



A STUDY ANALYZING UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' AND TEACHERS' OPINIONS OF MULTILITERATE ASSIGNMENTS APPLICABLE TO 21ST-CENTURY TECHNOLOGIES IN CHINA

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ABSTRACT

Students nowadays need to be able to do more than simply memorize data if they want to thrive in today's competitive job market. With the implementation of the Common Core State Standards, there has been a shift in educational practice toward preparing students for success in higher education and secondary teaching. This thesis presents the findings of an investigation into the perspectives of both university English teachers and their students on the use of multiliterate projects to instill in their pupils the skills necessary to succeed in the modern world. This thesis lays forth the research's rationale, essential concepts, methodologies, results, and conclusions. The purpose of this research was to look at three things: how much students' and teachers' views of the incorporation of 21st-century skills into multiliterate assignments match up with reality; whether or not these skills actually are there in these assignments; and how this perception affects the students' and teachers' grasp of the subject. Educators' and students' perspectives on the efficacy of multiliterate activities in fostering the acquisition of 21st-century skills are the focus of this qualitative study. According to surveys and student reflections, multiliterate assignments assist students in using the four main 21st-century skills that are essential for success in higher education, the job, and life in general. This research suggests that including multiliterate activities into English lessons might help students become more prepared for life after college.

Keywords: *Literacy Assignments, 21st Century, Innovations, Chinese University Students, Chinese literacy teaching.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Through initiatives like Common Core, educators have sought to equip children with the skills and information they'll need to thrive in college and beyond (Payne, 2020). So, they're focusing on helping kids develop skills like critical thinking, creative problem-solving, and effective communication so that they can put their classroom knowledge to use in the real world. This is true across all grade levels and in all classrooms. Students now require a whole new set of skills



and a whole new vocabulary than they had even a generation ago. Computers and other new tools, including different modalities or genres, might be difficult for both students and teachers to handle well. Researchers are employing state-of-the-art methods and technologies to have students think about their own work while they complete assignments. Following the standards set forth by the Common Core, students are required to develop their analytical, problem-solving, and critical-thinking skills. "The gap between the skills people learn and the skills people need is becoming more obvious, as traditional learning falls short of equipping students with the knowledge they need to thrive," says the World Economic Forum. "Today's job candidates must be able to collaborate, communicate and solve problems" (Payne) adds to this, suggesting that students still need these 21st century skills, even though Common Core provides enough opportunities to develop them. One program that tries to reach children from elementary school all the way through college says, "Hanover Research recently analysed six major educational frameworks designed to improve the development of 21st century skills." The program points out that while each framework has a slightly different set of skills that students should acquire, they all agree on four critical areas: collaboration and teamwork, creativity and imagination, critical thinking, and problem solving (Envision). In order to fulfill the dual demands of developing students' subject area competence and giving them opportunities to master those skills, teachers will need to make some adjustments to their teaching methods. Although literacy has changed over time, its importance has remained constant. Fortunately, in the modern digital world, both students and educators have access to more resources than ever before (Irianto et al., 2020). The English language classroom is a prime example of this. While still educating their students, teachers are allowed and encouraged to access the resources their students use. Teachers are feeling the heat to ditch PowerPoint presentations, even though doing so isn't part of their official duties. Therefore,



teachers need to be resourceful in finding new methods to convey information via various forms of media and modalities. Educators are increasingly adopting a classroom style that aims to better prepare students for life beyond college by focusing on the development of students' 21st-century competencies in a range of circumstances. If companies and standards both stress the value of these skills, will teachers be able to effectively impart them to their students? This non-governmental organization is now instructing teachers on what subjects they must cover in the classroom in light of the implementation of Common Core and 21st century skills. Teachers are required to include these criteria into their teachings, and students are evaluated on them at the end of each semester or academic year. While this has been attempted before, it falls short of the standards set by an external organization that is demanding it of teachers. Instead, they should be thinking about the standards' implementation from a 21st-century skill application perspective and asking why and how. The purpose of this research is to examine the perceptions of multiliterate activities among both students and instructors, with a focus on how well these assignments foster the development of abilities relevant to the contemporary world.

2. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Many studies have focused on modern literacies (Syahza, 2019). While some research has dissected literacy into its constituent elements, others have banded together under the umbrella term of new literacies, which emerged in the 1990s. Even after 30 years, these literacys are still fresh. Researchers continued their work on multiliteracies by arguing that pupils are not being



equipped with the ability to comprehend and use new technology via present educational procedures. Some scholars have argued that students should use modern technology to uncover the hidden meanings in texts in order to advance social justice, find bias and authorial purpose. In order for students to be active members of the future society in all its facets—socially, culturally, and politically—they must acquire the skills listed above. Modern literacies are a catch-all term for the reading and writing abilities that today's youth must have in order to participate fully in us media-saturated society. According to (Muhammad et al., 2019), the three foundational competencies for the 21st century are utiliteracies, digital literacy, and critical literacy. Teachers are equipped with these literacies to equip their students to be engaged members of society. The cultural and social contexts in which today's kids grow up have a significant impact on their reading skills. Literacy in the modern day must be redefined to include the reality that students communicate via a variety of media, including online, digital, and conventional text formats. In order for students to become active participants in society, it is essential to expose them to and assist them in developing skills to consume and create with these new forms and modalities of text. Digital literacy has emerged as a critical competency for students to possess in order to thrive in the modern digital environment, stemming from this expanded and comprehensive definition of literacy. On the other hand, prejudice, power, and perspectives are all brought up by this term. For students to develop into critical thinkers and analytical readers in this digital age, they must first learn to navigate this new environment (Goulgouti et al., 2019).

3. PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH



The purpose of this research is to examine the perspectives of both educators and their students on technologically enhanced multiliterate tasks. looking into how teachers and students see the usefulness and importance of multiliterate assignments in the classroom. assess the impact of technology in the classroom on student involvement and the quality of their learning in the twenty-first century. Noticing potential problems and roadblocks that instructors and students may have while completing these tasks. offering resources to aid educators in developing multiliterate assignments that enhance teaching and learning for students. looking at how students' cultural backgrounds influence their perspectives on technology in the classroom.

4. LITERATURE REVIEW:

The phrase "21st century skills" is bandied around quite a bit these days in the fields of education and professional development. The actual strength of the term "skills for the 21st century" originates from the requirements of contemporary companies. The businesses are learning to use technology better in order to compete on a global scale. According to (Irianto et al., 2020), education changes as a society and its students do. College and university students are part of a dynamic, global society, and educators need to do more to prepare them for this. Teachers should not limit themselves to only teaching facts and figures; they should also assist students in acquiring the skills necessary for success in further education and the job market. They believed that equipping their students with 21st century skills alongside more conventional academic topics would better prepare them to face the problems of today. Skills for the 21st century are those that educators have employed to foster critical and creative thinking among their students. Making



"students ready for university and their future careers" has recently been the focal point of educational theory and practice, as stated in the "21st Century Standards and Curriculum: Current Research and Practice" study (Zachariou et al., 2020). "The core content subjects - math, social studies, the arts - must be enhanced by incorporating critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and creativity" into the classroom, according to the researcher, in order to better prepare students for life in a globalised society. An integral part of this endeavor has been the Common Core state standards. Similar to several other US states and territories, all North Carolina public schools are now instructing students using the most recent standards, the Common Core State Standards. These standards mostly deal with English and mathematics, while they do make use of other basic standards for other required courses. Students are expected to demonstrate mastery of academic material as part of an endeavor to provide them with the skills necessary for success in the modern world via the implementation of the Common Core State Standards. According to (Mavaluru, 2020), the Common Core State Standards Initiative argues that in order to adequately educate students for college and the workforce, as well as to engage in the global economy, the standards need to be rigorous and relevant. It has been the goal of the Common Core standards to include critical thinking and social skills into academic coursework. To ensure that "students master the multi-dimensional abilities required in the 21st century," it is useful to interpret the requirements in this way. Experts agree that "21st century skills" isn't just a cliché with no real meaning. Inspiring and equipping students with these abilities positions them for future employment success regardless of whether they complete their university education or not. the skills of the twenty-first century, which might be valuable in both academic and professional settings. Students may use these abilities to better understand both present and future subjects. Educators may find it more difficult to define and transmit the essential skills than the subject



