

# Teaching and Learning Techniques for Stateless Student: A Preliminary Study

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## ABSTRACT

In Malaysia, stateless children who cannot access mainstream schools can receive informal education at alternative schools established by Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs). However, these alternative schools face some challenges in terms of teaching expertise, infrastructure, financial resources, and learning environment. They also tend to lack the implementation of structured teaching and learning methods. Necessarily, alternative schools need to develop teaching and learning techniques that are more flexible, inclusive, and child friendly. This research aims to analyze appropriate teaching and learning techniques for stateless children by employing a qualitative research approach using content analysis. The findings and results show four techniques that are considered effective for stateless children that are project-based learning, interactive learning, learning through immersion approach and communities best learning.

**Keywords:** Techniques, Teaching, Children, Stateless

## INTRODUCTION

Education is one of the human rights preserved in international conventions, under Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), which stated that everyone has their own right to get free education minimum in basic and early stages. Articles 28, Children Right Conventions (CRC) declared each country compulsory to prepare early education not only for child citizens but also stateless (Nur Ezan, et.al., 2021). However, until now, stateless children are always left behind and never have chance to get a quality early education since the issues of unclear citizenship status and lack of equipment like premier school.

Despite the effort from the government allowing non formal education system, or it's called alternative school for stateless children thru NGO learning centre, till now, the school still struggle with the lack curriculum, resources and teaching standards for primary school (Tharani et al.,2022). Thus, alternative education in Malaysia does not recognize as one of the educational program equivalents with standard formal education (Vincent et al.,2019).

There are several things need an attention along the process of teaching and learning in the alternative schools. The reports show stateless children such as Bajau Laut community abandon from alternative school because of the irrelevant school curriculum for them (United Nation,1996). Some of the community group have their own cultural and language make them difficult to follow the learning process. Bajau Laut community such as they have their own native language and not genuinely understand Malay language. Other than that, they always moved out from one island to another making difficult to get the education (Muhammad Zaim et al., 2021). The alternative schoolteachers need to have teaching pedagogical suitable with the stateless children with include cultural subtlety approach, language diversity and creativity. This coincides with research conducted by Salem et al., (Salim et al,2020) that children live in certain ethnic groups feel local knowledge and cultural custom

practice in their environment will help them in explore the new information. Therefore, this research will analyse in detail which teaching and learning technique adapt for stateless children.

## METHOD

The qualitative method of descriptive document analysis was used for this research. Document analysis is one of the systematic procedures to review and evaluate printed or electronic documents. Document analysis needs to examine and interpret the data to get the meaning, understand, and explore the empirical knowledge (Gleen, 2009). Hence. This study used existing data from journal articles, books, and other documents related to teaching and learning in general. According to Hani (2022), in qualitative technique, the researchers can use a variety of techniques to collect the data and one of the methods to get the existing data is the text that is standard with the information collected from the interview.

Searching articles related to the research is the first process to analyze the document by extracting the important factors from the articles to explore the purity, credibility, and meaning representing the research field (Flick, 2018). In this research, the first thing researchers do is to do the early research about meaning and concepts discussed by past research. After understanding the teaching and learning concepts, the next steps are to focus on suitable teaching and learning for the stateless children. Other than that, the researchers need to identify the main category of teaching and learning techniques referring to primary resources, such as journal articles that explain in detail related to interactive techniques, multi-languages, projects, and games.

## Stateless Children and Alternative School

Article 1 of the UNCHR convention relates to the stateless people status and defines stateless people as people without any citizenship bound in any country or international policies (Nur Ezan, 2021). Malaysians categorized all the refugees and stateless people as illegal immigrants (Paramita, 2019). Malaysians also can't avoid the prolonged stateless problem until listed as one of the highest stateless people in Asia (Norhafiza, et al., 2022). Malaysia is also one of the hosts of more than 160,000 refugees and asylum seekers, and most of them are estimated to be from Myanmar (Tood, et al., 2019). Jassica et al., (2020), people without citizenship have issues in Malaysia because of the presence of refugees in Sabah compared to other states.

