Training and Mentoring of Classroom Action Research as a Strategy for Developing Chinese Teacher Skills

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Abstract: This proposed community service activity offers a solution in the form of training activities to increase teacher skills and competence. The intended training is for training and mentoring scientific work; the easiest is classroom action research (CAR). This is taken with the consideration that, besides being easy, it is also based on the real experience that Chinese teachers have gained in Surabaya. The implementation method to solve this problem is divided into three stages, namely the preparation stage, the implementation of training and mentoring, and post-training and mentoring. The results of the mentoring stated that participants considered this material in accordance with their practical needs as Chinese teachers and could adapt it to the conditions of their respective schools. Overall, the training was successful in creating a positive and meaningful experience for participants, illustrating the effectiveness and responsiveness of UNESA’s Confucius Institute in meeting the needs of trainees.

Keywords: ability of Chinese teachers; CAR; learning improvement

INTRODUCTION

Based on empirical evidence from research results and preliminary studies, it is evident that there is an urgent need to improve the ability to produce scholarly works, particularly in conducting Classroom Action Research (CAR), to address the issues at hand. Training alone is not sufficient; rather, there is a necessity for mentoring until teachers are able to produce CAR works.

Analyzing the situation and the results of observations of several problems faced by our partners, it is apparent that, based on interviews with some Chinese teachers in Surabaya, they are interested in
conducting CAR. This interest stems from the consideration that, besides being easy, it also carries the benefit of real-life experience from Chinese teachers in Surabaya.

Various scholars assert that the caliber of educators significantly shapes the quality of educational provision. These scholars underscore the pivotal role of teachers, who occupy a central position within the national education framework, thereby profoundly influencing its effectiveness (Elitasari, 2022; Sulastri et al., 2020). They are integral components of educational development, and the success of education reform policies largely depends on their contributions. UNESCO emphasizes the importance of improving the quality of education, particularly through recruiting, training, enhancing social status, and improving working conditions for teachers. Teachers require a combination of knowledge, skills, strong personalities, adequate professional opportunities, and high motivation to meet the expectations of various stakeholders in the education sector.

Teachers face demands to develop professional, pedagogical, personality, and social competencies (Aryana et al., 2022; Saadi et al., 2023; Zainuddin et al., 2019). Professional competence refers to a teacher's ability to master the learning material comprehensively, enabling them to guide learners toward achieving the competency standards set in national education standards. Pedagogical competence includes a teacher's ability to manage student learning, understand student characteristics, plan and implement learning activities, evaluate learning outcomes, and develop students to actualize their potential. Personality competence involves having a strong, stable, mature, wise, and authoritative personality, serving as a role model for students, and having noble character. Meanwhile, social competence encompasses a teacher's ability as a member of society to communicate and interact effectively with students, fellow teachers, education staff, parents or guardians, and the surrounding community.

Based on mutual agreement, the priority problem that urgently needs to be addressed is the production of scholarly works. The most accessible form of scholarly work is CAR. Considering its ease and the benefit of real-life experience from Chinese teachers in Surabaya, this choice is made. The proposed community service activity offers a solution in the form of training to enhance teachers' competency skills. The intended training is on CAR, considering its ease and the benefit of real-life experience from Chinese teachers in Surabaya. The training will use a hybrid approach, with the team delivering conceptual understanding online and providing direct mentoring at the partner's location, followed by self-paced, asynchronous tasks. Data recording for this community service activity will utilize questionnaires and documentation. The training activities are divided into two sessions: (1) material presentation, (2) guided practice, and (3) independent practice. The implementing team will deliver material presentations in person at the partner's location, while independent practice will take place at the partner's location and will be periodically followed up through asynchronous mode. This activity also supports the professional development of teachers in their positions to continually improve their ability to produce scholarly works, particularly CAR.

METHODS
This training activity constitutes a form of single-group evaluation study. The process is divided into three stages: the preparation stage, the training and mentoring implementation stage, and the post-training and mentoring stage. The preparation stage involves the initial steps
required to organize and plan the training. The implementation stage entails executing the training materials and providing support during the training sessions. Meanwhile, the post-training/mentoring stage emphasizes follow-up actions and support provided after the training to ensure the application of skills and knowledge acquired by participants in practical contexts (Mahdianur et al., 2021; Rosdiana et al., 2023).

