

PROJECT CLASH: AN AID IN IMPROVING THE CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS AMONG GRADE 11 LEARNERS

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ABSTRACT

One of the life skills that is exceedingly required in the 21st century generation is the critical thinking skills; therefore, every teacher has the responsibility in improving the critical thinking skills of the students. Thus, this research aimed to determine the effectiveness of the Contextualized Learning Activity Sheets at Home (CLASH) in improving the critical thinking skills of the grade 11-students. It utilized Quasi-Experimental design particularly One Group Pretest -Posttest Research Design with an equal number of 48 Grade 11 students in which the same group received the same treatment. The data gathered were tabulated and analyzed using mean, standard deviation, Paired Sample t-test and Cohens'd. Results further show that there is a significant difference in the pre-test and posttest scores of the respondents after their exposure to the Project CLASH. Furthermore, the results of this research concluded that the intervention used in the study contributed to the improvement of the Grade 11 students' critical thinking skills.

Keywords: Contextualized learning activity, critical thinking skills, Project CLASH

INTRODUCTION

Developing the critical thinking skills among the students is considered one of the fundamentals of the K -12 Basic Education Program as it develops essential skills and competence to prepare the learners to face the challenges of the 21st century and envision to develop holistically learners with 21st century skills, realize their full potentials, become better and responsible individuals and contribute meaningfully to building the nation. Therefore, the need to equipping our learners with right thinking tools is important most especially that we are in the 21st century generation.

Critical thinking skill is defined as “the intellectually disciplined process of actively and skillfully conceptualizing, applying, analyzing, synthesizing, and/ or evaluating information gathered from, or generated by, observation, experience, reflection, reasoning or communication as a guide to belief or action” NCECT, (2017). Furthermore, one of the life skills required in this globalization era is critical thinking skills Khasanah et al, (2017). The critical thinking skills is an essential skill in life and the working world; also, it has an effective function in all other aspects of life to improve human being quality. In addition, Abed et.al, (2018) said that critical thinking skills are superior ability which plays an important role in all aspects of life.

The “Policy Guidelines on the K 12 Basic Education Program,” otherwise known as the D.O. # 021 s, 2019, emphasizes on the development of critical thinking skill as one of the components of the Learning and Innovation Skills which help the learners resolve daily issues and challenges be it academic, personal, social, and take advantage of the opportunities of the 21st century.

Additionally, URM. s, 2019, 2018 National Achievement Test (NAT) 6, 10, AND 12 Results and Analysis, registered that Critical Thinking Skills received the lowest mean which indicate the very low performance of students in Grade 6, 10 and 12. Overall, the region was not able to surpass the 75% level of proficiency and accuracy in all subject areas for Grade 6,10 and 12 as exhibited in the results of the 21st century Skills and learning areas tested.

For the past years of teaching the proponent observed that the students got bored when literary selections were introduced to them which eventually resulted in poor individual or group written outputs, lack of interests, poor interaction during classes and unsatisfactory performance tasks. The researcher found out that learners have difficulty as far as critical thinking is concerned. Moreover, the result of their Diagnostic Test which was conducted to the Grade 11 HUMMS learners during the S.Y. 2020-2021, revealed that the MELC-Based competencies, describing the critical thinking skills appeared to be the least mastered competency as shown in the 23 % of the total scores. Furthermore, based on the collated Mean Percentage Score (MPS) from S.Y. 2018-2020, in the same competency, Grade 11 HUMMS learners registered a mean percentage score of 64.26 %, and 62. 82% for the school year 2018-2019 and 2019-2020 respectively. Lastly, the researcher also observed that learners have difficulty in explaining the literary text when asked to answer questions that probe them to think outside the box.

Based on the above facts, it is very important to improve the critical thinking skills in their literature classes. In the Philippines, literature is one of the core subjects in the senior high school, a compulsory subject in the general education curriculum particularly the Grade 11. Literature offers wide range of skills to be developed, such as literary appreciation and analysis, independent learning, sensitivity, critical thinking skills and greater understanding of the self, the people and the world.

