be employed to teach as permanent certified teachers upon completion of the program. This program gives priority to temporary uncertified teachers teaching in their own hometowns especially in the remote and rural areas to overcome the shortage of qualified teachers in these areas.

Ensuring Quality of Teachers

The emphasis on quality of teachers in the last two decades is evident from government's serious efforts to place only teachers with a degree qualification in all schools by 2010. This is further strengthened in the service circulars of the public sector requiring the provision of the in-service training programs for continuous professional development for all government employees including teachers. Strategies adopted include the expansion of degree programs and the reduction of the diploma programs in the pre-service teacher education; more rigorous procedures in the selection and appointment of new teachers; and increased budget allocations for in-service training and continuous professional development.

Selection for Pre-service Training Programme

In the past, the selection of candidates for the pre-service programs in the Teacher Training Institutes (TTI's) involves three main criteria – performance grades in the SPM or STPM; performance in the written qualifying test – Malaysian Teachers Selection Test (M-TeST) or Teachers Personality Inventory (InSaK); and performance in the interview. Candidates who passed the SPM/STPM requirement will have to sit for InSaK or M-TeST and successful candidates would be called for an

interview. Enrollment into the teacher training programs in the local public universities, however, was based on the performance grades in the SPM or STPM only.

Beginning 2007, TTI's and IPTA's have adopted common procedures involving all the three criteria that have been long practiced by TTI's under the Ministry of Education - Ministry of Higher Learning collaboration. This is to ensure that only those who meet the requirements and have the interest and inclination to be teachers are selected for the teacher training program.

Appointment Criteria

The employment in the permanent service is dependant on candidates' academic achievement during the training program and their performance in the interview conducted by the Education Service Commission (SPP). In the past, almost all graduates from the teacher training programs were employed after graduation. Beginning 2007, only those who are sponsored by MOE and achieve CGPA ≥ 2.75 will be employed and placed upon graduation. Those with CGPA below 2.75 will have to undergo another qualifying examination (InSaK) followed by an interview before being posted upon passing both requirements.

Quality Indicators

Statistics show that there has been significant improvement in the quality of teachers in terms of their academic and professional qualifications. The percentage of certified teachers had increased from 95.1 percent to 99.4 percent in 2006, leaving only 0.6 percent of uncertified and contract teachers. There is also a noticeable increase in the number of teachers with degree qualification; from 26,357 (36.4 percent) in 1990 to 118,341 (85.4 percent) in 2006. These trends are illustrated in Chart 7.4.

It is targeted that by the year 2010, all teachers in secondary schools will possess at least a bachelor degree qualification. This goal is most likely to be achieved by 2010 since currently the supply of secondary school teachers comes from the Bachelor Degree in Education (ISMP) and Post-graduate Diploma in Education (DPLI) programs only.

The quality and relevance of the teacher training programs have also been given much emphasis.

- During pre-service training, each trainee teacher is trained in two subject areas. A typical program consists of 80 percent content, 20 percent education component, plus internship (practicum).
- English is a core component in the teacher preparation program and is compulsory for every trainee.
- Basic and generic skills such as ethnic relations, Islamic and Asian Civilizations, language literacy, numerical literacy, and English language are compulsory across subject specialization. Elements of innovative and thinking skills are given emphasis and incorporated in these components.
- Professional studies, course major, and professional practice (practicum) are the components of the core courses across programs.

Looking at the components in the core and basic/generic skills, it is apparent that the teacher training programs have been carefully designed to produce teachers who are not only competent professionally in their subject areas, but also who fully understand the multi-cultural and multi-religious setting of the society.

Classroom Supervision

As part of the continuous improvement strategy, supervision on the teaching-learning process is also conducted by school principals, senior assistants, subject panel heads, and peer teachers. In addition, supervision and evaluation are done by the Federal Inspectorates of Schools and officials from the State Education Departments (SED's) and District Education Offices (DEO's).

Standards for Quality Education in Schools

The Standards for Quality Education (SQEM) was developed in 2004 as a benchmark of the educational quality standards for Malaysian schools. The SQEM instrument series comprises SQEM1 (Statements of Standards), SQEM2 (Standard Assurance Instrument), and SQEM3 (School Improvement Plan). SQEM focuses on 4 dimensions – leadership direction, organizational management, educational program management, and students' accomplishment.

The instrument is currently used by the School Inspectorate to assess performance of schools, teachers and students on the four dimensions stated above. School principals are expected to use this instrument for self-assessment in school improvement efforts. Many schools have succeeded in using the instrument to improve the schools' performance in related areas.

While the instrument appears to be comprehensive and promising, it has not been widely used by school administrators and officials of the District Education Offices (DEO's) and State Education Departments (SED's) to monitor school progress and performance. It is envisaged that the quality of education in the country would have progressed at a much greater speed if all the school community and educational officials at all levels were to employ this instrument.

Awards of Excellent / Very Competent Teachers

An excellent school is defined as a school that has shown a high quality of performance as a whole, including a clear leadership direction, organizational management, education programme management and student accomplishment in terms of character building, personality traits and moral values based on the criteria specified in the SQEM instrument.

