

The use of problem-based learning in the integration of global citizenship education in English critical reading course: A classroom action research

Rizvika Rahmita Salim

¹Faculty of Arts and Design, Institut Teknologi Bandung, Indonesia

**) correspondence: rizvikarahmita@gmail.com*

ABSTRACT

This research aimed at explaining the use of problem-based learning (PBL) in the integration of Global Citizenship Education (GCED), encouraged by the The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), in the Critical Reading Course, a mandatory English course for first years at Institut Teknologi Bandung. The study was a classroom action research which analysed how PBL acts as an effective method to apply the three domains of learning of GCED: cognitive, socio-emotional, and behavioural. The subject of this study was first year students at the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences in the academic year 2020/2021. The research data were collected through several instruments, namely diagnostic tests, assignments, and questionnaire responses which were analysed quantitatively and qualitatively. The finding shows that the use of PBL was effective, specifically in the implementation of enhancing cognitive skills and behavioural skills related to global citizenship. Students were able to understand what it means to be a global citizen. Their critical thinking as well as media and information literacy skills were enhanced during the reading, information gathering, and discussion sessions. In terms of socio-emotional skills, students were able to communicate and collaborate well with their team members in the PBL. The PBL has also made them feel a sense of belonging to the wider community, respect differences, and develop care and empathy towards others. In terms of behavioural skills, students were able to cultivate problem-solving skills related to global issues, be more motivated in learning and take part in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The integration of GCED in the English Critical Reading Course has enhanced student's motivation to improve their English language skills.

Keywords: Reading Comprehension; GCED; Critical Reading; Problem-based Learning

INTRODUCTION

The ability to read critically is an essential skill especially for higher education students or future professionals when it comes to making sense of the world which constantly floods them with information. How one processes all of the information and accepts ideas or information as true or at least reasonable depends on how critical they are in analyzing the information given. Therefore, the need for critical thinking and critical reading is prominent. Critical Reading is an analytic activity where readers not only read at face value, but analyze the reading materials deeper to identify information, values, language usage and interpret the underlying meaning of the text as a whole (Kurland, 2021). The use of critical reading to enhance reading comprehension of English as a Foreign Language has been done by many. While research has been conducted on problems students face when expected to be able to read critically in Reading Comprehension Classes (Silalahi, 2018; Rohmah, 2018), the topics and content of the reading materials may not be the focus.

In an attempt to provide students in English Critical Reading Course relevant topics to motivate them to improve their reading and writing skills in English while able to be critical and

analytical, the Global Citizenship Education through the Problem-based Learning approach is applied.

Literature Review

Ensuring effective methods to enhance student's critical reading skills is still a challenge for many. As critical thinking skills and Media and Information Literacy has been at the forefront of today's education priority, specifically with the United Nations and its Member States' objectives to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) number 4, Quality Education for all, the need to implement a universal pedagogy to provide inclusive quality education is very much significant. One of the approaches that one of the UN's specialized agencies, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has prepared as a response to the interconnected world challenges we see today is the Global Citizenship Education (GCED).

GCED is a "framing paradigm which encapsulates how education can develop the knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes learners need for securing a world which is more just, peaceful, tolerant, inclusive, secure, and sustainable." (UNESCO, 2014). As the world has become increasingly globalised, challenges have become not only a problem for one State or country but also a global problem such as the Covid-19 pandemic we see today. The need to deliver a collective call to action to tackle these challenges has made it more apparent that everyone needs to have a sense of belonging to the world we live in, a sense of belonging to a "broader community and common humanity", or what we can call as global citizenship. The GCED programme itself has been promoted since the launch of the UN Secretary-General's Global Education First Initiative (GEFI) in 2012 as it put forward global citizenship as one of its education priorities (UNESCO, 2015).

