

Colour Reading Speech Kit (Tubana Kit) as a Therapy Tool for Students with Special Needs

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4

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9

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Abstract: This innovation of the Color Reading Speech Kit (Tubana Kit) is provided to improve the skills of listening, speaking, reading, observation, concentration, and interest and reduce the stress of students in special education schools. This kit consists of two items, namely activities for tongue twister training in the form of software and English and Malay activity and coloring books. This kit is unique for those students in special needs schools who will gain benefits in terms of improved listening, speaking, reading, observation, and gross and fine motor coordination skills with the use of this innovation. In addition, Kit Tubana is also able to be a therapist for students to solve various behavioral problems in the classroom. The kit also contains fun activities and materials in its tongue twister software and activity and coloring books and is well suited to the Language Arts aspect of the Standard Primary School Curriculum (KSSR) which emphasizes the concept of “learning while playing” and language games. Hence, this research will be conducted through collaboration with the Mobile Book Café as the industry collaborator and Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan (SMK) Seremban 2, as the community collaborator. The respondents are 14 special needs students, i.e. 7 students from the Malay Language class and 7 students from the English Language Class. These special needs students are those with learning difficulties but can read and write. After using the Tubana Kit, the findings are all 14 students in the Malay Language and English class have benefited from the transfer of knowledge of the Tubana Kit. The student's pronunciation, behavior, and speaking have improved. So is their articulation and vocabulary in the Malay and English languages. Students who usually have limited usage of vocabulary have shown improvement after using the Malay and English activities and coloring books. Nevertheless, the ability of the Tubana Kit is proven as a therapy for students with special needs in the Malay and English

languages of SMK Seremban 2. Thus, teachers in SMK Seremban 2 have used the Tubana Kit as a tool to apply therapy to students with special needs.

Keywords: Special needs; Therapy; Tongue twister training; Coloring; Tubana Kit

Introduction

Western pedagogies and theories have affected numerous Early Childhood Education (ECE) policies throughout Asia. As an illustration, consider how commonplace the concept of play is in curriculum policy frameworks, which partly reflects Western research findings. But considering what we know about cross-cultural variations in learning and development in children, it is critical to conduct the current body of research on play studies involving Asian children (Bautista, Yu, Lee, & Sun. 2023).

For example, there were only a few naturalistic studies found in Singapore (Ng & Bull, 2018), Japan (Takahashi, 2016), and Hong Kong (Cheung et al., 2015). Intervention study is conducted in Malaysia (Syed Azman, S. Z., Shahril, R., & Borhan, L. 2022). In a nutshell, each of the studies demonstrated how play-based pedagogies might benefit particular areas of Asian children's socioemotional development. The studies should be noted for their qualitative nature small, non-representative sample sizes, and nature of disabilities.

Another type of disability among students is slow learning. Children with learning disabilities typically exhibit speech impairments, trouble learning to read and write, or difficulty accessing and understanding the core curriculum. It's possible that some of these kids had linguistic impairments when they were younger. They could be able to follow standard classroom instructions in school, but they might find it difficult to understand fresh or unusual material (Paul, 2007). Their vocabulary might be limited for their age; they might speak in short, simple sentences or come across as "immature," and they might have trouble with more sophisticated language abilities like humor understanding, and reasoning. They might also find it difficult to communicate verbally in social situations. For instance, finding it difficult to strike up conversations or clear up misunderstandings. Children who struggle with their education may often present emotional and behavioral problems.

The present study involves the representation of Malaysian slow learners in utilizing a tool for therapy. Colour Reading Speech Kit or *Kit Tutur Baca Warna* (Tubana Kit) is unique for students in special needs schools who will benefit in terms of improved listening, speaking, reading, observation, and gross and fine motor coordination skills with the use of this innovation. In addition, Kit Tubana is also able to be a therapist for students in solving various behavioral problems in the classroom. The kit also contains fun activities and materials in its tongue twister software activity and coloring books. Furthermore, it is well suited to the Language Arts aspect of the Standard Primary School Curriculum (KSSR) which emphasizes the concept of "learning while playing" and language games. This kit was previously used in two schools, namely at Sekolah Kebangsaan Taman Seri Pagi, Senawang, Negeri Sembilan, and Sekolah Menengah Pendidikan Khas Vokasional Shah Alam from July to October 2021. Data and evidence from the kit have shown changes in behavior and speech among normal pupils and pupils with special needs. The objectives of this study were to:

- (a) help students with learning difficulties namely students with indolent learning problems overcome their fear of teaching and learning;
- (b) assist students with learning difficulties namely students with indolent learning problems learn to speak and color easily; and
- (c) guide teachers and administrators of SMK Seremban 2, Seremban, Negeri Sembilan to use Tubana Kit as therapy and as a tool to improve speaking skills among students

with learning difficulties

Students in primary schools and in schools with special needs often experience various problems such as behavioral problems, observation problems, motor skills problems, socialization, and emotional problems (Khatijah & Yasmin 2006). Thus, the innovation of the Color Reading Speech Kit (Tubana Kit) which consists of two items, namely software for tongue twister training; activity, and coloring books is prepared with the objective that teachers can practice therapy activities during the teaching and learning process (T&L) in the classroom to help level primary school students and in schools with special needs reach their maximum potential according to their abilities; and improve listening, speaking, reading, observation, concentration, interest, and stress skills of students in primary schools and special education schools.

