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A RUBRIC DESIGN: ASSESSING INNOVATION DURING TEACHING PRACTICUM

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ABSTRACT

One of the fundamental aspects during the current teaching practicum is the inclusion of innovation in the classroom, but guidance on this aspect is lacking. This paper provides a description of a proposed rubric to be used for assessing innovation teaching practicum. Three documents were reviewed and analysed by looking at the alignment between learning and innovation constructs. The outcome was a rubric that consisted of eight constructs, which aligns with the learning objectives, the national content and learning standard, and assessment, as outlined by the Ministry of Education, Malaysia. The proposed rubric was later reviewed by two inter-raters.

Keywords: Teaching practicum, innovation, assessment, education, pedagogy

INTRODUCTION

In 2013, the Ministry of Education Malaysia (MoE) launched the Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013-2025 (Malaysian Ministry of Education, 2013) with the aim to improve the standard of education in Malaysia by the year 2025. This aim involved the effort of many parties – students, teachers, schools and the MoE itself. In addition, the revolution that occurs globally also affects the education outlook and plans. With regards to the 4th industrial revolution (4IR) and the world economy, the education transformation requires changes in the contents of technical education and also education in general. In preparing students to thrive in the future economy within the realm of the 4IR, the MoE identified 'Six Student Aspirations' to be instilled in each individual – knowledge, bilingual proficiency, thinking skills, leadership skills, ethics and spirituality, and national identity (refer Figure 1). This is in line with the aim of the education ministry which is to achieve the development of a holistic individual, as stated

in the national education philosophy. Thus, it is the teachers themselves who play a role to realise the education transformation.

To meet the globally competitive needs of the 4IR, the Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE), Malaysia has set forth new initiatives as part of its effort to cultivate holistic, entrepreneurial and balanced graduates, who are able to preserve the core values, ethical principles and Malaysian identities. In addition, graduates are also expected to be creative and critical by showing their ability to deal with cognitive flexibility and complexity, innovative, communicative and collaborative, and also equipped with adequate digital and data literacy skills. In Malaysian universities, innovation is a key competitive factor of digital transformation in 4IR. Thus, there is a need to investigate the innovation ideas integrated into teaching and learning, which this study tries to fulfil. It is therefore imperative that teacher training is given a priority in any education process in order to ensure that quality teachers will be placed in the system.

BACKGROUND

The challenge of teacher education

Being a teacher or an educator – either at preschool, primary school or secondary school, and also higher learning institutions – is a complex task and requires teachers with positive teaching strengths and qualities, as well as excellent teacher preparation and practice. Teacher education institutions need to provide high quality training from which future teachers can gain knowledge of young children, skill in teaching techniques and a sense of responsibility for the holistic development of young learners. In addition, preparing students for the uncertainties of the future remains a challenge for the teachers, and a bigger challenge for the teacher education institutions. This is because they need to prepare the best curriculum and practicum experience to fulfil this purpose.

This scenario is especially true within the Malaysian context as the education system is undergoing rapid transformation under the blueprint. The MoE introduced the School-based Assessment in 2011 where a more formative assessment is now being carried out to evaluate students' performance. The New Standard Curriculum for Primary (KSSR) and Secondary (KSSM) School is now being implemented in all schools, inculcating more higher order thinking skills (HOTS) through 21st century learning approaches. However, these new developments in education implemented in schools may not be explicitly exposed to the teacher-trainees in teacher education institutions. It is only during their teaching practicum that the teacher-trainees have the opportunity to learn about the new education policies being implemented under the blueprint. Considering the limited time that the teacher-trainees have for teaching practicum, most will revert to the 'traditional' way of teaching or teacher-centered approach instead of the student-centered approach that they are taught to implement in the classroom (Saleh & Aziz, 2012). Teacher-trainees therefore need to develop skills of inquiry and learn how to continue acquiring knowledge throughout their lives, to be able to connect different pieces of knowledge, and to create new knowledge. These higher-order thinking skills and the ability to innovate are especially critical in a rapidly evolving technological world.

In a study on the implementation of 21st century education among school teachers, the researchers found that teachers lack activities that build the 21st century skills in their classroom (Tee et. al, 2018). Some teachers and school heads claimed that their teacher training did not provide them with such teaching skills training, and that the 21st century skills were not

specifically mentioned during their teacher training (Nair, 2014). These data bring about the concern for the lack of implementation of the 21st century education among school teachers. Due to this, teacher training institutions need to ensure that their teacher-trainees receive the accurate and appropriate skill needed for them to use in their future teaching career. The knowledge and implementation of 21st century education is necessary in today's globalised world as we need to develop students who are critical, collaborative, communicative and creative (Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 2010), leading to the ability to become innovative. This leads to the focus of the study, which provides insights into the link between innovation and pedagogy.