An Excellent School Award is MOE's effort to acknowledge and appreciate schools that demonstrate excellent performance in all aspects, academic and non-academic. The award is given to schools under 14 categories to ensure that comparisons are made based on equal parameters. The categories are the rural primary schools; urban primary schools; urban secondary schools; rural secondary schools; urban boarding schools; rural boarding schools; fully residential schools; technical

schools; religious schools; small schools (SKM); remote schools; indigenous schools; special education schools; and schools under the Federal Land Development Authority (FELDA).

Other than the excellent school award, there is Quantum Leap Award which is awarded to schools that demonstrate an increase in performance in specific areas in academic or co-curriculum aspects. In order to achieve this award, schools must demonstrate at least a 10 percent increase in achievement in the national examinations or show continuous success and achievement in co-curriculum activities for three consecutive years.

The Quantum Leap Award is given to schools under seven categories, namely the performance in UPSR examination (national school); performance in UPSR examination (vernacular school); performance in PMR examination; performance in SPM examination; performance in STPM examination; performance in uniformed organizations; and performance in sports and games.

A special award called the Education Minister Quality Award is given to the best excellent school. The award comes with monetary incentive, benchmarking trips and funding of school projects. Every staff in the school including the principal, teachers, and non-academic staff will receive RM500.00 each.

In short, the system has been very successful in balancing the demand and supply of teachers at the secondary level and at ensuring quality. Even though there are discrepancies and mismatches in the implementation of policies at the school level, the problems are generally minor and sporadic in nature and appropriate measures have been undertaken to address the issues.

The emphasis on quality of teachers and the quality of education as a whole is also evident from the establishment of standards and implementation of various programs and incentives. Elements of quality are clearly embedded in the selection process and screening of student teacher candidates, appointment criteria for service and continuous professional development of serving teachers, and further strengthened by various programs and incentives. However, to what extent quality of teachers actually impacts students' performance is hard to measure, particularly on aspects related to intangible measures such as commitment, creativity, passion for the job and distinctive personal traits.

Appraisal and Recognition

There are several forms of appraisal and recognition of teachers' performance currently practiced in the system.

Competency Level Evaluation

All teachers, as in other public services, regardless of their service scales, have to undertake a competency test namely the Competency Level Evaluation (PTK). It is an instrument used to evaluate teachers' competency in the conduct of their service. Teachers are assessed in terms of their professional knowledge and skills as well as personal values and attitudes under the components of general and specialized competencies. The PTK result is also used as a pre-requisite for promotional considerations to higher scales.

Annual Appraisal and Excellent Service Award

Assessment of teachers' performance is done by the school principals annually. Teachers' scores in the annual appraisal are used for considerations in promotions to higher grades or salary scales, opportunities for qualification upgrading courses and scholarships awards.

Teachers with excellent scores in the annual appraisal, normally the top five percent, will be considered for the Excellent Service Award. It is a form of appreciation given by the Government to its employees who have demonstrated competencies beyond the expected norms annually. All teachers are eligible to be considered for the Excellent Service Award except for those holding premier posts of Special Grade C and above. Recipients of the award will receive a certificate of Excellent Service and cash prize of RM1,000.00. They may also be considered for career advancement opportunities.

Model of Teacher Award: Federal, State, District and School

This is an award granted to teachers who have demonstrated par excellence contribution to the teaching service. The award is given at national, state, district and school level in the form of cash, certificates and other tokens of appreciation normally presented on the Teachers' Day which falls on the 16th of May every year.

Promotions

Like employees in other public services, teachers also enjoy promotions to higher grades after a few years of service upon their success in meeting the requirements which include the number of years teaching, their performance in school, and their performance in the Competency Level Assessment (PTK). Several promotional tracks for teachers are illustrated in Chart 14.

In the normal promotion practice, a typical subject teacher will be promoted to Grade DG44 (personal to holder or KUP) after at least 10 years of service. They will get the second promotion to Grade DG48 ten or twelve years later and will reach the maximum salary at RM 5,777.12 (Level 1) or RM6, 325.29 (Level 2) by current retirement age at 56.

As discussed earlier, promotion under this normal track or practice is very much slower compared to other services such as the general administrative and diplomatic (M), medical (U), and engineering (J) sectors. On the average, a typical teacher will only reach Grade DG48 (KUP) after 22 years of service and remain on that scale until retirement age. Officers in some other public services such as the general administrative and diplomatic service (M) may reach Grade 48 after only five years of service. This has often created complaints among teachers and educators through their associations and unions for what they feel as an unfair treatment.

Fast Track Promotion

The Super Teacher and Super Principal Schemes provide an alternative 'fast track promotion' for excellent teachers and principals. Excellent teachers and principals are encouraged to apply to be

considered for these promotions after five years of serving in the current posts. Under this fast track, an excellent subject teacher can be promoted to Grade DG 48 after five years of service. To some extent, this is some sort of compensation to the unequal promotional practices between the teaching service and other services.

