The Evaluation of Highly Immersive Programme (HIP)

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Abstract

This study aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of Highly Immersive Programme (HIP) through the CIPP (context, input, process, and product) evaluation model developed by Stufflebeam. There are 223 participants (a School Head, ten teachers, 111 students and 101 parents and community) participated in the study. The data were gathered through documents review, questionnaire and short interview. The data based on the questionnaire were analyzed through descriptive statistics while content analysis was carried out to analyze the qualitative data from short interview. Paired sample T test was also employed to investigate whether the significant differences among students' AR1 and AR4 existed. Results of the study indicated that HIP at the school under studied is mostly served for its purpose to increase students' English language proficiency. However, some improvements in the dimensions of students' confident as well as support from parents and community were required to make the program more effective.

Keywords: Effectiveness, Evaluation, Context, Input, Process, Product

1.0   Introduction

In accordance to the National Education Philosophy (1996), education in Malaysia aims to produce holistic and competitive individuals who can meet the needs for 21st century. Realising the demands for globalized economy, English which serves as the international means of communication is important to support this growing of economy. To ensure every individual is competent in the use of English, there is a need to initiate a highly immersive English-rich environment in school.

The Highly Immersive Programme (HIP) is a programme introduced under the To Uphold Malay Language And Strengthen The Command Of English (MBMMBI) policy. It is aligned with student aspirations highlighted in the Malaysia Education Blueprint (MEB) 2013-2025 and supports five shifts of the MEB. It aims to improve the English proficiency of students through increased exposure to English and to inculcate positive behaviours towards the learning and usage of the English language. Variety English language support activities are introduced to be inculcated in school to increase students' exposure time to the language. It allows a highly immersive language-rich environment to be developed for the students based on whole school approach that empower by School Heads, teachers, students, parents and community.

The outcome targeted by HIP for schools and students include increased self-assessed levels of English immersiveness of schools, positive acceptance towards the importance of learning and mastering English as well as increased overall proficiency of the English Language.

As such, the effectiveness of the implementation of HIP activities in school should be evaluated in ensuring better students' outcomes. Hence, this study aims to investigate whether HIP will achieve its objectives in improving students' English proficiency through Stufflebeam's Context, Input, Process and Product (CIPP) Evaluation Model.

2.0   Review of Research on English Proficiency

Language learning is at its heart a social enterprise, and individuals construct their identities in part via the language that they use for communication. The learning of English language should not just depend solely on textbook and activity book. Instead, English teachers should engage students in more fun-learning activities with the co-operation from different parties such as parents and community. In providing highly immersive language-rich environment in school, students are deliberately and recurrently exposed to the English language through a variety of activities of high-quality linguistic input both within and beyond the classroom (Bunce, 1995).

English serves as an important language around the world. However, research done on English proficiency reported that students or even lecturers in Malaysia varsities still at low level of English proficiency. For instance, a study conducted by Atan (2007) to assess the English proficiency among students and lecturers in Malaysia showed that 43% were at the average level that is level 3. Another 21% were at the satisfactory level which is level 4 and 5% at good level which is level 5. Only 2% were at the excellent level, level 6. The findings suggested that urgent attention need to be taken in order to enhance or elevate the English proficiency at varsities in Malaysia.

There are only few studies done about the effects of teaching strategies on English proficiency. According to Wong & Nunan (2011), increasing the range of teaching strategies can help lecturers cater to the different learners that will eventually enhance their English proficiency. Another study reported by Hakuta, Butler & Witt (2000) drew conclusions on how long it takes students to develop oral and academic English proficiency. Their data showed that even in two California districts that are considered the most successful in teaching English to LEP students, oral proficiency takes 3 to 5 years to develop, and academic English proficiency can take 4 to 7 years. This finding has same similarities with studies done by Collier (1987, 1995), Cummins (1981), and Mitchell, Destino and Karam (1997) who report estimates of up to 10 years before students are fully proficient in English.