In the GCED paradigm there are three domains of learning: cognitive, socio-emotional, and behavioural. The cognitive core competency includes acquiring "knowledge, understanding and critical thinking about global, regional, national and local issues and the interconnectedness and interdependency of different countries and populations." While socio-emotional core competency include having "a sense of belonging to a common humanity, sharing values and responsibilities, empathy, solidarity and respect for differences and diversity." Last but not least, the behavioural core competency includes acting "effectively and responsibly at local, national and global levels for a more peaceful and sustainable world." The themes of GCED are human rights, peace and conflict, respect for diversity, globalization, and sustainable development (APCEIU, 2018).

Approaches taken in the integration and assessment of GCED will depend on the context and on how GCED is delivered. Assessment on how successful the integration and or delivery of GCED is seen by whether it is aligned with the learning objectives and how the teaching and learning practices are conducted. There is no specific global indicator of GCED success integration as there are many factors that play in the integration of GCED in certain subjects, but what is essential is that it is aimed to assess "both personal growth/integration and social awareness" of the learners (UNESCO, 2015).

Studies regarding the integration of GCED have been conducted as has been compiled by The GCED Clearinghouse (UNESCO Clearing House on GCED, 2021), however the integration of GCED in Indonesia may not yet be a popular approach despite some research done by the UNESCO or researchers from Australia (Wierenga, A. and Beadle, S. 2010). UNESCO reported that in Indonesia GCED topics relating to morals, values, ethics, and education were already implemented. While there is much research done in GCED, the practice of integrating it in language classes is encouraged as studies in it are little compared to other fields or approaches of integration delivery. In the integration of GCED some approaches have been proven to be effective namely: school-wide, cross-curricular, separate and stand-alone subjects, and integrated with certain subjects. The integration of GCED is encouraged and one of the ways to implement it is by integrating it

with certain subjects, one of them being the arts subject which includes language and literature subjects (UNESCO, 2015).

The English Language Course, namely Critical Reading Course, is a mandatory course for first-year Undergraduate students at Institut Teknologi Bandung (ITB). Quoting from the syllabus of this course, the objective of the course is to “train the students' critical thinking skills in reading activities and in writing in the academic field in order to develop long-life learning and communication skills, particularly in written form.” It also emphasizes on the life-long learning skill in attaining and organizing information in English and the ability to construct logical arguments. Topics are adjusted to the student's field of study and to enrich student's cross-cultural understanding, multicultural reading passages are provided as part of the core materials.

Language lessons are divided into two categories, the content proper, the linguistic aspect that needs to be taught in foreign language courses, and the content carrier, a factor that stimulates the active use of the learned language (Medgyes, 1998, as cited in Tarasheva, 2008). During some period of time, there was a challenge in choosing what kind of content carrier lecturers should provide but do not divert from the syllabus. At times the topics chosen can be so broad that at one point even though the learning objectives and outcomes were achieved, the potential that students can gain more vocabularies and topics that are truly relevant to them and their future self can be missed. Therefore, the initiative was to integrate the GCED in the Critical Reading Course. GCED themes and topics can act as the content carrier. To integrate Global Citizenship Education as the content carrier of the Critical Reading Course will be in accordance with the syllabus from ITB and meet the needs of this syllabus. First, to enhance and develop student's critical thinking and life-long learning skills, the GCED's first learner attribute, informed and critically literate, can be integrated. Second, the cross-cultural understanding and multicultural reading passages that are part of the core material in the course can be related to two of the learner attributes of the GCED curriculum; socially connected and respectful of diversity, and ethically responsible and engaged. Third, the topics should be adjusted to the student's field of study. This also means that it is expected for students, as future professionals, to obtain adequate knowledge on understanding the problems that they will tackle now and those of the future when they become professionals, and fostering the need to take part in the nation's priority in reaching the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs.) which the world is expected to reach by 2030 (United Nations, 2021).

While the integration of GCED in the Critical Reading Course may have tackled the need for a much planned content carrier, the effectiveness of the implementation should be catalyzed by the use of appropriate methods of teaching. One which might be worth trying is Problem-based Learning.

