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Integrating Problem-Based Learning into the Chinese Language Classroom Curriculum Design in Malaysian Chinese Independent High Schools

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Abstract

Educational reformation has struggled with the persistent issue of encouraging independent learning abilities among high school students. Students have been vocal about respective disappointment with Chinese language classes and textbooks in recent years, including the lack of motivation. Student learning quality diminishes when only a single teaching method is employed. Therefore, teachers should reappraise the curriculum design to emphasise developing personal learning abilities among students for higher classroom engagement. Teachers should redefine the concept of self-directed learning by expanding the definition of self-sustaining student learning behaviour outside classrooms before altering the existing approach to classroom learning. Although PBL remains in the early stages of CLC curriculum design, the problem-based learning (PBL) method could assist in addressing the Chinese language classroom (CLC) learning issues. The current study examined the PBL approach in CLCs and developed a framework for educating a Chinese language unit to second-year students in a Malaysian private high school. In addition, this study provided the Malaysian government with a strategic recommendation for improving the primary school curriculum.

Keywords: Problem-Based Learning (PBL), Curriculum Design, Independent Learning, Chinese Language Classroom (CLC).

Introduction

Contemporary education is considered an individual's most valuable asset as a crucial tool in stimulating the thinking, performance, and decision-making processes. Accordingly, the Malaysian government constantly promotes the importance of the educational system to ensure every student is adequately prepared for success in the rapidly expanding global economy through the National Education Blueprint (2013-2025). Excellent teaching, which is the most critical school-based activity, could be accomplished by improving the teaching quality (Cornito, 2021). The government should provide sufficient teacher training for all educators with teacher training programmes from educators commencing the profession until retirement (Malaysian National Education Blueprint, 2013-2025). Simultaneously, teachers should invest in respective professional growth to adapt to the latest policies while fulfilling student learning requirements. The United Chinese School Committees Association of Malaysia (Dong Zong) also published the "Malaysian Chinese Independent Secondary School Curriculum (Trial Version)" in March 2020 to highlight students' learning ownership and the importance of developing interpersonal, communicative, and collaborative skills.

Paul Zurkowski coined the phrase information literacy in 1974, followed by the expansion of

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the meaning and scope subsequently (Zurkowski, 1974) that spurred information literacy education through continuous growth and development. Literacy is the ability to acquire, evaluate, and effectively apply knowledge while maintaining an acceptable psychological stance. Comparatively, core literacy learning refers to developing critical thinking, problem-solving, and a positive outlook on life beyond a certain age. The conventional teacher-centred approach to education has not produced the desired educational results, especially during the pandemic. Numerous studies (Baker et al., 2021; Marshall et al., 2020) revealed that students lost interest in learning the Chinese language and believed that classroom lessons did not apply to real life. Teachers risked diminishing students' interest in studying the Chinese language if continuously emphasised coursework and examinations, which would result in high difficulty to develop student skills necessary for independent learning.

Curricula should be designed optimally to sustain student attention, encourage independent learning, and assist in creating connections between classroom content and realistic situations. The present study incorporated problem-based learning (PBL) in the course design for Chinese language classroom (CLC) students in the second year to counteract the widespread belief that studying the Chinese language is boring, stagnant, and devoid of engaging content. The developed curriculum sought to encourage students to adopt a growth mindset, provide ample exposure to Chinese classics, provoke thought on current topics, and improve the ability to retain information via engaging digital narratives. Thus, the current study aimed to create a PBL teaching design unit for a Chinese language course through processed textbook knowledge as student learning activities in the second-year class at Hin Hua High School in Malaysia.

Literature Review on Problem-Based Learning (PBL)

Barrows developed the PBL concept in 1969 to avoid monotonous, repetitive, and conventional medical education by developing an aggregation of pedagogical frameworks in designing educational interventions. The concept is associated with problem-oriented and student-centred pedagogies, real-world problem-based learning, and project-based learning (Zhou, 2020), which is an educational approach to integrating encountered challenges as learning activities. Accordingly, PBL generates questions analogous to students' interests in stimulating curiosity and encouraging critical thinking. Rincon-Flores and Santos-Guevara (2021) explicated that active learning transforms teaching into a process, in which learners and teachers collaborate and shape one another's understanding. Hence, PBL is an educational approach to developing student capacity and knowledge literacy by promoting independent learning, constructive thinking, knowledge framework development, and suitable learning strategy and procedure implementation (Amrilloevich, 2022).

