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PEMBELAJARAN INFORMAL DI KALANGAN GURU-GURU SEKOLAH MENENGAH DI DAERAH KINTA, PERAK.

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**DISERTASI DIKEMUKAKAN BAGI
MEMENUHI SYARAT UNTUK MEMPEROLEHI
IJAZAH SARJANA PENDIDIKAN
(PENGURUSAN PENDIDIKAN)**

**FAKULTI PERNIAGAAN DAN EKONOMI
UNIVERSITI PENDIDIKAN SULTAN IDRIS**

2005



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PENGAKUAN

Saya mengaku kertas projek ini adalah hasil kerja saya sendiri kecuali nukilan dan ringkasan yang setiap satunya saya jelaskan sumbernya.

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the work in this project is my own except for quotations and summaries which have been dully acknowledged.

27-5-2005

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I thank God for making it possible for me to complete this study. At this opportunity, I express my deepest gratitude to Ms Khuan Wai Bing my supervisor for her invaluable guidance, support and motivation throughout this project. I thank her also for her selfless advice during the entire course of the study, irrespective of time and day.

My sincere thanks also to the participated school principals, senior assistance and teachers who were the respondents in this study.



And finally to my loving husband Ganesan, my lovely boys Ravindran and Ravishangkar, my parents and in laws. I owe them gratitude not only for their much tested patience for the duration of my previous studies that have led to the successful completion of my graduate studies.

Suguna Devi Peariasamy
May, 2005





ABSTRAK

Tujuan kajian ini adalah untuk mengkaji praktis pembelajaran informal di kalangan guru-guru sekolah menengah di daerah Kinta, Perak. Kajian ini dijalankan berpandukan empat soalan kajian iaitu 1. Apakah jenis aktiviti pembelajaran informal yang telah dilakukan oleh guru-guru dalam tahun tahun yang lalu? 2. Di manakah guru-guru melakukan pembelajaran informal?. 3. Berapakah tempoh masa yang diluangkan bagi pembelajaran informal? 4. Apakah kaedah pembelajaran informal yang diminati oleh guru-guru? Kajian ini menggunakan metodologi kuantitatif dan data dikumpul melalui soal selidik. Seramai 143 orang guru sekolah menengah dipilih sebagai sample kajian. Sumber utama data adalah daripada satu set senarai soalan. Kajian ini mendedahkan bahawa hampir semua guru-guru yang menjawab telah terlibat dalam sekurang-kurangnya satu aktiviti pembelajaran informal. Sifat-sifat latarbelakang responden juga diselidik berdasarkan jantina, umur, lokasi kedudukan sekolah dan lain-lain. Guru-guru menyatakan bahawa mereka meluangkan masa purata 6 jam seminggu dalam aktiviti pembelajaran informal berkaitan dengan kerja, komuniti, rekreasi atau rumah mereka. Kaedah pembelajaran yang diminati oleh guru – guru seminggu adalah secara bersendirian atau dengan rakan sekerja. Secara spesifik purata masa yang diluangkan untuk kegiatan berkaitan tempat kerja adalah 2.4 jam, 1.7 jam digunakan untuk kegiatan berkaitan dengan rekreasi, 1.4 jam dalam pembelajaran komuniti dan lebih kurang 1.5 jam digunakan bagi kegiatan rumah. Minat dalam pendidikan masa hadapan yang dimaklumkan oleh responden-responden adalah tema yang berkaitn secara langsung kepada pengajaran di sekolah.-





ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research is to examine the informal learning practices among secondary school teachers in the Kinta District of Perak. The research is conducted by examining four research questions: 1. What types of informal learning activities the teachers may have done in the past year? 2. Where do the teachers engage in informal learning? 3. How much time do teachers spend in informal learning? 4. What are teachers' favoured modes of informal learning? The study employed the quantitative methodology and data were collected through structured questionnaires. The secondary school teachers were selected to participate in this study. The main source of data was from a set of questionnaire and 143 teachers responded. The study revealed that almost all the teachers indicated that they had engaged in some form of informal learning. The background characteristics of the respondents were also examined based on gender, age, and school locality, etcetera. The findings revealed that teachers spent an average of six hours per week engaged in informal learning related to their job, community/social, recreational and home. Specifically an average of 2.4 hours were spent in the workplace activities, 1.7 hours spend for recreational related activities, and 1.4 hours in community learning and about 1.5 hours spent in home activities. The learning modes preferred by teachers generally were learning on their own or with peers. The future educational interest reported by respondents were themes related directly to teaching.



LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
3.1 Relationship Between Selected Variables That Lead To Informal Learning	42
3.2 Reliability of Questionnaire	53
4.1 Background Characteristics of Respondents	59
4.3 School Locality and the Size	61
4.4 Characteristics of Teacher Workload	62
4.5 Types of Locality for Informal Learning Activities	67
4.6 Work Related Informal Learning Themes in the Past Twelve Months	69
4.7 Total Hours Spent in Informal Learning	70
4.8 Summary of How Informal Learning Took Place	72
4.9 Most Important Future Further Education Interests	74

CONTENT

	Page
PENGAKUAN	ii
DECLARATION	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	iv
ABSTRAK	v
ABSTRACT	vi

PART I INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Inquiry	1
1.2 Statement of the Research Problem	7
1.3 Research Questions	9
1.4 Objective of the Study	9
1.5 Definition of Key Terms	10
1.6 Significance of the Proposed Research	13

PART II LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction	14
2.2 Learning	15
2.3 Teacher Learning	15
2.4 Informal Learning	18
2.5 Informal Learners	22
2.6 Types of Informal Learning Activities	24



2.7	Learning Locality	26
2.8	Workplace Learning	28
2.9	Learning at Home and in the Community	34
2.10	Hours Spent and Time Involved	36
2.11	Modes of Learning	37
2.12	Summary	38

PART III METHODOLOGY

3.1	Introduction	39
3.2	Research Design	40
3.3	Research Framework	41
3.4	Characteristics Of Questionnaire	43
3.4.1	Informal Learning In The Workplace	44
3.4.2	Informal Learning At Home	45
3.4.3	Other Activities of Informal Learning	45
3.4.4	Approach To Learning	45
3.5	Translation of Instrument	46
3.6	Pilot Testing	47
3.7	Population	48
3.8	Sample	49
3.9	Data Collection	51
3.10	Data Analysis	53
3.11	Reliability and Validity	53
3.12	Limitation of The Study	54
3.13	Summary	54

PART IV FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1	Background Characteristics of Respondents	56
4.2	Types of Locality for Informal Learning Activities	63
4.3	Time Involvement in Informal Learning	69
4.4	Modes of Learning	70



4.5	Future Learning Interest	73
4.6	Summary	75

PART V CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1	Limitation of Study	79
5.2	Recommendation	80

BIBLIOGRAPHY

APPENDICES



PART I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Inquiry

Today much importance has been given to lifelong learning in both developed and developing nation, changes in work organization and management, that coupled with a focus on markets, consumption and lifestyle. This has drawn the attention of the leaders and policy makers to the rhetoric of lifelong learning.

There is a growing recognition of the need to move towards lifelong learning, specifically that which focuses on informal learning. The purpose is to provide an understanding of a lifelong learning as part of everyday life, a permanent national necessity and inseparable aspect of citizenship.

Lifelong learning is a variety of learning process throughout life that transform experiences into knowledge, skills and attitudes. It happens automatically with various



degrees of success. It should be understood as the expression and fulfillment of the naturally occurring curiosity that is found in healthy human beings. It occurs inevitably as it is the process by which past experiences are integrated to respond to unfolding possibilities in the present and future (Gan, 2005). In other words, lifelong learning is as old as the human race itself. For the hunter and gatherer in ancient times, living by his or wits was lifelong learning.

Further supported by Dato Seri Chan Kong Choy (2005) that there is an urge for lifelong learning to meet the challenges of globalization. Lifelong learning has been shown to promote more individual's and nations competitive edge. He further stressed that it is important to instill an awareness of learning in order to progress and move forward.

Lifelong learning exists in three distinct forms that are formal, non-formal and informal. Formal learning opportunities are provided by institutions such as schools and colleges and usually result in credentials such as diplomas, certificates or degrees and current campaign on lifelong learning in Malaysia more concerned with providing opportunities for non-formal learning which refers to learning in organizations and agencies where the provision of learning opportunities is a secondary function (Gan, 2005).

Informal learning encompasses vast majority of learning that takes place within a community. It is characterised by interaction between human and media or material

resources. Informal learning opportunities are available from family and friends, books and forms of mass media such as newspaper and television.

Today, lifelong campaigns that have been going on are generally aimed at personal, community or national development. It is expedient to all organizations to organize programmes or activities that are community based. This approach has been proven to impact individuals, groups and communities in the way they live, inform and educate themselves.