The preparation stage focuses on needs analysis and the design of training materials and activities. In this stage, a thorough evaluation is conducted to understand participants' needs, and training materials and activities are carefully designed. The training and mentoring implementation stages involve participants' delivery of materials and independent practice. They will engage in material presentations and have opportunities to apply their knowledge in practical situations. In the post-training/mentoring stage, we perform evaluations, deliver feedback through surveys, and furnish participants with the technical assistance they require after the training. Figure 1 illustrates the problem-solving framework and activities within this process.

![Figure 1 Problem-solving framework and activity scheme](image)

RESULT AND DISCUSSION
The Confucius Institute at Universitas Negeri Surabaya (UNESA) is an international institution supported by the Chinese government, with a mission focus on education and culture, particularly concerning Chinese and Indonesian cultures. Collaboration between the Graduate School and the Confucius Institute at UNESA is realized through organizing seminars to enhance the competencies of Chinese Mandarin language teachers from China. This event took place at the Confucius Institute Office, Moestopo Campus, Surabaya, on Saturday, November 11, 2023. The topics covered in this event included mapping the quality of education at the education unit level, planning quality improvement outlined in the school's work plan, implementing quality fulfillment in managing educational units and learning processes, monitoring and evaluating the quality fulfillment process, and developing quality improvement strategies based on evaluation results. As part of the seminar series, training sessions were also held on writing high-quality scientific journals, community service program to enhance the abilities of Chinese teachers in designing CAR, and Quality Assurance training for foreign Mandarin language teachers. The documentation of the seminar implementation is presented in Figure 2.
Punctual attendance according to the schedule creates a professional and organized impression. Participants feel valued because the event starts without any delays that could hinder the workshop's progress. Evaluations highlight that this aspect provides a positive foundation, building participants' trust in the quality of the training event. After the break, the facilitator's discipline continues to receive appreciation. Participants acknowledge that the facilitator's ability to restart sessions promptly creates continuity of momentum and ensures participants remain focused. This reflects the positive influence of discipline on the dynamics and effectiveness of the training sessions.

In terms of interaction, participants assess that time discipline creates a conducive learning environment. They feel more prepared to engage in training activities after the break, indicating that the facilitator's discipline not only affects time aspects but also impacts participant participation. Overall, qualitative evaluations depict that the facilitator's time management discipline creates significant positive impacts. Participants evaluate this not only as adherence to rules but also as a substantial contribution to their training experience, creating a structured, efficient, and supportive environment for participant growth during training sessions.

Furthermore, the positive responses received by the facilitator regarding attributes such as patience, accommodativeness, communicativeness, and firmness provide deep insights into their influence on the training experience. Participants perceive the facilitator's patience as key to creating a supportive and understanding environment. Participants feel valued and are given space for questions and clarifications without feeling rushed, fostering positive relationships and enthusiasm for learning.

The facilitator's ability to be accommodating also plays a central role in achieving positive responses. Participants highlighted that the facilitator can adapt the learning approach to individual needs and learning styles. This provides participants with a more personally engaging learning process, creating an inclusive atmosphere that enhances the effectiveness of the training sessions. In terms of communication, participants appreciate the facilitator's clarity and ease of understanding when delivering materials. Participants perceive that the facilitator's language is accessible to all, irrespective of their initial understanding level. This effective communication supports the achievement of training goals by avoiding potential confusion and ensuring optimal information transfer.

Qualitative aspects provide a highly positive overview in evaluating participants' training responses to the facilitator's discipline. Participants consistently express their satisfaction with the facilitator's discipline in adhering to time before and after the break. The presentation of material by the facilitator is shown in Figure 3.
Equally important, positive responses also refer to the facilitator's firmness. Participants acknowledge that clear directions and boundaries set by the facilitator provide the necessary structure for smooth discussions and group activities. This firmness guides participants through the training, creating a directed environment and clear objectives. Overall, participants' positive responses are about a deep understanding of the training material and reflect the facilitator's ability to create a positive relationship and support effective learning (Nasution et al., 2023). With qualities such as patience, accommodation, communication, and firmness, the facilitator becomes an information provider and a catalyst for shaping meaningful training experiences.