Teaching practicum

Teaching practicum is one the most important aspects of teacher education. It is a requirement in any teaching-related programmes, which is generally required for the purpose of teacher certification. It is necessary as it provides future teachers with the field-based experience in the actual school setting. According to Lee and Mi (2022), a teaching practicum involves extensive structured classroom observations and supervised teaching practice. Researches on teaching practicum have shown its relation to professional training and the learning processes of student teachers (Boz & Boz, 2006; Yan & He, 2010), student teachers' their perceptions of a career in teaching (Hodge et al., 2002; Poulou, 2007), and student teachers' motivation with regard to teaching and constructing their professional identities as prospective teachers (Deng et al., 2018; Gao & Benson, 2012; Lee & Yuan, 2014; Maaranen & Stenberg, 2020; Sinclair, 2008).

Other studies have also looked at the issues and challenges that teacher-trainees faced during teaching practicum (Goh & Matthews, 2011; Lee, 2014; Valli, Perkkila & Valli, 2014; Deocampo, 2020). According to Goh and Matthews (2011), teaching practicum was regarded as the most challenging time in the teacher education process as many teacher-trainees were caught off-guard by the realities that is happening in the classroom. This is because there are a lot of preparations that future teacher-trainees need to make before he or she could teach in a school. This challenging experience provides teacher-trainees with a wider view of the reality of teaching, as what they learnt in their institutions may not be relevant to the actual teaching experience (Lee, 2014). This is also supported by another researcher who adds that the teaching practicum exposes teacher-trainees the ability to teach and socialise (Valli, Perkkila & Valli, 2014).

Deocampo (2020) conducted a study to identify the issues and challenges of English language teacher-trainees who undertook their teaching practicum. Using the narrative approach, she reported some challenges that the teacher-trainees faced, among them were teachers' voice, classroom management, teaching strategies, learning strategies, communication barriers, vocabulary knowledge, lesson planning, teaching appraisal and classroom motivation. She concluded that when teacher-trainees are aware of the actual issues and challenges in a real teaching environment, it can shape their personal and professional growth, and become a good resource for them to move forward and be successful in their teaching profession.

In a case study that explored pre-service teachers of English with regards to educational innovations through experiences and practices for developing contextual language learning (Setyaningrum, Purwati & Sabgini, 2022), the researchers reported that pre-service teachers had integrated innovations which they had reflected from the intelligent themes in the syllabus. Using these themes, lessons were linked to young learners' life experiences, characters building

and intercultural awareness. In addition, the use of authentic materials like own body, clothes, toys drawing and other objects integrated with psychomotor activities like shaking hands, holding hands, role playing or simulation enhanced meaningful learning for the young learners. Although the lessons planned were not restricted to the use of technology, it shows that using innovative thematic lessons can be a useful strategy to help in teaching and learning. This study reflects the use of reflections of teacher-trainees, which contributes to their education innovations during teaching practicum. This can be a useful strategy as for one to become a better teacher, he or she is encouraged to practice 'a reflective mind' as it would allow them to have an insight of what is going on in the classroom and decipher what works and would not work (Farrell, 2018).

In the MEB, it stated that Malaysia's pre-service programmes appear to have a limited practical component in which trainees are able to practice their skills in schools under the guidance and supervision of an experienced teacher. Because of this, the Ministry aimed to increase the percentage of time spent by teacher-trainees on practicum training to 40%. This effort is to ensure that teachers are adequately prepared to teach the higher-order thinking skills desired of Malaysia's students. One of the steps taken to support this aim is to assign experienced teachers as qualified mentors, who supervise the trainees in the classroom environment to enhance consistency and quality of practicum.

The study

Through some of the past studies conducted, it focused on the challenge of teaching practicum with regards to its relation to the actual reality of teaching, the preparations required, and the teaching skills expected. However, discussions on the challenge of the innovations that current teacher-trainees need to show during their teaching practicum are lacking. This causes some concern in the way teacher-trainees should design an innovation to be used in the classroom. This is due to the inclusion of innovation in the classroom, which would require them to apply 21st century skills – creativity, critical thinking, communicative, collaborative – and also digital literacy skill – which are needed to cater to the needs of the future generation that they will be facing. At the same time, they would need to preserve the values and achieve the six student aspirations as highlighted in the Malaysian Education Blueprint (2013). Therefore, teacher education institutions need to provide high quality teacher training so that teacher-trainees can gain knowledge of young children, skill in teaching techniques, and a sense of responsibility for the holistic development of young learners. Future teacher-trainees also need to be prepared for the uncertainties of the practicum experience, i.e. the coronavirus pandemic and the changes from face-to-face learning to online learning, to be able to provide the platform for future teachers to be ready for the challenges of the education transformation.