Wan Rosili (2020), views there are several factors of stateless issues, such as the law of citizenship conflict, war, ethnic cleansing, human trafficking, and noncitizen ship parents. The effect of this issue is that they have been denied their citizenship and also denied others' human rights, such as the freedom to move, medical rights, and the critical issues the children didn't get access to the education system (Norhafiza et al., 2022). In 2019, the Malaysian government under the Ministry of Education started zero-reject policies for stateless children to enter public schools as an effort to increase education. However there are a few challenges of stateless children that is i) lack of financial ability, past research shows the total number of students in Mabul island primary school decreased because the government determines the payment of school fees RM120.00 ii) lack of documentation, research by Norsaherah and Badariah (2022), state that stateless children admission to primary school need to have an approval letter from Sabah State Education Department. Thus, it makes it difficult for them since they don't have enough access and help.

According to Miskiman and Zainal (Miskiman an Zainal, 2019), the issues of dropout children's education among refugees and stateless in the worrying stage in 2016, 50% of child refugees and stateless dropped out of primary school, and 75% dropped out of secondary school. Alternative schools under government agencies, non-government agencies (NGO), and private individuals are initiated to reduce the problem. It can be seen clearly with 170 alternative learning centres based in Sabah (UNICEF, 2019). Alternative education includes the implemented and other than standard education (Rahman et al, 2018). Alternative education is divided into 2 methods: access to education and alternative to curriculum preparation. The first method focuses on preparing different methods to fulfil the education needs of children who are not registered in the formal education system. The second method non, the traditional curriculum, is either different or synchronizes with the standard education system (Afifah and Badariah, 2022).

The alternative school needs to actively prepare flexible pedagogy and give the chances for stateless children to

develop the literacy and numeracy skills to become an individual holistic from knowledge to giving back to the community. Some of the programs in alternative schools take into several important aspects related to teaching and pedagogy, learning environment, resources, and professional development (Shawn, 2020).

## Teaching And Learning Methodology for Stateless Children

Teaching and learning methodology refers to the strategic approach or technique used by educators to deliver knowledge to students. Thus, selecting the method depends on the learning objective, student characteristics, and teaching content. Stateless children need the teaching approach and more inclusive learning, flexibility and sensitivity towards background and their needs. Moreover, researchers found that a few suitable teaching and learning techniques to be implemented that is:

### Project Based Learning

Bender (2012) Project-based Learning (PBL) is one of the learning processes that uses original material related to the current situation and encourages high motivation that contributes questions, assignments, and problems to educate students with academic comparative content and context to problem-solving. Past research shows that the implementation of Project-Based learning (PBL) in certain subjects in school has a positive effect on the students. In their research, Muhammad Zaim et al., (2021), show that Project-based Learning can potentially increase the skill of thinking toward student history. This research finding is supported by Monica dan Zamri [22]; there is an increase in student interest in learning writing in a few aspects: i) freedom to explore creativity, ii) focus on in-depth curiosity feeling, and iii) actively taking part in activities. According to Serin (2019), using Project-based Learning (PBL) in mathematics education increases student motivation and academic achievement. This method can organize self-learning with a friend's guidance (Kissanraj and Muhammad Safwan, 2022).

In creating the learning experience in Project-based Learning in alternative schools, there are six phases that need to be followed by the educator that is group planning, information finding, creating, exploring, and initial assessment of project results, second information finding phase, final performance development and product exhibition (Bneder, 2012). In the first phase, educators need to divide students into a few groups and give them assignments that can be produced. The first phase is suitable to the situation and student' needs in alternative schools and helps them to interact with their friends, develop positive relationships, and understand the social norms of their environment. The educator can be divided into small groups of four to six members (Mohd Asnorhisham and Abdu Rahim, 2017).

The next phase is information searching and planning, where every group of students is given the freedom to seek for idea and information related to the given tasks. Teachers can help the groups to choose their project theme, designing the project schedule, and collecting theories relating to the tasks (Suradika et al., 2023). Meanwhile, for project creation, development, and initial assessment, students are given the freedom to choose any relevant project suitable with their idea. This phase helps students to solve problems and increase their creative thinking skills ( Ulger et al.,2013), planning the implementation and task division. After that, students are exposed with research and project implementation using several research methods such as interview, observation, or experiment. In this phase, students can recommend solution to problems and create new innovation based on their research.