A challenge stimulates every scientific inquiry before developing corresponding theories, techniques, or knowledge to delineate and resolve scientific challenges (Ongie et al., 2020). Therefore, problems are the rational impetus for accumulating and developing cognitive processes, understanding, and producing novel concepts, techniques, and ideas. The awareness of difficulties in learning a language should also be considered, as challenges are the fundamental motivation to comprehend an issue that elicits and arouses knowledge-seeking behaviour. Student learning will be superficial and highly structured when students are oblivious to encountered challenges. As such, CLC learning methodologies should emphasise PBL by including learning challenges as the motivation, commencement point, and primary learning method in the problem-solving process (Chen, 2020).

The Proposed PLB Integration in the Curriculum Design

The proposed curriculum integration in the current conceptual study relates to persuading learning, which is a curriculum design guiding document to nurture students' independent learning abilities. A challenging, exploratory, integrative, and PBL-relevant curriculum was established for a second-year CLC course. Figure 1 depicts the proposed PBL curriculum design for the CLC through (i) selecting content and skills, (ii) writing a problem statement, and (iii) selecting motivational activities.

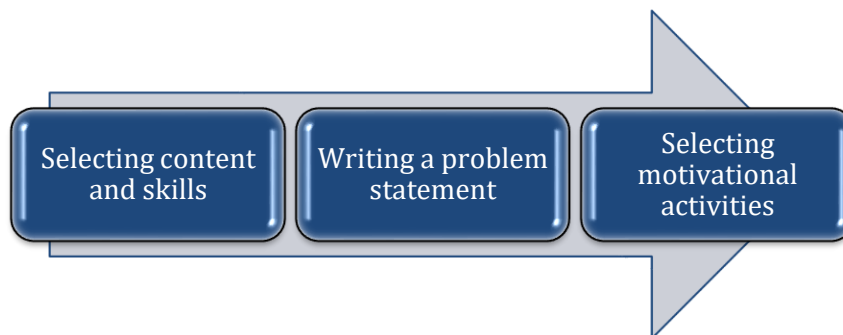


Figure 1. The PBL Integration in Curriculum Design for the Chinese Language Classroom

Processed textbook knowledge as the subject of student learning activities could lead to more effective learning activities (Kuo, 2009) when multiple articles from a topic are utilised. Each article is self-contained from an educational perspective, with each article serving as a platform for the author to communicate relevant ideas in the respective language and model for students to adopt. Each article is accessible to allow for group reading by topic and text fragment. Meanwhile, contextualisation is a conditional process (Liang, 2021). For instance, the first and second semesters of the second-year Chinese class at Hin Hua High School in Malaysia are based on generalised teaching of humanistic themes, such as 'Encouraging Learning', 'Spring Flowers Blooming', and 'I Have a Dream', as illustrated in the original textbooks. Humanistic themes are arranging units based on specific content types to create a visual thread throughout the textbook.

The humanistic theme underscores the relationship between Chinese and life, highlights the significance of mainstream and traditional culture penetration, and promotes students to develop a morally appropriate worldview, life perspective, and value. The CLC learning should consider text self-sufficiency by effectively employing each text while educating text independence during the perusal process (Jinghuan, 2019). Specifically, the process of embracing the text, acquiring the text, and perusing the text intensely by "putting oneself in the position of the character" is based on overcoming the text barrier through non-singular forms and real emotions (Liang, 2021, p.132). Accordingly, students might perceive the chapters only under the theme of promoting learning if teachers only analyse and explain the texts by rote through a single teaching method. Contrarily, the teaching method would be more effective if innovative teaching methods are incorporated, although students would continue learning passively with only a superficial understanding of the article. Students may passively acquire the main points with superficial knowledge with only one teaching approach being employed (Jesionkowska et al., 2020).

