

Report on the South Gloucestershire Schools

Teachers' International Professional Development (T.I.P.D)

Visit to Jakarta, Indonesia

5th – 13th April 2008

Focus

The use of Teaching Assistants in the classroom as part of the teaching and learning process to support children and young people



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Report

Summary profile	
Local Authority	South Gloucestershire LA
Full name of LA visit leader: E mail address	Sue Morgan Sue.morgan@southglos.gov.uk
Reference and Title of visit	SV839: Teaching and Learning The use of Teaching Assistants in the classroom as part of the teaching and learning process to support children and young people
Provider	The British Council
Country / Region visited:	Jakarta, Indonesia
Types of Schools Visited	Kindergarten Primary
Age of students observed	3yrs (Kindergarten) to 12 yrs (Primary)
Languages / s used	English and Bahasa Indonesian
Key educational purpose of the visit	To look at the use of support staff in the teaching and learning process

Introduction

Jakarta is the capital and largest city of Indonesia. Located on the northwest coast of Java Island, it has an area of 661.52 km² and an official population of 8,389,443. Jakarta currently is the eleventh largest city in the world. It has previously been known as Sunda Kalapa (397-1527), Jayakarta (1527-1619), Batavia (1619-1942), and Djakarta (1942-1972).

Officially, Jakarta is not a city but a province with special status as the capital of Indonesia. It is administered much as any other Indonesian province with a governor (instead of a mayor), and is divided into several sub-regions with their own administrative systems; Jakarta, as a province, is divided into five cities of Central, East, North, South and West Jakarta.

As the economic and political capital of Indonesia, Jakarta attracts many foreign as well as domestic immigrants. As a result, Jakarta has a decidedly cosmopolitan flavor and a diverse culture. Many of the immigrants are from the other parts of Java Island, bringing along a mixture of dialects of the Javanese and Sundanese languages, as well as their traditional foods and customs.

Jakarta has a hot and humid equatorial/tropical climate. Jakarta's wet season rainfall peak is January with average monthly rainfall of 350mm, and its dry season low point is August with a monthly average of 60mm. The city is humid throughout the year with daily temperature range of 25°C to 38°C. A bustling urban metropolis, Jakarta is known for its overcrowding, traffic congestion, and income disparity.



Intended aims of the visit

- to develop a clear understanding about the education system and school management in Indonesia
- to visit and observe practice in schools in Jakarta to understand the context, constraints and opportunities for education in Indonesia
- to share practice about the use of support staff in the teaching and learning process
- to identify potential areas for school partnerships and building links between schools in Indonesia and South Gloucestershire

Expected outcomes of the visit

- to gain new ideas and knowledge for the use of support staff
- to reflect on practice in own schools
- to gain an insight into Indonesian culture
- to build international relationships between Indonesia and South Gloucestershire

How were these to be identified and recorded?

- SWOT analysis prior to visit focusing on classroom management, the use of support staff in teaching and learning and curriculum materials used.
- through observations/photographs and discussions during visit and also via Weblog <http://www.jakarta2008.wordpress.com>
- through formal feedback session to Indonesian colleagues
- through presentation post visit at school level, Local Authority and TA cluster meetings

Report of the experience

Over a four day period, as a group of five teachers and eight teaching assistants led by an adviser from the Local Authority, a wide variety of schools with differing socio – economic and demographic backgrounds were visited. The intended outcome of the visit was to compare the use of support staff in schools to enhance teaching and learning. It was very clear on the first day of the visit that we would be unable to achieve this outcome as support staff do not exist in the Indonesian education system. However, we were able to reflect on and recognise opportunities where TAs might be used to enable teachers to teach more effectively. Many comparisons could be made based upon the observations and professional discussions participated in over the four days work with schools.

The structure of the school system

From birth until the age of 5, Indonesian children do not generally have access to formal education. From the age of 5 to 6 they can attend kindergarten, the majority of which are private schools. The majority of children begin their formal education from the age of 7 when they enter Primary school (SD). This level of education is compulsory for all Indonesian citizens. They remain in Primary school for six years up to the age of 12. In contrast to the majority of privately run kindergartens, most primary schools are government operated state schools, accounting for 75-85% of schools in the Jakarta area (93% in Indonesia as a whole). After completing primary school, students go on to Junior secondary school (SMP) for three years from the age of 13-15 after which they go on to Senior Secondary School (SMA) or Vocational School (SMK) which is less popular.