Therefore, the purpose of this paper is to propose a guideline that could be used to prepare and assess innovations used in the classroom, specifically during teaching practicum. This guideline could be used as a rubric for the evaluation of any innovation-related project that is related to teaching and learning. This is because, although the ministry requires innovation to be used in the classroom, no direct guide has been informed regarding the evaluation process of this aspect during teaching practicum, which causes ideas or understanding of innovation to be very general, and interpreted differently from one person to another. Due to the lack of guideline from the ministry or other literatures, it is timely that such issue is brought into focus. With the guideline, not only practicum supervisors would be able to assess the innovations prepared and used by teacher-trainees during their teaching practicum, but it can also benefit

the teacher-trainees themselves and also the supervising teachers and the school administrators as they would also be required to monitor and assess the innovation projects.

The study is significant to create an awareness that teacher education is a complex task, thus it requires teachers to have positive teaching strengths and qualities, as well as excellent teacher preparation and practice. Thus, by providing an assessment guide for innovation would hopefully prepare them to show their creative ability and high commitment when preparing the innovation project. With that, the objectives of the study are to propose a guideline or rubric to assess innovation in the education context.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a qualitative research design. The data gathered were collected through document reviews from three sources – the MEB 2013-2025 **(**Malaysian Ministry of Education, 2013)**,** the DSKP (Malaysian Ministry of Education, 2017)**,** and Ying**'s (**2013) pedagogical innovations in higher education. The researchers then went through the document analysis stage, which analysed data gathered based on themes. The thematic analysis stage involved coding keywords or phrases into categories, which were later compared and contrasted from one document to another. To ensure that the data achieved were reliable and valid, the researchers appointed two experts in the area of Teaching and Assessment to check the proposed guideline or rubric. This step was taken to ensure that that inter-rater reliability was achieved.

Research procedure

The first step taken in the study was to view classroom video recordings (CVR) of some classes conducted by teacher-trainees of the postgraduate diploma education programme. The recordings were selected based on random selection of videos, which were later re-viewed focusing on the phase of the lesson where the teacher-trainees used their innovation projects. While re-viewing the recordings, the researchers observed and took down notes or items that they considered were important to be highlighted when preparing and using the innovation project in the classroom. Once the re-viewing process was completed, the researchers discussed with each other, comparing and contrasting the notes or items that they had identified. The video analysis of lessons conducted by selected teacher-trainees show that there are gaps in terms of a standardised understanding of the concept of innovation that teacher-trainees need to show during their teaching practicum. At this stage, the researchers discovered that they themselves had different views of the innovation projects. Therefore, they suggested to have a standardised guide for the purpose of assessing the innovation projects.

To ensure that standardisation is achieved for the assessment of innovation projects, it was decided to look at some formal documents by the MoE, Malaysia, and link them to the new curriculum (KSSM) and the demands of the education transformation at present. The overall data gathered from the CVR analysis were then compared to what and how innovation is being explained in the major national documents – the MEB 2013-2025 (Malaysian Ministry of Education, 2013) and the DSKP (Malaysian Ministry of Education, 2017) – that schools and teachers used in the education context. In addition, the researchers identified and based their data on Ying's (2013) study conducted locally, that focused on pedagogical innovations in higher education. Thus, the data analysis involved a triangulation of document reviews from three sources – the MEB 2013-2025 (Malaysian Ministry of Education, 2013), the DSKP (Malaysian Ministry of Education, 2017), and Ying's study (2013).

Ying (2013) looked at a few guides with reference to pedagogical innovations. However, his adaptation to six dimensions of pedagogical innovations by Law (2005) was used in the document review triangulation process in the study. The proposed six dimensions of pedagogical innovations which were used by Ying (2013) are:

1. Pedagogical Learning Objectives
2. Teacher's Roles
3. Student's Roles
4. ICT use
5. Multiplicity of learning outcomes exhibited
6. Connectedness

These dimensions were compared and contrasted to two aspects stated in the MEB 2013-2025 (Pre-School to Post-Secondary Education), which are 'Student Aspirations' (Figure 1) and the eleven (11) shifts of the education transformation. From the six (6) student aspirations listed (knowledge, thinking skills, leadership skills, bilingual proficiency, ethics and spirituality, and national identity), only the 'thinking skills' is used in the study as innovation involves more of the thinking skills.

