

## A COMPARISON OF FORM 2 ENGLISH CURRICULUM CHANGE IN MALAYSIAN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

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**Abstract.** This study investigates the curriculum change of Form 2 English syllabus and compares the mentioned curriculum between two Malaysian public secondary schools. Study on the curriculum change in teaching, learning and assessment of Form 2 KSSM English Language curriculum in the two public secondary schools is discussed. A curriculum change is being implemented because the current curriculum is needed to be revised. The schools have been using the current curriculum for many years. However, recent research has shown that better, more innovative methods help students succeed in the curriculum. A team looked at new learning priorities earlier in the year, and another looked at classroom tools and materials. It is time to develop and revise aspects of the curriculum in Form 2 English. In-depth interview was carried out to obtain the findings. An English teacher from an urban secondary school and another English teacher from a rural secondary school were selected as the participants. Three interview sessions were conducted with each respondent over a period of one month. Interview sessions via *Whatsapp* were conducted on one-to-one basis between the researcher and the participants. After the interview, follow-up information correspondence via email was accomplished. Items in the interview were developed by the researchers. Three experts in related field were involved in validating the interview protocol and appropriacy of the language employed for this study. Findings on comparison between the curriculum change in urban secondary school and rural secondary school are discussed. This study provides the overview of Form 2 English Language curriculum of the 21<sup>st</sup> century educational setting, especially for other researchers and practitioners.

**Keywords:** *curriculum change, Kurikulum Standard Sekolah Menengah (KSSM), whatsapp interview, qualitative, secondary students, English Language curriculum*

### Introduction

Our social system, particularly education, is perpetually concerned with the way of how the younger generation is educated and trained. This involves the prediction on the society development as a whole as well as their potential needs in order to ensure adaptation to different variables such as the environment, technology, and legal conditions is relevant. There were several attempts in Malaysia to align the educational system with the evolving realities of our society, as well as to harmonize its content with European benchmarks that Malaysia also wishes to adopt. As a result of the advent of new documents aimed at governing the educational system and based on the wishes of those in government or ministries, neoliberalism has emerged. As mentioned by Rus

et al. (2019), the realities faced in the educational process, the legislative framework, the social order, the learning needs, or the cultural and geographical context in which this process takes place all influence the curriculum change of a school subject.

Sahlberg (2005) stated that curriculum change is a process of learning for teachers and their schools. It is for the improvement and renewal of the curriculum. Good understanding of change and clear conception of curriculum are necessary elements to improve the new curriculum implementation in many school subject such as English, Music Education, Science, and Islamic Education (Anuar and Ismail, 2021; Kamis et al., 2019). Previous studies proved, with a good understanding of curriculum, teachers may effectively deliver lesson contents to students in various types of education fields (Ismail et al., 2021b; Md Jais et al., 2018). The curriculum change can be seen as one of the conveniences to particular groups (e.g: policy makers, education leaders and teachers), which include: (1) assisting on the curriculum development by facilitating and identifying the drivers and mechanisms towards a successful curriculum; (2) re-conceptualizing the curriculum based on the original curriculum to a better and preferable content and context; and (3) creating professional learning communities for pedagogies and related associates.

The objective of the study is include; (1) to investigate the curriculum change in teaching, learning and assessment of Form 2 English Language syllabus under KSSM in the urban public secondary school; (2) to investigate the curriculum change in teaching, learning and assessment of Form 2 English Language syllabus under KSSM in the rural public secondary school; and (3) to identify the differences between the students' learning and assessment of Form 2 English Language syllabus under KSSM in the urban and the rural public secondary schools.

### ***Problem statement***

Since the current programme is obsolete, a curriculum change is being introduced. The school has been using the same techniques for many years, but newer, more advanced approaches have been shown to help students excel in recent studies. Earlier in the year, one team looked at new learning goals, while another looked at classroom resources and materials. It is time to work on developing and revising some elements of the programme. One of the Standards-Based Secondary Curriculum (KSSM) aspirations is to develop students with the 21st Century Skills which places a premium on critical thinking, life skills, and a career built on pure value practices. The 21st Century Skills programme aims to produce students who have the characteristics mentioned in their profile in order to succeed globally.

The development of 21st Century Skills is supported by mastery of Content and Learning Standards in the English Language curriculum. The ability to think objectively and creatively, interact, and communicate efficiently are all examples of learning skills. Knowledge literacy, media literacy, and technology literacy are all examples of literacy skills. In addition, flexibility and adaptability, initiative and self-direction, social and cross-cultural skills, productivity and accountability, and leadership and responsibility are all examples of life skills. Thus, curriculum change is needed to integrate the 21<sup>st</sup> century skills in the Form 2 English learning process. Based on the observation and interview, the current teaching and learning process uses the conventional teaching method and 21<sup>st</sup> century skills learning methods are scarcely implemented in the teaching and learning process.

