

# UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN QUEENSLAND

## USING A MULTILITERACIES APPROACH IN A MALAYSIAN POLYTECHNIC CLASSROOM: A PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH PROJECT

A dissertation submitted by:

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## **ABSTRACT**

### **USING A MULTILITERACIES APPROACH IN A MALAYSIAN POLYTECHNIC CLASSROOM: A PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH PROJECT**

This participatory action research project investigated how students in a Malaysian polytechnic classroom context, who were used to examination-based learning, negotiated learning using a multiliteracies approach (The New London Group, 2000). The study explored 12 students' experiences in learning English as a Second Language (ESL) and drew on qualitative methods including classroom observations, informal conversations, a research journal, professional discussions and classroom artefacts. With two polytechnic lecturers involved as part of the research team, the study also investigated the research team's experiences in engaging in a collaborative research process in two cycles of planning, action, observation and reflection.

This study was framed within Vygotsky's (1978) socio-cultural theory that states that human learning and development is mediated by historical and cultural artefacts in the socialisation process. Guided by these principles, the study examined the ways that students' socio-cultural perspectives and practices influenced their learning using the multiliteracies approach. In addition, the researcher investigated how the research team's cultural perspectives and practices influenced the research processes and outcomes of the participatory action research. Data were analysed through a critical reflective analysis because of the emphasis on reflection in participatory action research. The study highlighted the consequences of implementing a Western-based teaching approach and research methodology in a Malaysian context.

During the first cycle of the study, the students faced challenges in negotiating learning for acquiring 21<sup>st</sup> century knowledge and skills, such as using technologies, oral presentation, critical thinking, peer-collaboration and active participation in designing their own learning. After considering the students' examination-based learning experiences, the research team designed a second multiliteracies module that focussed on fusing the students' cultural learning with the components of a multiliteracies approach. During the second cycle, the students had enhanced learning experiences, where they demonstrated better negotiations with learning the 21<sup>st</sup> century skills.

The study contributes to the area of using multiliteracies approach in a Malaysian context, showing how the students' examination-based learning and cultural practices can be incorporated with a multiliteracies approach to enhance the students' negotiation of learning 21<sup>st</sup> century skills. It also maps out the journey of the research team members whose roles were initially influenced by their positions in the hierarchical structure that is ubiquitous in social, institutional and organizational contexts in Malaysia. As the research team became more engaged with the collaborative research process, they were empowered to challenge their roles and to become active co-researchers in analysing data and contributing to decision-making processes.

## **CERTIFICATION OF DISSERTATION**

I certify that the ideas, experimental work, results, analyses, software and conclusions reported in this dissertation are entirely my own effort, except where otherwise acknowledged. I also certify that the work is original and has not been previously submitted for any other award, except where otherwise acknowledged.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Candidate

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## **ENDORSEMENT**

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Signature of Supervisor/s

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Date

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