Prime Minister Dato Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi (2005) further supported that learning does not end when we complete school or tertiary education new knowledge is constantly being produced. Malaysians must therefore constantly upgrade their knowledge and skills, and have passion for lifelong learning.

In addition, as part of government's efforts to enhance competency, a new measure implemented under a new human resources training policy. The policy calls for every civil servant to equip himself with the right attitude, skills and knowledge via a planned program based on upgrading of competency and lifelong learning. It is to ensure "value added services" from civil servants. To help them advance in their career, increase productivity and improve work quality.

It cannot be denied that we learn throughout our lives. Some of this learning is deliberate and planned, and some simply happens as a result of our experience. Although most of us recognize and value the learning we gain through our formal education and



training, we do not always place equal value on our informal learning. By far the greatest part of our learning is achieved outside formal education and training though our everyday experiences of acquiring knowledge and information by watching others, asking questions, solving problems and experiencing success and failure.

Informal learning activities will be one of the most important characteristics of the working life of the future (Johnston, 1998). While specialized competence depreciate very fast in terms of economic value, workers of all skill levels have to update their technical skills and enhance their general skills to keep pace with the continuous technological change and new job requirements (Bartel, Sicherman, 1998 & Gould, 2002). Formal education as provided by training courses during work-time accounts only for a small part of the required educational activities.

Informal learning is also proven to be one of the distressing techniques for teachers and administrators who face stress related problems in life. It can generate a high level of stress, fatigue, and lead to burnout. Contributing factors to this stress are many such as spending many hours in class, classes that take more preparation time, handling classes with large enrollments, latest curricular and teaching approaches, including the use of technology, increasing demands on time, energy, administrative, clerical and committee duties, changes in administrative demands or administrative leadership, time pressures and deadlines and many more.





It has been reported that teachers spend almost more than 40 hours a week for school related activities. Too much workload is a barrier to all teachers to do further learning. They have no time for formal learning activities that help them to upgrade their knowledge. Through informal learning activities one may able to keep up to date and prepare themselves for personal growth and also student's achievements.

The collective recognition of this informal learning and its occurrence across the life course can lead to people more fully valuing both their own learning capacities and those of other social groups. By recognizing the amount of informal learning they are doing, ordinary people can begin to identify connections among the learning activities in which they are involved with their workmates, families, and community members. Furthermore, they can be more articulate with government policymakers about what kinds of learning programs should be developed and should be offered to link to the competencies and interests that are already there, rather than just accepting more unilaterally-established training provisions.

Informal learning research can enable governments, trade unions, and employers to become more responsive to the interests and receptivities of the workforce for different forms of educational programs. In short, with such data, learning needs can be more fully and effectively problematised and strategised in terms of needs for whom, for what, and from what standpoint. The recognition of informal learning can improve an individual's employability and enable enterprises to increase their potential for human resource management.



It should also be clear from these findings that teachers have the opportunity to ensure the type of informal learning and the subject-area they need to do to prepare themselves for personal and organizational growth. Learning for life generally, there are many benefits of informal learning for increasing an individual's knowledge and understanding of their health and well-being; for managing time and leisure activities; for active participation as a citizen; for encouraging further engagement with education and learning; for employment skills and quality of working life; for making consumer choices about goods and services; for an appreciation of the physical environment and social environment; and for personal safety.

Administrators and policy makers can focused more on the subject-area of informal learning that will help the teachers to upgrade knowledge and continuing learning as a life long process. As noted by Garet (2001), Learning that is focused on subject matter, provides teachers with opportunities to enhance knowledge and skills that positively impact students achievement. To meet the challenges of globalization. Teachers need to upgrade knowledge and skills through learning- Informal Learning for professional development that provides some meaning to life and often be a pathway to formal learning.

Studies on informal learning are mainly carried out in the West and mostly in the non-formal or conventional context. However, the phenomenon needs to be understood in the informal learning context and in a Malaysian setting. The researcher also feels that there is a need for further insight into the phenomenon of informal learning in Malaysia. Most of the literature on this phenomenon comes from the West.



The researcher has been motivated to further study about what teachers are actually doing to develop professionalism. This study will be mainly about the concept of “informal learning” in which learning is undertaken outside of formal structures of classes and courses, instructors and regulations. It is a process or a way of helping people to learn through activities such as reading around the subject, buying magazines and searching information. This encourages teachers to think and able to bring special insights and ways to develop professionalism.