Identifying the main differences between texts regardless of the spiritual significance or the

literal meaning is essential. According to Hoff (2020), “if students only focus on ideas and disregard learning, the concepts acquired will be superficial, as ideas can also be found in language, words, texts, and tones”. Moreover, the humanistic theme of “The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons” (Wen Xin Xue) incorporates the “Chinese Literacy” and “Cultivating People with Morality” concepts, learning strategies, and study routines. The Chinese elements promote developing students’ language literacy by highlighting the importance of Chinese proficiency. “Lide the virtues and cultivate people” is the organic integration and pervasion of the teaching concept to cultivate students in learning languages while gradually establishing acceptable ideological concepts and commendable moral principles. Summarily, the PBL teaching design could integrate humanistic themes, linguistic aspects, moral education, and core literacy, which represents the combination and practice of knowledge, ability, and literacy.

Selecting Content and Skills

The unit materials associated with the humanistic theme of ‘Persuading Learning’ contain extensive information. Students could relive and appreciate the learning pleasure and significance and understand that a beautiful future is founded on hard work in the present during perusal. Teachers are required to assist students in discovering learning enjoyment through instructional PBL steps, which could inspire students to ponder the educational purpose. Specifically, five texts are available under the theme, namely (i) Xunzi’s ‘Persuading Learning’ or Quàn Xué, (ii) Zhu Guangqian’s ‘Discuss Reading’ or Tán Dúshū, (iii) Yang Zi’s ‘Eighteen and Others – Celebrating the Birthday of the Eldest Son Dongdong’ or Shíbā Sui Hé Qítā-Hè Zhǎngzǐ Dōng Dōng Shēngrì, (iv) Fang Xiu’s ‘A Little Story of Einstein’ or Ài Yīn Sītǎn Xiǎo Gùshì, and (v) Huang Yongwu’s ‘Ailu Sketches’ or Ài Lú Xiǎopǐn Xuǎn, with two additional textbooks, which are (i) The Oil Seller or Mài Yóu Wēng and (ii) Liang Qichao’s For Learning and Becoming a Man or Wéi Xué Yǔ Zuòrén (see Table 1). The authors organised the teaching objectives with the guideline provided in the Curriculum Bureau of the Independent Secondary School Work Committee’s Chinese Teachers’ Handbook. Moreover, the unit is not limited to classroom instruction. The article is provided at the beginning of the school year, which is an ideal time to foster teacher-student interactions and assist students in developing appropriate learning methods, skills, and concepts. Notably, the authors incorporated PBL into the classroom by creating a discussion question with students reading the book together to promote critical reading or thinking (Miseliunaite et al., 2022).

| Content | Learning Objectives (Knowledge, Skills, and Literacy) | The Humanistic Theme of Persuading Learning |
|---|---|---|
| Xunzi's 'Persuading Learning' or <i>Quàn Xué</i> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Understand Xunzi's attitude towards education and learning. 2. Appreciate the language style of Xunzi's writings and learn the argumentation methods in the texts. 3. Master common classical Chinese content, functional, and common false words. | Learning Attitude |
| Zhu Guangqian's 'Discuss Reading' or <i>Tán Dúshū</i> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Clarify the article ideas and understand the reading essentials. 2. Cultivate an interest in reading and develop good reading habits. | The Habit of Reading |
| Yang Zi's 'Eighteen and Others – Celebrating the Birthday of the Eldest Son Dongdong' or <i>Shíbā Suì Hé Qítā - Hè Zhǎngzǐ Dōng Dōng Shēng rì</i> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Experience the understanding and love of parents for children and learn to be grateful. 2. Recognise and deal with the contradiction between the two generations, learn to study happily, cherish youth, and establish a correct outlook on life. | Happy Learning |
| Fang Xiu's 'A Little Story of Einstein' or <i>Ài Yīn Sītǎn Xiǎo Gùshì</i> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Understand the noble character of great scientists. 2. Distill ideas from examples. | Learning Attitude |
| Huang Yongwu's 'Ailu Sketches' or <i>Ài Lú Xiǎopǐn Xuǎn</i> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Understand the characteristics of Huang Yongwu's literary works. 2. Understand figurative, positive, and negative citation arguments in the text. 3. Experience the fun and elegance of mountain tours and reading. 4. Develop personal expectations for self-discipline. | Reading and Self-Discipline |