### Interactive Learning

Interactive learning is an effective approach to help stateless children study better because it emphasizes active involvement, social interaction, and an engaging learning experience. Teachers act as facilitators in the interactive learning process, while students actively participate throughout the lessons (Dyah et al.,2022). One of the characteristics of interactive learning is that it centers on students and focuses on their progress (Mohd Sham et al.,2017). Student-centric learning ensures that students are actively engaged in their own learning rather than passively receiving information from the teacher (Faiezah et al., 2024). According to Alizah & Zamri (2019), student-centered learning emphasizes two aspects: (1) teaching approach and (2) educational resources. This approach is well-suited for alternative schools, as it focuses on two-way interaction and meaningful learning

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through group tasks, allowing students to become more creative and innovative.

Another characteristic of interactive learning is that it involves a multi-sensory approach, incorporating vision, hearing, psychomotor skills, and touch (Lee and Kamariah, 2022). The multi-sensory approach stimulates students' senses, helping them develop various skills and enhance their cognitive abilities (Lee and Kamariah, 2022; Yaswinda et al., 2019). For stateless children who may face language barriers, limited educational access, or social trauma, interactive learning is particularly useful because it is more inclusive and emphasizes holistic, experiential learning. Several strategies can be adopted by teachers in alternative schools to implement multi-sensory learning, such as using visual aids like pictures, flashcards, and graphs. Flashcards, in particular, are effective for teaching students reading and writing comprehension (Paramita, 2019). The use of flashcards helps students develop autonomy in learning in three ways: (1) direction—through the choice of words in the lesson, (2) the selection of various information, and (3) memorization of words through repetition (Teng and He, 2015).

Next, the auditory method, which involves the sense of hearing to help children understand and memorize information, is suitable for stateless children. This method can be implemented by involving students in group discussions, storytelling, and oral presentations, enabling them to express their points, evaluate ideas, and think critically about the concepts they are learning (Nurin et al., 2024). This auditory approach encourages communication, builds students' listening and speaking skills, strengthens memory, and helps them focus on the instructions or sounds delivered during lessons.

Besides, the kinaesthetic approach, which focuses on physical movements and touch, can attract the interest of stateless children. This approach involves repetitive movements that can be embedded in students' memory (Suppiah et al., 2012). Teachers can use various teaching aids by demonstrating, copying, role-playing, dancing, acting, etc. This approach includes hands-on activities where students handle apparatus and engage with them through movement (Faraliza and Shahlan, 2023).

### **Learning through Immersion Approach**

Learning through immersion is an approach where students learn languages or other subjects by fully engaging with their surroundings while using the target language. This approach is commonly utilized in teaching second languages (Derri, 2020). It emphasizes direct experience in an environment where students are fully engaged in the lesson. This method can be applied to stateless children, especially for daily communication in the Malay language. The main challenge faced by teachers in alternative schools is the children's poor command of Malay. For instance, Aida & Napisah (2021) found that the majority of Rohingya students were unable to communicate in Malay or understand it, even though they spoke a Chinese dialect in Malaysia.

Thus, there are several activities that can be practiced within the immersion approach. Firstly, teachers can encourage students to engage in situations that require them to communicate in Malay in their daily activities, such as social interactions or everyday conversations. Secondly, students can be invited to participate in direct social and cultural activities, such as cultural festivals or traditional games, which require them to speak in Malay. This approach also allows them to learn about local cultures.

Thirdly, teachers can implement project-based activities in which students are invited to carry out a project involving research on the local community, history, or current issues. In this activity, students need to prepare a report and present their findings in Malay. Project-based learning actually provides students with the opportunity to use Malay in a broader and more practical context, thereby enhancing their understanding of the language and vocabulary. Fourthly, students can also participate in simulation or role-playing activities, where they are given roles as local people, such as being a customer or a worker in a shop, to act out using the everyday language of the local community. This technique allows students to practice their language skills in more realistic situations and gives them the opportunity to learn in a more authentic context.