The positive feedback received from participants regarding the facilitator's appearance, particularly in the context of neatness in dressing, which encompasses qualities of simplicity, cleanliness, politeness, and tidiness, reflects the positive impact of non-verbal elements in the training scope. Positive responses to the facilitator maintaining a simple yet clean and tidy appearance give the impression of consistency and professionalism. Participants realize that a well-maintained appearance creates a serious atmosphere and a focus on the material, adding an extra dimension to their trust and respect for the facilitator as the leader of the training session.

The second element is the importance of dressing neatly and politely. Participants emphasize that polite attire creates a comfortable and supportive environment for participation. The sense of respect arising from polite attire opens up space for more effective collaboration, forming an inclusive atmosphere and encouraging participant involvement. Equally important, a neat appearance is also a determining factor in receiving positive feedback. Participants feel that tidiness in dressing creates an impression of seriousness and diligence in the facilitator's approach to the training material. Neat appearance reinforces participants' confidence, creating a focused environment and supporting a deeper understanding of the material.

The facilitator's skill in delivering materials includes explaining clearly, being easily understood, effective, and contextual. Proficient facilitators can articulate complex concepts in an understandable way to the audience. Organizing and conveying information clearly ensures that participants can understand the material comprehensively. Additionally, the facilitator's effectiveness is reflected in their ability to deliver materials to stimulate active participant participation (Abbas et al., 2023; Lumuan et al., 2023). Using
appropriate teaching methods and engaging communication techniques helps achieve learning objectives effectively. Effective facilitators can also guide participants through the material by providing concrete examples and practical applications.

The contextual aspect reflects the facilitator's ability to relate the material to real-world situations or specific audience contexts. By understanding the background and needs of participants, facilitators can present the material in a relevant manner and connect it to participants' experiences and knowledge. Overall, the facilitator's mastery in delivering materials includes explaining clearly, ensuring easy understanding, achieving learning effectiveness, and presenting material contextually according to participants' needs.

The facilitator delivers material on the use of digital media in teaching Mandarin. Clear and relevant methods for integrating technology into learning, providing contextual case studies, and presenting innovative approaches to enhance the learning experience. The case studies provided by the facilitator may involve the use of interactive Mandarin language learning applications. The facilitator can describe how the application not only present learning material clearly but is also relevant to participants' daily lives (Adiyono et al., 2023; Amini et al., 2023; Permana et al., 2021; Purba et al., 2022). For example, the application may offer situation-based learning modules in real-life settings in China, creating a contextual experience for participants.

Furthermore, the facilitator can discuss application innovations, such as augmented reality (AR), to provide personalized feedback tailored to each participant's ability level. This creates an innovative element that enriches the learning experience. By providing case studies that encompass these three aspects—clarity, relevance, and innovation—the facilitator can ensure that the material delivered meets the practical needs of Mandarin language educators, provides a deep understanding, and encourages the adoption of modern solutions in the learning process. The participants' enthusiasm to try AR features is depicted in Figures 4.

In line with the students' enthusiasm for evaluating the relevance of case studies to the material provided by the facilitator, the assessment of media utilization conducted by the facilitator in the presentation fulfills four elements: accuracy, efficiency, effectiveness, and innovation. The choice of media is not only based on diversity but also considers the participants' characteristics and learning objectives (Sari et al., 2023). The facilitator ensures that each medium introduced has direct relevance to the presented material, explaining concepts meticulously and systematically.

Efficiency and effectiveness in media usage are reflected in the facilitator's ability to deliver information in a way that is accessible and easily understood by participants. The facilitator manages the use of media timely, optimizing the efficiency of material delivery without
sacrificing understanding quality. With this approach, the facilitator creates an effective learning environment, enabling participants to absorb information more effectively.

Media utilization also reflects the facilitator's innovation in designing engaging learning experiences. By integrating innovative elements such as interactive simulations, multimedia, or interactive online platforms, the facilitator creates a motivating and engaging learning atmosphere, involving participants more actively (Nuraini et al., 2023; Palyanti, 2023; Setyorini et al., 2023; Sholeh & Efendi, 2023). This innovative approach enriches the material and stimulates participants' interest in Mandarin learning. The facilitator successfully combines accuracy, efficiency, effectiveness, and innovation in media utilization to present material. Thus, the facilitator meets quality standards in information delivery and creates motivating and relevant learning experiences for participants.

