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# Maths, Arts, or Language?

Language learning is a continuous active learning process throughout one's life. Humans learn language to communicate their feelings, thoughts, and establish relationships with others. Therefore, active learning in a language classroom is an essential approach in which active interaction using target language comes naturally. Active learning is commonly viewed as a superior teaching and learning approach in the 21st century classroom (Bolefski, 2020; Yuh, 2020). Active learning in a language classroom allows students to engage in multi-sensory learning via speaking, listening, and reading at the same time.



Active learning in Mandarin language classroom.

Students' engagement in active learning activities throughout the multi-sensory learning circumstance makes learning more fun and productive. In a tertiary foreign language education, the main goal is to help students acquire practical communication skills that will aid them to analyse information, convey ideas, and use the target language in daily life. Therefore, it is important to link language to different contexts or subjects in order to ensure the functional purpose of the target language. Consequently, this type of multidisciplinary integrated language classroom transforms the learning environment from passive to active as students become the centre of the learning experience by collaborating on target language in real-life or career contexts that relate to their future pursuits.

According to one of my Mandarin lessons, I implemented a multidisciplinary approach by incorporating various disciplines in the context of ordering food in a café. The activity was suitably related to students' daily life conversations. To be more specific, simulating a situation of ordering food in a café requires students' knowledge of language interactions, visual presentations, and arithmetic techniques. The lesson inevitably integrates language (Mandarin), arts (visual effect), and mathematics (arithmetic techniques) subjects.



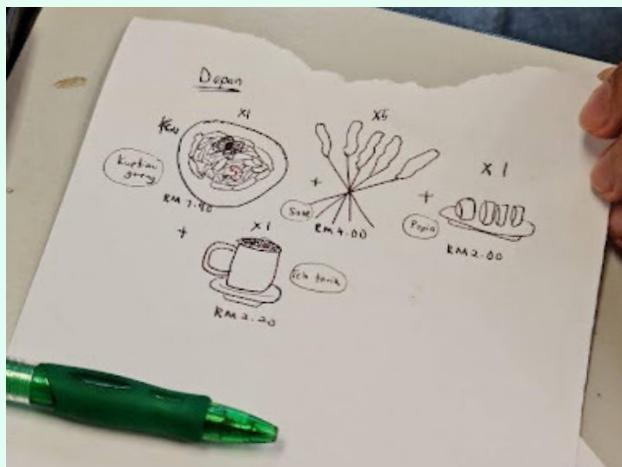
Placing orders and calculating the bill.



By Dr Leow Min Hui



During the active multidisciplinary learning activity, students simulated the situation of ordering food in a café using the target language. They moved around the classroom and communicated in Mandarin. Before that, teachers assigned roles to the students; every student played their role as a waiter or customer alternately. Students prepared a simple menu as a guide to placing orders and calculating the bill. Some students did an excellent job of drawing and labelling their menu, and they appeared to be having fun.



Student's work (Menu)



Students practiced a variety of learning skills (speaking, listening, reading) throughout this activity. Students also applied their mathematics and arts skills in the context, which helped to improve their retention of the target language, broaden their learning experience, and deepen their awareness of how the target language is used in real-world situations. In a nutshell, students who take part in the multidisciplinary integrated language course can exhibit their individual interests, show specific abilities, and master high-level academic and technical materials by applying different learning methods.

### References

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