Problem-based Learning (PBL) is one of the contemporary approaches to learning and classroom instruction. Problem-based Learning approach emphasizes on “providing students with opportunities to identify and tackle complex, multifaceted problems in both small groups and on their own.” (Slavich & Zimbardo, 2012). This approach is used in various education levels and fields of studies. Numerous activities have been developed for this approach (Barrows, 1996).

In the teaching of foreign languages, PBL has also been utilized and has been proven to be an effective approach to teaching English as Foreign Language (EFL) across the world. Some have applied this approach in classes such as English grammar (Chiou, 2019), English for Adult Learners (Mathews & Aydinli, 2007), and English comprehension class (Lin, 2017) with satisfying results. Students were able to improve their English abilities. Moreover, in Lin's study, when compared to groups of students who were not under the PBL instruction, the result shows that “the ability to

identify the subject matter, supportive details, and learning attitude are better than the non-PBL students.” (Lin, 2017). In Indonesia, teachers and lecturers across the nation have applied this approach to improve student’s speaking ability (Khotimah, 2014) and reading comprehension (Arjuna & Jufri, 2016), which again proved to result in positive improvement in student’s English ability.

The aforementioned studies have provided evidence that PBL is an effective tool for language teaching. Inspired by these studies, the objective of this study is to use the PBL to improve the learning outcome of the Critical Reading Course, and how effective this approach will be in the integration of a more focused content carrier, the GCED, in improving learner’s ability in reading and writing critically in English. To fulfill these purposes, the following are the research questions:

1. Does the PBL approach improve student’s English abilities, especially their critical reading and writing skills?
2. Does the PBL approach effectively support the GCED core learning competencies; cognitive, socio-emotional, and behavioural?
3. Does the PBL approach enhance student’s motivation to improve their English abilities and global citizenship knowledge?
4. Does the PBL approach act as an effective tool in the integration of GCED in the language teaching setting?

METHODS

In conducting this research, the Classroom Action Research (CAR) methodology was applied. This method was first introduced by Kurt Lewin in 1946 to conduct research in the field of social psychology (Adelman, 1993). The CAR has been proven to be an effective tool to systematically research and reflect on the actions of practitioners in various fields of study. In the education realm, it can be used by teachers to reflect on their own way of teaching and to focus on the practical significance in terms of what teaching strategies might be best or can be improved for future classes (Mettetal, 2001). In that sense, this method is in line with the objective of this study; to determine how effective the use of PBL is in the integration of GCED in the English Critical Reading Course.

Participants

The subject of the study is the first-year students from the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences in the academic year 2020/2021. There were 64 students, aged approximately 18-21 years old in one class and data were collected from their participation in the Critical Reading Course, KU1024, a mandatory English course for all first-year students at Institut Teknologi Bandung, Bandung, West Java, Indonesia.

Instrumentation

The research data were collected through several instruments, namely diagnostic tests, assignments, and questionnaire responses which were analysed quantitatively and qualitatively. The diagnostic test was conducted to see the students’ reading comprehension and writing ability. Students were to answer multiple choice questions of academic reading texts. The result of this test was then gathered to divide students into groups of 7-8 members, with a compilation of a balanced number of low achievers and high-achievers in each group so that they can collaborate and solve problems effectively together while learning from each other. The writing task was to watch a video of global citizenship and to write a self-introduction of their roles as individuals, local citizens, and global citizens. This was set as a diagnostic test of their knowledge about global citizenship and their writing skills.

After students are divided into groups, they are to choose one of the main themes of GCED, which is sustainability. Each group had to choose one out of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals

curated by the UN. This will act as the content carrier throughout the whole course. Assignments are given in every meeting, whether individual or group assignments. Individual assignments are usually a form of practice for the content proper, or the language skills aspect of it, while the group assignment is when the language skills are then put into solving a real world problem context.