1.2 Statement of the Research Problem

It is known that adults are involved in some kind of learning. As adults they are self-motivated, plan their own learning, have readiness to learn and seek the help and advice of others. But this kind of learning is more aimed in non-formal situation. Researches indicate that majority of adults today are involved in informal learning rather than formal and non-formal learning (Gan, 2005). Little attention has been given to informal learning as it directly impacts individuals, groups and communities in the way they live, inform and educate themselves.

Learning is a multifunctional instrument for personal, organizational and student’s development. Learning is seen as a process and help community members to identify their own problems and needs, seek solutions among themselves, mobilize the necessary resources and to execute a plan. Teachers as community members are expected to teach





more demanding standards-based curricula currently like teaching Mathematics and Science in English and to ensure that their students meet academic standards, they discover that they themselves need to learn new subject-area content as well as more effective ways to teach their subject. Teachers and administrators therefore need to select the subject-area content that will help them to upgrade knowledge to give quality teaching that will lead to student's success.

Learning that is focused on subject matter, provides teachers with opportunities for “hands-on” work, and is integrated into the daily life of the school is more likely to produce enhanced knowledge and skills that positively impact student achievement. Researchers also agree that the success of school improvement and reform initiatives hinges, in large part, on the qualifications and effectiveness of teachers (Garet, 2001). In this light, attention should be paid to what the teachers are actually learning and they are already doing for professional development.

It is apparent that teachers are continuously learning to meet the challenges. However, it is still unclear how teachers are going about learning informally. Investigations need to be done in the areas of the types of informal learning, where do they learn, how much time do they spend for informal learning and the preferred modes of learning to enable teachers to identify their own problems and seek solutions among themselves. In other words, learners must be equipped with the ability and skill of how, what, why, when and where to learn.





Hence, the researcher has decided to undertake a study to examine informal learning practices among teachers. This encompasses the need for learning as liberal education, in developing oneself to cope as best as possible with the continual problems that plague teachers, as a functional vehicle for professional development that provides some meaning to life.

1.3 Research Questions

The research questions are stated as follows:

1. What types of informal learning activities the teachers may have done in the past year?
2. Where do the teachers engage in informal learning?
3. How much time do teachers spend in informal learning?
4. What are teachers' favoured modes of Informal Learning?

1.4 Objective of the Study

The main objective of this study is to examine informal practices among secondary teachers in Kinta District of Perak. The specific objectives include:





1. to determine the types of informal learning activities the teachers may have done in the past year.
2. to determine the location of teachers' engagement in informal learning.
3. to determine the number of hours teachers spend in informal learning.
4. to determine the teachers' favoured modes of Informal Learning.

1.5 Definition of Key Terms

Learning



The acquisition of knowledge, attitudes, and skills, usually resulting in behavioral change in an individual.



Informal Learning

Informal learning refers to learning activities involving understanding, knowledge or skill which occurs outside curricular of educational institutions.





Formal Learning

Formal learning takes place in education and training institutions, leading to recognised diplomas and qualifications.

Lifelong learning

A process of learning that continues throughout one's lifetime, depending on individual needs, interests, and learning skills.



Learning Activities

Learning activities means the types of learning activities adults do to achieve an outcome or qualification.

Experience

Learning from our experience increases understanding, knowledge and skills.



Learning Locality

The place where adults learn for instance home, community and work.

Workplace related learning

Workplace related learning for teachers means taking part in their job related activities

Time Involvement in Informal Learning

The time spend for informal learning in order gain new form of understanding, knowledge or skill.

Modes of Informal Learning

Modes of learning refers to how adults learn go about learning whether on their own, friends or others.



1.6 Significance of the Proposed Research

The study is undertaken for a better understanding of informal learning practices among teachers. Since learning is a pillar of adult learning theory, this study will contribute to an understanding of the type of informal learning and the subject-area the teachers need to do, to prepare them for personal and organizational growth. The findings of this study will contribute to the larger body of knowledge in adult learning.

The study will also benefits the informal learners for increasing an individual's knowledge and understanding of their health and well-being; for managing time and leisure activities; for active participation as a citizen; for encouraging further engagement with education and learning; for employment skills and quality of working life.

Informal learning can be acquired, potential adult learners can learn the techniques and obtain the qualities they need in preparation to engage in informal learning, especially in informal learning in the workplace. The findings therefore provide an additional perspective to the existing knowledge on informal learning and contribute significantly to the development of adult learning. It will contribute to help adults to take charge of their own learning, engage in never-ending quest for learning to enhance intellectual development and growth.