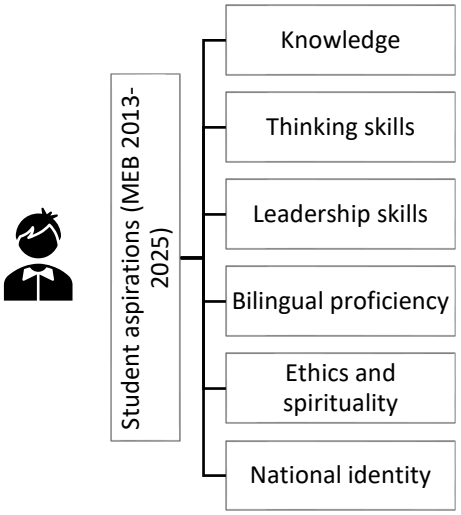

Figure 1. The Six Student Aspirations (Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013-2025 – Pre-School to Post-Secondary Education)

To add, there are 11 shifts in the MEB 2013-2025 involved in the education transformation (Figure 2).

Shift 1	Provide equal access to quality education of an international standard
Shift 2	Ensure every child is proficient in Bahasa Malaysia and English language and is encouraged to learn an additional language
Shift 3	Develop values-driven Malaysian
Shift 4	Transform teaching into the profession of choice
Shift 5	Ensure high performing school leaders in every school
Shift 6	Empower JPN, PPD, and schools to customise solutions based on need
Shift 7	Leverage ICT to scale up quality learning across Malaysia
Shift 8	Transform Ministry delivery capabilities and capacity
Shift 9	Partner with parents, community, and private sector at scale
Shift 10	Maximise student outcomes for every Ringgit
Shift 11	Increase transparency for direct public accountability

Figure 2. The 11 shifts in education transformation (Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013-2025 – Pre-School to Post-Secondary Education)

From the 11 shifts listed in the MEB 2013-2025 (Malaysian Ministry of Education, 2013) that will need to occur in the education transformation, four (4) shifts were identified as to be the most relevant in relation to the study, namely:

1. Provide equal access to quality education of an international standard (Shift 1),
2. Transform teaching into the profession of choice (Shift 4),
3. Leverage ICT to scale up quality learning across Malaysia (Shift 7), and
4. Partner with parents community and private sector at scale (Shift 9).

These were then linked to the *Dokumen Standard Kurikulum dan Pentaksiran* or DSKP **(**Malaysian Ministry of Education, 2017**).** The DSKP is a document that integrates the curriculum standard and assessment standard. It is a complete document that contains curriculum information that needs to be implemented throughout the school year. A teacher needs to understand and master the standard content and learning clearly. Their skills in applying the approach, method and technique during the teaching and learning process will help them to achieve the standard content and learning, and later in the assessment process. The DSKP also contains the need to build students' creativity and innovativeness, thus teachers need to be able to encourage and motivate students to generate ideas so that their creativity, critical thinking and personality can be highlighted **(**Malaysian Ministry of Education, 2017**).**

DISCUSSION AND FINDING

The problems relevant to the study, which highlighted the issue between the actual implementation of teaching approach has shown that the traditional practice is still being carried out, where classes are teacher-centred or involves one-way communication, and also a lack of ICT use due and lack of ICT knowledge. These problems, when linked to the pedagogical innovations (Ying, 2013), MEB 2013-2025 **(**Malaysian Ministry of Education, 2013), and the DSKP **(**Malaysian Ministry of Education, 2017)**,** are aligned and shown in Figure 3 below.