In the CAR method, there are 4 steps which complete as a cycle; planning, acting, observing, and reflecting (Kemmis & Mc Taggart in Burns, 2010). The planning of using PBL as an approach to integrate GCED in Critical English Course as a content carrier was conducted before the start of the semester based on past classroom learning experience. Actions were then taken in accordance with the created plan, which in this study the PBL treatment was applied to improve students' critical reading and writing in English experience. Observations were then made by collecting qualitative and quantitative data. After the observation stage, the reflection stage took place. This is when the teacher or instructor evaluates the teaching and learning experience as well as the progress the new approach has made in all aspects of learning.

Data Collection Technique

A diagnostic test consisting of the content proper (reading comprehension and writing skills) and content carrier (GCED topics) was given to individual students. This is to measure how well students critically read and write in English. The results also act as a starting point for the teaching and learning journey throughout the semester. Other than the diagnostic tests, individual assignments were given to see students content proper ability and improvement each week. Furthermore, based on the PBL approach, group assignments were given every week to see how students try to solve problems of one of the main themes of GCED, which is sustainability by choosing one SDG to discuss with their group members. Each week commencing the second meeting out of the 16 meetings, students were to discuss the challenges faced by citizens in achieving the SDGs by 2030 as agreed by the UN and Member States. After weeks of data gathering from reading materials and other sources, they were to write an essay and video essay as a way to present their ideas and solutions which is also in line with the three main domains of learning or competencies of GCED: cognitive, socio-emotional, and behavioural. After the completion of the group assignment, students were to write an individual assignment essay about their response to current world issues related to GCED. This acts as a final examination of how they process information or based on the three domains of GCED competencies mentioned above. Lastly, students are to fill in a questionnaire on how the integration of GCED in the Critical Reading Course impacted their language learning experience.

Data Analysis

The quantitative and qualitative research methods were used in this study. The first and last individual essay assignment and group assignments are analyzed quantitatively, the survey research in the form of an online questionnaire is analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Analysis of the Effect of PBL Approach on Student's Critical Reading and Writing Skills

Based on the questionnaire given at the end of the course, students have stated that the integration of GCED in the English Course has made them more interested in improving their English skills. The reading and discussion materials have given them sophisticated vocabulary, writing skills, and problem-solving skills. They also stated that the topics given made them increasingly aware of the present world problems caused by humans. It has also increased their critical thinking skills and overall English skills. In addition, this type of programme is doable in the middle of the pandemic as the video project can also act as a medium to connect and interact with others and the world. These results can be seen from comparing the results of the first essay assignment and the last essay assignment in which students were able to identify, organize, and retrieve information.

In addition, the questionnaire responses generated at the end of the course have given support to the improvement of students' English skills. There are 4 sets of questions in the questionnaire,

namely: cognitive competency, socio-emotional competency, behavioural competency, and language acquisition and literacy. Related to students' critical reading and writing skills, the responses from the cognitive competency and language acquisition and literacy has shown that out of 64 students participating in the questionnaire, 31.3% strongly agree that from the class materials they were able to critically analyze local and global issues. 60.9% of them agree to the statement while the remaining 7.8% remain neutral. 93.7% believed that the class materials have enabled them to gain media and information literacy. In addition, 93.8% stated that they were able to find and identify reliable sources for their writing projects. Additionally, students also felt that they have gained more sophisticated vocabulary by reading the given materials and topics.

2. Analysis of GCED core competencies

The second research question proposes whether the use of PBL was effective to deliver the three core competencies of GCED. In short, the themes of GCED, namely, Globalization and Social Justice, Human Rights, Conflict and Peacebuilding, Respect for Diversity, and Sustainability were all covered in this PBL approach. Furthermore, focus was put on the topics of sustainability due to the problem-based learning approach in using the problems or challenges in achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as the learning method. The details can be seen below in Figure 1.

