

Implementation of Siblings' Involvement in Inclusive Education Programs with Special Educational Needs Child in Home Learning Activities During COVID-19 Pandemic

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ABSTRACT

The Covid-19 pandemic has been a major issue for the whole world these days. It has affected many sectors, including our education field, for the past two years. Most of the school programs have either been postponed or been canceled. On the other hand, teachers need to overcome any difficulties and come up with new approaches to make sure our special-needs children are not left behind. The purpose of this best practice regarding the Inclusive Educational Program in SK Bukit Beruang (Bukit Beruang National School), Malacca in home learning activities was to make sure special needs pupils were still involved in inclusive activities even though they were at home and the participation of their siblings would hopefully increase their involvement and self-esteem. Our main focus was the increase in pupils' self-confidence during the subjects of physical education (PE) at home. At least 5 pupils with special needs at SK Bukit Beruang were involved with their siblings during. The final observation and evaluation showed that pupils with special needs who participated in the same activity with their siblings have increased during the covid-19 pandemic. In the future, this best practice can be implemented in other subjects and the number of participations could be increased to encourage inclusive activity of pupils in home base learning.

Keywords : Inclusive Educational Program, Home Learning, Special Needs Child, Physical Education (PE)

Introduction to Best Practices

The Covid-19 epidemic was never anticipated to have such a significant worldwide impact. Most sectors were affected in a negative way including the educational field. Schools were forced to close as this health crisis rose rapidly for nearly two years. Children all over the world are stranded at home and attended home learning via online platforms. Teachers had to improvise their teaching ways to cope with the situation. To ensure that children worldwide continue to have access to education, trial-and-error teaching techniques were used.

In line with the study by Norhayati et al. (2010) who use recreational activities in implementing inclusive programs, for our inclusive curriculum at SK Bukit Beruang, we've explored art and physical education (PE). The Inclusive Education Program can be implemented successfully in 2019 with art subjects. Students with special needs have the opportunity to participate in activities in mainstream classes together with friends in the mainstream. This inclusive education gives them the opportunity to be in a real community environment and this situation will help them train themselves to face the future. (Zaharah, 2013). As a result of the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic, which led the government to apply the Movement Control Order on all agencies, including the education sector, this programme, which is run through the physical education (PE) subject, can only be implemented until March in 2020. In 2021, the learning situation of students is still uncertain because the school opening instructions that have been issued have to depend on the COVID-19 pandemic situation in Malaysia.

Why siblings? They are the closest people with our special needs' children at home. Within the mostly same group of age, they can encourage our special needs child to be more confident, engagement and socialization skills to grow. One of the factors influencing the excellence of students with special needs is the role of parents (Norhayati et al., 2010). With the cooperation from their parents, the Inclusive Education Program will hopefully successfully be implemented at home.

Justification on the Implementation of Best Practices

The need to temporarily halt face-to-face instruction. Teachers are concerned about this circumstance, therefore. Home base learning is difficult to implement perfectly. Similarly, the Inclusive Education Program is suspended because it is difficult to ensure its implementation at home because most physical education teachers only teach theory to students in the mainstream. Based on Norhayati et. al (2022), COVID-19 pandemic may develop the awareness of parents on the conditions of their children during home learning. Based on findings from prior studies, it was clear that the parents had been quite supportive of their kids' homeschooling endeavours. This could be a chance to ensure that inclusivity can be applied to activities for home-based learning. Therefore, the school took the initiative for students to implement the Inclusive Education Program during learning at home with siblings or family members.