There are deadlines in place to ensure that the goals of Malaysia's Education Blueprints 2013-2025 (MEB) are met, as well as a yearly report to track progress. Every year, the Ministry of Education publishes a report detailing the implementation's highlights, success, obstacles, and setbacks (MOE, 2013). Curriculum changes are often necessary. The MEB is interested in adapting curriculum changes where MEB is not just a book with instructions about how to use it, instead, it is a living text that adapts to changes over time. Therefore, this study is conducted to respond to three main research questions which are; (1) What are the curriculum changes in teaching, learning and assessment of Form 2 English Language syllabus under KSSM in the urban public secondary school? (2) What are the curriculum changes in teaching, learning and assessment of Form 2 English Language syllabus under KSSM in the rural public secondary school? (3) What are the differences between the students' learning and assessment of Form 2 English Language syllabus under KSSM in the urban and the rural public secondary schools?

### *Literature review*

#### *Curriculum change*

According to Yunos et al. (2019), one aspect that concerns the sustainability of a programme is the curriculum. It must be in place to respond to changes in the workplace, especially for a developing country such as Malaysia. According to Wiles and Bondi (2015), the philosophy that covers curriculum development processes of a particular school is being portrayed and guided by its plans. It is significant that the plan designed by school demonstrates the direction of education which designates requisite elements and features of the educational program, ensures necessary support to anticipate and provides for the accountability. Tyler (1957) was the first theorist to mention the importance of aligning curriculum in both school planning and the comprehensive of school setting.

In a similar vein, Taba (1962) attested that "the curriculum is the students' learning which is planned and directed by the school to achieve its educational goals." Tanner and Tanner (1995) also stated that curriculum is "the planned and guided learning experiences and intended outcomes of an institution". As mentioned by Yidana and Aboagye (2018), effective collaboration for curriculum changes still remains as a requirement in higher education, especially in terms of updating or changing the overall curriculum. A curriculum change on existing courses or content does not always steer to the desired reform, although a collaborative play as the fundamental role of the process has been employed. Comprehensive and collaborative curriculum provides a comprehensive examination, as academics identify their roles and as the curriculum itself is defined, analyzed and modified.

Oliva and Gordon (2012) mentioned that curriculum change is inevitable, necessary, and desirable. Curriculum should be dynamic. Teachers should react accordingly to the changes that occur in schools. In order to understand the curriculum change, we should know the areas related to curriculum study which covers the subject content, process, pedagogy and assessment. Subject content is the aspect of learning that learners should obtain from a course. The process is related to the teaching and learning on how the content is delivered. Pedagogy is related to various methods used for teaching and learning. Assessment is related to how the learning is assessed. Another area is implemented recently; it is the learning outcome which refers to the attributes or skills

obtained by students. In many educational institutions, the courses offered are content-based and focus on the knowledge that students should be equipped with at the end of their studies. However, content-based curriculum would result in traditional and passive learning whereby students only learn to add new knowledge in the field related to their study.

According to Mbarushimana and Allida (2017), curriculum is defined as a course that has been planned, offered by an educational institution. Change is a process, not an event. It occurs over a period of time. Their views on curriculum change are: (1) individuals must change first before organizations; (2) horizontal views of change are much better than other views; (3) administrators must secure the necessary infrastructure changes and long-term resource support; (4) effective change must be accompanied by continuing communication, on-going training, on-site coaching, and time for implementation; (5) school staff and leaders have responsibilities for change. To adapt to curriculum change, teaching and learning pedagogies need to be measured and evaluated. A new curriculum will embolden reflection on how knowledge is developed and industrialized as to broaden the young generation's thinking manner.

As mentioned by Mbarushimana and Allida (2017), change is a team effort that needs collaboration; change works best when it is facilitated and developed well. Leaders and managers must be well prepared on changes; the school context influences the changing process. Curriculum change is well managed in five processes: first, an analysis of the current context; second, the expression of key programme aims in a mission statement; third, a prioritization of resources and development strategies; fourth, the implementation of the targeted curriculum change; and fifth, the establishment of monitoring tools and processes.

Teachers' ability to incorporate curriculum change was found to be highly dependent on school leadership, teacher relationships with leaders and colleagues, school organizational processes and community, as well as personal motivation (Jenkins, 2020). Curriculum change in education systems is basically a necessary effort, as its methods affect how educational stakeholders will be able to make changes in adapting to the present context. The teachers' stimulus on curriculum changes cannot be ignored as they are being one of the imperative components in school systems. Teachers tend spend more hours with the students as compared to any other stakeholders in educational settings. Teachers are the ones who implement and practice education policies, rules and regulations with the students. Subsequently, their participation and partaking in curriculum change is extremely essential.