Applicants have to undergo six levels of appraisal by principals, peers, students, District Education Office, State Education Office, and the Inspectorate of Schools. They will be assessed on their professional competence; teaching and learning effectiveness; curriculum management; roles in non-academic activities; personality characteristics; and self development.

Opportunities for Professional Advancement

In-service training (In-Set) is an essential component in the teaching service in the system. The concept of Continuous Development Programme (CDP) and the In-Service Staff development programme (In-Set) serve as a form of compensation benefited by teachers wishing to develop themselves further throughout their career. In-Set is conducted by several departments and agencies at the school, district, state and national levels. Each year In-Set is allocated a sizeable portion of the educational recurrent budget and the amount increases each year. The proposed amount for 2008 for example is RM200 million. Two types of In-Set are the qualification upgrading courses and knowledge and skills upgrading short courses which takes less than one year.

The continuous professional development programs offer a range of courses for the purpose of up-skilling and upgrading knowledge in teaching and learning to keep up with current development in education. Teachers attending in-service training are provided with incentives such as half-pay study leave or full pay leave with scholarships.

Qualification Upgrading Courses

Qualifications upgrading courses are offered at the bachelor degree, master and doctoral levels for serving teachers, through either full-time or part-time programs. The special bachelor degree courses (PKPG) are designed for non-degree teachers, while the master and doctoral degree courses are targeted for degree holders.

The Special Bachelor Degree Program (PKPG) is a full-time program offering half-pay leave and scholarships to teachers, while the Bachelor Degree - Distance Education (PJJ) is a part-time program conducted by the Teacher Education Division (TED) MOE in collaboration with the local universities (IPTA). However this arrangement has been discontinued for secondary school teachers in 2007 with the agreement that the supply of secondary teachers by the IPTA and the primary school teachers by Teacher Training Institutes (TTI's). This program will be continued for primary school teachers in 2008 by TTI's.

Besides these two channels, non-degree teachers can also apply for normal bachelor degree programs conducted by the universities. The number of teachers sponsored to attend qualification

upgrading courses by program is shown in Table 1.1 below.

The MOE also provides scholarships with full-pay leave for teachers to continue their studies at the post-graduate level (Masters and PhD) locally or abroad in order to improve knowledge and skills of teachers in areas related to teaching and learning in specific subject areas.

Table 1.1: Teachers Involved in the Upgrading Qualification

Program	2005	2006	2007
Bachelor Degree (Full-time)	1,255	1,201	-
Bachelor Degree (PJJ)	3,220	3,589	7,459
Masters Degree	350	358	358
Doctoral Degree	70	80	90

Note: Data include MOE sponsored teachers only. Teachers pursuing further studies on their own initiatives were not captured except for 2007.

Source: Scholarship Division and Teacher Education Division, Ministry of Education.

Knowledge and Skills Upgrading Courses

The new remuneration scheme (SSM) circular requires every teacher (and other government employees) to attend a minimum of seven days in-service training a year. Knowledge and skills upgrading courses for teachers are conducted through series of short in-service courses, workshops and seminars.

In-service courses are conducted at the school, district, state and national levels organized by different education offices and divisions, departments, and institutions in the MOE such as the Teacher Training Institutes (TTI's), Curriculum Development Division (CDD) and Aminuddin Baki Institute (IAB), and also by international organizations such as SEAMEO-RECSAM.

Besides primarily focusing on pre-service training, the TTI's are also responsible for conducting in-service programs for serving teachers at the primary and secondary levels. TTI's conduct short courses related to pedagogy besides enrichment courses related to latest development or initiatives in education to enhance teachers' professional skills and knowledge.

Other than the TTI's, several agencies and departments also conduct in-service teacher training programs with different emphasis and focus. The TTI's focus on pedagogy, generic and specific skills; the IAB focuses on school leadership and management; Educational Technology Division (ETD) focuses on ICT development and training; while the State Education Departments (SED's) and District Education Offices (DEO's) conduct courses on the implementation of policies and programs at the school level.

Besides the above, schools are encouraged to conduct in-house staff development programs covering a wide range of areas based on their needs. Teachers who have attended in-service training programs at the district, state or central levels are expected to share the new knowledge and experience with their peers in schools.

The CDD conducts courses related to curriculum change or introduction of new curriculum. Some of these courses are conducted at the national level while some other at the state and district levels with the cooperation of the SED's and DEO's. In-services courses are mandatory for teachers involved in curriculum changes or new initiatives. Examples of in-service courses conducted by CDD are shown in Table 1.2.

The development of teacher leadership competencies include generally the following sub - domains of skills.

1. Personality leadership characteristics
2. Social leadership competencies
3. Intellectual leadership competencies
4. Pedagogical and curriculum management leadership competencies
5. Spiritual leadership competencies
6. Sport leadership competencies
7. ICT management leadership competencies
8. Counseling management leadership competencies
9. Co-curriculum management leadership competencies

Table 1.2: Example of In-Service Courses Conducted by CDD

Areas/Subjects	2006		2007	
	No. of Courses	No. of Participants	No. of Courses	No. of Participants
Critical thinking	18	1461	0	0
Learning Skills	4	378	1	350
Language Course	20	2456	26	4156
Mathematics	4	627	9	1105
Science	8	953	2	503
Social Science	20	1312	19	1007
Vocational	19	635	20	512
Computer	3	1337	0	0
Total	96	9159	77	7633

Source: Curriculum Development Division, Ministry of Education, Malaysia.

