The Role of ICT in Special Educational Needs – A Case Study of Malaysia

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ABSTRACT
Learning disabilities could impair one's access to and involvement in education. For students with learning disabilities or students with Special Education Needs (SEN), school may be a struggle, and concentrating in lessons or trying to understand what is taught may be highly challenging. Some students failed in their studies, while some become dropouts as school to them is obsolete and boring, and fails to cater to their learning needs. This study therefore proposed a well-known but unpopular method for assisting the struggling students to return to school. Specifically, this study proposes the use of more than one styles of records and expression presentation to attract students who require learning strategies that are broader and more dynamic.

Keywords: *ICT, Social Web, Special Educational Needs, Education Difficulties.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Web 2.0 or social Web encompasses Web-based environments that user employ for the purpose of communicating, networking and collaborating, and in the context of education, Web 2.0 is now integral. Among many education scholars of different domains, their interest is on the application of these technologies for educational purposes. In this regard, Communication Technologies (CT) have been proposed to foster the development and improvement of students on several aspects, and these include the aspects of collaboration, knowledge building, critical thinking, socialization, satisfaction, as well as inclusion [1][2].

Among the aforementioned aspects, the past decades have seen the aspect of inclusion being a major challenge (among others) for school systems. The inclusion of students is preserved by the Inclusive Education Framework (IEF) [3]. In particular, IEF provides that inclusion disallows exclusion, and students of all conditions (e.g., physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic or other conditions) are equally entitled to receive education [4]. However, it should be understood that inclusive education is beyond an application of policies. In this regard, teachers and other educational agents need to be sufficiently trained in order to assure the achievement of inclusive practices. Accordingly, adequate training allows teachers and other educational agents to effectively address different circumstances and needs of students. Consequently, an inclusive education by way of inclusive schools/environments can be established.

Various initiatives can be contained within the inclusive education. These include the initiatives for the following students (among others): students with disabilities, underprivileged students, students belonging to ethnic or linguistic minorities, exploited students, and discriminated students. However, in this paper, inclusive education will only cover students who in (SEN). In this paper, SEN is associated with students who face academic underachievement or those who leave school without proper credentials.

SEN may be caused by a number of factors including the feeling of detachment from the school setting, rejection or neglect by peers, and being excluded from the normal educational experiences. Interestingly, it is not uncommon for students with SEN to have certain interests and abilities but due to the failure of the conventional pedagogical practices and strategies in catering to the learning needs of these students, these interests and abilities remain concealed.

In the education setting of Malaysia, IEF provides the guidelines for Special Education. Notably, IEF has been in effect since 1994. Unfortunately, the efforts that have been made appear to be inadequate in terms of innovativeness or inclusiveness, that those are unfit with the conventional educational setting remained

marginalized. In fact, these students still represent the majority of the dropouts in the country [5]. Ironically, about rate of dropouts in Malaysia remains double that of the Asian average rates. As can therefore be construed, much remains to be addressed in the context of Malaysian education system.

This study therefore proposed the utilization of Communication Technology (CT), especially the one belonging to the social Web era. Such usage can facilitate the efforts in addressing the academic underachievers

II. PROBLEMS AND OBSTACLES

Many factors have been linked to academic underachievement. In this regard, SEN which has linkage to the deficiencies of senses, motor and cognition, has been regarded as the primary cause of learning limitations. As an example, it is actually very common for gifted children to underachieve [6], and the same phenomenon can equally be seen among disadvantaged or marginalized children owing to functional restrictions, social misfit and erratic school performance, which have been associated with them.

The notion of underachievement can be explained as a discrepancy that is present between intellectual potential or capacity and academic achievement, and the main cause of underachievement appears to be a mixture of personal attributes and factors related to the environment. Among the examples of personal attributes are irresolute learning incapacity, doubts in the successful accomplishment of a task or goal, or restricted capacity in self-regulating the behaviour. In the meantime, the environmental variables may additionally include social and own family related troubles, and a misalliance among the mastering fashion of the student and that of his/her peers and the style of coaching employed by using the teacher. Equally, issues and restriction associated with a typical classroom and of the educational system can also contribute to underachievement. It should also be noted that in a classroom, there may be some disruptive students who cause disturbance to others, and high student number in a class may restrict the teacher's ability to address these students and to fulfil the lesson plan.

It is not uncommon for underperforming students to have high level of creativity, aside from having special capabilities. In the meantime, the traditional textual content-based practice, rote memory studying duties, or instructor directed actions would cause these students to lose interest in learning altogether [7]. For these students, curriculum that is boring, homogenous and disengaging can cause underachievement and negative willing to attend the school classes. These can result in further disinclination to pursue instructional success and

also rejection behaviours. However, the failure of school environment in catering to the needs of students with SEN is not the only reason for school failure. In fact, this issue can be handled through the utilization of innovative strategies which could capture the interests of today's youth.

Accordingly, this study is of the view that emerging technologies can be highly of value in facilitating the learning success of students with SEN. Especially, net based gear and environments offers novel methods to access and manage data. the usage of internet based gear additionally has refashioned the dynamics of interaction. furthermore, having those tools mixed with suitable pedagogical techniques, these technology and environments can substantially affect the way wherein college students alternate knowledge, interact and examine.

III. COMPREHENSIVE PLATFORM APPLING SOCIAL WEB

Today's social network relies primarily on networks, user-generated content, communities, and social interaction. With countless free tools and easy-to-use applications provided by the social network, users can effectively control, sort, manage, employ, and rebuild knowledge using diverse methods and for various purposes. The social network is largely driven by people's attitudes towards the desire for knowledge, participation, participation in knowledge sharing and creation, and interaction with others.