In order to provide effective instruction in the academic language needed for success in the content areas, teachers must be prepared to integrate academic language teaching into the teaching of the disciplines (Bunch, 2013; Heritage, Silva & Pierce, 2007; Wong-Fillmore and Snow, 2000). High-quality professional development programs targeting academic language instruction, which are embedded into professional learning communities and well supported via school and district leadership and access to resources (Leaning Forward, 2012), can result in improvements in student performance (Kim et al., 2011; Anstrom et al. 2010; Dicerbo, Anstrom, Baker & Rivera, 2013).

Research shows that anxiety has a negative effect on achievement and can hinder language acquisition, specifically because anxiety is likely to lead to diminished desire to communicate (Horwitz, Tallon, & Luo, 2010). Horwitz, Tallon & Luo also recommend that teachers explicitly address language learning anxiety in the classroom and frame it as a normal part of second

language acquisition. This is because students may feel anxious as they perceive their language competencies as low and are hesitant about communicating and being understood.

3.0   Research Theories and Evaluation Model

Stephen Krashen once stated that language acquisition does not require extensive use of conscious grammatical rules, and does not require tedious drill but meaningful interaction in the target language. Krashen's theory of second language acquisition (1985) consists of five main hypotheses as follows:

i.   the Acquisition-Learning hypothesis,
ii.   the Monitor hypothesis,
iii.   the Input hypothesis,
iv.   the Natural Order hypothesis, and
v.   the Affective Filter hypothesis.

According to Krashen, the acquired system and the learned system are two independent systems of second language performance. The formal system is the product of a subconscious process very similar to the process children undergo when they acquire their first language. The later is the product of formal instruction and it comprises a conscious process which results in conscious knowledge 'about' the language. The second hypothesis, Monitor hypothesis concerns with the relationship between acquisition and learning. The Input hypothesis explains how the learner acquires a second language. The Input hypothesis on the other hand concerned with acquisition but no learning. The Natural Order hypothesis suggested that the acquisition of grammatical structures follows a natural order which is predictable. The last hypothesis, the Affective Filter hypothesis embodies Krashen's view that a number of 'affective variables' play a facilitative, but non-causal, role in second language acquisition.

Merrill Swain (1985, 1995, 2005) has argued that comprehensible output (i.e. second language production) plays an important role in acquisition since it ensures mental grammatical processing and is the most effective stimulus for the development of the learner's interlanguage. She formulated a hypothesis named Output Hypothesis (1985) in which she put forward the idea that what the learners were lacking were sufficient opportunities for second language production. Swain argued that it is only during the production of the second language (in speech or writing), that the learners can notice that they are not able to say what they want to say in the target language.

Long's Interaction Hypothesis (1980s) proposed by Michael Long has similarities with Krashen's theory of second language acquisition in terms of the comprehensible input. Both claim that comprehensible input is important and can be elevated when learners learn with meaning. This Interaction hypothesis is a <u>theory</u> of <u>second-language acquisition</u> which states that the development of <u>language proficiency</u> is promoted by face-to-face interaction and <u>communication</u>. But interactions always result in learners receiving negative evidence. The hypothesis divided into two forms, the strong form and the weak form. The former form is the position that the interaction itself contributes to language development while the later form is the position that interaction is simply the way that learners find learning opportunities, whether or not they make productive use of them.

In-line with the purpose of the study, a comprehensive framework namely CIPP Evaluation Model is used to guide evaluations of HIP. Corresponding to the letters in the acronym CIPP, this model's core parts are context, input, process, and product evaluation. In general, these four parts of an evaluation respectively ask:

What should we do?

How should we do it?
Are we doing it as planned?
Did the programme work?

The CIPP evaluation model "is configured especially to enable and guide comprehensive, systematic examination of social and educational projects that occur in the dynamic, septic conditions of the real world . . ." (Stufflebeam & Shinkfield, 2007, p. 351). Over the years, the model has been refined (Alkin, 2004) and used by a wide range of disciplines (Stufflebeam & Shinkfield, 2007).