When the policy of teaching of mathematics and science in English (ETeMS) was introduced simultaneously for Year One, Form One and Lower Six in 2003, the following support programs were also undertaken various divisions and departments in the MOE to ensure the successful implementation of the policy. These include:

- Conducting series of courses to improve teachers' proficiency in English and readiness to teach mathematics and science in English;
- Producing teaching support materials such as courseware, textbooks, glossary and activity books;
- Providing diagnostic assessment packages and intervention programs; and
- Providing ICT facilities such as computer laboratories, notebooks, LCD projectors to enhance the teaching and learning process.

Leadership Competency Programmes for Principals

The Aminuddin Baki Institute (IAB) focuses on leadership courses related to the management and administration of schools. The targeted group is school managers and administrators that include school principals or headmasters, senior assistants, and head of departments. Examples of the courses are shown in the following Table 1.3.

Table 1.3: Number of Teachers Involved in In-Service Courses Conducted by IAB

Program	2006	2007
School Leadership & Management Course for Administrators	639	2,649
National Professional Principalship Course (NPQH)	172	145
Other Short Courses	5,276	3,857
Total	6,087	6,649
	12,174	13,300

Source: Institute Aminuddin Baki, Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2007

The importance of effective school leadership and efficient management in school improvement efforts was given greater emphasis beginning the year 2000. The IAB was accorded greater responsibility in preparing school leaders and managers through several more advanced programs such as the National Professional Qualifications for Headship (NPQH). Since 2008 the programme has been re-labeled as NPQEL which refers to 'National Professional Qualification of Educational Leadership'.

Selected graduates of the NPQEL programme are given the opportunity to pursue the Master Degree program in principalship studies at the University of Malaya on full-pay leave plus scholarship. To

date the program has produced about 400 graduates who will be prospective principals in secondary schools.

While In-SeT is essential for continuous professional development (CDP) of teachers, there are several issues that have far reaching implications to schools. In-SeT's are normally conducted during week days, and teachers involved have to leave the classrooms to attend these courses. The school normally provides relief teachers to replace these teachers, but more often than not they are not prepared to teach the relief subjects. In the normal practice, several relief teachers will be assigned to replace one particular subject teacher throughout his or her absence from school. This has often resulted in not only in deferment in the progress of the curriculum implementation, but also affecting student's learning of the subject.

Even though the policy allows schools to apply for substitute teachers from the District Education Offices (DEO's) throughout the absence of the In-SeT teachers under the pool of reserve teachers (KGSK), this provision has not been fully utilized by schools partly due to ignorance of such provision and bureaucratic procedures.

In short, the system has taken serious efforts to train quality teachers and retain them in the education service through various policies, programs and incentives. In effect, teacher compensation in Malaysia not only comprises basic salary and allowances, but also other fringe benefits including loans, promotions, opportunities for professional enhancement through various in-service teacher training programs and the creation of 'fast track' promotion through super teacher and super principal schemes.

Master Degree Programme For Teachers To Become Principals

Teachers are also encouraged to proceed on their educational leadership training by attending advanced degree programmes either on their own volition or being identified by the Human Resource Management Division, Ministry of Education. In this regard, selected groups of teachers who have attended the NPQEL at Institute Aminuddin Baki as discussed above are generally selected to do the master degree programme at several local universities. For example, the collaboration between Institute Aminuddin Baki and Institute Principalship Studies, University of Malaya under the staff development programme has given more opportunities to teachers to do the master degree programme. The principal objective of the programme is to provide academic and professional training programmes for potential educational leaders and principals via the master and doctoral programmes. The coverage of the courses generally covers the following subject domains:

School Governance and Management

Secondary School Principalship in Malaysia

Research and Statistics for Principals

Theory and Research in School Leadership and Management

School Leadership and Instructional Supervision

Curriculum Leadership and Pedagogy

Human Resource Management in Educational Organisations
Student Management and Self-Development
School Financial Management
School Management and the Law
Information Technology for Instructional Management
School Effectiveness and Improvement: Theory and Research
School -Based Research
Management Project (Research Report)
Advanced Research Method
Advanced Statistics and Data Analysis
Doctoral Seminar in Principalship Studies
Research in Principalship Studies
Independent Research Study

As an example, the following table indicates the number of teachers who have graduated with a Master Degree in Principalship Studies from the Institute of Principalship Studies, University of Malaya since its inception in 2000.

Session	Cohort	No. of Students
1999/2000	1	71
2000/2001	2	70
2001/2002	3A	31
2002/2003	3B	36
2003/2004	4	30
2003/2004	Open	12
2004/2005	5	47
2005/2006	6	43
2006/2007	7	47
2007/2008	8	56
2008/2009	9	26
2009/2010	10	47

Source: *Institute of Principalship Studies University of Malaya, 2009.*

Continuous Professional Development

Another principle that has been adopted by the education services as far as the development of teacher leadership competencies is concerned is Continuous Professional Development (CPD).