Literature study can be an effective means of developing the critical thinking skills of the SHS students for the following reasons. First, when the students read literature readings, they make intelligent judgements over the meaning of the text by recalling and reflecting on their previous experiences related to the meaning of the text. Students learn to differentiate truths from opinionated views, to identify the literal versus the implied meaning of the text, and to connect what their learnings from the text into the real-world setting. Second, literature readings allow the readers to construct meanings of self and life progressively. It allows the students to investigate the language used by the author by knowing where the structure of the plot, the author's intention, the tone of the text, the symbolism used in the story, why the characters are off equal importance as the events of the story and how does the interaction of the characters affect the other characters. These impact the student's comprehension and interpretation of the text and allows them to change to become better readers and individuals.

The educational system is greatly affected by the COVID-19 outbreak which has resulted in the closure of schools around the world and has affected more than 91% percent of the students globally (UNICEF,2020) with more than 1 billion out of the classroom and 186 countries affected by the closure of the schools as of the 29th April 20220(Li & Lalani,2020. This situation has resulted in a change in the educational system worldwide which requires everyone to adopt to the new normal situation of delivering quality education to our learners. The Department of Education firmly reiterates that education must continue despite the challenges brought by the COVID 19 as mandated in D.O. # 032, S.2020. Hence, distance learning is implemented with the blended learning approach through which learners may learn from online, television radio and printed materials.

Distance learning refers to the learning modality where learning where learning takes place between the teacher and the learner who are remote from each other during the actual period of instruction. (Manila Times, 2020). One of the blended learning approaches which is implemented in our school as agreed upon by our parents prior to the opening of classes is the Modular Distance Learning which allows the learners to use self-learning modules (SLMs) in print or digital format/electronic copy. Learners under Modular Distance Learning can also use other resources such as Learner's Materials, textbooks, activity sheets, study guides, and other study materials in which the Department of Education emphasizes the importance of being creative and innovative when it comes to the employing different strategies to improve the learning outcomes specifically the critical thinking skills of the learners since this skill is needed across disciplines.

In addition, the Department of Education emphasized localization, indigenization and contextualization of learning materials as what is emphasized in D.O. # 035 s, 2016. This, policy supports the curriculum localization, indigenization and contextualization. Curriculum contextualization is the process of matching the curriculum content

and instructional strategies relevant to learners. Student diversity requires that teachers always consider individual differences in lesson planning and implementation. Teachers identify and respond to opportunities to link teaching and learning in the classroom to the experiences, interests, and aspirations of the wider school community and other key stakeholders. Moreover, through linking of new content to the local experiences that are familiar to students, learning will be more efficient for and relevant to them. The localization of curriculum is an essential feature of the K to 12 Curriculum. The teacher's guide and learners' materials may be modified to accommodate the unique contexts of a particular locality. Deepening curriculum contextualization through indigenization is essential for communities that have cultural practices that are different from the majority of people in the same locality. Providing spaces for unique cultures in the K to 12 Basic Education Program is a key strategy for student inclusion and ensuring relevance of education processes for all learners. Teachers and school systems must make sure that the members of the community participate in indigenization processes, so that the curriculum will be accurate and faithful to the culture in consideration.

On the other hand, Labiste (2019), contextualization is a key in developing students' language skills. Rather than teach for the abstract or theoretical world, using contextual learning strategies helps teachers prepare their students to take on real-world challenges that their staff faces in the workplace. Because the contextual learning approach relies on "context", teachers can offer content built to deal with company specific context in mind (Labiste, 2019). The researcher believes that through this contextualized intervention material, the critical thinking skills of the learners was improved.

Considering the importance of critical thinking skills and the need of active engagement learning the intervention materials was devised to link the learners into the real-world situations and have motivated the researcher and came up with this Project CLASH: Contextualized Literature Based Activity Sheets At Home) to improve the critical thinking skills among the Grade 11 students. The research hypothesis was that Contextualized Learning Activity Sheets could enhance students' critical thinking skills in their literature subjects.

METHODOLOGY

This study made use of the Quasi-Experimental particularly One Group Pretest - Posttest Research Design in which the respondents have received the same treatment to determine the effectiveness of the intervention in improving the critical thinking skills among the identified respondents. All the students from the Humanities and Social Sciences classes took the Diagnostic Test, and those who belong to the bottom 30 % of the three sections of the said strand will be taken as sample based on the result will be considered as the participants of the study. There were forty-eight (48) learners who were taken as participants of this study. They took the pre-test, use the intervention and took the posttest.