Implementation Objectives

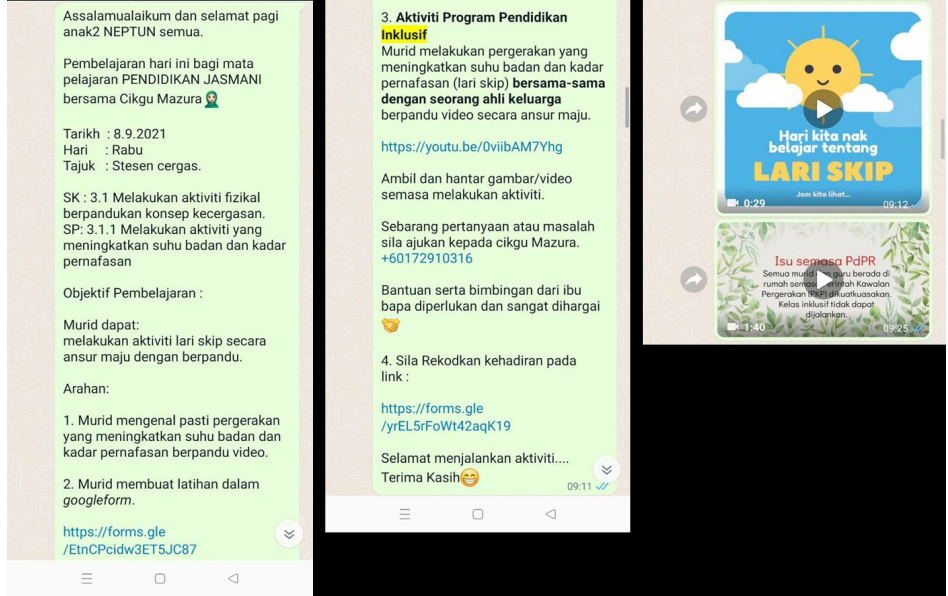
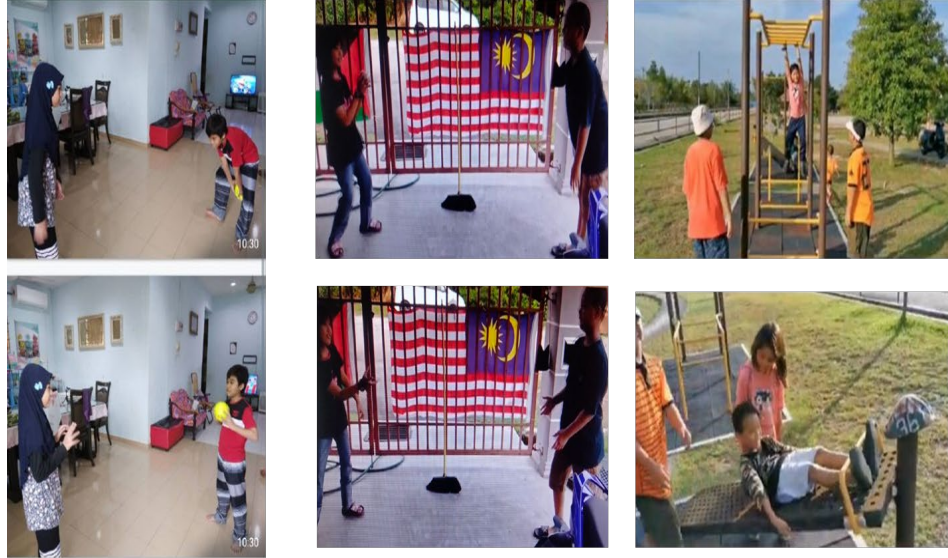
The objectives of the implementation of this best practice are:

1. To ensure that the Inclusive Education Program continues to run as planned even in the COVID-19 pandemic situation.
2. Maintain pupils involvement in the Inclusive Education Program during learning from home only.
3. Improving pupils engagement & student socialization skills during the COVID-19 pandemic era.

Implementation of Best Practices

The best practice introduced is the implementation of the Inclusive Education Program in home learning through the involvement of siblings or family members. There are several phases in the implementation of this best practice as follows:

Work Process	Description
<p>Planning</p>	<p>Discussion of curriculum unit teachers with special education senior assistant teachers on objectives and work processes.</p>  
<p>Phase 1</p>	<p>Produce an explanatory video and distribute it to parents as a guide for the implementation of the activity.</p> 

<p>Phase 2</p>	<p>Teachers assign the implementation of activities through the Whatsapp application to students in their respective class groups.</p> 
<p>Phase 3</p>	<p>Pupils submit assignments via photographs or video recordings.</p> 

Effectiveness from the Implementation of Best Practices

These three main targets of best practice have successfully yielded positive results. First, in terms of the participants of the implementation of the Inclusive Education Program itself can be ensured to run smoothly as planned. As it is one of the most important cores in the special education curriculum, the school was concerned to make sure this program was still going on under pandemic COVID-19.