Global Citizenship Education (GCED) Topics Chosen by Students of English Critical Reading Course

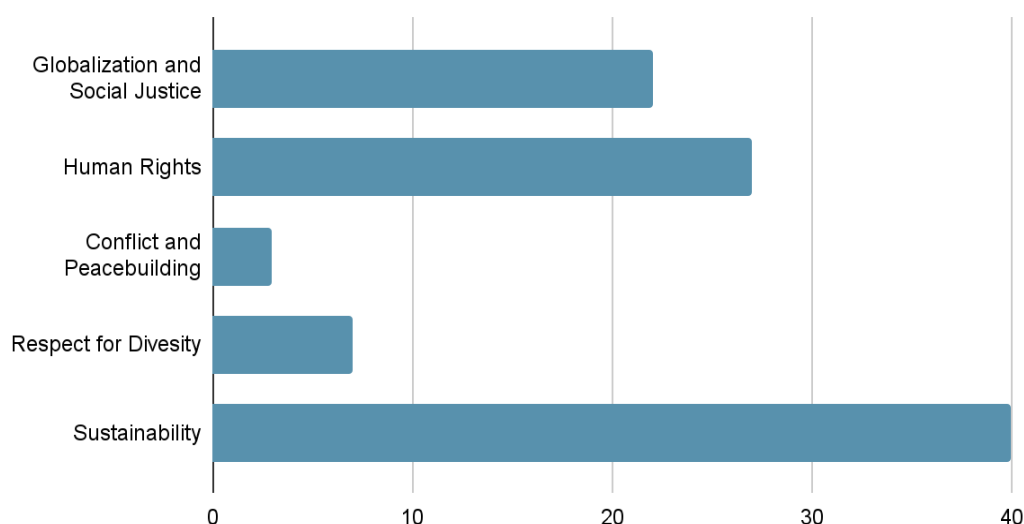


Figure 1. Global Citizenship Education (GCED) Topics Chosen by Students of English Critical Reading Course

The effectiveness of the PBL approach can be examined from how the GCED key learning outcomes and key learner's attributes have been achieved. The key learning outcomes and key learners attributes as the learning objectives of the content carrier in the Critical Reading Course in this study can be seen below.

Table 1. Global Citizenship Education, adapted from UNESCO (2015)

Key Learning Outcomes		
Cognitive	Socio-Emotional	Behavioural
• Learners acquire knowledge and understanding of local, national and	• Learners experience a sense of belonging to a common	• Learners act effectively and responsibly at local, national

global issues and the interconnectedness and interdependency of different countries and populations • Learners develop skills for critical thinking and analysis	humanity, sharing values and responsibilities, based on human rights. • Learners develop attitudes of empathy, solidarity and respect for differences and diversity	and global levels for a more peaceful and sustainable world • Learners develop motivation and willingness to take necessary actions
Key Learner Attributes		
Informed and critically literate • Know about local, national and global issues, governance systems and structures • Understand the interdependence and connections of global and local concerns • Develop skills for critical inquiry and analysis	Socially connected and respectful of diversity • Cultivate and manage identities, relationships and feeling of belongingness • Share values and responsibilities based on human rights • Develop attitudes to appreciate and respect differences and diversity	Ethically responsible and engaged • Enact appropriate skills, values, beliefs and attitudes • Demonstrate personal and social responsibility for a peaceful and sustainable world • Develop motivation and willingness to care for the common good

Based on the learning outcomes and learners attributes above, the five points of each core competency will be described as the learning objectives of the integration of GCED, the first point will be named as Learning Objective 1 and numbered up to the 5th point as Learning Objective 5. As seen below, students were to assess whether their experience of the integration of GCED in the Critical Reading Course with the PBL approach was in fact successful in making them achieve the learning objectives set in terms of the content carrier.