However, while CDP has been given strong emphasis with a special budget allocation annually, there are several areas that need to be strengthened. In the current system, the policies, mechanism and structure are well in place. However, there are some problems that need to be addressed in relation to the process and procedures of coordination and monitoring of the program implementation.

Currently the in-service training (In-SeT) programs are carried out by several agencies in the MOE. At the central level, the Staff Development Committee (JIPS) MOE oversees the overall planning of all In-SeT programs for all education service officers. Information and data of In-SeT programs lie with the respective implementing agencies. This makes monitoring of the programs a very challenging task to perform. In fact it is almost impossible to obtain data of individual teachers on the number, kind and duration of courses they have attended in a particular year. This is due the absence of a comprehensive record of the In-SeT programs conducted by the different agencies.

The absence of the In-SeT database has contributed to the unfair distribution of opportunity to attend courses among teachers. Some teachers have hardly had the opportunity to attend a course, where as some others have attended several in a particular year.

It is only appropriate for the MOE to establish a database management system on In-SeT that captures the data and records of individual teachers and education service officers in the education service. This will help MOE in planning more relevant and better In-SeT programs that fulfill the needs of teachers and educators.

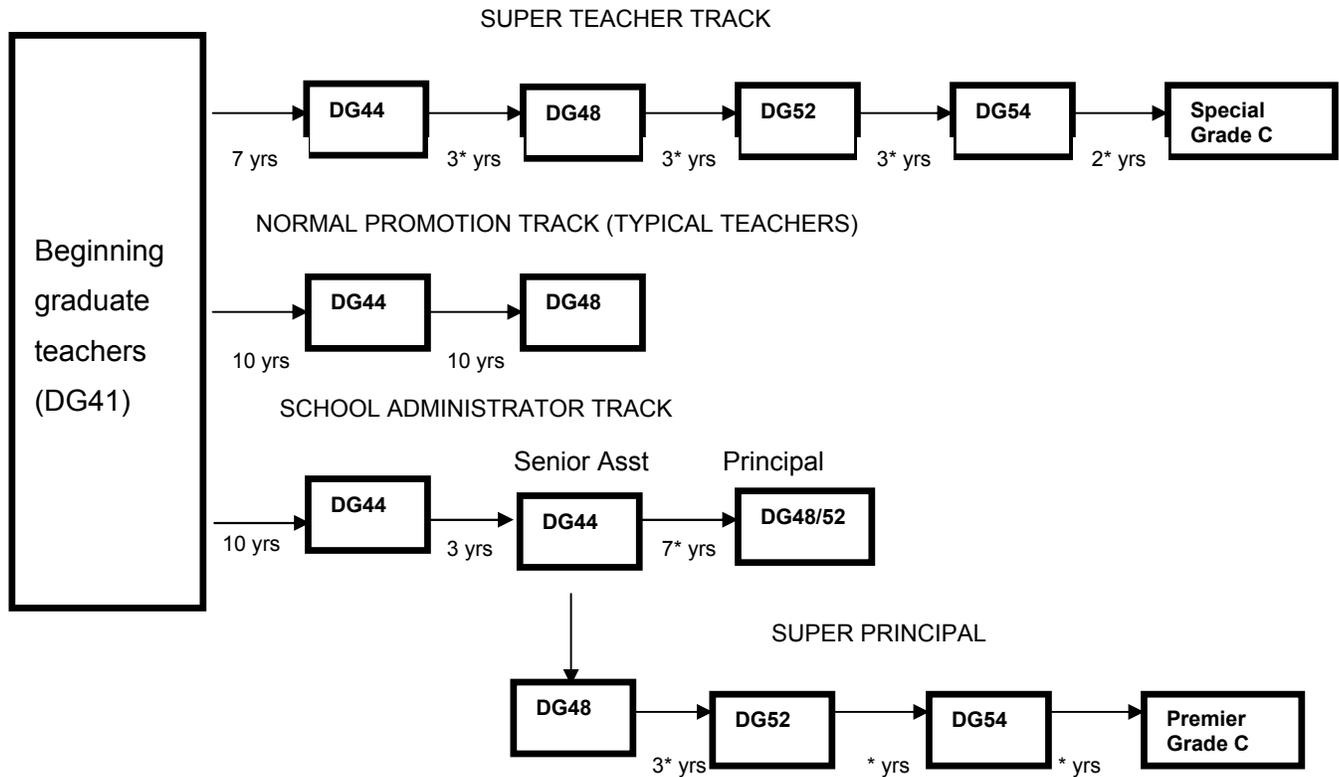
'Tracks' for Competence-Based Teacher Promotion

The slow normal promotion practice for typical teachers and education officers compared to other services has, to a certain extent, been addressed by the introduction of the Super Teacher and Super Principal Schemes in 1994. The schemes were introduced to give recognition to teachers who are excellent in their subject areas and school leadership. The aims are to motivate teachers and encourage them to become role model to their peers and remain in the system throughout their education career. To date, there are several tracks for teachers to be considered for promotion to higher grades. The different tracks are illustrated in Chart 1 below.