Literature Review

This review focuses on the application of play-based learning for students with disabilities. Play-based learning signifies fun activities and materials in its software and activities deemed suited to skill improvement. Emphasis is given to the concept of “learning while playing” and language games. Students with special needs pertain to indolent learning problems and slow learners are the target participants.

Indolent Learning Problem

According to Hallahan and Kaufman (2006), the Individuals with Special Needs Education Act defines a slow learner’s learning problem as one or more disorders in basic psychological processes that relate to the comprehension or use of language. This problem occurs in writing or reading and can interfere with listening, thinking, speaking, reading, writing spelling, and counting skills. In other words, these sluggish students show weaknesses in mastering the skills of reading, writing, and counting and sometimes exhibit other problems or disorders such as behavioral and social problems. Accordingly, sluggish students have difficulty paying attention to, collecting, or processing the information received in their memory. Although the level of difficulty varies, it will cause difficulty for them to master the skills in the learning process. As such, these students also often exhibit difficulty in focusing or paying attention to the learning process in the classroom (Safani Bari et.al, 2006). They easily lose focus, easily make mistakes due to negligence (careless mistakes), have difficulty completing tasks, have difficulty doing multiple sequences of tasks (difficulties doing more than one task), and are likely to exhibit behaviors that frequently interrupt others.

Art Therapy Coloring Activities

Therapy is derived from the Greek word, namely *Therapeia* which means a service, a presentation related to the Greek word (verb) therapeutic which means "I wait upon". In the context of special education, therapy can be defined as a method to help an individual respond to a particular activity or skill. The concept of therapy in special education is based on the concept of the diversity of categories of individuals with special needs. Pupils with special needs have either a disability, impaired disability, or resistance to achieving cognitive, emotional, social, or psychomotor development. Accordingly, therapeutic methods can help students with learning difficulties achieve appropriate development (Mosley, 2001)

Art therapy, on the other hand, uses art media, images, artistic creativity processes, and client responses to produce products. In addition, art therapy also reflects individual development, abilities, personalities, interests, worries, and conflicts. This therapy also has

the potential to reconcile a person's internal emotional conflicts, educate self-awareness, and develop social skills, managing behaviors, problem-solving, statements, and elevating self-esteem. Art therapy in special education is taught to students with special needs to develop emotions and feelings in their lives.

In this regard, students with special needs should be given the opportunity to explore the field of art using various art tools such as coloring, patterning, and batik. The goal is to generate their ideas and creativity. This trait is very important to help students with special needs to create, communicate, and strengthen sensory coordination in a balanced way (Yasmin, 2013). This is because coloring is one of the mediums of art therapy that stimulates the overall development of students and is an important activity to improve gross motor skills as well as mental growth. The coloring activity is one of the fun activities for pupils of all ages. Among the benefits of coloring, activities are to increase the level of concentration, develop gross and fine motor skills, introduce a variety of colors, and unearth creativity among students.

Past Studies on play-based learning via intervention

Intervention research has looked at the effects of play-based programs on students and/or determine what makes them effective. Studies have been conducted in Mainland China (Li et al., 2016), Hong Kong (Cheung, 2018; Fung & Cheng, 2017; Hui et al., 2015; Leung, 2011, 2015; Liu et al., 2017b; Wang & Hung, 2010), and Singapore (Kok et al., 2002; Qu et al., 2015; Teo et al., 2017) and Malaysia (Syed Azman et al., 2022).

For instance, Liu et al. (2017a, b) demonstrated how a parent-guided education intervention could raise the social competence of children in Hong Kong. The concept of eduplay (Rao & Li, 2009) is a cross between the Chinese Confucian emphasis on teaching adult-predetermined outcomes and the Western idea of "playing to learn." The Liu et al. (2017a, b) program comprised eight weekly 1-hour sessions. In a classroom context, children participated in cooperative group games supervised by qualified parent volunteers. Games with themes like lining up, gathering, and dispersing were centered around social settings.