In fact, previous studies have shown that the immersion approach can sharpen students' language skills, making them proficient in writing, reading, and speaking (Derri, 2020). Yusup et al., (2020) view that the immersion approach can motivate students to learn a language informally and foster natural and intimate communication

between students and teachers, providing them with opportunities to use the language with confidence. This is supported by a study conducted by Hariati et al., (2024) on English immersion learning for students at the Surabaya Maritime Polytechnic, where it improved students' speaking ability in English. The approach also had a positive impact on students' self-confidence in using English in contexts relevant to their future careers.

### Community Based-Learning

Community-based learning is an approach that involves students and the community in the learning process (Naufal & Nurfaradilla, 2024). Community-based learning is similar to service-based learning, where the main goal is to enhance civic engagement among students (Celio et al., 2011). According to Rosfazila (2020), community-based learning can be defined as experiential learning, in which students and teachers collaborate with the community to address existing issues. At the same time, both parties gain knowledge and skills and enhance their personal development.

In this regard, this approach is highly suitable for stateless students as they are often involved in and live closely with the communities around them. This is in line with the view of Yusof et al. (2020), who stated that connecting theory with real-life situations is a more effective method of exposing students to authentic learning experiences. Therefore, there are several core factors that must be considered throughout the community-based learning process, including the active involvement of teachers as mentors, opportunities for students to gain new knowledge and skills, critical reflection on their experiences, and the empowerment of the community in determining and managing the activities conducted (Rosfazila, 2020).

The main advantage of community-based learning is that it provides educational access to stateless students who are excluded from the formal education system. As is commonly known, community classes are usually held for stateless students at community centers, places of worship, or NGO premises. With such classes, stateless students are still able to engage in basic education, such as reading, writing, and arithmetic. This approach, which connects theory with real-life situations, is seen as more effective in enhancing students' motivation and understanding (Yusof et al., 2020).

Community-based learning not only provides academic knowledge but also helps develop various important skills among stateless children. They actively participate in activities such as group work, community projects, and game-based learning, which in turn boosts their self-confidence and communication skills. This aligns with the study by Maharam et al. (2019), which states that the approach in community-based learning involves various types of activities, such as capstone projects, case studies, and problem-based projects, which enhance students' critical thinking and creativity. Furthermore, students are also exposed to positive values such as cooperation, empathy, and social responsibility.

In addition, through community-based learning, stateless students are exposed directly to the realities of local community life. They not only learn from textbooks but also through real-life experiences such as community visits, cleanliness projects, or life skills workshops. This provides a deeper understanding of the surrounding world and fosters sensitivity to humanitarian issues. In the long run, this exposure contributes to the formation of a positive sense of identity and civic awareness, even though they are not officially recognized as citizens.

## CONCLUSION

Stateless children often face challenges in accessing formal education, educational resources, and emotional support. The lack of citizenship forces them to be marginalized from the formal education system, resulting in unequal educational opportunities. Furthermore, stateless children come from various backgrounds and life experiences, including differences in language, culture, religion, and academic knowledge. As a result, the teaching and learning methods used for them must be adapted to meet their specific needs.

Inclusive teaching and learning techniques that are easily accessible, such as using clear and simple language, preparing visual aids, and maintaining continuous interaction with stateless students, will help them feel more accepted and supported in the education system. Additionally, flexible and adaptive methods, such as collaborative teaching, the use of current technology, and out-of-class activities, are more practical for stateless

children, allowing them to better adapt and understand the content of the syllabus. Moreover, a focus on language proficiency especially in the national language is essential to overcoming the communication barriers they face on a daily basis.

Therefore, to ensure the success of these techniques for stateless children, a synergy between the government, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and society is necessary to provide external support to schools. The authorities must offer financial assistance, access to educational resources, and the necessary support to enable schools to provide education without discrimination. By offering support in terms of language, social integration, and psychological well-being, along with practical, student-centric teaching methods, stateless children will have better opportunities for academic success and the potential to expand their capabilities.

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