Self-Study Text:

Supplementary Materials

(i) *The Oil Seller* or *Mài Yóu Wēng*(ii) Liang Qichao's *For Learning and Becoming a Man* or *Wéi Xué Yǔ Zuòrén*

Table 1: Teaching Content and Skills

Writing a problem statement

The PBL concept emphasises the significance of challenges in instructional activities as the propelling force, starting point, and main learning process. In addition, issues are created through learning, which further stimulates learning. According to Chen and Yang (2019), the process consists of identifying discussing, analysing, and resolving challenges. Teachers should provide students with learning challenges at different levels, such as closed, semi-open, and open, in developing problem-solving skills (Chen, 2012). Simultaneously, assessing whether students are engaged in resolving challenges is vital when composing a problem statement. For example, teachers could select open-ended queries and enter the text to promote intentional perusal, which involves frequent debates before agreeing on a solution. Hence, the problem statement is frequently derived from the actual world, which is selective and directive of students' attention to practical actions while stimulating the interest in learning (Asghari et al., 2021). Table 2 details the classroom learning checklist, which elucidates the authors' problem statements to assist students in reading the article with a problem-solving mindset. The authors also encourage students to pose queries during reading to increase the depth of classroom discussions.

| Main Question: Why do I need to learn? | | |
|---|--|--|
| Theme | Learning Challenge | Specific Activities (Two Class Hours) |
| Zhu Guangqian's 'Discuss Reading' or <i>Tán Dúshū</i> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Do you not possess time to read extra-curricular books? 2. What is the importance of developing reading habits? 3. What is the ideal reading state? | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Group reading and discussion 2. Class discussion 3. Complete the study content list |
| Xunzi's 'Persuading Learning' or <i>Quàn Xué</i> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What is the significance of learning? 2. What is the role of learning? 3. What are the learning methods and attitudes? | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Group reading and discussion 2. Class discussion 3. Complete the study content list |

| | | |
|--|---|---|
| Yang Zi's 'Eighteen and Others – Celebrating the Birthday of the Eldest Son Dongdong' or <i>Shíbā Suì Hé Qítā - Hè Zhǎngzǐ Dōng Dōng Shēngri</i> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What are the pain and pleasure of reading? 2. Is it possible to avoid the pain of reading? Why? 3. What does youth look like? | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Group reading and discussion 2. Class discussion 3. Complete the study content list |
| Fang Xiu's 'A Little Story of Einstein' or <i>Ài Yīn Sītǎn Xiǎo Gùshì</i> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What is the attitude of the great man in learning? 2. What are the values of great men? | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Group reading and discussion 2. Class discussion 3. Complete the study content list. |
| Huang Yongwu's 'Ailu Sketches' or <i>Ài Lú Xiǎopǐn Xuǎn</i> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What is the relationship between mountain tours and reading? Do you agree with the author's point of view? 2. Why do people need to be disciplined? | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Group reading and discussion 2. Class discussion 3. Complete the study content list |

Table 2: Classroom Learning Checklist

Selecting Motivational Activities

When constructing a problem statement, the problem must be situated in a natural context to account for numerous realistic challenges that are thought-provoking and driving in stimulating students' interest in the topic. The 'truth' is defined as the truth of the acquired knowledge and skills and the truth of the employed mode of thought (Xia, 2019). Teachers will collect the opinions of past classmates and design a real situational question to provoke students' thinking process:

- What do you think about going to school and studying?
- What would you do if you or a friend encountered this problem?