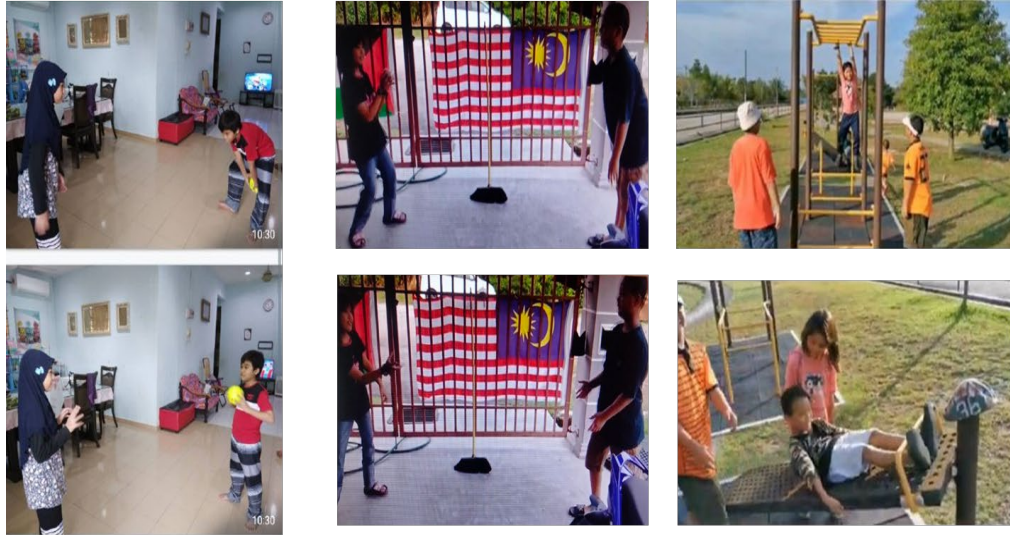
Table 1

Table above shows pupils participation in the Inclusive Education Program in physical education (PE) subject during COVID-19 pandemic

Session	Date	Number of participations (out of 5)	Activities
1	26 th July 2021	3	throwing / catching balls
2	18 th August 2021	3	breathing and heart rate-increasing activities
2	8 th September 2021	3	breathing and heart rate-increasing activities

Secondly, students were happy to have activities with siblings / family. At least 3 out of 5 pupils fulfilled the tasks given with the inclusion of their siblings. As observed, the pupils performed the task better compared to when they did it alone previously. They looked happier and enjoyed themselves while doing the given task. They also do it correctly as they unintentionally get guidance from their siblings. While the third, the teacher's target towards special needs children becoming a positive, high self-esteem with high socialization skill students is achieved.

Figure 1
Pictures Above Show Pupils Participation in the Inclusive Education Program Along With Their Siblings



Conclusion and Recommendations

This best practice has also been able to have some important implications particularly for pupils' involvement, teachers' learning objective, and the Inclusive Education Program itself. This best practice has ensured that the Inclusive Education Program continues to run as planned even in the COVID-19 pandemic situation. Pupils' involvement in the Inclusive Education Program during learning from home is also maintained. The most significant benefit was that its enhanced pupils' socialisation and involvement throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. According to Saiful Azam (2017), all parties play an important role and need to work together to ensure the successful implementation of this Inclusive Education program.

Siblings involvement nevertheless bring indirectly positive impact on the participation of special needs children in the Inclusive Educational Program. It's not just the number of participation but also the quality of skills and excitement they get. After observing this approach's success with kids, teachers recognise the need for ongoing application of best practises because no one can predict what lies ahead for us in the future. Lindsay et. al (2007) suggested that there is an opportunity to implement and evaluate a variegated system of inclusive education appropriate to this century's complex societies and patterns of schooling where inclusion in its widest sense is impartial, addressing religion, ethnicity, social class and other social dimensions as well as special educational needs and disability. More trials need to be conducted in other subjects or the number of samples to increase the inclusive participation of pupils with special needs in home learning activities.

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