The parent volunteers had two main responsibilities when the kids were playing the games: (1) reading children's social cues and summarizing the good manners they displayed; and (2) using a star system and encouraging body language to reward kids for prosocial behaviors like sharing and taking turns. Teachers' and parents' evaluations showed that after eight weeks of intervention, children's social competence had significantly improved as measured by the Early School Behavior Rating Scale (ESBS).

The other brief classroom interventions included pretend and socio-dramatic play, which has been shown to improve Singaporean children's theory of mind (Qu et al., 2015) and lessen disruptive behaviors from Hong Kong children when they interact with their peers (Fung & Cheng, 2017). Additionally, studies on therapeutic interventions have shown that guided play helps reduce internalizing and externalizing behavioral problems in Hong Kong (Leung, 2011, 2015), increases social interaction time in Mainland China (Li et al., 2016), and improves appropriate communication in Singapore (Kok et al., 2002) among children with autism.

Syed Azman et al. (2022) conducted a study on Autistic children. They argued that one of the finest intervention strategies for kids with autism spectrum disorder is Applied Behavioural Analysis (ABA). Parents of children on the autism spectrum can adopt this technique with great success. ABA is an intervention that uses behavior's fundamental principles to teach desired behaviors and eliminate undesirable ones. Some examples of ABA activities that parents can perform at home are also provided. Research has demonstrated the effectiveness of ABA in enhancing various facets of children's development. The best results for the children's growth will come from parents who use ABA at home in addition to one-

on-one therapy sessions.

Tubana Kit

Tubana kit consists of two items, which are the software for tongue twister training; and activity and coloring books. An example of an existing coloring activity book that has been prepared by the project leader and members is the *Kisah Zidni* activity and coloring book in Malay. However, for this KTP RIGS SDG project, this existing activity, and coloring book will be translated into English and augmented with another title. As for a guide, the contents and front page of the activity book and coloring of *Zidni's Story* are as in Figure 1 and Table 1.

The software for Tubana Kit tongue twister training in the Malay language consists of video, audio, and tongue twister scripts as shown in Figure 2.

Methodology

This project was in line with the fourth goal in the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG), which is Quality Education. Hence, this research was conducted through collaboration with the Mobile Book Café as the industry collaborator and Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan (SMK) Seremban 2, as the community collaborator. The respondents were special needs students namely students with indolent learning problems in SMK Seremban 2. The data collection method was participatory observation where the project team used the Tubana Kit as an activity for the respondents to overcome their fear of teaching and learning and helped them to speak and color easily. All information was captured via video, audio recordings, diagnostic test/pre-test, and post-test. The data before and after process were displayed as well as the number of responders that benefited from the Tubana Kit. The data collected were analyzed through the qualitative method. In summary, the procedures used for this project are shown in Figure 3.

Project Activities

This project was completed within a one-year duration as stated in Table 2:

Tubana Kit- Data Collection Procedure

Tubana Kit was used on 27 students (Year 3) of Sekolah Kebangsaan Taman Seri Pagi, Senawang, Negeri Sembilan. Prior to the use of this kit, students were found to be less proficient in pronouncing certain words and phrases that had similar letters and syllables. In addition, students' pronunciation and intonation were less accurate and unclear. They also often acted aggressively and noisily when teaching and learning (T&L) was carried out in the classroom. Difficulties in focusing and actively participating in the T&L activities were the prime issues.

While the Tubana Kit was in use, students read and repeated the tongue twister sentences to test their reading ability. They also did some drills to correct the pronunciation so that it is clearer if there are words or syllables that are pronounced incorrectly. After that, the students did the coloring book coloring activity and the *Zidni Story* activity. After the Tubana Kit was used, most of the students managed to pronounce words, phrases, and sentences with correct and clear pronunciation. Pupils could also read tongue twister sentences quickly even if there were some pronunciation errors in the word. Pupils were tested with a variety of sentence patterns. Pupils were also found to be more focused and interested when T&L was carried out and were able to do coloring activities well.

Tubana Kit was fully utilized on two special needs students at Shah Alam Vocational Special Education Secondary School; a student with speech and hearing problems, named Jitinder, and another student with behavioral problems, named Muhammad Azrin. Before the use of this kit, Jitinder had complex reading problems. The student's behavior was

unpredictable and very solitary. Meanwhile, Muhammad Azrin had behavioral problems and lacked concentration because he often observed various locations and had difficulty socializing with friends and teachers. This pupil also struggled with reading, stuttered frequently, and forgot things easily.

2 Findings and Discussion

In this section, the findings and discussion of the survey are explained further. This section is divided into two parts which are, the types of behavior and speaking problems among students with special needs in the Malay Language and the types of behavior and speaking problems among students with special needs in the English Language. The research conducted was taken from a sample of 14 students i.e. 7 students in the Malay Language class and 7 students in the English Language class.