The examples below narrate the motivational activities:

1. *Sheng Hua has been tardy to class recently and has been sluggish in class. When the teacher is in the middle of explaining the material, he frequently falls asleep on the table. His grades dropped when the teacher reprimanded him.*

Kai Ming, his good friend, could not help but question him, "What's the matter with you? Isn't this how it used to be?"

Sheng Hua scored a 'C' on the Chinese exam last semester. He lost confidence since he could not believe that he was not good at the Chinese test he excelled at. Furthermore, a female classmate he had a 'crush' on recently snubbed him, thereby making him sad, abandoning

himself, and wondering, “Why on earth are we going to school?”

Why are you studying so hard? Why bother putting in the effort if it is not guaranteed to produce results? And I heard people say that the knowledge learned in school now may not be used in society in the future. The department chosen by the university is just to let you use four years to prove that you are not suitable.

“How about I drop out of school and go to work!” Sheng Hua ultimately says.

2. How would you persuade Sheng Hua to change his mind? Please also comment on any challenges you had while studying or any personal doubts you may have. If you are shy or want to protect your privacy, you can choose to remain anonymous!

Teachers collect feedback from students and add personal input to the teaching content of the text.

3. Perhaps try to read five texts and combine your thinking to find your answer. Finally, please discuss with your team members, incorporate the discussion results, and make a film for Sheng Hua to see if it can solve his doubts.

Teaching Plan Implementation

The implementation instruction plan comprises eight activity stages after selecting motivational activities. Table 3 depicts the instructional techniques, including the actions to be performed and the completion schedule.

| Stage | Activity | Schedule |
|-----------------------|--|--------------|
| 1 st Stage | Arousing motivation: | |
| | 1. The teacher-student relationship is established at the beginning of the semester. 2. Motivation through real situations. | 1-Hour Class |
| 2 nd Stage | Introducing the teaching plan. The teacher will tell the students the learning process, procedure, and tasks with the class schedule to ensure students’ general understanding of the plan implementation: | 1-Hour Class |
| | 1. Distribute teaching plans, study content lists, task requirements, etc. | |

2. Determine the number of team members by suggesting a group of four members.

Describe task requirements:

1. Read the group article to confirm the central question content.
2. Discuss each group answer to the question ‘Why do we study?’
3. Organise and summarise the answers in the group, write a script, and produce the script into a video not more than five minutes.
4. The title is ‘Reasons to Study / You Can Make Your Own’.

Each group reads discusses and the text:

- | | | |
|-----------------------|--|-----------------|
| 3 rd Stage | <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The article can be read according to the study content list, although completion is not mandatory.2. Consider the questions raised by the teacher in the study sheet and record the questions raised by the group members. | 2-Hour Class |
|-----------------------|--|-----------------|

Group discussion by summarising, analysing, discussing, and writing scripts:

- | | | |
|-----------------------|--|-----------------|
| 4 th Stage | <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Please write a script based on the article content or the group discussion results.2. Produce the scripts into a film of not more than five minutes. | 2-Hour Class |
|-----------------------|--|-----------------|

- | | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------|---|
| 5 th Stage | Filming at school. | 2-Hour Class with Self- Learning Time |
|-----------------------|--------------------|---|

Normal class:

- | | | |
|-----------------------|---|------------------|
| 6 th Stage | <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The student previews the article in class and encounters a challenge.2. Discuss the problem and complete the worksheet simultaneously with teacher-organised test questions for language knowledge, in addition to the open questions in the study sheet. | 10-Hour Class |
|-----------------------|---|------------------|

| | | |
|-----------------------|--|--|
| 7 th Stage | Organise students to report or screen the video, share results, evaluate, and vote. | 2-Hour Class |
| 8 th Stage | Co-organise themed book fairs with the library regarding the theme 'Reasons to Study' and encourage students to borrow related books or teachers can recommend books related to learning topics to complete the article writing. | 2-Hour Class (If the class hours are insufficient, the task will be completed after class) |