Assessment of Success Percentage in Achieving The Learning Objectives of The Three GCED Core Competencies

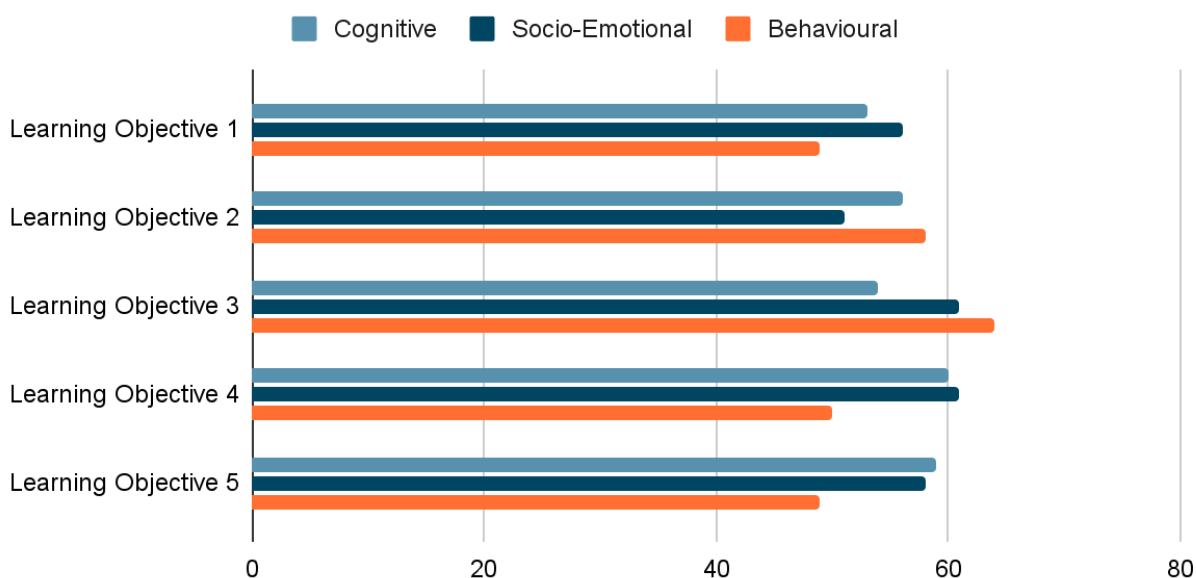


Figure 2. Student's responses to their result in achieving the learning objectives of GCED core competencies

In detail, when it comes to the cognitive skills, students were able to understand what it means to be a global citizen. Identifying their multifaceted identity (local and global) from the reading and video materials given has helped students to identify their own goals in life and or the roles they

want to take in the world we live in. Their critical thinking as well as media and information literacy skills were enhanced during the reading, information gathering, and discussion sessions.

In terms of socio-emotional skills, students were able to communicate and collaborate well with their team members in the problem-based learning, in which they are to write a problem solution essay to one SDG of their choice and create a video on YouTube to spread awareness. The problem-based learning also made them feel a sense of belonging to the wider community, respect differences, and develop care and empathy towards others.

In terms of behavioural skills, students were able to cultivate problem-solving skills related to global issues, be more motivated in learning and take part in achieving the SDGs.

The tangible outcome of this programme is the problem-solution video group project uploaded on GCED Initiatives' YouTube Channel, which can be accessed via the link <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o4tEAWA7p4U&list=PL4nglh5GFb270cQxJ3YJ-7kueFrE-qrMh>

3. Analysis of students' motivation to improve English language abilities and GCED

Based on the questionnaire given at the end of the course, students have stated that the integration of GCED in the English Course has made them more interested in improving their English skills. The reading and discussion materials have given them sophisticated vocabulary, writing skills, and problem-solving skills. They also stated that the topics given made them increasingly aware of the present world problems caused by humans. It has also increased their critical thinking skills and overall English skills. In addition, this type of programme is doable in the middle of the pandemic as the video project can also act as a medium to connect and interact with others and the world. Other than that, after the completion of the course, 45.3% students stated that they would like to improve their writing skills, 35.9% showed their interest in improving their presentation skills, and others showed their interest to improve their speaking skills as well as reading and listening comprehensions.

4. Analysis of PBL Approach in the Integration of GCED in English Course

The use of PBL showed positive results in the integration of GCED in the Critical Reading Course. Students were able to successfully improve their critical reading and writing skills in English whilst gaining new information about global issues that needed to be analyzed critically and thoroughly. The integration of the content proper and content carrier does not seem to be an awkward combination, as learning English means having access to global or world information.