In July 2007 there were 2,024 super teachers and principals in the educations (Table 1.4). Rigorous efforts to fill up the vacant posts have been carried out in the last few months of the year and more posts have been filled up by the end of the year.

MOE is currently in the process of proposing a career path for teachers that will enable them to identify and plan for their career development. This career pathway would encompass the promotional pathway, professional training needs and the required qualifications in the course of their teaching career.

Chart 1 'Tracks' for Competence-Based Teacher Promotion



Source: Schools Division, Ministry of Education Malaysia

Note: * - Number of years depending on teachers' performance and availability of posts

Table 1.4: Number of Super Teachers according to Grades

Grade	Quota	Filled	(+/-)
SUPER GR. 'C'	24	13	-11
DG54	100	11	-88
DG52	250	28	-223
DG48	1000	497	-503
DG44	4000	44	-3956
DGA34	800	51	-749
DGA32	3200	1380	-1820
Total	9374	2024	-7350

Note: Data as of 21 July 2007

Source: Human Resource Department, Ministry of Education

Fundamental Principles

From the discussion above, at least three fundamental principles can be drawn to ensure quality teacher education in Malaysia.

Firstly, the professionalizing of teaching activity is the best long-term strategy to improve the outcome of education and the professional working conditions of teachers. Secondly, pre-service and in-service education and training should be profoundly modified so as to enable teachers to gain mastery of the whole range of educational strategies to be adapted to the wide diversity of learning situations when carrying out their duties. Thirdly, teachers must be persuaded to learn to use the new information and communication technologies. This means that the new ICT's must no longer be perceived either as a threat or as a panacea able to overcome all problems. Such a jaundiced view must be openly discussed, without prejudice or preconceptions. Very often, a number of the conceptions are based on a misunderstanding of reality.

There are, however, no silver bullets for improving the quality of teacher education. Given the multiplicity of contributing factors that can influence the quality of teacher education, a planned process of a comprehensive, systematic and systemic approach that touches on every stage of the career path of teachers is important to be addressed in an integrated and wholesome manner. It is the best strategy to be initially examined, not only for improving the quality of teacher education but also to maintain and sustain its impact on teaching and the general system of education as a whole.

Areas of Opportunity for Development of Leadership Competency of Teachers

There are at least four areas of opportunity that can be identified to ensure quality teacher education in Malaysia. These areas can be used to create a framework to help policy formulators address comprehensively the issues of quality teacher education; namely, quality of recruitment and selection standards, the application of quality assurance of pre-service programmes at teacher education levels, the mobilization of quality in-service programmes that must continuously be provided at every stage of the career of teachers, and the strategy of retaining the best teachers and teachers educators in schools and colleges, particularly where their specialized skills are most needed.

It must also be acknowledged that there is a clear linkage between three critical factors that affect the quality of teacher education; firstly, the profession of teacher educators, secondly, their economic and social status as teacher educators and thirdly, the physical and environmental conditions of their profession. Within the confines of these factors, there are several issues that policy formulators and designers on standards and benchmarking must try to address. The first issue is that since professional creativity is a process that is fostered by a selective acquisition of values, attitudes and cultures, it therefore requires that teacher educators who themselves have acquired quality professional and academic training should, in turn, promote quality teacher education at the training institutions.

Secondly, the selection, training and retention of experienced teacher educators needs to be addressed effectively. This proposition is based on the assumption that a major challenge facing the community of teachers is in determining the appropriateness of orthodox approaches to teaching and at the same time to be open to new approaches of teaching methodology. If teacher trainees are ill-prepared at the teacher training institutions and universities, they will highly likely lower the quality of education at the practical level in schools and classroom.

Thirdly, it is well acknowledged that as society progresses developmentally, the status and image of the teaching profession generally, and of teacher education specifically seems to deteriorate. This negative correlation, as can be observed of late and in the decade of the last century seems to suggest that conditions within the profession which should foster professional outlook, quality performance and improved development have not kept pace with expectations and changes in society.

In this regard, an improved level of professionalism and an enhanced status of teacher education require a commitment to critical analysis and evaluation in order to institute required changes. Such changes should include attention to meeting the demand for improved access, improved resource allocations and encouraging innovative approaches to that already provided to teacher education colleges and institution.

Malaysia Teacher Standards: the Model

In this regard it is noted that the Teacher Education Division of the Ministry Education had undertaken a bold initiative in establishing a Malaysia Teacher Standards or "*Standard Guru Malaysia*". As indicated by its report document in 2009, the purpose of the initiative is two- fold; firstly to identify the performance level of teacher professional competencies in the practice of teacher professional values, knowledge and understanding as well as in the teaching and learning skills; secondly, to identify the performance level of preparation and training implementation needs by agencies of teacher education and training institutions so as to ensure that the prescribed level of teacher competencies is achieved.

