Issues and Future Trends in Teaching Physical Education: A Preliminary Study

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Abstract—This study discusses the issues and future trends of teaching physical education subject. The data is elicited from an interview conducted with four expert teachers. Four issues were identified after conducting an analysis of the interview transcript. The issues are time, teaching method, perception toward physical education and future trends in teaching and learning physical education. Physical education is important for a child’s development from the cognitive, social and physical health aspect. Physical education is not emphasized in school. Based on the data obtained, a new teaching method must be devised to prevent the lack of interest in learning physical education in the classroom.

Keywords—Thematic Analysis; Physical Education; Time; Teaching Method; Perception; Future Trends

I. INTRODUCTION

Physical education is pivotal in the development of a child. Physical education is important to children as nurture’s them intrinsically and extrinsically in their intellectual, spiritual, emotional and physical domain [1] and also in their academic performance [2]. Bailey [2] supports this notion that physical education enables to enhance students’ self-confident, self-esteem, social skill, cognitive development and academic achievement. Other research findings posit that physical activity can improve children’s physical health during pre-adolescent years [3]. Barber, Eccles, and Stone [4] claim that students who are active in sport have greater achievement in academic performance compared to students who are not active in sports. This statement is supported by Shephard [5] who states that physical activity provides positive impact to students’ attention in classroom, personality, behaviors and academic performance during the physical education class. Thus, it can be deduced that there is a close relationship between academic achievement, children’s behavior and physical education.

II. BACKGROUND OF PROBLEM

Physical education is a subject that involves physical activity and the knowledge of awareness to health issues [6]. There are many topics that need to be taught by the teacher in physical education class. The topics are categorized into two part; physical education and health education. According to the syllabus [6], in the physical education class, the teacher teaches the assigned topics in classroom as well as conducting physical activities outside the classroom.

In the Malaysian education scenario, teachers still use the textbook to teach in class which is the traditional teaching method [7]. The textbook that is provided by the Ministry of Education Malaysia has a lot of information or knowledge but it is portrayed in text. Therefore, teachers need to spend more time to explain or demonstrate the relevant topics. Topics such as muscular or cardiovascular system is requires the teachers to teach using relevant teaching materials. In this century, the students are influenced by the technology boom [8][9] and variety of learning materials such as video and animation are easily obtained on the internet [10]. Teaching method is important in vesting the interest of the students to learn the subject, and the determination of the teacher is equally essential in educating the students.

The perception of teachers in teaching physical education is important as physical education is a subject that assist a child in the development and growth over the years [1]. Thus, the responsibility of a teacher is huge in delivering the relevant information to the students. The interest of the teacher to teach physical education is vital in encouraging and motivating the students during their learning process [11]. The interest of teacher to teach effectively during the physical education class can influence the students’ learning style and also able to enhance their interest to learn the subject. Previous studies posit that there are close relationship between interest and fitness toward the students’ learning achievement [12].

In this paper, four issues are discussed based on the interview. From the finding, the four issues are time factor, teaching method, students’ reaction during physical education class and future trends in teaching physical education.
III. RESULT AND FINDING

The interview was analyzed using thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is an independent qualitative descriptive approach and can be defined as a method used for identifying, analyzing and reporting patterns based on a theme within the data [13]. Thematic analysis is widely used to interpret a qualitative data based on the theme and based on the theme can obtain the important data that able to support the research study. This research used thematic analysis to analyzed the interview transcript and identify the issue encountered by the physical education teacher.

A. Time

The first issue that is identified from the interview transcript is time or duration of physical education class. Based on the finding, the duration of physical education class is only 70 minutes once a week which is two period of each class. According to the respondents, the time allocated is insufficient to teach the syllabus designed for the subject.

According to the respondents, the duration of a physical education class comprises of two periods of 35 minutes each. The subject teacher is required to teach several topics pertaining sport skills as well as health topics. A respondent mentioned that he spends 35 minutes to teach the relevant theory and the remaining 35 minutes the students practices the sports skill. The time allocated for practice is insufficient to acquire the appropriate skill of the sport. The syllabus of the subject must be taught 42 week inclusive of public holidays and exam weeks. There are reports which show that duration of physical education class should be more than 70 minutes. According the report from Indiana Standards [14], the time for physical education class should at least be within 75-105 minutes weekly. Besides that, a report from National Standards for Physical Education [15] also recommends that the duration for physical education may require a minimum of 150 minutes per week for elementary level and 225 minutes per week for middle and secondary school level to meet the high quality of physical education program. Due to insufficient time, the teacher also responded that the time allocated is divided into two sections of theory and practical skill accordingly. One respondent responded that he teaches the theory and skill concurrently on the field.

B. Teaching Method

Based on the interview, the second issue that is identified is teaching method. When the respondents were asked about their teaching method, 3 out of 4 respondents uses traditional method that uses the textbook in the teaching of physical education. Some of the respondents does not often use the textbook in their class but uses other teaching aids too. However, one respondent uses textbook and PowerPoint only. The respond are as below.

