Identifying predominant intelligence among preuniversity students of Universiti Malaysia Sabah

ABSTRACT

Many Malaysian institutions still default to the traditional one-size-fits-all educational approach which heavily inclines to Linguistic and Mathematical intelligences. Students with these domains will surely excel in the examination since the lesson plans are catered to develop their intelligence more; however, those with uncommon intelligence will not be valued and viewed as students with poor achievers. More often than usual, the school authorities and teachers perceive the weaker students through the lens of their deficits. They focus on the basic academic skills they are lacking – what they couldn't do – instead of focusing on the strengths they have, making it difficult for them to thrive within a paradigm of one-size-fits-all schooling. Finding a cognitive domain that is significantly associated with low-achieving students could be an excellent reference for educators to start acknowledging this intelligence in composition to improve the students' language skills. Therefore, this study aims to examine which intelligence is predominant in these low-achieving students in relation to their English proficiency. The Multiple Intelligence Profiling Questionnaire (MIPQ III) and a Paper 800/4 (Writing) Question 2 of Malaysian University English Test (MUET) March 2016 question were used in this study. Sixty pre-university students were purposively selected for the current research from the Preparatory Centre of Science and Technology, University Malaysia Sabah, Malaysia. The data were collected and analyzed using the Correlation tests. The findings reveal that the low-achieving students are dominant in Interpersonal intelligence despite the poor writing performance in the test. Although it was considered as a small-scale study, these early successes may hope to inspire educators to start acknowledging the students' differences in cognitive abilities and tailoring differentiated teaching approaches in a way that best suit their unique needs. Future research would include more language skills to be examined in a bigger number of students.