Jacobs (1989) mentioned three types of curriculum change. The type of change that is taken place is going to show how stakeholders may react. Three types of change are planned change, coercion and interaction change. In curriculum change, those who are involved have the same power. Everyone is clear on what to do. They are in agreement, and is moving together. In curriculum change, it has a serious imbalance of power. One group has the power to determine the goals and other groups are excluded from the discussion and yet they are expected to obey. Unfortunately, this is an extremely common type of change in education. Often governments or administrators will develop a curriculum and the teachers have to implement in the process of teaching and learning. Without proper input and further assistance, there is a high risk of failure in the curriculum change. The problem is the proper and clear communication and execution among themselves. The process for implementation is not well developed and it leads to people who are unsure of what to do. An experienced teacher might have seen these

three common types of change. It is important for administrators and teachers to understand the dangers to change. Curriculum is not going to work well. Interaction is unsuccessful due to lack of proper follow-up. To succeed, change must include commitment and understanding among teachers and administrators. A clear direction must be provided to prevent these common roadblocks to change.

According to Miles (1964) in the mid-1960s, he mentioned that it could possible take 50 years to accomplish for new ideas to become widely established in schools. Curriculum innovation is said to create new ideas or new materials where teachers can use it in the process of teaching and learning. According to Rogers (2003), an innovation is 'an idea, a practice, or an object being transformed into something new by an individual or a group'. A project-specific theory of change is basically allied to assessment. It makes the fundamental logic of the project much clearer, which helps with the process of preparation, execution, and evaluation. A theory of change is often needed by funding agencies as part of grant proposals. Change theories, on the other hand, are independent of any specific initiative and reflect theoretical and empirically based insight into how change occurs. Change theories may, in theory, advise a theory of change (Reinholz and Andrews, 2020).

Previous research suggested that teacher ownership can be done jointly by both teachers and central administration (Fullan 1991; Rudduck, 1991). Rudduck (1991) and Stenhouse (1975) mentioned that the importance of teachers' participation in curriculum change and the necessity for teachers' involvement and decision-making process. Ownership is difficult to measure, and it has many levels (Rudduck, 1991). Collaborative development needs to be instructed, and sometimes top-down decisions need to be agreed on theoretical issues which are beyond teachers' control. Furthermore, teachers need to be motivated, encouraged, or coached, to cooperate in change (Stenhouse, 1975).

Horton and Diaz (2011) stated that innovation in the curriculum is a development process whose main products are teaching materials, methodological skills, and pedagogical values that potential adopters view as a new curriculum. Miles (1964) and Nicholls (1983) mentioned that curriculum as a willed intervention, which results in the development of ideas and practices that are basically new. These ideas are then placed through a period of deliberation with a committee of curriculum potential adopters who in turn set out to design and create a new form of curriculum to be implemented in schools. Curriculum innovations after dissemination, diffusion, testing and evaluation are then used and applied to the general school system as a new form of curriculum. Fullan (1993) mentioned that the implementation stage of a curriculum is a crucial, difficult and unavoidable stage in curriculum development. This is because without implementation, a new form of curriculum cannot be evaluated to ascertain its successes and shortcomings.

Hoyle (1995) stated change as "embracing the concepts of innovation, renewal, development, and improvement of a curriculum". Blackmore and Kandiko (2012), discovered more interdisciplinary courses have been created, which combines content-focused and process-focused models of curriculum. Therefore, the curriculum change has to focus on students' knowledge development, skills and attributes which then are taken into account through reflection and related pedagogical practices. The literature has shown that commitment to the development of relevant resources, knowledge, skills and training is exceedingly required in order to influence effective changes. As a result, while teachers have their own theoretical preparation and trainings, they indeed need

more assistance because they are often confused in the face of this rapid curriculum change. To effectively resolve the problems, new teachers must possess the knowledge of the subject as well as pedagogy skills especially in ascertaining the current contents of the curriculum.