The CIPP evaluation model emphasizes "learning-by-doing" to identify corrections for problematic project features. As Stufflebeam has pointed out, the most fundamental tenet of the model is "not to prove, but to improve" (Stufflebeam & Shinkfield, 2007, p. 331). Based on Stufflebeam (2003), context evaluation aims to assess the needs, assets, and problems within a defined environment. It also evaluates whether proposed objectives are sufficiently responsive to assessed needs. Input evaluation assesses competing strategies and the work plans and budgets of the selected approach. Experts, evaluators, and stakeholders have to identify or create potentially relevant approaches that may help in formulating a responsive plan. Process evaluation monitor, document, and assess program activities in terms of to what extent the project is being carried out appropriately and effectively. Lastly the product evaluation assesses whether a programme reaches to the target audience by identifying the programme outcomes, both intended and unintended.

4.0   Method

In general, this study concerns on the effectiveness of HIP that being carried out in school. It is designed based on an evaluation research that involved finding out how well a programme, practice, procedure or policy is working (Polit & Hungler, 1999:201) aiming to assess the success of HIP in school. The sample for this study is one school head, ten English teachers, 111 Year Six students, 101 parents and community. This gave rise to 223 participants to be involved in this study. The school head, teachers and students are from a school in Sarawak, Malaysia which is undergoing the HIP. Assessment tool is being distributed to each of the participant in order to get a broad sense of variety of responses from participants.

There are four types of questionnaires being adopted from the HIP toolkit provided: School Head Assessment Tool, Teachers Assessment Tool, Students Assessment Tool and Parent and Community Assessment Tool. The questionnaires are rated on a five-point Likert scale. To minimise the possibility of low response rate, the school head, teacher and student questionnaires are distributed and responded during meeting and in class. Written document is reviewed to provide information about teachers' SPM English grade and their teaching experience. The documents that being reviewed are school booklet and teachers' printed profile. Short interview is used in order to explore reason behind the improvement of students in English test. Using short interview as a research method is because of its ability to gain further insights based on the responses of the interviewees.

In this study, Stufflebeam's Context, Input, Process and Product (CIPP) Evaluation Model is used to analysis the data collected. This study focuses on the context evaluation, input evaluation, process evaluation and the product evaluation. In the questionnaires, there are parts for context and process evaluation. Descriptive statistic is used to calculate the total score of each construct evaluating context, input and process. The product evaluation is determined first by performing paired sample T test on students' AR1 and AR4 and second by calculating the total and mean score for each group (school head, teacher, student, parents and community). The total score for the whole school is finally determined by adding all the

mean scores from every group. The level of immersiveness that the school achieved is identified based on the total school score. Data from short interview is analyzed by exploring the reasons for students' improvement in English. Their comments on HIP were investigated to check the successfulness of HIP.

5.0 Results and Discussion

5.1 Context

Based on the context component in CIPP evaluation model, the results shown in Table 1 indicated that the school concerned has essential facilities and equipment to carry out the programme.

Table 1
Students' responses on context component

Context Evaluation	Item 1		Item 2		Item 3		Item 4		Item 5		Item 6		Item 7	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Not at all	30	27.03	37	33.33	28	25.23	33	29.73	49	44.14	40	36.04	53	47.75
Seldom	39	35.14	42	37.84	47	42.34	25	22.52	32	28.83	40	36.04	34	30.63
Sometimes	31	27.93	21	18.92	25	22.52	30	27.03	18	16.22	16	14.41	12	10.81
Often	5	4.51	7	6.31	6	5.41	13	11.71	9	8.11	10	9.01	4	3.6
Very often	6	5.41	4	3.6	5	4.51	0	0	3	2.7	5	4.51	8	7.21
TOTAL	111	100	111	100	111	100	110	99.90	111	100	111	100	111	100

However, due to the relatively high number of students in the school, teachers face problem in building confident in students to use English. This can explain why the different of mean scores for AR1 and AR4 is not obvious (increase by only 10.11) as shown in Table 4. Big classes have a negative effect on student achievements because less opportunity for all students to reach their potential. This is parallel with the survey done by US Washington Research Center (1987) which claimed that class size affects student achievements and classroom climate.