matter itself. This study focused on these four talents since they are often highlighted in studies and align with the Common Core standards for English language arts in grades 9 and 10. Every single skill is essential for preparing pupils for life after university. The National Council for Excellence in Critical Thinking states that critical thinking is "the intellectually disciplined process of actively and skillfully conceptualising, applying, analysing, synthesising, and/or evaluating information gathered." Critical thinking necessitates that pupils possess abilities such as analysis, interpretation, evaluation, synthesis, decision-making, and problem-solving. students should possess the ability to think critically via the use of higher-order thinking skills such as analysis, evaluation, creation, and application (Shabbir et al., 2020).

5. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- How does group learning contribute to the completion of the assignment?

6. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

The primary objective of this study was to determine how well university English teachers felt their multiliterate projects helped their students develop abilities relevant to the modern world. The goals of this study were to (1) determine whether students and instructors think that multiliterate assignments help students use 21st century skills, (2) identify which skills are present in these assignments, and (3) determine whether students' use of these skills improves their understanding of course material.

A qualitative technique was used in this investigation. Through "emerging questions and procedures, data typically collected in the environment of the participant, analysis of the data



inductively constructing from particulars to general themes, and the researcher making interpretations of the meaning of the data," qualitative approaches aim to "explore and understand the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem." Using a constructivist perspective, researchers conducted this investigation using a qualitative methodology. Everyone wants to know more about their everyday lives and the environment around them, according to social constructivists. One way to learn about people's worldviews is to measure their perceptions. The participants' immediate environment in this study is the classroom. To better understand how the school's instructors and students saw the incorporation of 21st century abilities into multiliterate assignments, this study set out to measure perceptions. The method employed shifted the emphasis from the incorporation of skills to the overall perceptions of the tasks by both students and instructors, as well as the extent to which the assignments served to do so. The researcher evaluated the participants' sentiments regarding their workplace and the tasks they performed by using open-ended questions. The questions were presented in a way that allowed both students and teachers to contemplate them without being rushed into coming up with a solution. This gave us a chance to learn about the participants' thoughts and feelings as well as their assumptions and biases. Ultimately, this method yielded information regarding the instructors' and students' perspectives on the tasks and the topic at hand.

The tasks served as the basis for the development of the surveys and reflective assignments. Both multiple-choice and open-ended questions are used in the surveys. The pre-student survey included the following questions:

- I. What is the assignment?
- II. What abilities are necessary to do this task?



- III. Which talent is crucial for this task?
- IV. In a single phrase, what you think is the most challenging aspect of this task.
- V. How would you sum up the lessons you've learned from this endeavor in just a few sentences?

Included in the post-student survey were the following questions:

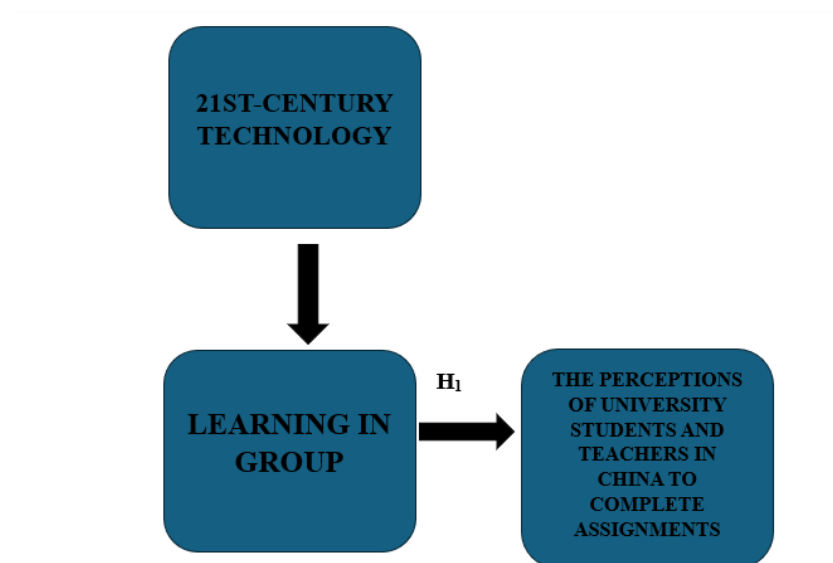
- I. Which task have you finished?
- II. To do the task, what abilities were necessary?
- III. Which ability was crucial for finishing the task at hand?

At last, the researcher was able to get my classroom study underway. The assigned readings are discussed in class each week. The students were provided with the pre-survey via a protected Google Doc before the commencement of the assignments. The post-survey and reflection were handed out to the students after the tasks were completed. After the surveys were finished, they collected the data and ran the analyses. Using a spreadsheet, researcher extracted the survey responses from Google Doc and compared them to the pre- and post-survey results. The data was then split into two groups: one for the multigenre assignment and another for the multimodal assignment. The assignment researcher used the same procedure for analysis. To keep track of how often each ability was cited by participants for each class in ninth and tenth grade, researchers combined the first two survey questions. In order to grade the third and fourth questions, researchers read each student's responses for recurring themes and then, if necessary, researcher gave them 21st century skills to go along with those themes. After that, researchers looked for parallels between the student's initial expectations and their final impressions of each assignment by comparing the data from the pre- and post-surveys. To analyse the data from the reflection assignment, they collected all of the paragraph responses and then split them again into the



multimodal and multigenre categories. They reviewed all the assignments for recurring ideas and took note of any references to information or abilities that are relevant in the modern world.

7. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK



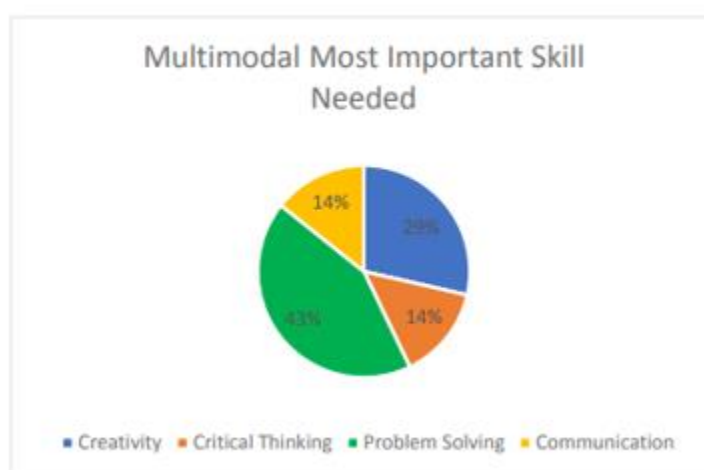
8. RESULT

Every one of my courses had a multimodal and a multigenre assignment that the students had to do. The readings they covered in class served as foundation for these summative tests. Each task had its own pre- and post-survey, and in addition to writing a reflection paragraph, students also filled out a standard academic survey. Each of these tasks was reviewed by the professors, who then completed their own questionnaires. Neither of the multimodal tasks had been used in my classroom before now. Because they cared so much about the quality of their final output, this



class pleaded with me to grant them an extra day to finish their projects so that their movies would be flawless. Their passion shone through as the researcher saw the kids become really involved with the final project. Students were filled with anxiety as they worked on this task. Their complaints persisted throughout the whole project, and they lacked the enthusiasm shown by the ninth graders in their multimodal assignment. Students were needed to write most of the project and make films as part of the two multimodal assignments; they also had to fill out a pre-survey. According to the pre-survey, students think all four talents are necessary to do the assignments. Figure 1 shows that the poll indicated that problem-solving and creative thinking were the two most critical talents that may be required. Coming up with ideas and making it, being comfortable working well in a group with people they don't know and being able to appeal to the project's audience were the three main themes that ran through the survey responses when asked what the hardest part of the assignment would be.