### ***Kurikulum Standard Sekolah Menengah (KSSM)***

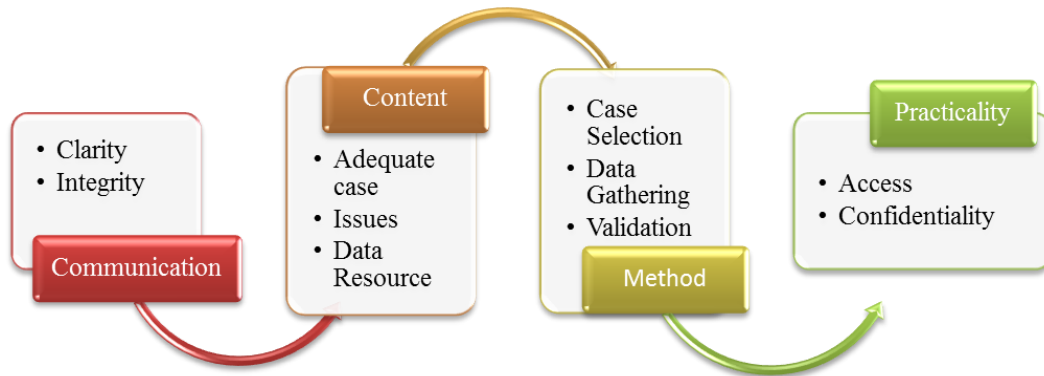
One of the Standards-Based Secondary Curriculum (KSSM) aspirations is to develop students with the 21st Century Skills which places a premium on critical thinking, life skills, and a career built on pure value practices (MOE, 2017). The 21st Century Skills programme aims to produce students who have the characteristics mentioned in their profile in order to succeed globally. The development of 21st Century Skills is supported by mastery of Content and Learning Standards in the English Language curriculum. The ability to think objectively and creatively, interact, and communicate efficiently is all examples of learning skills. Knowledge literacy, media literacy, and technology literacy are all examples of literacy skills.

In addition, flexibility and adaptability, initiative and self-direction, social and cross-cultural skills, productivity and accountability, and leadership and responsibility are all examples of life skills. The aim of English in Form 2 is to continue to provide students with constructive and successful English interactions, as well as an integrated emphasis on grammar and varied and ongoing practice of the language. Listening, speaking, reading, and writing are the four skills, as well as Literature in Action. The Secondary School Standard Curriculum (KSSM) is introduced to Form Four students, replacing the Integrated Secondary School Curriculum (KBSM). It entails changing the Science and Literature streams' selections. This means that students are given the option of choosing one of four subject packages rather than one of the streams. The implementation of KSSM is to realize the Second Wave agenda based on Malaysia Education Development Plan (PPPM) 2016 to 2020 (Dom, 2019).

## **Materials and Methods**

### ***Research design***

This qualitative study is to investigate the curriculum changes of Form 2 English syllabus and a comparison of curriculum change between two public secondary schools located in Kuala Lumpur and Selangor, Malaysia. This study adopted a model as recommended by Leonard and Maulding (2019). This model involves an intensive, systematic investigation of single individual in which the researcher examines in-depth data relating to several variables. Some case study rules and regulations were applied in conducting this study as in *Figure 1*.



**Figure 1.** Case study design rules.  
Source: Crowe et al. (2011)

### Sampling

An English teacher with a Master degree in TESL (M.Ed. TESL) from an urban public secondary school and an English teacher with a Bachelor degree in TESL (B.Ed. TESL) from a rural public secondary school were chosen as the respondents. The details of each respondent are shown in *Table 1*.

**Table 1.** Respondents' profile.

Respondent	Gender	Age	Working experience
R1	Male	42	15 years
R2	Female	44	17 years

### Data collection

#### In-depth interview

Since interviews must be transcribed, organized, interpreted, and recorded, in-depth interviews do take a longer time. The whole process could be ruined and misdirected if the interviewer is not highly qualified and experienced. In comparing to other undemanding interviews, the procedure can be very expensive. However, compared to in-person interviews, telephone in-depth interviews can be cost efficient. To prevent biasness, participants must be carefully selected, which can lead to a longer vetting phase. In this study, time and dates of the interview session for each respondent are varied as recommended by Ismail and Anuar (2020). Some interview sessions were conducted at night and took longer than those conducted during working hours which mostly at lunch hours. This is to fit to the respondents' convenience.

Three in-depth interview sessions were conducted with each respondent over a period of one month. The *whatsapp* interview conducted was on one-to-one basis between the researcher on one hand and the respondent on the other hand. Time and dates of the interview session for each respondent are varied. The interview sessions conducted at night took longer than those conducted during working hours which mostly during lunch hour. The minimum duration of interview session was conducted is five minutes while the maximum was fifteen minutes. After the interview, follow-up for more information and updates via email was carried out. Items for the interview were developed by the researchers. Three experts of doctorate degree have aided in validating the interview protocol. The questions of the interview were designed to generate data that could assist the researchers to investigate and discover the curriculum change in

teaching, learning and assessment of Form 2 English syllabus under KSSM in the two public secondary schools in 2020.

