Enhancing English Teacher Language Proficiency: The Malaysian Experience

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Great concern in Government and Civil Society about English language proficiency and it is reflected in ...

**GTP 2.0 (Government Transformation Programme)**

2 of 7 education initiatives are related to English:
- LINUS 2.0 – ensuring basic literacy in English among Year 1 – 3 pupils
- Enhancing the Quality of English Language Teachers

**Malaysia Education Blueprint**

- Shift 2: Ensure Every Child Is Proficient In Bahasa Malaysia and English Language
Malaysian students face tremendous challenges in attaining English proficiency ...

- **English is students’ weakest core subject in national assessments**
  - 25% fail at UPSR (Yr 6)
  - 23% fail at PMR (Yr 9)
  - 22% fail at SPM (Yr 11)

- **Malaysian students perform poorly in international English exams**
  - 50% fail 1119 (Yr 11)

- **Students lose out in employment – lack requisite proficiency**
  - 52% in MUET bands 1&2
  - 48% of employers rejected students due to poor English
There is a slate of initiatives designed to improve student outcomes in English. Two initiatives for English language teachers, ...

- Quality of teachers is a critical determinant of student outcomes
- English proficiency is a prerequisite to good teaching of the language

1. English Teacher language proficiency testing
2. Intensive English proficiency up-skilling
The objective was to assess the proficiency levels of all English language teachers.

1. English Teacher language proficiency testing

- To obtain a profile of English language teachers’ proficiency levels
- To map the proficiency of Malaysian teachers to an internationally recognized metric for describing language proficiency
- To develop a framework of continuous professional development based on teachers’ needs

The Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Pri</th>
<th>Sec</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C2</td>
<td>3.9%</td>
<td>14.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C1</td>
<td>21.1%</td>
<td>36.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B2</td>
<td>42.5%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B1</td>
<td>28.3%</td>
<td>11.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A2</td>
<td>4.0%</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A1</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* CPT is calibrated to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR)
CPT results indicated more support and training is required to further enhance proficiency levels.

2. Intensive English proficiency up-skilling

In syndication with ELT experts, we...

...set proficiency targets
- C1 for secondary
- B2 for primary

(14,240 English teachers to be up-skilled between Nov 2012 and Dec 2014)

...and established the design features
- Duration
  480 hour intensive language up-skilling
- Mode
  Blended mode – face-to-face and digital / online component
- Surrender Value
  Focus on enhancing proficiency but training materials and training context drawn from pedagogy

...which underpinned the training programme...
... Professional Up-skilling of English Language Teachers (Pro-ELT)

We did these right...

- the right provider
- fit-for-purpose
- on-boarding
- incentivizing

... but we could have done this better

- messaging
Thank you