Researcher

“How do you teach physical education in your class? Do you use any material to help you in teaching?”

Respondent 1

“In my school, I am provided with a reference book so I can find extra note for my students and I also refer the examples of exercises in that reference book for my students.”

Respondent 2

“I often do not use the textbook and I use the textbook only as a reference because I will find other reference which is beyond the textbook to teach the students. This will attract the students and the students can get more “surprises” when they are learning certain topic.”

Respondent 3

“I do not often use textbook because the students enjoy the teaching method which is more interesting. They prefer or focus when I use some teaching aids in physical education class.”

Respondent 4

“I use the textbook and power point slides when I teach this subject. Some of the classes are installed with LCD so I can use power point to teach. However, there are not all the class have LCD. For the class that is not installed with LCD, I have to use textbook to teach the students.”

Based on the answers from the respondent, it is clearly stated that the respondents still uses the traditional teaching method even though in the current 21st century the teachers and students are exposed to technology. The teachers use the face-to face teaching method in the classroom. Indirectly, it will affect the interest of the students to learn physical education.

C. Students’ Reaction During Physical Education Class

Next from the interview data, the researcher found that the teachers are still using traditional method to teach the physical education subject. Teachers are the best individual to observe every reaction in class while the class is ongoing. One of the interview question is “What are the students’ reaction when you are teaching in physical education class?” Basically, all the respondents gave the same answer, whereby most of their students are bored and feel uninterested to learn the subject when taught in the classroom. One of the respondents said that mostly the students does not like to bring physical education textbook to school and this action portrayed the students’ lack of interest in the subject. However, when the teachers teach the topic by using some teaching aids, the
students are focused and show interest in the topic being taught. The interview question and the respond from respondents are show as below.

Researcher

“Based on your observation, what is the students’ reaction when you are teaching during the physical education class?”

Respondent 1

“The students are aware that this subject is not a core subject in examination such as SPM so they do not take it seriously. They also do not show interest or enjoyment when I use textbook to teach this subject.”

Respondent 2

“I use textbook to teach in class and the students feel boring in this subject and some of them purposely don’t bring the textbook to school. When I use teaching aids in class, the situation in class is different. The students show interest and focus to the topic that I teach in class.”

Respondent 3

“The students feel boring when I teach this subject by using textbook. On the other hand, they are attracted and focused when I include some teaching aids in my lesson.”

Respondent 4

“I use textbook and power point. There is a lot different when I use these two types of method. When I use textbook in my lesson, it is difficult to attract the students’ attention. If I use power point, the students are interested and it is easier to attract the students’ attention because I can add some image into the power point slides.”

The data shows that the students are uninterested and teachers are unable to attract students’ attention when they use the textbook to teach physical education. However, some respondents suggest that by integrating the teaching aids in the teaching process is easier to attract the students’ focus in the class. Thus, new teaching aids are needed to assist the teachers to teach during the physical education class.

D. Future Trends In Teaching And Learning Physical Education

The last finding focuses on the future trends in teaching and learning physical education. The data shows that currently, teachers still uses the traditional method in the teaching process and the outcome may show negative result. However, the respondents suggests that they are willing to use other method in their teaching process for a more interesting and enjoyable lesson. The respondents suggest that by integrating multimedia elements such as video in teaching process may provide positive impact to the students’ interest for physical education. This is aligned with Blakely and Irvine [16] which claimed that video is the combination of text, audio and graphics. The usage of video in class is does not only benefits the teachers but also the students. The respondents commented that the use of video in class allows the students to attain better understanding of the subject matter as audio visual provides better learning environment. The respondents also commented that audio visual also assist them to teach the skills that they do not comprehend. For example, a respondent who is not an expert in teaching rugby, will be able to and he can show explain to the students the relevant skills of the game with the help of a video clip. The respondents also commented that they able to find the relevant video from YouTube that capture professional players performing the sport skills. The example respond is shown as below.

Researcher

“Do you think video clip can help you in your teaching process? Why?”

Respondent 1 and 2

“It is very helpful. For example, if we use video to teach about the topic of cardiovascular, I think the lesson will become more interesting because the topic is show in visual method. Besides that, it also can encourage the students to know more about the topic. If we teach this kind of topic by using textbook, the students may find it hard to understand. I think this is very good and helpful if we have this kind of teaching material.”

IV. IV Discussion

From the interview conducted, there are four issues identified based on the finding. The four issues are time factor, teaching method, students’ reaction during physical education class and future trends in teaching and learning physical education.

Firstly, the teachers have insufficient time to cover all the topics in the syllabus by using the traditional teaching method. There are several research comparing the effectiveness of traditional teaching method and new teaching method in time and the finding shows that new teaching method such as integrating technology in teaching and learning process is less time consuming the time [17]. Integrated technology in teaching and learning process is much different than teaching face-to-face in class in terms of students’ interest and enjoyable to the physical education subject. Besides that, the teacher needs to complete the syllabus with limited time. The respondents stated that they must use the correct teaching method or technique in order to complete the syllabus at the end of the year [18]. Due to insufficient time, the teaching style of teachers is teacher-centered to complete of the
required task and teach the syllabus of the subject. Limited time affects the teaching quality the inability of the teachers in imparting knowledge effectively.[19]. Therefore, the teachers will always complete the daily basic content of the textbook by following the teaching plan.