### ***Ethical consideration***

According to Arifin (2018), researchers must consider the participant cultural background but also the flexibility in the interview process. She said when dealing with participants openly, the qualitative researcher should be aware of the potential harm that can impose on the participants. Ethical principles should be applied through all stages of the research process. The relationship and intimacy established between researchers and participants in qualitative studies may have a variety of different ethical concerns, and qualitative researchers face dilemmas such as respecting privacy, establishing honest and open interactions, and avoiding of false statements (Connelly, 2014). Ethicality on challenging situations can arise if researchers are faced with conflicting issues and choose between different methodological strategies in case of conflict. In such cases, disagreements between the different components, such as the participants, the researchers, the research discipline, the funding body and society, may be inevitable. Some important ethical concerns to consider when conducting qualitative research include: anonymity, confidentiality, and informed consent. The names of teachers and schools are not mentioned in this study due to confidentiality. The content of the interview is highly confidential and the teachers who attended the interview have received the informed consent.

## **Results and Discussion**

### ***Finding 1***

#### ***Brief descriptions of the urban secondary school***

The school is located in the city. The school has the enrollment of about 3000 students from form 1 to form 5. It has sufficient classrooms and all the facilities for the students such as ICT rooms, music room, big library, big field, spacious canteen and many 21<sup>st</sup> century classrooms are provided. According to the teacher, urban school students have opportunities to attend tuition classes, obtain information from internet, have discussion from one another through *whatsapp* and emails and have their own smartphones and laptops. They have high self-concept, belong to high socio-economic status and have high academic achievements in school.

#### ***Brief descriptions of the rural secondary school***

The school is located in a village where most parents of the students are working as farmers. The school has the enrollment of about 950 students from form 1 to form 5. It has adequate classrooms and all the facilities for the students such as Information and Communications Technology (ICT) rooms, library, field, and canteen are provided. There is no 21<sup>st</sup> century classroom adaptation. According to the teacher, rural school students have no opportunities to attend tuition classes, obtain information from internet, have discussion from one another through *whatsapp* and emails and have their own smartphones and laptops. They have low self-concept, belong to low socio-economic status and have low academic achievements in school. They have to work after school and they have no time to study at home.



### ***Similarities of the urban secondary school and the rural secondary school***

Both schools are borne by the government. Trained teachers are being sent to these schools. Both schools have given the same facilities such as library, canteen, classrooms, school field, toilets, science laboratories, ICT rooms and the staff room. Both schools have the process of teaching, learning and assessment. They too have the same curriculum prepared and developed by the Ministry of Education.

### ***Finding 2***

#### ***Teaching, learning and assessment of form 2 English in urban public secondary school***

Based on the interviews, urban school uses 21<sup>st</sup> century classroom that implements technology integration where students and teacher are able to use technology such as laptop, ipad and smartphone to achieve goals in a different ways. The classroom is filled with collaborative environment where collaboration among students fosters the development of new ideas and exposes students to opposing viewpoints. It provides opportunities for creative expression among students' learning in the classroom to build students' confidence. In addition, the classroom creates inquiry based approach where students are able to face the new topic in the context of answering a question with confidence and self-inquiry approach. Students have their own justification for all answers from a number of angles and discover what they truly believe.

The 21<sup>st</sup> century classroom helps students to have strong metacognitive reinforcement of learning and they are able to write for reflection of what they have learned. Students use a blog for reflection; they are very surprised to know that other people are interested in their thoughts. Besides, blog helps students to acquire problem solving methodology and hands-on learning. It is an opportunity to connect with the outside world to enhance students' achievement. The 21<sup>st</sup> century classroom no longer supports the idea of the teacher as an authoritarian figure standing in front of the students scrawling on a chalkboard. They instead are facilitators and educators, providing support and encouragement for the students' educational journey. 21<sup>st</sup> century classroom provides transparent assessment where students form stronger connections with material and portfolios, projects, formative assessments and rubrics that can help meet this goal.

Based on the interviews and observations, students can be seen as producers. The respondent said;

*“Students are treated as digital natives and producers of any digital content. Students are laced with latest tools, although they seldom use it beyond communicating with family & friends. Every student has expensive devices such as i-pad, laptop, smartphone and e-tablet which have capabilities to produce blogs, infographics, and tutorials. They make imaginative blogs, stories and feel proud to share with others when students are given opportunities. HOTS concepts and 8 i-THINK maps are introduced and taught in the 21<sup>st</sup> century classroom and students themselves search information from their devices.”*

Students have been exposed to research by using HOTS concepts and 8 i-THINK maps, contact experts, create final projects and share ideas and knowledge using devices in hand. They only need guidance from the teacher. Respondent said;