Figure 1: Multimodal most important skill needed



"The hardest part of the assignment is communicating because some people don't always feel comfortable enough about being bullied," one student said. According to another student, getting

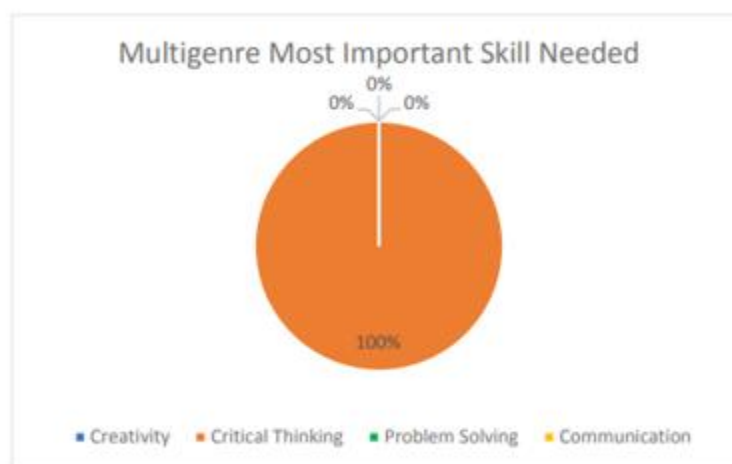


everyone in the group to agree on a single vision for the legendary hero and his trials and tribulations was described as the most challenging. One of the most important skills that students identified as necessary to finish this assignment was the ability to communicate effectively. According to one student, "having good creativity and making sure everything sums up and makes sense" is just as challenging as choosing a subject. Lastly, one student said that they found the creation of the caravan to be the most challenging aspect of this task. Along with the results from the first question indicating that students would need to communicate and be creative in order to finish the project, the students' actions reveal that they also had to utilise their creative abilities. In this question, students did not indicate that critical thinking was a challenge. Both questions one and three demonstrate students' problem-solving abilities, which may have been necessary for them to discover innovative solutions to their projects. Participants were invited to reflect on what they want to gain from the initiative in the last survey question. Thirty-three percent of those who took part in the survey said they would have learned something new about being creative as a result of this experience. On the other hand, 33% of participants expressed confidence in their ability to work well with others in the group, and 22% were certain that the project would help them comprehend bullying, its consequences, and ways to put an end to it. Lastly, 12% of participants said that they would take away the ability to solve problems. To get the most out of their responses, students said that the multimodal assignments helped them develop 21st century abilities like creativity and communication. "Content connection" and "problem solving" were the other two options. Given the importance of creativity in the workplace, it is noteworthy that many students believed it would have a long-lasting effect. "Separating students who are prepared for a more and more complex life and work environments in the 21st century, from those who are not" is the sentiment expressed by the Partnership for 21st Century Learning (P21), which argues that this



capacity for learning and innovation, along with critical thinking, communication, and collaboration, is "essential to prepare students for the future" ("Framework for 21st Century Learning"). Additionally, a small number of students held the view that the ability to effectively communicate was going to be a crucial skill for them to acquire from this assignment. Because they were working in groups, kids had to talk to one another. The students also had to figure out who they were talking to when they presented their idea. The ability to communicate effectively in the modern day is highly prized.

