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The GrandLit Prix Platform: A Constructive Tool to Support Literature Learning

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Abstract

The introduction of new literary texts in the second wave of the Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013-2025 has generated new frustrations among Malaysian secondary students as the selected texts originate from foreign countries. Students often have difficulty in comprehending literary texts that are not culturally and contextually related to the local scene and this leads to reduced motivation in learning literature, especially among low-performing ESL (English as a second language) students. Coupled with the fact that the integration of ICT in literature learning is currently considered pivotal to ensure quality learning among Gen Z students, as underlined in the national education blueprint, this study was aimed to investigate the impact of the GrandLit Prix platform in scaffolding students' literature learning as well as examining students' engagement in learning the Form 4 literary text "Leaving" by M.G. Vassanji during the implementation of GrandLit Prix. Three Form 4 Art-streamed students from SMK Pusa, in Betong, Sarawak, Malaysia were selected by purposive sampling as the research participants

because they had low literature marks in the second school-based examination. The study administered a pre-test, post-test and interview, respectively, on the participants. Based on the reported findings, gamified literature learning left a positive impact on the students' understanding in learning literary text as they had recorded an improvement of 5% in their test scores. Additionally, the GrandLit Prix platform was found to intensify students' engagement level in learning literature because the students have understood of the story better and exhibited a positive behaviour in their literature learning.

Keyword: GrandLit Prix, gamified literature learning, ESL students

Introduction

The influx of Gen Z students in Malaysia has led to drastic changes with regards to the Malaysian education demographics, at which point the incorporation of information and information communication technology (ICT) and its tools are considered necessary to ensure retention and quality learning. In fact, Gen Z learners are “wired” in such a way that they respond differently to their surroundings with sophisticated and complex imageries, and this fortifies the need of audio-visual aids in their learning experiences (Rothman, 2015). As opposed to the millennials, the Gen Z learners are the generation in which smartphones take precedence. In other words, they are the first generation raised in the smartphone era, absorbing and losing interest in information almost simultaneously (Williams, 2015). Thriving on online video games and social media, Gen Z view many technologies as obsolete, even as young as they are, due to the ever-evolving nature of technology (“Generation Z: Born in the digital age”, 2015). A research conducted in 2014 by Global Messaging, a mobile marketing company, showed Gen Z's dependency on smartphone technology and that 66% of respondents have listed gaming as their main hobby (Aron, 2014). According to Koulopoulos and Keldsen (2014), Gen Z learners are very much dependent on the way they game. Collaboration is necessary when dealing with massive online communities, and thus shaping the way they view education and learning.

In addition, Koulopoulos and Keldsen (2014) showed that great games have challenged and kept learners within a comfort zone, minus the frustration when they are faced with certain issues. It would appear that the incorporation of games into language learning would certainly share its fair advantages. Teachers can engage students more in learning activities while minimising their tendency to become frustrated with unfamiliar subject matter. Not only do Gen Z learners spend plenty of time on the Internet, but they are also reported to spend a