*“Students compare information from different sources, give feedback to peers and convey own ideas. Students learn new technologies. Quality education is to integrate technology with teaching to create learning environment which fulfill the needs of students. It is good for students to have their own hand on experience. They use HOTS concepts and 8 i-THINK maps in their presentations.”*

It is also discovered that students are encouraged to go global. By teaching students use the tools in their hands to visit any corner of this world, make them more knowledgeable and sympathetic. Students are smart to use smartphones. Students find their answers they need and to be independent through smartphones. The benefit for students is the freedom to access resources. Students create blogs. Blogging is one of the professional activities. The use of blogs in education produces numerous benefits. The blog can be used as a platform to post assignments, assignments, projects, ask for help, share resources, etc. As blogging is purely a writing activity, but requires reading, reading various books, reading other blogs, articles, etc. It also leads to one's professional development. Critical and logical thought is encouraged through blogging, access increases and social contact with others increases. The use of digital among students is another significant feature of not using paper. Respondent mentioned;

*“The students of today are profoundly interested in the digital world. Social media, online tools, mobile phones, iPads are a daily use of students. Students can organize educational resources and activities on their website, and the integration of technology takes the learning experience to different levels. They can share links and discuss topics online.”*

Therefore, teachers' roles has changed to become a facilitator, mentor and coach. Collaboration helps technology offer powerful new tools to aid communication beyond the classroom. Create collaboration between students and teacher. Classroom activities are made similar to those in the real world by creating digital assets, lectures, presentations, and projects together with other teachers and students. The teacher plays the role of facilitator of collaboration between local, national and global communities. Teachers also expose students to use Twitter chat. It is the most efficient and economical way to organize your professional development, share research and ideas. It is one of the ways to stay up-to-date on current issues in the field. Students build a positive fingerprint. 21st century students can create a positive fingerprint. 21<sup>st</sup> century classroom offers students the opportunity to contribute and share their unique point of view.

Maintaining professional demeanor both in the classroom and online helps build a positive fingerprint and outlines appropriate actions for students. The teacher guides the students on how to use social media, how to produce, post important content and create resources to share. Digital literacy is often referred to as "literacy in the 21st century." However, the classroom is not filled with collaborative environment where supposedly collaboration among students could foster their development of new ideas and expose them to opposing viewpoints. The circumstance does not provide opportunities for

creative expression on students' learning in the classroom as to build students' confidence. In addition, the classroom does not create inquiry-based approach where purportedly students are able to embrace new topic and answer questions with confidence and apply self-inquiry approach. Students are weak and they do not have their own justification for all answers from variety of angles and do not really discover what they truly believe as they failed to clarify and justify.

The findings showed that students use innovation in the 21<sup>st</sup> century classroom. The main focus behind any innovation in technology is to provide comfort, productivity and a better life. Teachers of the 21st century need to expand their teaching toolbox and test new application examples by replacing textbooks with web resources and teaching with social media. Students love using Facebook for class discussions and announcements. The 21st century classroom provides an effective learning environment for the students. Based on the interviews and observations, various games that are suitable for the topic is modified, designed and implemented during the lesson. Teacher in urban school is very creative and innovative. Urban school students are highly motivated and they acquire the knowledge very efficiently due to their excellent command of English language. Besides, higher order thinking skill, active learning styles will help urban students to think and to be creative as proven by Md Jais (2017).

#### ***Assessment in urban secondary school: 21st century skills are being implemented***

Based on the interviews, 21st century assessments are essential for preparation of assessment activities by teachers in urban school. It is to ensure that the students are being assessed towards the skills and demand of the 21st century. Based on the interviews and observations, the teacher uses visible performance-based work (as a result of assessment) generates data that inform curriculum and instruction. Assessments need to be adaptable to students' settings. 21st century approaches in the assessment are more versatile. The teacher in urban school let her students have a survey on their Multiple Intelligences. After that, she grouped her students according to their intelligences and let them have a creative presentation. Assessments are related to day-to-day practice rather than as add-ons at the end of the lesson.

The teacher does assess her students from time to time because assessments are not just given at the end which is related with Ismail et al. (2021a). She gives her students formative assessments rather than just giving them summative assessments. The 21st century objectives are clearly stated and explicitly taught. Students exhibit their emerging knowledge and skills. Teacher routinely guides students toward achievement of targets. Before she starts her class, she sees to it that her students are aware of the goals and objectives. With that, her students will be guided with their achievements. An assessment that includes a spectrum of strategies is the norm. Her students have different intelligences, so she sees to it that she does not focus on only one way of assessing their learnings. The assessment data or result is clear and transparent for all stakeholders.