There are different categories of Primary school in Jakarta. The first known as 'regular' provides the minimum standard of education and in these schools teachers are not required to have a degree. The second, 'model' schools are considered to provide a higher quality of education, receive more funding from the Indonesian Government and are consequently better resourced. Some of the teachers will have completed from 1 to 4 years of University education. In addition to this there are ordinary private schools and religious private schools (Islamic and Christian) where

parents will pay for their children to attend. In state schools there is no one to support the teacher in the classroom (typical class sizes are 40) whereas in private schools there may be a 'Teaching Assistant' working in classes of 20 to 25 pupils. This is not a TA as we have in the UK education system but a less experienced teacher who is there to gain experience so they can later become a class teacher. Both students and teachers wear a school uniform.

Seven different settings were visited in Jakarta: a private Islamic, a private Christian, two regular state schools and three model state schools. The school day begins at 7am and children leave at different times, depending on which grade they are in. The size of the school population in Jakarta is such that one of the schools visited closed at 1pm so that secondary aged pupils could use the building in the afternoon.

The Curriculum

The Indonesian 'National Curriculum' was first implemented in 1994 but like that in the UK has undergone several changes since that time. The 2004 version contained indicators for outcomes as well as main objectives eg subtract up to 20 with examples of how this might be done, however this was simplified in 2006 as control from central government became less and it is now a competency based framework. Some local governments give support to interpret the curriculum whereas others do not.

Children are taught from eleven to thirteen subjects, some of which are the same as in UK schools. The children also learn Bahasa (Indonesian Language) which is similar to Literacy in the UK and includes spelling and handwriting sessions. The children also learn social studies, which are not taught in the UK which focuses on Indonesian culture where they learn about the region they come from as well as some aspects of the citizenship curriculum as in the UK. This aspect of the curriculum places a much greater emphasis on drawing, music and dance than we have in the UK although we felt it also had similar themes to SEAL and PSHME lessons in our schools. We felt this may be a reflection of the Christian ethos as opposed to the Indonesian education system in the school in which the observation was made. Art, Design and Technology, Geography and History are taught by class teachers in both countries but in Indonesia, Sport, ICT and music are often taken by specialist teachers.

Religion is a significant part of the culture of Indonesians which has five main religions : Islam, Catholicism, Christianity, Buddhism and Hinduism, however, eighty seven percent of the population are Muslim. Children from each religion are taught separately by specialist teachers in school even if this is to a single pupil for a lesson. Religious studies take on a different role from those in R.E. in the UK. The children do not learn about each others religions, they are taught to pray correctly, how to conduct themselves, morals and values and given time to read sacred texts. In Islamic schools time is taken out of the curriculum for praying and schools have their own mosques and prayer rooms.

The curriculum is supported through extra curricular activities that take place from three o'clock in the afternoon until five o'clock. These are optional to the pupils and range from music to boy scouts. These are much the same as extra curricular activities in the UK but they are much more structured and have less emphasis on fun. The Indonesian system of these activities however fits well with the UK

government agendas of extended schooling and co-locating services on one site as outside groups can run their activities in a central place at the heart of the community.

Teaching techniques

The general teaching methods in the schools were very directive and theoretical with most individual tasks completed on worksheets or textbooks giving little opportunity for the pupils to question and interact in the lessons. Practical tasks were usually set as homework so as a result many subjects did not allow opportunity for pupils to put their learning into practice in school. The Indonesian system of education seemed to place a high emphasis on the ability of children to copy and this was observed in a range of contexts; music was taught by learning and playing notes with no time to experiment with tone, pitch or to compose their own pieces of music as they do in UK schools: Art was taught by the teacher drawing a picture for the children to copy or colour in set mediums, not ever by pupils creating their own pieces of work: Bahasa (like literacy) did not give pupils the chance to plan and construct stories or poems, it consisted of reading, retelling and critiquing existing pieces of work. Although the children seemed to achieve a very high standard in this area, much more perhaps than might be expected of children in a western system the flip side of this was that the areas of creativity, experimentation and challenge appeared not to be fostered as much as they are in the UK. English lessons tended to be the exception where they were based on more active methods of teaching. This may have been because English teaching was seen as a high priority in Indonesia and the English teachers had been able to undertake considerably more professional development (government funded) than their colleagues.

In the Indonesian system emphasis was placed on pupils recording something every lesson so large chunks of time were dedicated to writing with content not always understood. This contrasts significantly with the UK where there is an understanding that children do not need to write to learn. The positive outcome of this emphasis on writing was that their handwriting was exceptionally neat and tidy with superb letter formation.