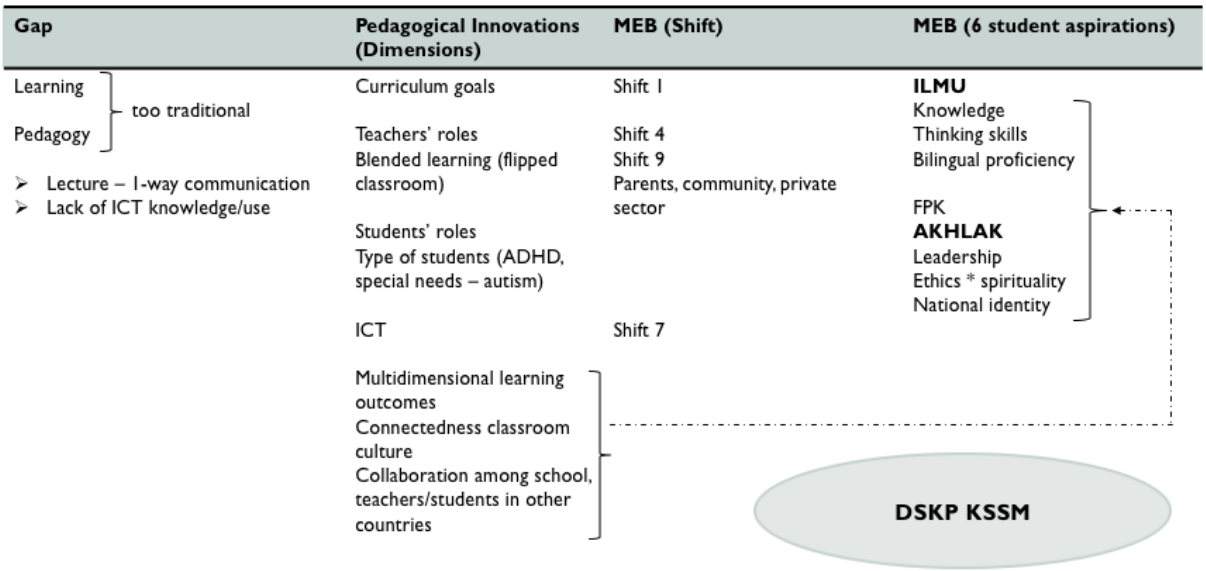

Figure 3. An alignment of innovation criteria

The analysis started with an analysis of the innovation ideas that teacher-trainees showed in the classroom to current teaching and learning requirements. The data shows a gap in the way teacher-trainees prepared their innovation in relation to learning and pedagogy. This was in terms of the teaching approach which was teacher-centred, where explanation was through one-way communication. In addition, the innovations that they used lack the integration of ICT knowledge and use. This shows a mismatch of the government's effort in upgrading the teaching and learning system in Malaysia as what is highlighted in the MEB 2013-2025 (Malaysian Ministry of Education, 2013) and the DSKP (Malaysian Ministry of Education, 2017). The approaches that teacher-trainees portrayed when using the innovations in the classroom represent a very traditional method to teaching and learning, which at present, do not align with 21st century approaches. In addition, the innovations that teacher-trainees used did not fully reflect the idea of pedagogical innovations as provided by Ying (2013).

In Figure 3, the gaps identified while teacher-trainees conducted their innovation in the classroom were aligned to the three documents review used in the study, with a specific focus on innovation. As a result of the alignment, the researchers proposed nine constructs, which were revised based on Ying's (2013) dimensions, to be used in the proposed guideline to assess innovation. These constructs are:

1. Curriculum goals
2. Teachers' roles
3. Blended learning

4. Students' roles
5. Student types
6. ICT
7. Multidimensional learning outcomes
8. Connectedness (classroom culture)
9. Collaboration (among school, teachers/students in other countries)

The pedagogical innovations were also linked to the six student aspirations stated in the MEB. These aspirations were categorised into two groups – Ilmu and Akhlak. Ilmu concerns the first three aspirations (Knowledge, thinking skills and bilingual proficiency), while Akhlak (Leadership, Ethics and spirituality, and national identity) can be associated to the National Education Philosophy, and also to three dimensions proposed in the study – multidimensional learning outcomes, connectedness, and collaboration. The link between the student aspiration, specifically thinking skills, and the dimensions for pedagogical innovations also show a close link to the DSKP (Malaysian Ministry of Education, 2017). This shows that when designing and assessing innovations, all parties need to refer closely to the MEB (Malaysian Ministry of Education, 2013), the National Education Philosophy, and also the relevant dimensions of pedagogical innovations that can be used in the local context and to the knowledge of the teacher-trainees.

From these alignments, the researchers came up with a proposed guideline or rubric to assess innovations used in the classroom. The rubric, which is named Matrix for Innovative Pedagogy or M-fIP, consists of eight (8) main constructs – learning objectives, thinking skills, teachers' role, students' role, values, ICT, connectedness and teaching tools – which were revised after receiving feedback from two inter-raters. In the rubric, each construct is defined, and evaluators are to assess the innovations based on three levels – beginner, intermediate or advanced. For each rubric and level, a descriptor is provided, to guide the evaluators on the differences between each level. The proposed rubric is shown in Table 1. M-fIP received its copyright in December 2020 (Copyright no. LY2020007353). Table 1 shows the proposed rubric of M-fIP.

