



Bilingual education in Brunei: the evolution of the Brunei approach to bilingual education and the role of CfBT in promoting educational change

Research briefing

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During 2012/13 academics from the Department of Education, University of Oxford were commissioned by CfBT to conduct an independent evaluation of the CfBT Brunei English teaching programme. The evaluation sought to document the various processes of change and improvement within the Bruneian education system between 1996 and 2012, in particular looking at the teaching of English as an additional language in the bilingual system and the involvement of CfBT as an external education provider and change agent.

The evaluation identified six 'evolutionary paths':

1. Bilingual education policy in Brunei demonstrated a consistent focus on promoting bilingual education. This has been a strength, encouraging stability and consistency in the priority accorded to promoting competence in both English and Standard Malay.
2. There has been strong consensus in Brunei on the need to encourage higher levels of English attainment to promote economic competitiveness, recognising English as a crucial 'tool' for the 21st century. This has changed the relationship with CfBT, leading to greater demands and higher expectations for the delivery of ongoing improvements in student attainment.
3. The relationship between the Brunei Ministry of Education (MoE) and CfBT has changed, evolving from a recruitment link into a bilingual education partnership. CfBT has become a deliverer of improved attainment and taken on a capacity-enhancing role that has led to a strong and productive view of successful bilingual partnership.
4. Programmes targeting student outcomes and attitudes have moved from pockets of good practice to national-level reach. CfBT has drawn on education reform experiences elsewhere to support context-specific improvements in the quality of teaching and learning, promoting more active student learning in schools, with a focus on enhancing study skills and improved attainment.
5. Programmes targeting teaching practice, professional development and capacity building for both CfBT and Bruneian language teachers have been key to developing a collaborative working relationship between CfBT and the Bruneian government.
6. Building the infrastructure and the potential for school- and system-wide improvement, the relationship has evolved into one where CfBT expertise is focused on capacity building as well as capacity providing. CfBT has come to be seen as a valued education improvement partner rather than just an effective recruitment agency, an organisation that helps to support the MoE's aims and one that promotes positive educational change and improved practice in schools as well as improved outcomes for students.



The six evolutionary paths: a bird's eye view



The report made a number of recommendations which could support continued improvement in student attainment and teacher professional development:

- Greater focus on and awareness of the challenges posed by speaking, writing and literacy skills in both Malay and English could support pupils' capacity to learn.
- Increasing CfBT activities into the upper primary years could help ease the transition between phases.
- Greater consideration could be given to SEN diagnostics, the role of technology, promoting and supporting the role of the home as a learning environment and tracking pupils over a longer term.
- Professional development could focus on:
 - combined CPD programmes for Bruneian teachers and CfBT teachers, to progress pedagogic skills
 - ways to manage the demands of English-medium teachers of maths, science and ICT
 - ways to expand the cooperative teaching model, allowing greater collaboration
 - the creation of a educational/training hub
 - offering 'core' (compulsory) and elective modules.

For more information and to download the summary and full reports see:

<http://www.cfbt.com/Research/Research-library/2014/r-bilingual-education-in-brunei-2014>



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