3 Observations of the problems before and after the practice of using the Tubana Kit by the students with special needs were made and recorded in Table 3. Any problems the students made during the pre-test were recorded to ensure the problems did not recur during the post-test. Students may use the Tubana Kit to their advantage to improve their behavior and speaking skills. This kit consists of two items, namely activities for tongue twister training in the form of software and English and Malay activities and coloring books. This kit is unique for those students in special needs schools who will gain benefits in terms of improved listening, speaking, reading, observation, and gross and fine motor coordination skills with the use of this innovation. In addition, Tubana Kit is also able to be a therapist for students to solve various behavioral problems in the classroom. The kit also contains fun activities and materials in its tongue twister software and activity and coloring books and is deemed suited to the Language Arts aspect of the Standard Primary School Curriculum (KSSR) which emphasizes the concept of “learning while playing” and language games.

Based on the findings in the Malay Language class, there were few behaviors and speaking problems among students with special needs during the pre-test. After the post-test, most students benefitted from using the Tubana Kit. One out of 7 respondents has trouble pronouncing due to speech impairment which is the inability to roll the tongue to pronounce in speech but has tried to pronounce with the tongue twister’s activities. However, the rest have shown significant improvement in terms of articulation during the post-test. One student who usually has limited usage of vocabulary has shown improvement after using the Malay activity and coloring books.

As for the English Language class, based on the findings in Table 4, there are few problems among students with special needs in the English language during the pre-test. The problems are difficulties staying focused, difficulties pronouncing correctly, forming correct sentences, and behavioral problems. After the post-test, most students benefit from using the Tubana Kit show positive changes in their behavior, and pronunciation, and stay focussed throughout the teaching and learning of the English Language with the help of the Tubana Kit.

In general, the results indicate that children with special needs in both Malay and English language classrooms have significantly improved in their articulation and vocabulary usage after the Tubana Kit was implemented, especially with the use of Malay activity and coloring books. This demonstrates how well play-based therapies work with this population's communication issues and improve language proficiency which are in rhyme with other studies in Asian countries that use intervention such as play-based learning.

Furthermore, after using the Tubana Kit, students' conduct, concentration, and pronunciation in the English language class all improved, demonstrating the kit's adaptability and effectiveness in meeting a range of learning demands. The dynamic and captivating activities included in the kit probably encouraged involvement and attention, which enhanced language outcomes.

The findings are in rhyme with studies conducted in the Asian region which note the significant changes in students' behavior when exposed to interventions such as play-based learning. The studies **1** such as those conducted by Cheung, (2018); Fung & Cheng, (2017); Hui et al **1** (2015); Li et al., (2016); Leung, (2011, 2015); Liu et al., (2017b); Wang & Hung, (2010); Kok et al., (2002); Qu et al., (2015); Teo et al., (2017) and Syed Azman et. al, 2022). For instance, studies on therapeutic interventions have **5**onstrated that guided play helps children with autism communicate more appropriately in **S**ingapore (Kok et al., 2002), increases social interaction time (Li et al., 2016), and decreases **internalizing and externalizing behavioral problems** (Leung, 2011, 2015). However, more research is needed as the studies are conducted based on different cohorts and disability nature.

Conclusion

Students with special needs at Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan Seremban 2 (SMK Seremban 2) have found that the Tubana Kit, in particular its speaking tool and tongue twister activities, is helpful in helping them improve their speech and language skills, especially in Malay and English. This is supported by actual data or observations made during the Tubana Kit's implementation in a classroom.

It has been reported that the tongue twister exercises and speaking tools in the Tubana Kit are effective in assisting kids with special needs in overcoming speech and language-related learning challenges. This suggests that the Tubana Kit's tools and activities are designed to specifically address the requirements and difficulties these children encounter, making learning more accessible and engaging for them. They have also shown appreciable gains in their speech and language abilities due to the Tubana Kit. Improved pronunciation, more vocabulary, improved articulation, and improved fluency in both Malay and English are a few possible indicators of this progress. The finding suggests that there is more to the Tubana Kit's use than just educational resources by claiming that it acts as therapy for students with special needs. It implies that the tasks offered by the Tubana Kit are therapeutic in nature and may help these students with more general developmental or communication issues.

The Tubana Kit has been **3**welcomed by the instructors at SMK Seremban 2 as a useful resource for offering therapy to **students with special needs**. The acceptance **of the** Tubana Kit implies **that** educators have acknowledged its efficacy and are proactively incorporating it into their pedagogical approaches to cater to the varied requirements of their pupils. More studies on different cohorts of students should be conducted to explore the effectiveness or improvisation of the tool for learning sustainability.

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PAGE 1

PAGE 2

PAGE 3

PAGE 4

PAGE 5

PAGE 6

PAGE 7