Table 3: Teaching Plan Implementation

Evaluation Strategies

Considering the evaluation strategy, the course utilised peer evaluation with each group contributing two votes. After a discussion, each group voted for the most engaging and inspiring group in the film to observe the difficulties in defining intersubjectivity. Students' participation was regulated by self-evaluation (feedback form), mutual evaluation (group leader and group member evaluations), and teacher evaluation. Table 4 depicts the unit evaluation design, which includes the evaluation design, rubrics, evaluation subjects, scoring requirements, and scores.

| Evaluation Item | Rubric | Evaluation Subject | Scoring Requirements | Score |
|------------------------------|---|---|---|-------|
| Classroom Performance | A comprehensive evaluation of listening, speaking, and group cooperation in learning participation. | Self-evaluation, mutual evaluation, and teacher evaluation. | Participation | |
| Video Quality | Film content, creativity, and presentation. | Group evaluation and teacher evaluation. | Creative Language to elevate the scoring index. | |

Table 4: Unit Evaluation Design

The PBL Course Design Concept

This section elaborates on (a) developing students' problem-solving skills, (b) emphasising teachers' leadership roles, and (c) adhering to democracy and equality between teachers and

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Develop students' problem-solving ability

Students are the core learning focus to address the first question when creating a PBL unit curriculum:

- What is the student pondering?
- What is the major inquiry interest?

Standard responses do not exist for teacher inquiries, questions about the context, and analyses, synthesis, or evaluation of the circumstances, which necessitates transforming declarative queries from 'the reasons for learning' to 'why do we study?' to stimulate students' investigation desire. To answer the question comprehensively, students must first investigate the text, identify the author's arguments, and formulate personal opinions. Additionally, the group must seek extra-curricular materials or content to support respective perspectives and consider the most optimal approach to expressing personal viewpoints more effectively. The development of the study site should also consider students' cognitive blind spots and conflicts by anticipating students to ask questions after perusal.

The lesson materials are predicated on the learning challenge. Teachers first encourage students to engage in active exploration, inquiry, and problem-solving to acquire knowledge and skills during the teaching process. Subsequently, teachers concentrate on problem-solving techniques, wherein students should organise and discuss questions while generating pertinent documents actively. Teachers could record students' original ideas and assumptions about the questions clearly and in detail and require students to reflect on the acquired skills and employed learning strategies. The course should emphasise student participation in learning activities, operations, practices, inspections, questions, and investigations by considering student knowledge, direct experience, and life context as valuable curriculum resources. From a teaching perspective, the objective is to encourage students to self-interpret and comprehend textbooks, respect students' sentiments and unique opinions, and ensure an individualistic learning process (Chen, 2020).

Highlight Teacher Leadership Roles

Teachers' guidance is integral to student learning primarily reflected through teachers' assistance in students' problem-solving processes. The design of CLC activities must allow sufficient rational thoughts to avoid highly controlled and directive lessons in promoting adequate critical thinking and learning opportunities. Resultantly, the activities would inspire students to think critically, demonstrate initiative, and engage in creative analysis (Chen, 2020). Moreover, teachers should be highly aware of potential issues encountered by students when teaching the article introduction unit. The planning table, study sheet, video advice, and assessment techniques could be incorporated into teaching guidance:

1. The question is raised.
2. The role of the study sheet is to assist the preview and focus for students' immediate attention within a specific period.
3. The assessment criteria are designed to guide cooperation. To ensure the effect of collaboration, teachers and students are required to clarify several basic learning principles to prevent interference factors hindering healthy cooperation before implementing the activity.

Self-directed learning encourages students to actively peruse and comprehend the article when limited opportunities exist for independent learning to encourage setting learning goals for unique learning needs and assess personal understanding (Guo, 2003). As such, self-directed learning positively impacts students' self-confidence in personal learning abilities. Students choose learning material and delivery strategies freely when being encouraged to learn actively and independently. Students may interact with one another effortlessly when prior knowledge, experience, and alternative ideas are merged with peers (Guo, 2003). Sufficient self-study will result in students thoroughly understanding the learned materials and enhancing personal academic achievement. In this study, self-reading and text dialogues were discovered to assist second-year students in developing deep and relative comprehension. Students posed questions that answered the author's reasons to study. Furthermore, teachers could encourage students to reflect independently by discussing the three facets of learning, namely morality, emotion, and wisdom. Students could continually reflect and question rhetorically the screenplay creation and project filming to expand the question topic gradually. Students could also learn to ask questions to personal learning and peers similar to the teacher's method throughout the shooting process, which would improve the ability to actively ask questions.