The formulation and documentation of Malaysia Teacher Standards is based on the rationale that teachers must have basic standards of competencies and a standard level of values of teacher professionalism, wide knowledge and understanding, and teaching and learning skills in order to function as effective teachers in schools. Hence, teacher education and training institutions and agencies that prepare teachers must provide fundamental and comprehensive needs including policy, curriculum, infrastructure, teaching staff, teaching and learning resources and quality control. The purpose of this requirement is to ensure the process of training in the institutions is of quality and conducted effectively in line with the requirements of the Malaysian Qualification Framework (MQA) of the higher education system.

The components of the Malaysia Teacher Standards are conceptualised in the following diagram.

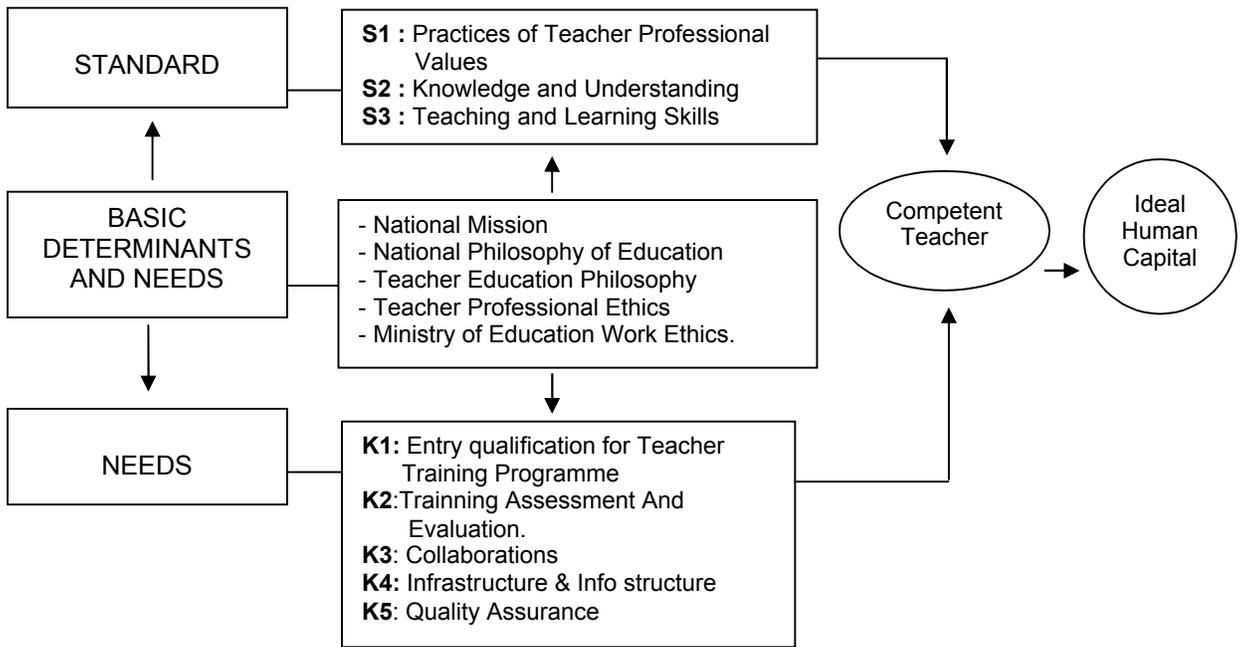
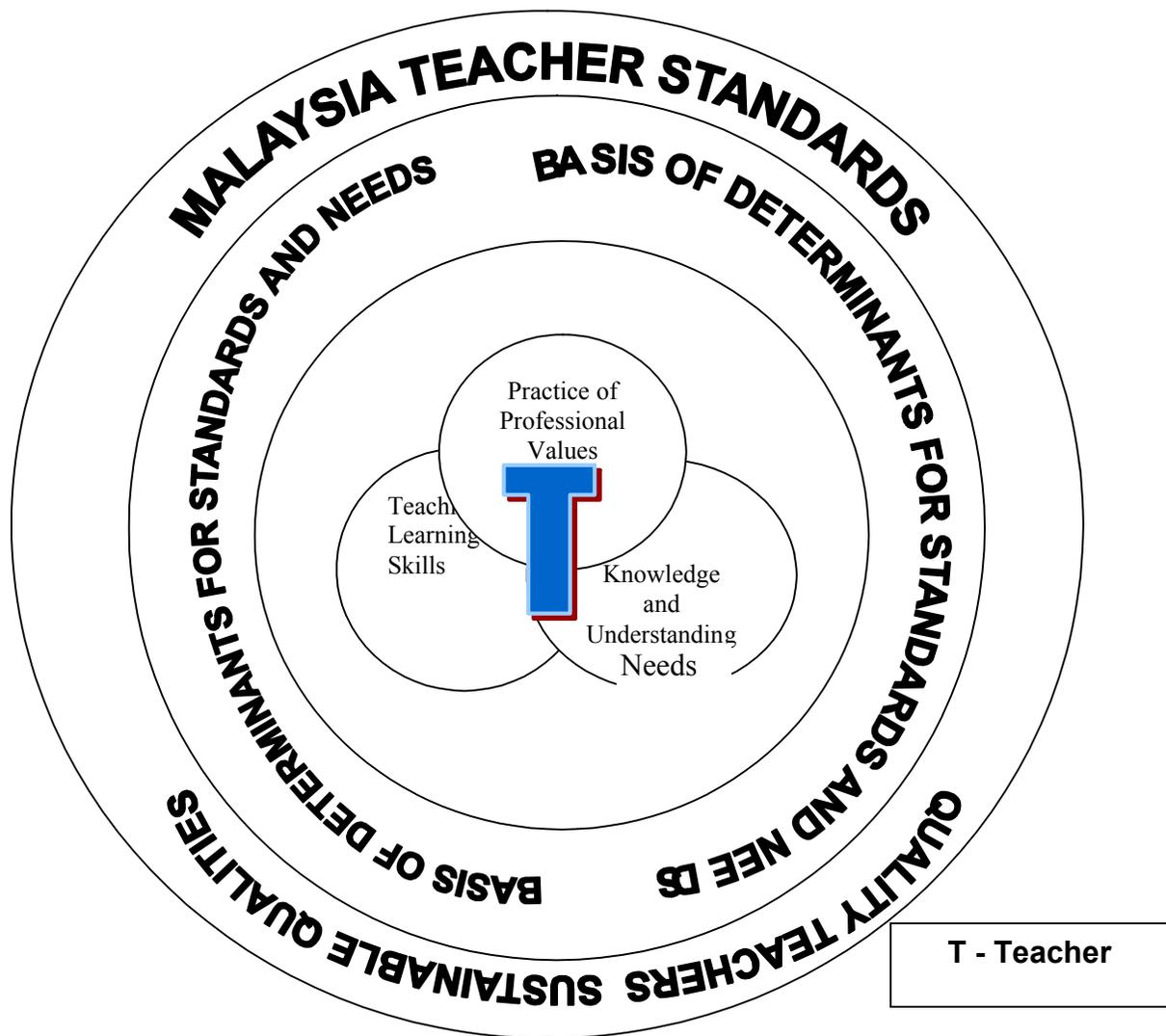