5.2 Input

According to documents reviewed, it was found that the objectives of the programme are clear and the activities suggested are useful. In the input component, HIP has clear objectives stated in the Toolkit provided. This allows the four fundamental factors which are the School Head, teachers, students, parents and community pose a clear view about the programme. The teachers' qualification and teaching experience always supported in achieving the objectives for the programme. Table 2 reported that half of the teachers (50%) have 1-5 years of experiences in teaching English language. Two teachers (20%) have 6-10 years, one teacher has 11-15 years and another two teachers have 21 years and above in teaching English language.

Table 2
Distribution of teachers' teaching experience

		Frequency	Percent
Teachers	1-5 years	5	50.0
	6-10 years	2	20.0
	11-15 years	1	10.0
	15-20 years	0	0
	21 years above	2	20.0
	Total	10	100.0

5.3 Process

For the HIP implementation, the organisation of English activities were good in such teachers maximise the available resources for meaningful and fun learning. Various English activities in school such as Fun Learning, Let's Talk, Sun Flower Programme, Pen-pal Programme, Parents in the House, Holiday Fun Learning, Language Games, Drop Everything and Read (DEAR) as data gathered from the interview attracted students' interest and made them learn. However, lack support received from parents and community as reported in Table 3 slightly hindered the programme to run smoothly. Hence, less support from parents eventually causes poor self-development in students and less study at home.

Table 3
Parents' responses on process component

Process Evaluation	Item 12		Item 13		Item 14		Item 15		Item 16		Item 17	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Not at all	51	50.5	53	52.48	51	50.5	46	45.54	22	21.78	34	33.66
Seldom	26	25.74	21	20.79	30	29.7	36	35.64	32	31.68	29	28.71
Sometimes	12	11.88	15	14.85	15	14.85	11	10.89	14	13.86	31	30.69
Often	9	8.91	8	7.92	4	3.96	5	4.95	19	18.81	4	3.96
Very often	3	2.97	4	3.96	1	0.99	3	2.97	14	13.86	3	2.97
TOTAL	101	100	101	100	101	100	101	100	101	100	101	100

5.4 Product

In order to examine the product component of this study, a paired sample T test is performed on students' actual result 1 (AR1) and actual result 4 (AR4). Table 4 shows students mean scores and standard values while Table 5 shows the significant value. The number of students participated in each AR is 111. Students' mean score for AR1 is 35.19 while for AR4 is 45.30. The standard deviation for AR1 and AR4 are 18.770 and 20.005 respectively.

Table 4
Paired sample T test of students' English AR1 and AR4

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	AR1	35.19	111	18.770	1.782
	AR4	45.30	111	20.005	1.899

Table 5 gives the sig. (2-tailed) value is 0.000 which is less than 0.05. There is a statistically significant difference between mean scores of AR1 and AR4. Since the mean score for AR4 was greater than the mean score for AR1, we can conclude that students performed better in AR4 than AR1. Hence, the differences between AR1 and AR4 are not likely due to chance and are probably due to the English activities that carried out along the HIP implementation.

Table 5
Paired sample T test of students' English AR1 and AR4

		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	AR1 - AR4	-10.108	9.674	.918	-11.928	-8.288	-11.008	110	.000

According to Table 6, the findings of this study shows that the school studied has achieved level 3 as its level of immersiveness in implementing the HIP. This means that the school community (School Head and teachers) as a whole prepared a rich English environment for students and managed to engage students in the good and meaningful English immersive environment.