Secondly, teaching method is important to increase students’ interest and encouraging them to be involved in the physical education activities. The comments from the respondents show that they are apply traditional teaching method in the classroom. The traditional teaching methods tend to encourage passive learning and the students are may not have the chance to critically appraise the new knowledge [20]. According to [20], choosing the appropriate teaching media is important in encouraging students to interact during teaching and learning in the classroom. The way to encourage students to interact with teachers is by asking question. Most of the time, the teachers themselves answers the questions being asked. Nonetheless, teachers should wait for the answer from the students because it may take time for the students to change the mode from listening to thinking [20]. However, due to the limited time allocated, there is less interaction in the classroom.

Thirdly, the students’ reaction during lesson is the best way to reflect the dissemination of information. Maintaining the motivation of students during the lesson is essential in any lesson being taught [21]. Teachers have to use the appropriate teaching technique or motivational strategies to engage the students who less interested in this subject. The strategies does not only able to engage the students to involve in the ongoing class activities, but also assists the teacher to achieve the teaching objective. According to [21], there are two factors which influence students’ motivation to involve in physical education class which is internal and external aspects. The internal aspects includes individual characteristics (e.g. age, gender, physical attributed), dispositional variable (e.g. attitude, task and ego orientation, intrinsic motivation) and individual situational variable (e.g. sport practice involvement, motives for sport participant, perception of success) [22] [23]. External factors includes environment situation variable (e.g. teacher’s expertise, school characteristics, parents’ involvement, providing choice) and contextual variable (e.g. Physical education curriculum, Physical education program, physical education teacher) [22] [23] [24]. Based on the two factors, the teachers have to find out the suitable teaching method that can engage students’ motivation to involve or participant in physical activities. Students who show greater motivation in physical education also enable to enhance the teaching and learning quality of the subject.

Fourth, technology is widely used in the education field and this trend is growing rapidly because technology provide greater impact to students who are not academically inclined and improves the teaching and learning quality in the classroom [25] [26]. Mobile learning is actively being used in the education field and research states that that children can learn from well-designed educational application [27]. There are several studies which show that the current trend in education is mobile learning [28] [29] [30] [31]. A report by Telstra [32], show that the ownership of mobile device in Australia has increased by 36% from 2010 until 2011 and was predicted that the growth will be up to 60% by 2012. Based on this number, researcher asked the respondents on the use of mobile device in the teaching and learning process. The respondents provides positive feedback and comment that integration of mobile device in teaching and learning process enables to change the classroom environment to become more enjoyable and interesting.

Researcher

“Do you think mobile device can help you in teaching this subject?”

Respondent 1

“I feel it is helpful because if we have the tablet we can easily to show examples to the students but there is a problem, whereby tablets cannot be provided to all the students and the screen is too small.”

Respondent 2

“I think it will be more attractive because the mobile device can be used outside the school hour also.”

Respondent 3

“I feel it is useful and interesting because it is a new teaching method and students will enjoy the dynamic teaching material. The textbook used in teaching and learning has only text and statics images. When integrated with new technology, the students will understand the topic better.”

Respondent 4

“Of course. Mobile device is portable and I can bring to the field and show the video to the students on the spot. Compared to laptop, the size of the laptop is bigger and the mobility is low.”

The comments above illustrates that mobile device is helpful and useful. However, there are some problems such as the screen is too small and the tablet cannot be provided to all students. There are some applications able to overcome this problem. One of the solutions to overcome this problem is by using the Google remote desktop. This application is an open source and can be downloaded from the internet. The main function of this application is to share the smartphone or tablet’s screen into computer.
V. CONCLUSION

This paper illustrates the thematic analysis of interview data which was conducted by the researcher with four respondents. Several interview questions were asked to the respondents. Based on the interview data obtained, the researcher analyzed the transcript and identified four issues which are time constrain, teaching method, students’ perception toward physical education and future trend in physical education. There is limited time for teachers to teach all the required topics during the physical education lesson and teacher needs to use the correct teaching method to teach the students in the allocated time. Unfortunately, the teachers still use the traditional method and a lot of time is used in dissemination of knowledge. Hence, the students show less interest and does not focus during ongoing lesson in the classroom as some topics is quite complicated to understand such as cardiovascular system or muscular system. Besides that, it was noted that the students purposely do not bring the physical education textbook to school. To overcome this problem, new teaching method has to be applied to change the classroom environment during physical education lesson. Currently, mobile learning is a trend and previous studies show that mobile learning enables to change the classroom environment. Although mobile learning shows a positive impact in the teaching and learning process, the learning module also has an important role. The researcher suggests that a digital application should be developed to replace the tangible textbook. The digital textbook that developed in the future should include the multimedia element that can attract and encourage students’ interest to further study in this subject.

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