In the UK to enable children to access the curriculum the children are given different strategies to complete tasks. For example, in Numeracy, in order to complete a subtraction sum, children begin with concrete objects such as multi-link, then a numberline and eventually they will progress onto using a written method. This is not the case in Indonesia. Pupils are expected to use complex methods straight away and are not given any strategies or resources to help them understand the concepts.

Teachers have to ensure that pupils meet National Competency standards in Bahasa, Science, maths and English but are not guided in how to help pupils achieve this. Teachers are free to teach skills in any order and by any process consequently the standard and content of education taught is largely dependent on the competency of the teacher. Teachers rely on textbooks to provide progression in lesson structure rather than Programmes of Study and Frameworks as we have in the UK.

Classroom management and organisation

Indonesian class sizes are much larger than those in the UK, but it could be said that these classes are easier to manage. From observation behaviour would not appear to be an issue; classes were frequently observed working diligently through textbooks with no class teacher present.

A mixture of lessons were observed, some of which involved pupils sitting and listening with little child participation (desks are generally in rows), but others where teachers engaged pupils through singing and games.

Visual, Auditory and Kinaesthetic learning was observed which led us to believe that teachers did have an understanding of different learning styles and versatile ways to access the curriculum however the challenge was to encourage these methods to be used more often as it was evident that these were not preferred methods. Active learning lessons that were observed were science, social studies and English spelling, however they seemed to be planned for the benefit of us as visiting professionals since when questioned pupils openly said that this way of learning, including group work was not a regular occurrence in the schools in the same ways that it is for pupils in the UK. Children appear to be supported through the use of different learning styles more comprehensively in the UK and most teaching in Indonesia is either through passive sitting and listening or through reading worksheets and textbooks. There is little opportunity for discussion between learners and for different abilities of pupils to work together in different contexts. However children are given greater responsibilities for independent learning as a result of this and surprisingly when left children were more likely to complete their work than their counterparts in UK schools.

Due to the lack of funding in Indonesian schools, resources are limited and/or inadequate. Children have to provide consumables such as pencils and paper and this can be a challenge in poorer areas. There is also a limited amount of books to support learning; with any books that are purchased being non-fiction or textbooks. It was noted that the school libraries seldom contained any fiction or story books, except for religious stories and those that did were not borrowed in the way they are in our libraries. Children in the UK are lucky to access a wealth of resources and books to support every aspect of their learning and it is overwhelming that pupils in Indonesia do not have this opportunity. This must have a negative impact on their access to the curriculum and learning opportunities. Moreover, classrooms in the UK are covered in educational posters to help support the curriculum such as maps, times table charts and PSHE posters. The classrooms in Indonesia are decorated with displays of art work but there is nothing to stimulate learning or offer strategies of support.

Relationships and behaviour

Although a more didactic approach to teaching appears to be in place in Indonesian classrooms, teachers must be praised for the relationship they have with their pupils. It may be attributed to cultural aspects but pupils have a great deal of respect for their teachers and visiting adults and frequently demonstrate this by raising the adults hand to their temple or cheek. However it was observed that the respect that was commanded did not frighten or intimidate the children in anyway. Teachers were

friendly and had fun with the children outside the classroom. Pupils and professionals in England could learn a great deal from these relationships.

Assessment

The Indonesian system put a stronger emphasis on tests than in the UK. Children appeared to be tested in every subject weekly, but it was not evident what happens to the results of these assessments and whether they were used to inform future planning. Indonesian teachers tend to lead from the front of the class whereas in the UK teachers move around the classroom during lessons to enable them to see what is happening but also to share their support, offer praise and encouragement and check pupil understanding. In Indonesia observational assessment may be more useful for regular assessment and monitoring lesson participation may help inform who is achieving lesson objectives. There was no evidence of differentiated work or individual strategies/help for below average pupils only of differentiation by outcome.

The teacher marked the written work completed each lesson and gave a score for it. Generally children did not receive comments on their work as they do in the UK nor were they given time to look back and reflect and improve their learning. Rather than additional support being given to complete a task extra time was given, frequently after class, sometimes to the extent of being held back a year.

Lessons did not appear to have plenaries as in the UK so the only evidence that the teacher had of the understanding of pupils was the work sheet/written work that had been completed.

Opportunities for Professional Development

Each school is fairly independent from the next and they tend not to work together in any way. Even where primary and secondary schools were on a linked site they had no contact with each other. Clusters of schools were not set up in the same way as they are in the UK where different subject leaders can work together so opportunities to share policy and practice were missed. In one school professional development consisted of a teacher, selected in rotation, 'teaching' the rest of the staff including the Principal who would then critique his/her methods. Whilst this might be one approach it did not allow for new practice from elsewhere to be brought back into the school and shared.