The teacher lets her students keep track of their progress by returning their papers or evaluation sheet. She also makes sure that she submits her student's grade on time for their parents to be aware of their child/children's achievements. Adjustments are carried out in the assessment process to meet the students' needs and fairness. She must always make sure that her assessments are valid and reliable as her students have different level of intelligences, different beliefs, different gender and socioeconomic groups. The 21st century assessment is a well-aligned assessment system that includes all students,

constituents, and stakeholders and designed to improve at all levels. Changes are inevitable so she makes sure that she is able to identify the needs of her students and the community. With that she will be able to develop her students into globally competitive individuals.

### ***Teaching, learning and assessment of form 2 English in rural public secondary school***

Based on the interviews, rural school students are seemed to be hardly apply 21<sup>st</sup> century classroom that implements technology integration where students and teacher are able to use technology such as laptop, iPad and smartphone to achieve goals in a different ways. Participant responded;

*“The classroom is scarcely filled with collaborative environment where collaboration among students fosters the development of new ideas and exposes students to opposing viewpoints. It infrequently provides opportunities for creative expression among students’ learning in the classroom to build students’ confidence.”*

In addition, the classroom hardly create inquiry-based approach where students are able to face the new topic in the context of answering a question with confidence and self-inquiry approach. Participant mentioned;

*“Rural school students often lack their own justification for all answers from a number of angles and discover what they truly believe. They often rely on English teacher to acquire the knowledge of English.”*

When the 21<sup>st</sup> century classroom is hardly being used in rural secondary school, it rarely helps students to have strong metacognitive reinforcement of learning and students infrequently write for reflection of what they have learned. Rural school students rarely use blog for reflection. The teaching and learning process in rural school often supports the idea of the teacher as an authoritarian figure standing in front of the students scrawling on a chalkboard. Teachers in rural school hardly play the role of facilitators and educators, providing support and encouragement for the students’ educational journey. Without using the 21<sup>st</sup> century classroom, no transparent assessment is provided where students hardly from stronger connections with material and portfolios, projects, formative assessments and rubrics to reach high level of achievement. It is found that school students in this study are rarely be perceived as producers. The students were not treated as digital natives and producers of any digital content. The students are not laced with latest tools where they can use it beyond communicating with family & friends. Respondent said;

*“A costly device such as i-pad, laptop, smartphone, e-tablet which have capabilities to produce blogs, infographics, tutorials is rarely available to every student. When students are not given opportunity, they cannot make creative blogs, stories and feel proud to share with others. HOTS concepts and 8 i-THINK maps are rarely introduced and taught in the rural school.”*

Results indicated that school students in rural areas hardly practice Project-Based Learning. This is related to participant’s information mentioning that;

*“Students rarely conduct their research using HOTS concepts and 8 i-THINK maps, contact experts, create final projects and share ideas and knowledge using devices in hand. Students are not able to compare information from different sources, giving feedback to peers and conveying own ideas.”*

Additionally, school students in rural areas rarely learn new technologies. Quality education is to integrate technology with teaching to create learning environment which fulfill the needs of students. It is bad for students not to have their own hands-on experience. It is also found that rural school students rarely given chance to go global. It is impossible to have first-hand experience of other countries for them. Majority of the rural school students lack knowledge of using smartphones because they come from poor families and they cannot afford to buy smartphones. Students in rural schools rarely have the opportunity to participate in the digital world due to the poor connection of internet. Students do not use Twitter chat. According to the teacher;

*“hmm...without using 21<sup>st</sup> century classroom, we have problems to expand teaching toolbox and to try new applications example replacing textbooks with web resources, teaching with social media. Though we are very enthusiastic but the feedback from the students is very discouraging.”*

#### ***Assessment in rural secondary school: 21st century skills are not being implemented***

The findings revealed that the teacher does not use visible performance-based work (as a result of assessment) generates data that inform curriculum and instruction. Only the monthly tests, mid-year examinations and final year examinations are carried out. Assessments are related to day-to-day practice rather than as add-on at the end of the lesson. The teacher seldom assesses her students from time to time. She only gives her students summative assessments. The assessment data or results are clear and transparent for all stakeholders. The teacher let her students keep track of their progress by returning their papers or evaluation sheet. Based on the interviews and observations, discussion is carried out and she asks her students to do corrections. She does submit her student's grade on time for their parents to be aware of their child/children's achievements. She seldom ensures her assessments are valid and reliable as her students have different level of intelligences, different beliefs, different gender and socioeconomic groups. The assessment questions are copied from the past year questions from the form 2 English workbooks.