Furthermore, the facilitator's ability to manage the class, including collaborative, accommodative, communicative, and participative elements, has received positive responses from participants. The facilitator's ability to manage the class with a collaborative, accommodative, communicative, and participative approach has garnered positive responses from participants. The collaborative approach involves participants as partners in the learning process, creating an environment where ideas and experiences can be freely exchanged. Facilitators who can create this collaboration provide opportunities for participants to actively engage in the learning process (Anwar et al., 2023; Dewi et al., 2023). Participants' positive responses to the facilitator's ability to manage the class reflect success in creating an inclusive learning environment, focusing on participants, and motivating active participation, as shown in Figure 6, where participants actively ask questions. By integrating collaborative, accommodative, communicative, and participative elements, facilitators become effective teachers and catalysts in shaping positive and impactful learning experiences.

The training material on the development of action research in the form of CAR brings significant benefits to Chinese teachers in enhancing their research skills. The facilitator presents the material with an emphasis on the practical steps of the CAR methodology. Participants are guided to understand the basic concepts of CAR, design relevant research questions within the context of Mandarin language classrooms, and identify potential changes needed in the learning process. Through this material, Chinese teachers can better understand the CAR process and how to integrate it into their teaching environments. The training equips them with the skills to design and implement action research to improve the effectiveness of Mandarin language teaching. Additionally, the facilitator highlights the importance of
reflecting on CAR outcomes and implementing continuous improvement. Furthermore, evaluation results indicate that the training material on internalizing the values of Pancasila through CAR can be tailored to each school's conditions. This training is designed to provide participants with a profound understanding of integrating Pancasila values into the school’s learning context. The material will cover the basic principles of Pancasila and their relevance to education. The facilitator will offer a holistic view of values such as mutual cooperation, justice, democracy, and others, and how these values can be reflected in each step of CAR-based research. Participants will then be guided to design a CAR that encompasses academic aspects and reflects the implementation of Pancasila values in the school environment. Practical guidance will be provided on adapting CAR to fit each school's characteristics and needs, allowing participants to internalize Pancasila values contextually.

Throughout the training, participants will be directed to identify their schools’ unique challenges and potentials in implementing Pancasila values. This will enable them to develop more focused and relevant strategies for formulating CAR that can strengthen the school's character in line with Pancasila's fundamental values. With an approach tailored to each school's conditions, this training material is expected to provide a strong foundation for participants to develop CAR that supports the improvement of education quality and demonstrates loyalty to Pancasila values in daily educational practices.

The importance of classroom action research lies in improving the quality of learning and empowering teachers as active researchers engaged in continuous improvement. By mastering the formulation of CAR, Chinese teachers can become more effective agents of change in enhancing the quality of Mandarin language teaching and learning outcomes in their learning environments. Implementing this activity is hoped to bring refreshment and enhance understanding of the challenges arising from cultural differences in the context of cross-cultural learning. The implementation of classroom action research is expected to provide more relevant solutions to students' needs in the learning process.

Participants perceive this activity as an effective means of communication to discuss aspects of cultural differences. In these discussions, valuable information is essential in designing appropriate teaching methods for student diversity. One example is the effort to improve understanding of cultural differences and, of course, to increase the level of patience in managing classes with high dynamics and diversity.

**CONCLUSION**

The training program initiated by the Confucius Institute at Universitas Negeri Surabaya (UNESA) has successfully provided meaningful and impressive experiences for its participants. The facilitators' punctuality and professional classroom management greatly aided in facilitating the participants’ development. The characteristics of the facilitators, such as patience, ability to accept input, communication skills, and clarity of roles, were highly appreciated by the participants, who felt that the learning environment created was very conducive, open, and focused on the learning process. Teaching styles that prioritize cooperation, openness, effective communication, and active participant involvement contributed to the creation of a learning environment that embraced all participants.

The training content, especially those related to academic writing through CAR and the application of Pancasila values, were deemed appropriate and met the practical needs of Mandarin language
teachers, who could adapt them to their respective school environments. Overall, this program demonstrates the success and adaptability of Confucius Institute UNESA in meeting the expectations and needs of the training participants.

REFERENCES