Chart: Components of Malaysia Teacher Standards

Source: Adapted from the Ministry of Education – Standard Guru Malaysia (Malaysia Teacher Standards), Teacher Education Division (Translated) pg 20.

The model of the components is conceptualized in the following diagram :



The instrument that is expected to be used in accessing the quality of teacher is based on several elements in the three major domains of practising values of professionalism, knowledge and understanding, and skills of teaching and learning.

The Challenge for Malaysia

In the context of teacher education system in Malaysia, building a system of quality assurance, standards and benchmarks toward improving the quality of teacher education is deemed not only relevant but also pertinent at this juncture, especially for the teacher education institutes under a parent structure of a Teacher University Institution under the purview of the Ministry of Education.

The University Institution and its 27 current Institutes of Teacher Education (IPGM) should work closely in close synergy and collaboration with the Sultan Idris Teacher Education University (*Universiti*

Pendidikan Sultan Idris or UPSI) and the world class teacher universities overseas in producing quality teachers. Content standards, standards-based teaching practicum, and capacity-enhancing professional standards are some of the critical domains that must be addressed with professional rigour and enthusiasm. While the Teacher Education Institutes or IPGM's and the newly established parent University are expected to produce primary level school teachers, the UPSI must move towards producing not only teachers for secondary schools for Malaysia but also execute quality research and evaluation projects on education, policy and development.

The principal question one may ask is not where the Malaysian teacher education mission is heading in the first decade of this century, but where it ought to be heading. It is most apparent that Malaysian teacher educators should lead the way to achieving and realizing the mission by preparing themselves to critically examine, thoughtfully engage and exemplify quality teaching skills that is grounded in the creation of content standards, benchmarks and standards-based teaching and practicum, with a strong sense of professionalism.

It might be noted that capacity-enhancing professional standards ought to be the types that build the capacity of teacher trainees to discover the best ways to meet the expectation of standards. Standards, however, should represent what is known from research and best practice, and define it in broad terms of what teacher trainees should know and be able to do in the real world of the teaching profession.

Capacity-enhancing strategies and standards should, therefore, invite and challenge teacher trainees and teacher educators to engage in deliberative and reflective dialogues and discussions to meet the standards in their particular settings. Such standards may encourage teachers to aim for expert level of performance. To focus on professional standards for quality teacher education programmes is to focus on outcomes and the expectation teacher educators have of their teacher trainees as they learn and begin to conduct their work at the school and classroom level.

Well-prepared teacher educators in Teacher Education Institutes and the Universities are therefore expected to have a rich and wide knowledge and understanding of their subject areas and skilful in the areas of pedagogy. In short, they must be good specialists in their fields of specialisations and strong generalists in the general field of pedagogy. They should also be willing to be held accountable for the outcomes of their contribution and also make full use of contemporary resources and technology as well as to work actively in developing the potential of their trainee teachers.

In conclusion, from the observations stated above, it is important to note that the preparation of future teachers in the competencies required by international standards and quality assurance criteria in a renewed education system and policy change demands a sustained and long term initiative. This implies adopting a strategic vision of the teacher education and designing teacher education programme as a strategy that are of world class standards.

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