UK schools are privileged to have, not only a wealth of staff and professionals available to support with curriculum access but also a huge range of locally and centrally funded CPD to support teaching and learning. Changes in the frameworks (literacy and numeracy) have come about with a huge amount of support for our schools largely taken for granted which cannot be said for Indonesian teachers. They do appear to be quite isolated with very little support and were without exception very eager to learn how we planned our curriculum and differentiated our learning in order to improve their own curriculum delivery.

Where universal good practice was seen was in the private Kindergartens where classrooms were bright and colourful and good behaviour and independence strategies were used.

Evaluation: Summary of Key Outcomes

- The terminology of Teaching Assistant within Indonesia and the UK means two entirely different things and they do not have any individuals who have the same role as TAs do in the UK
- A significant number of teachers in Primary schools are employed after leaving High School or after only 1 year of a subject degree course
- There is no academic qualification as such for teachers which gives them an understanding of the pedagogy of teaching and learning as we have in the UK for all our teachers and an increasing number of TAs. The idea of having professional standards for all teachers in Indonesia with relevant professional development would provide a significant step forward.
- In schools (private) where there are trainee assistant teachers their role appeared to be one of observation rather than working one to one or with small groups so involvement in planning and implementation was probably minimal.
- The teaching profession in Indonesia is a very poorly paid one and Headteachers are appointed as part of a reward system rather than because they are good Educational leaders.
- There are significantly more opportunities for professional development for teachers and teaching assistants in the UK and being able to engage with other professionals in a wide number of different forums.

Applying findings to the UK context?

- Self evaluation as to how we use support staff and volunteers in our schools.
- Teach drawing techniques such as perspective and proportion, as well as fostering and encouraging creativity.
- Introduce new maths techniques with the Gifted and Talented children as observed in the Indonesian classroom (e.g. multiplying decimals by converting them to improper fractions and then reducing them, and by extension, showing the relationships between decimals, fractions and percentages.)
- Increased understanding of the impact our techniques have on our children's learning – explaining WALTs, differentiation and reviewing learning
- Do we give creativity too much importance? Should we teach more skills (creative learning journey focus' more on skills)

How will you apply them to your work?

From many observations in classroom there were a number of ideas that will be implemented in our schools locally and include:

- Think about how we use support staff effectively in the lessons covered during PPA
- Think about how individual TAs are best used in lessons.
- Discuss with head/staff/governors how children are greeted in the morning
- Had Arts Day (planned before trip) where focus was colour mixing skill – this focus was a success, more in future?
- Refining use of WALT and WILF to focus more on TIBS – came from staff discussions and observations BUT trip reinforced reasons.

Dissemination of the findings

Local Authority Level:

- Feedback to Learning and School Effectiveness Service e.g. professional development groups, primary and secondary team meetings, professional learning community working group.
- Through local authority meetings e.g. cluster, best practice and HLTA conference – 1st July 2008, which will have an international focus
- Shared experience within the 'International Framework'

School Level:

- Feedback with presentation/discussion at TA, staff and governors meetings considering ideas to move forward
- Whole school assembly/presentation for pupils and staff with major display within school.
- Organise open afternoon with displays of photographs, DVDs, and resources purchased for parents & pupils
- HLTA Conference in July.
- Discussions with children – showing pictures and Blog etc
- Sharing individual portfolio on the learning experience and the impact on participants practice, e.g. planning and preparation between teacher and teaching assistant
- Individual school projects

Proposals for future development and links:

- As part of schools development of international links, form a link with host school particularly via email and hopefully create email buddies for pupils although this is limited in some schools because of the lack of technology
- Exchange of curriculum and planning information with the host schools
- We would welcome the return visit of our host teachers to our schools

General advice for other visitors to Jakarta, Indonesia

- Bring umbrellas if visiting this time of year! Weather is deceptive – quite hazy and grey but very warm so need to drink plenty of water.
- Pack Immodium in case!
- Be prepared for the marked contrast between rich and poor and their close proximity to each other – keep an open mind.
- Enjoy the friendliness of the people and don't be put off by their directness.
- Visit Mini Indonesia
- Some knowledge of Bahasa before hand
- Read up about culture and customs and give enough time to get fully immersed in the culture
- To be able to take resources that are needed
- Being able to reciprocate visit
- Dress code is quite formal (for a hot climate!) No sleeveless dresses or tops. Professional clothes.
- Be prepared to have your photo taken
- Rice is central to diet, but be prepared to try lots of different foods.