Figure 2: Multigenre most important skill needed





As shown in figure 2, all participants ranked critical thinking as the most crucial ability that is required to complete the assignment. Respondents listed the following as the most challenging aspect of the assignment: "judging the entire playing and its characters to write an essay on a topic that requires critical thinking," "writing," "reading," "journals," "understanding the feelings in the story," and "putting all of the information researchers gathered from the play into an article that resembles a news article and makes sense." Even though the whole project is based on students' interpretations of the play, many of them felt that the most challenging aspect would be coming up with the many genres to represent it. All of these ideas circle back to the need of using their imagination and reasoning skills to finish the task at hand. When asked what they thought the most important thing was to answers to the assignment ranged from "make learning critical thinking easier" to "learn how to do critical thinking better and researchers able to have more creative" ideas;" the steps to take in order to write a journal post. Researchers are able to think critically. Creativity Analysis and Debate Improving Communication for Problem Solving and "how to solve problems" Another thing they should work on is being more patient. "When researcher speak my mind, Researcher should consider the impact on those around me." and "the ability to think critically that resulted from analysing the play in depth." Developing one's capacity for critical thinking was rated by most participants as the most valuable takeaway. Prior to the survey, students were informed that critical thinking included many processes such as analysis, interpretation, evaluation, synthesis, decision-making, and problem-solving. According to my understanding as both a researcher and a teacher, students are expected to read and comprehend the play to a sufficient degree to complete the assignments, as well as to comprehend the genre



requirements to effectively complete the various parts of the assignment. This understanding is supported by the students' definition of critical thinking, which is provided to them.

9. DISCUSSION

While the surveys did collect data on teachers' and students' perspectives on the effectiveness of multimodal and multigenre classroom assignments, the replies did not fully address the research questions (Setiawan et al., 2020). However, some of the skills needed to do the activities were uncovered by the questionnaires. Researchers demonstrated that students' views on the significance of 21st century skills to the project's completion shifted between the pre- and post-survey surveys. The students' current perspective is that these abilities were crucial to their achievement on the tasks. All of the students thought that the multimodal tasks tested their imaginations and ability to think critically in order to complete them. The anti-bullying project's multimodal assignment was the one that participants felt they benefited from the most. Even if the students didn't immediately see the skill utilization in the projects, the surveys proved it. Students were hoping that the multimodal assignment would need strong problem-solving skills, yet this competency was absent from the post-test. While students in the multimodal pre-survey did not correctly identify the topic in their survey replies, they did show promise of material retention in the post-surveys. The projects were great at using creative, problem-solving, and critical-thinking skills, but the data from after the survey shows that communication was not a major focus. Compared to the multimodal project, where students had to collaborate to complete it, the multigenre project permitted students to work alone, thus it's understandable that communication wasn't given the same level of priority. Depending on the context, assignments may be either



multigenre or multimodal, allowing students to use a wide variety of talents throughout the course (Hunter & Jordan, 2019).

10. CONCLUSION

Evaluations of how well the multiliterate assignments include skills relevant to the modern world should inform decisions on how to teach university subject standards. The Common Core standards are an initiative by lawmakers and the federal government to promote the development of students' employability skills alongside traditional academic subjects. Students need to do more than just study for exams to be ready for university, jobs, and life beyond high school. However, in order to help students succeed, the states that have adopted Common Core aim to teach them the basics. Ability to think creatively, solve issues, communicate clearly, and critically are all part of this set of skills. Through its activity suggestions, the Partnership for 21st Century Learning has established a foundation to begin integrating these competencies into the classroom. But there are many ways to equip students with the knowledge and abilities they'll need for college and beyond. Adopting multiliterate textbooks and assignments now utilized in post-secondary colleges may help universities better prepare their students for the future. Secondary schools may help prepare students for these sorts of jobs by including activities like these in their lessons; these skills are already in demand at universities and colleges. University systems are emphasizing STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) and PBL (problem-based learning) programs to assist students in acquiring these skills. The provision of multiliterate tasks is beneficial. After finishing high school, students have the opportunity to hone the skills necessary to thrive in today's



competitive job market. Students' use of core skills is associated with their performance in completing classroom multiliterate activities, according to this study (Shabbir et al., 2020).

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