Table 6
Total school score and level of immersiveness

Groups	Mean Score
School Head	60
Teachers	56.8
Students	36.25
Parents and Community	23.46
Total school score	176.51
Level of Immersiveness	**3**

There is evidence of the sustainability of some ELT activities. Teachers manage to expose students to English language learning activities both in and out of class; however this may not be varied in terms of enrichment and remedial activities. According to data from the short interview, students had undergone various English activities that had provided them with some challenging and enjoyable learning experiences. Students gave positive comments on the implementation of the programme. Some of the students' responses for the short interview are shown below:

Student 3: The activities are very funny and role play makes me learn a lot.

> *The activities made me excited most of the time. I feel happy and fun.*
> *Student 8: The study camp encouraged me to study with fun.*
> *Although have to stay in school, cannot go home, but I enjoyed the time we study and play*
> *together.*
> *Student 10: Hopscotch game helps me learn English easily.*
> *Really exciting. I feel like going back to kindergarten.*

On the inverse side, the activities used are only sometimes able to strengthen students' confidence in using English occasionally. Students do not communicate in English frequently especially when they are out of school compound due to less parents' involvement in supporting the school activities. Hence, the school's engagements in outreach activities through alumni, engagement with ELT experts from higher learning institutions and corporate bodies have to be reviewed.

The evaluation outcomes are being summarized in Table 7 based on the context, input, process and product aspects.

Table 7
Evaluation of the Highly Immersive Programme

	Context	Input	Process	Product
Objective	To define the institutional context.	To check the teachers' educational background and teaching experience in meeting the programme objectives.	To provide feedback on the extent of Implementation.	To collect descriptions judgments of outcomes.
Method/ Data source	By conducting questionnaires.	By using document review.	By conducting questionnaires.	By performing both qualitative and quantitative analyses through descriptive statistic and short interviews.
Results	-The context was partly suitable for teaching and learning of English. -Rich English environment is a strong point. -But lack of students' and parents'	-Half of the teachers have SPM English grade of A, B or C. -Only two teachers have teaching experience of 21 years and above. -The objectives of the	-The organisation of English activities were good in such teachers maximise the available resources. -But lack support received from parents and community.	-The level of immersiveness of school concerned is 3. -Students show higher mean score in AR4 compared to AR1 which due to the successfulness of HIP carried out based on the data

	confidents in using English.	programme are clear and the activities suggested are useful.	-Students show poor self-development and studies at home.	collected in short interview.

6.0   Implications for Practice

It is believed that this study will have significant implication for English teaching development where the findings later in this study would suggest activities in helping teachers pay close attention to enhance students' English proficiency. Apart from being able to collect relevant data, the researcher and the participants under study will able to share best practices and experiences in teaching and learning of English language through this study. This type of collaborative session truly supports one of the initiatives under the National Key Result Area (NKRA): "Professional Learning Communities" (PLC) programme aimed at improving teaching skills and assuring quality education.

Based on the results, School Heads may reflect on activities carried out and subsequently improve the implementation of HIP. Teachers may know students' perception about HIP thus choose the most suitable activities. According to the local context and capabilities of different schools, teachers may select effective activities to carry out for the implementation of HIP activities. They assist in creating tools and aids required for the effective implementation. For policy planner, the findings of this study will provide a platform for them to be more confident in implementing HIP to all schools. Their expertise and continuous support are sought to ensure the sustainability of the programme.

Current reform efforts in education are calling for substantial changes in teaching and learning of English language. However, the participants in this study will be only exposed to a few selected activities which are relevant to the context of the school under study. The sample size for short interview in this study is also a limitation. It is relatively small to consider a full transferability of results. Thus, the results of the study may not reflect the intended accuracy of the analysis and validity of the findings. This small scale might not reflect the characteristics of the whole population as well.

This study has highlighted the evaluation of HIP in school concerned and data gathered from current teachers and students. It would be more fruitful to investigate graduate students' perspectives about the programme. Future studies may focus on a comparative analysis between perspective of the graduate students and perspectives the current students.

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