Adhering To Democracy and Equality Between Teachers and Students

Teachers and students are no longer in the traditional teaching relationship, such as rote learning. Teachers are the creators of challenging situations, planners of solution proposals, guides in students' problem-solving, strong supporters, coordinators, and collaborators. The genuine teacher-student relationship refers to both parties present, attracted, tolerated, and participated in the learning process. Students should be guided to participate in both learning and teaching with students' learning initiative and educators' teaching ambition. According to Chen (2020), teachers must conduct teacher-student mutual teaching and learning activities in the classroom by respecting students' interests and equal rights to convey personal opinions. Teachers should acknowledge students' choices and guide students to study consciously and voluntarily while respecting students' lives, interests, preferences, and emotions. In addition, teachers should appropriately tolerate and understand students' mistakes and guide the students correctly. The right to voice belongs to every student, wherein teachers and students participate in various dialogues through appropriate language and behaviour (Kim, 2020).

Interpretations and Learned Lessons

Introducing PBL might induce significant self-perceived pressure on teachers as teachers might assume that group activities and problem-solving would consume a significant amount of instructional time in delaying completing the lesson. Moreover, teachers might worry that students, who are not acquainted with the PBL concept, could not efficiently manage traditional pencil-and-paper examinations. Teachers might also struggle when being required to multitask for classroom instruction. Implementing PBL education requires ample time to prepare lessons before class, which might demotivate teachers. Nonetheless, implementing PBL could be accomplished by performing minor modifications with flexibility to existing courses without increasing teacher workload. Teachers could also establish a collaborative PBL group to generate ideas, continuously enhance lesson plans, and discuss experienced challenges (Zaafour et al., 2022).

When PBL is implemented, students might criticise the implementation due to being unfamiliar with engaging in self-directed discussion and learning. Students were accustomed to being constantly monitored throughout education and might hesitate to express personal opinions

owing to the fear of being reprimanded for expressing different opinions. Resultantly, students would continue conveying socially accepted responses without providing different perspectives. As such, discussing cases with multiple answers is essential as most Chinese literature education centres on students selecting a single answer when numerous conceivable situations exist in the real world (Huang et al., 2020). Group collaboration could assist students in communicating more effectively, which benefits not only language skills but also the ability to comprehend peers and the significance of studying literature.

Limitations

The current study is limited to case-based instructors at a single secondary school regarding the method of integrating PBL into the CLC curriculum. Due to the lack of in-depth PBL research for teachers, CLC teaching should be continuously highlighted to achieve the designated objective by correlating teacher professional development with the understanding of the PBL curriculum. The influence of teaching efficacy on student learning could also be further investigated by future researchers.

Conclusion

The PBL integration into the CLC curriculum design in Malaysian secondary schools was conceptually designed in the present study to encourage students to explore language, experience life, comprehend emotions, and express personal perspectives through effective language. In addition to knowledge comprehension, PBL could enhance practical skills, develop positive attitudes, and shape students' thinking processes to ensure students could effectively comprehend the inner meaning of teaching activities, connect with the spiritual world, and develop a more positive outlook on life and values. Accordingly, students prefer PBL in language classes as the problem- and task-based class enables the shift from the previously fixed mindset to developing critical thinking. By employing the first unit of Senior Two to illustrate the CLC curriculum design, teachers posed fundamental queries as the initial PBL instruction step and initiative to establish trust and safety in the classroom. In the second unit, students were introduced to the learned material through personally encountered learning challenges instead of pondering the meaning after perusing the material. Hence, the study could transform the existing learning process by actively exploring students' learning challenges, which would promote students as learning experts engaging in personal and genuine study investigations.

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