#### ***Comparison between students in urban secondary school and rural secondary school***

The cost of education is borne by the government and partially by parents (or care takers/guardians). Parents have to support the urban school children day-to-day schooling activities. Parents have to spend the money on food, clothing and shelter, transportation in order to educate their children. These include school fees, school uniform, books and equipment, pocket money for meals, school trips and other charges. Some of the expenses are quite standard as they are borne by the schools with the help of Parent-Teacher's Associations and the government. There are certain expenditures which may vary widely among students, such as extra reading materials, iPad, smartphone, laptop and tuition. Richer parents can afford to spend more on their

children's needs while some poorer parents may have to face financial problems. They can get help from educational support programs such as subsidies, scholarships, textbooks-on-loan and hostel facilities.

Government has put much effort to reduce the performance gap between rural and urban schools by upgrading the teaching and learning facilities, including computer laboratories, and sending more trained teachers in rural schools. Parents with higher socioeconomic status, as reflected by higher income and educational attainment, can afford to spend more on their children's education. Students' parents from urban school have much financial contribution to the school in order to have more facilities in urban school. However, students' parents from rural school cannot afford to do so. Students in rural school have to work to help earn money for the parents. They lack of time to study and to do revision. Though the rural school provides free tuition for the students after school hour, the students cannot make it to attend the tuition classes. Urban school students are different, they can afford to spend much money on private tuition, buy ipad, smartphone, and laptop and serve internet to obtain more information related to their studies. Internet is strong in urban area but not in rural area.

In the teaching and learning process, speaking, writing, reading and listening are the four skills to acquire the English language. Urban school students are very good at these four skills but most of the rural school students often lack of these skills. Rural school students usually speak their native language. In the content of form 2 English, students should be taught to acquire the 21<sup>st</sup> century skills, higher order thinking skills, teaching and learning strategies, cross curricular elements, listening, writing, reading and speaking skills and literature. All these skills are being applied and taught in urban school. In rural school, teacher wants to teach and apply all these skills. However, students acquire these skills inefficiently. This seems to be the problem for the rural school English teacher. Though the curriculum of form 2 English is the same between the rural school and the urban school but the curriculum implementing process is different from one another.

## **Conclusion**

Curriculum change affects teachers, students and their school learning process. Good understanding of change and clear curriculum conception are essential prerequisites for the implementation of the new curriculum. Three conclusions can be summed up as a key message of this study. First, the successful development of a curriculum requires better use of 'change knowledge.' Policymakers, school administration and teachers need to know more about the drivers of successful change in school curricula (Ong et al., 2021). Learning about education changes and their key features should therefore become an integral element of any serious process of curriculum reform. Secondly, the curriculum is re-conceptualization. The traditional organization of the curriculum has been the basis of many curriculum reforms. As a result, many curricula for teachers and students have become overloaded, confusing, and inadequate. Therefore, the orientation of the curriculum should be shifted from a curriculum as a product to a comprehensive curriculum considering both urban and rural students.

This will also make the role of the curriculum a more comprehensive idea of a purely technical document, which also provides guidance on improvement of the school. Third, change in teaching and learning needs to be planned in a specific way. Teachers' in-service training is not sufficient. If the aim of the curriculum reform is to change the

ways students learn and explore, sophisticated strategies for implementation are needed such as learning materials, teaching techniques, class environment, process of learning and learning product. Therefore, teachers are recommended to be the leader to help build professional learning communities and schools.

In the present study, the curriculum change in teaching, learning and assessment of English Language curriculum under KSSM in the two public secondary schools has been carried out. Findings on comparison between the curriculum change in urban secondary school and rural secondary school have shown that there are differences in the implementation of Form 2 English Language curriculum under KSSM. The urban secondary school has used technology devices to help in the implementation of Form 2 English language teaching and learning process. Besides, the students' learning and assessment in urban secondary school have been implemented more successfully than in rural secondary school with the use of technology devices.

The findings have shown the curriculum changes in teaching, learning and assessment of Form 2 English Language curriculum under KSSM in the urban public secondary school and rural public secondary school. In addition, the findings have also shown the differences between the students' learning and assessment of Form 2 English Language curriculum under KSSM in urban and rural public secondary schools. Curriculum change embraces the concepts of innovation, development, renewal and improvement in curriculum. It is a process that requires time, energy and resources. It is increasingly done and requires the development of feelings and skills through the use of new programmes. It contributes to change. It is a process of making the difference, in some way, to give it a new position or direction. It often means the change to its philosophy by its objectives, reviewing the content, revising its methods and re-thinking its procedures. This study will provide the overview of English Language curriculum of the 21st century educational setting, especially to other researchers and practitioners.

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There is no conflict of interest with any parties involved with this study.

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