Some have described this new network as a social platform that allows individuals to interact, redesign, share and redefine learning styles [8]. Blogs, wikis, social networks, or sharing sites are among the social web tools users use to explore different paths, connect with others, and learn by exploring areas of knowledge based on individual choices. When using the social network, users are encouraged to share, interact and share, while developing competencies to share and interact with others vigorously.

Incorporating social web tools into teaching practices and as a classroom expansion allows for the distribution of diverse learning environments and contexts, allowing students to show particular interests or abilities. These tools provide students with new opportunities to generate and transfer knowledge, create learning networks, move beyond the classroom and look for aspects of their lives. [9] Integrating social web tools into educational tools encourages students to transfer accountability, independent learning, problem-based learning and collaborative work. Developing sufficient attitudes to share with tools benefits students. Likewise, the fairer environment provided by social web tools benefits students and also transforms students into first

among equals, where hierarchies and individual differences are weakened [10].

Until this point, the problem assumptions seem to correspond to deductions. In this regard, they stated that students with SEN can benefit from social interactions with individuals from diverse backgrounds, in at least three different areas. These areas are:

A. Learning
B. Emotion
C. Behaviour

Consequently, the reported benefits from such interactions include:

A. Improved acquirement and generalization of skill,
B. Superior academic results,
C. Belonging feelings,
D. Behaviour, Social and academic silks based on role model,
E. Further embedding in future environments
F. Increase appreciation and acceptance of character differences and variety [9].

When web learning environments are expanded, students create feelings of belonging, enhancing their presence, motivation, behavior, self-confidence and attitudes towards learning and achievement. In this regard, when students feel that they are supported and that their opinions and perceptions are reliable and appreciated by others, there is thus an achievement. It also benefits from the creation of student-centered curricula and individual learning pathways provided by these tools.

For teachers, integrating social web tools into their practices of teaching provides them with fresh prospects of revaluating their practices of teaching and learning. Educators and teachers are agents of change. In this regard, they are asked to take on new roles and skills that can reduce learning and make learning more relevant to their students. However, proper training or hands-on examples through trial and error is necessary without them, it may be impossible to achieve comprehensive practices.

IV. THE MALAYSIAN CASE

Inside the Asian and Malaysian regulation, the schooling of students with SEN has been stipulated as a right and a duty for a long time, and but, best these days has there been an effective action to transport instructional regulations and practices closer to a greater inclusive route. by some means, there appears a void in the present day regulation and this void narrows the potentialities of a few college students with SEN, especially the ones without evidence of a recognized need. not only that, the rules appear to have decreased the amount of instructors for those students in addition to the number of hours allocated to them each week, resulting in students with SEN being taught in mainstream classes the use of the regular requirements or being consigned to expert publications for the attainment of obligatory education certification [11].

Inclusion rates may increase as SEN-certified students are included in traditional classes. In a way, this may mean that teachers need to equip themselves in order to be able to work with the student by SEN in the classroom. Nonetheless, this is not the commonly occurring situation. In fact, the last year has seen the increased focus on training the SEN teachers following the Technological Plan for Education (TPE). In particular, these teachers received training in CT application, and this is to promote the inclusion and facilitate the learning of students with SEN [12].

There are yet any available effects of TPE initiative however SEN researches have pointed to the various requirements within the initial and non-stop programs of training. Relevantly, a studies achieved in a master's diploma software in unique education [13] observed that most respondents, whom were college students, had been in settlement that CT presents noteworthy educational advantages. now not only that, they also agreed that CT can assist college students with SEN in overcoming some of the stumbling blocks from their unique desires. equally, CT became viewed by using the respondents as a component that accelerated motivation and involvement of college students with SEN. Nonetheless, the in-depth study found that in the use of CT among SEN children, most teachers revealed that they were not specifically trained and that they also had insufficient as well as obsolete knowledge [14].

In the context of Malaysia, studies that explore the application of social web as a platform to include students with SEN are yet to be carried out. Furthermore, it appears that the initiatives of social web often times are of individual initiatives, and not the initiatives of the institution [15].

Students that have learning problems do have the desire to learn. Somehow, their limitations appear to significantly hinder them from learning and from achieving the desirable outcomes within the academic environment. Such phenomenon may lead them to feel that they have personally failed, aside from being frustrated, angry and discouraged by the education system. These students may also gradually withdraw from classes aside from showing reluctance in the positive engagement with the learning process. There may also be moments of disaffection, emotional outbursts or incidents of improper behaviour demonstrated by these students. Unfortunately, all the aforementioned issues have not been properly addressed.

V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The potential applications of the social Web in motivating and encouraging students with SEN are

crucial for students suffering from learning problems and underachievement considering that emotional well-being can be the gap between being predisposed and not being predisposed to learning.

Accordingly, this study suggests the application and exploration of social web tools in addition to other CTs in catering to the special needs of the students while also motivating them to learn. Having the tools integrated with the innovative and engaging pedagogical strategies may lead to learning environments that are more equitable where knowledge can be created and shared, while restrictions or specific needs are attenuated.

Still, this study is of the view that change in traditional practices is not just about the application of novel tools, rather, it is about their application with specified purposes and attitudes. In this regard, a lot have to be done, especially on a global basis, in order that the Social Web in any respect of education levels may be endorsed. This could consequently foster a getting to know surroundings that caters to the desires of college students that failed in the traditional teaching and studying strategies.

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endless. Not only that, the social web can help increase the self-esteem of students and also help them in overcoming the feelings associated with inadequacy, isolation and failure. Notably, these aspects are highly