The researcher extracted some of the pretests and posttest questions from literature books and Self-Learning Modules aligned with the competencies in the curriculum guide of the Grade 11 and Most Essential Learning Competencies. Furthermore, it was validated by the language experts in the school in order to assure quality, validity, and reliability of questions.

The data gathered were tabulated and analyzed using t-test for the paired samples and Cohens-d. Meanwhile, the results indicated that there is a significant difference between the pretest and posttest scores as well as Project CLASH had a huge effect on the critical thinking skills of the respondents as indicated in the as manifested by the Cohen's d value 3.12 which is interpreted as having a huge effect size. Since this study exhibited favorable results, it is highly recommended that Project CLASH be adopted by other Grade 11 English teachers to improve their learners' critical thinking skills.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The respondents obtained a mean score of 13.035 and a standard deviation of 2.952 before the utilization of the intervention and a mean score of 22.785 and a standard deviation of 3.208 after using the intervention. This concludes that the standard deviation indicates the spread of scores from the mean, which means that there is a wide variation of scores among the participants. This implies that Project CLASH has immensely increased the posttest scores of the respondents when compared to the results of the pretest. Moreover, the interactive learning activity activities were likely to be engaging on the part of the respondents that made their scores increase.

Considering the aforementioned result, it is worth mentioning that “Contextualized brainstorming” has been shown to be effective in literature, which supports this study's conclusions. According to Iji et.al (2017), teaching Science principles and theories in a way that is relevant to the students is called contextualizing teaching. Contextualization is essential to the substance and organization of class discussions. Student engagement in homework increases when students understand why they are studying subjects and how those concepts might be used in real-world circumstances. To conclude, the increased mean score in the post test result proved that the use of Project CLASH significantly improved the critical thinking skills of Grade 11 and the intervention was able to augment the competencies of the respondents after having been exposed to it.

It can be deduced from the result that there was a significant difference in the pre-test and posttest scores of the respondents where the probability value which is .0000000005 is lower than 0.05 level of significance, a manifestation that there is a significant difference in the obtained scores of the respondents after their exposure to the Project CLASH. Learners achieved higher scores in the posttest which reflects better performance for the respondents. This implies that the intervention used by the researcher contributed to the improvement of the respondents 'skills.

Garin, et al. (2017) emphasized in their study that the use of contextualized instructional materials was an efficient medium in achieving maximum learning potential as evidenced in the students' enhanced academic performance. This was also supported in the study by Tadena & Hairulla, (2021), which indicates that the instructional contextualized approach has a positive effect on science learning.

Further, the increased mean score in the posttest result also proved that the use of Project CLASH intervention significantly improved the critical thinking skills of the Grade 11 students.

Based on statistical results, the data clearly reveal that there is a huge effect on the critical thinking skills of the respondents as manifested by the Cohen's d value 3.12 which is interpreted as having a huge effect size. This means that Project CLASH is effective in enhancing the critical thinking skills of the respondents. This may be attributed to the fact that the intervention was appreciated by the respondents and that the activities were interesting. It implies that the use of Project CLASH is effective.

Furthermore, Bird (2017) mentioned that contextualized instruction is an educational strategy that focuses on providing the lessons explicitly to students in a specific setting to adapt to their wants. In 'contextualized brainstorming, the teachers should employ problems, activities, practices, and learning goals that are relevant to their students in order to meet their needs on the topic. e. Furthermore, based on the study conducted by Dioneda (2019) he mentioned that there is a significant improvement in students' science learning occurred in the context of the studies based on the largest effect size, which means that a student exposed to localized and contextualized teaching improved their biology performance to a greater extent than the control group.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the analysis results and discussion, it concluded that the critical thinking skills 'average score of the students in Literature before the implementation of Project CLASH intervention was very low. However, after the students experienced exposure with the contextualized learning activity sheets with their scores enhanced and

categorized as having a huge effect on their posttest scores. In addition, the students' critical thinking skills were better after their exposure to the intervention compared to the students who were not exposed to the intervention.

This implies that the utilization in the new normal instruction through Project CLASH in improving the performance of the students in the improvement of their critical thinking skills was very effective.

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