In details, the integration of GCED in the English Course focus on the use of GCED thematic areas, in particular education for sustainable development, as the content carrier of this course to not only motivate students to learn foreign language with real world problems, but also to develop the three skills needed to nurture global citizenship in individuals; cognitive, socio-emotional, and behavioural skills whilst enhancing their critical reading and writing skills in English.

The cognitive skills to be generated from this programme are critical thinking skills, media and information literacy, Global Citizenship, and the Sustainable Development Goals. Along with the core content proper from Institut Teknologi Bandung, these cognitive skills are implemented in the first 3 meetings of the course.

The socio-emotional skills are then enhanced especially through the information gathering session from the 4th meeting until the 7th meeting. This includes the ability to communicate and collaborate well with other group members, respect differences and diversity whether between group members or in relation to the reading materials about diversity and develop attitudes of care and empathy towards others and the environment.

The behavioural skills are cultivated through the introduction of Sustainable Development Goals and identifying what learners can do to take action on local and global issues. The 8th to the 14th meeting focuses on the use of problem-based learning approach. This is when learners are to work together as groups to find solutions to help Indonesia achieve the Sustainable Development Goals of their group's choice. After some information gathering sessions, learners are expected to write a problem-solution essay to their chosen Sustainable Development Goal. As this study applied

the problem-based learning approach, learners are to share their solutions to demonstrate their mastery of the content proper and carrier of the course. As part of the behavioural competency is to be active in taking action, a video of their essay that can be shared through social media, in this case YouTube, is created to spread awareness of the Sustainable Development Goals. The YouTube videos are compiled in 1 playlist via the YouTube channel named GCED Initiatives. This is also to cultivate their sense of responsibility as learners who are privileged to gain knowledge to share their findings with others. At the end of the course, learners are to fill in a questionnaire form to evaluate the course.

With the many improvements and effectiveness of this approach, however, the programme is not without any limitations. Some students in remote areas, especially in Papua, have reported about not being able to join a session due to low Internet connection. Other than that, because this is an integration of an already set curriculum with limited time, if students are interested in more GCED contents, they have to access and obtain it from other sources. This will hopefully motivate them in learning English and GCED in the future.

CONCLUSION

According to the findings of this study, the PBL approach is an effective tool to integrate GCE in English language courses. Overall, there was only positive feedback from students. They agreed that the integration of GCED topics, especially sustainability, has helped them in becoming more engaged in learning English. They also stated that because the GCED topics were given to them in their first year of university, it gives a sense of purpose for their upcoming university years and adds to their interest to engage in lifelong learning and to take action in sustainability issues. The PBL has been helpful in leading students to learn each step of the content proper and content carrier, GCED, in this course. This positive impact can be a reference to apply the same teaching pedagogy in the upcoming semesters to create a harmonious and purposeful first year students before they embark in research and or take their roles as individuals, local, and global citizens.

The tangible things that can act as a follow-up to this programme are for learners to share their group project, the YouTube video about recommended solutions to achieve SDGs, to their social media followers and people in their surroundings in order to create a whole awareness of these sustainability issues. Other than that, standalone workshops, training, or youth bootcamps with GCED themes can be held to remind students of these values, whether during their university years or before they dive into the professional's world.

Further integration of GCED in other courses can also use the approach applied in this study. However, it may be better to also use a clear or identical pre-test post-test form of examination to evaluate the effectiveness so as to result in a more concrete result from before the application of PBL and after the application of it. The use of PBL to increase behavioural competencies had the least positive result when compared to the other two GCED core competencies. However, it was adequate enough to see that PBL was indeed effective. To increase the effectiveness of PBL in building learner's GCED behavioural competency, more initiatives and cooperation with local institutions or organizations related to the SDGs can be one of the solutions to enhance its effectiveness.

All in all, learners and the instructor agree that the PBL approach has given a purposeful look into learning the English language, especially when English is one of the doors to the information needed to tackle real world problems.

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