Table 1. Rubrics for assessing implementation of innovation in the teaching and learning process among teacher-trainees

Table 1: Rubrics for Assessing Implementation of Innovation in the Teaching and Learning Process among Teacher-trainees

No.	Construct	Definition	Beginner	Intermediate	Advanced
1	**Learning Objectives**	Refers to how the teacher-trainee (TT) links the innovation used in the classroom to the learning objective stated in the Standard Document for Curriculum and Performance (DSKP).	TT shows minimal or no link between innovation to the learning objectives.	TT shows implicit & considerable link between innovation to the learning objectives.	TT shows explicit & strong link between innovation to the learning objectives.
2	**Thinking skills**	Refers to the different levels of thinking - from LOTS (Lower Order Thinking Skills - Remember, Understand, Apply) to HOTS (Higher Order Thinking Skills - Analysis, Evaluate, Create) that students need to use when using the innovation.	Innovation allows students to apply LOTS (remember & understand).	Innovation allows students to apply LOTS to lower HOTS (remember, understand, apply, analyse).	Innovation allows students to apply higher HOTS (evaluate & create).

3	**Teachers' role**	Refers to the role played by the teacher-trainee (TT) when implementing the innovation in the classroom.	TT acts as the source of all knowledge and information in the classroom and directs what learners need to do.	TT assists / helps students in the process of completing a task.	TT co-creates the environment for learning and provides platform for students to design their own learning (e.g.: heutagogy, peeragogy).
4	**Students' role**	Refers to how the teacher-trainee (TT) enhances the students' role when implementing the innovation in the classroom.	TT provides no opportunities for students to participate in the learning activities / do peer tutoring / set their own learning goals and strategies / reflect on their own learning.	TT provides limited opportunities for students to participate in the learning activities / do peer tutoring / set their own learning goals and strategies / reflect on their own learning.	TT provides sufficient opportunities for students to participate in the learning activities / do peer tutoring / set their own learning goals and strategies / reflect on their own learning.
5	**Values**	Refers to how the teacher-trainee (TT) provides opportunities for students to develop values through the implementation of the innovation.	TT provides no opportunities for students to develop values through the implementation of the innovation.	TT provides limited opportunities for students to develop values through the implementation of the innovation.	TT provides sufficient opportunities for students to develop values through the implementation of the innovation.
6	**ICT**	Refers to the ability of the teacher-trainee (TT) to integrate technological tools and effective pedagogical approach in achieving the learning objective based on the enhancement stage (substitution & augmentation) of SAMR (substitution, augmentation, modification & redefinition) model (Ruben Puentedura, 2013).	TT attempts to use technological tools which promote active learning in the lesson; however, still employs conventional pedagogical approach (substitution stage).	TT uses technological tools as an aid in learning and to encourage active learning.	TT seamlessly integrates the use of technological tools to transform the lesson and learning tasks.
7	**Connectedness**	Refers to the ability of the teacher-trainee (TT) to initiate collaboration between and among people involved in the process of teaching and learning.	TT encourages collaboration between or among students in class.	TT encourages collaboration between or among students and teachers from other classes.	TT encourages collaboration between parents, community and private sectors.
8	**Teaching tools**	Refers to the teaching tools that the teacher-trainee (TT) uses in the class to promote active learning.	TT shows minimal teaching tools in the classroom.	TT uses appropriate and adequate teaching tools to promote active learning in the classroom.	TT optimises the use of teaching tools to promote active learning in the classroom.

CONCLUSION

The rubric for assessing innovation is a timely needed document, to provide a clearer guideline on the specific criteria to assess innovation. By having M-fIP brings about convergence as it bridges creativity, independent learning and is syllabus-compliant to the users (supervisors and teacher-trainees). It is also personalisable, as the descriptors proposed can be specifically used or modified, allowing flexibility of descriptors to suit different needs of learners and contexts. Other than that, the rubric allows room for preparation on the teacher-trainees as they would be able to plan what is to be expected from their innovation.

In the context of the current teaching practicum in Malaysia, the ministry is urging teachers to become innovative in their teaching and learning so as to prepare and personalise their teaching approach to suit the needs of the future generation, who live in the era of digital transformation. The rubric brings significance to the field of education, specifically for teaching practicum purpose, as it can be applied to supervisors, teacher-trainees and the education programme on the whole.

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