

Enhancing Students' Comprehension of Poetry Texts through the Integration of Project-Based Learning and Design Thinking

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Abstract

Poetry instruction in secondary schools sometimes limits students' full involvement in interpreting and appreciating literary works. The present research aimed to enhance students' understanding of poetic texts. In this regard, the study employed Project-Based Learning (PBL) and Design Thinking methodologies. The survey employed a Classroom Action Research study based on Kemmis and McTaggart's model, comprising three cycles of planning, action, observation, and reflection. The study involved 32 eleventh-grade students aged 16–18 from a public senior high school in Malang, Indonesia. Data were collected through observations, interviews, field notes, tests, and documentation. Reliability of the study was ensured through triangulation of constructs and procedures, and verification procedures were monitored throughout the research project. Results showed an increase in student engagement during lessons, from 68.75% to 93.75%. Obtaining mastery level increased the rate from 71.88% to 93.75%. Consequently, such trends resulted in a higher class average score, 84.13 to 85.86. Results from the qualitative analysis showed even stronger motivation, self-assurance, teamwork and desire to make sense of poetry. This makes it clear that, when it comes to students learning poetry, a conceptual step such as using PjBL together with Design Thinking will make learning poetry and greater interaction possible.

Keywords: *Classroom participation, Design Thinking, learning achievement, poetry comprehension, Project-Based Learning*

Introduction

The acquisition of the comprehension of poetry texts is a vital part of language learning today, as it not only improves reading skills but also encourages interpretative, reflective, and problem-solving skills. In today's curriculum, there is a requirement that learners must recognize simile, metaphor, and idiomatic expressions, as well as determine the use of symbols, and realize other more subtle meanings and the relevance of the social/cultural contexts in which a particular text is set. Therefore, the traditional objectives of reading, especially poetry reading, have expanded beyond mere appreciation of the art form, for they now tend to promote literacy, creativity, communication, or even emotional intelligence that is required in the 21st-century education (Nishihara, 2022; Suwastini & Rahmayanti, 2024). New Changes in the

educational environments have equally insisted on a shift in attention towards faceted activity rather than on physically oriented subject assemblies, leading to a balance, such as in the lesson of interaction in the class (Rohmah et al., 2024; Sedubun & Nurhayati, 2024).

In the ideal sense, poetry instruction should foster in students the ability to engage in the creation of meaning through discussion, interpretation, reflection, and imaginative output in relation to any given text. In poetry instruction, Project-Based Learning is relevant when it guides students to interpret poetic texts collaboratively and transform their understanding into meaningful literary products. Rather than emphasizing the broad benefits of PjBL in general, this study focuses on its use to support students' comprehension of figurative language, poetic meaning, and reflective interpretation. Students are positioned as active participants who engage in inquiry-oriented, collaborative, and project-based activities (Thomas, 2000; Bell, 2010). Furthermore, PjBL is an instructional way that allows students to also focus on enhancing their communication skills, critical thinking, and problem-solving within collaborative learning because of the integration of textual meaning and output generation (Guo et al., 2020; Maros et al., 2023). Additionally, project-based instruction allows learners to negotiate meaning such that it becomes inherent for them to think even harder about the way they interpret any given knowledge. This is relevant to the more abstract activity of analyzing poetry, where the relationship between logic and art is particularly close (Muneer et al., 2026; Ruslan et al., 2024).

However, despite the increasing relevance of poetry in the learning process, practices in reality remain largely teacher-centric, with practices such as direct or structural explanation, translation, rewriting, and memorizing of literary elements. Placement of the learners to this approach somehow might give benefits to the teacher as it reduces the amount of effort spent on the teaching practise itself. Still, in doing so, the students are stripped of the opportunity of learning on their own. As a result, many students stumble in their attempts to understand the figurative language, engrams, trust poetic wholeness, tone, and inapparent messages exhibited in the poems that are being read to them. Such issues are compounded by low mastery of vocabulary, inadequate reading interest, scarcity of literary texts, and appropriate expedited instructional techniques for the effective learning of poetry (Damaiyanti & Mulyati, 2025; Nishihara, 2022). Furthermore, it has been observed that traditional teaching approaches largely restrict the expression of inquiry as well as interpretive reading, since children will rely on them when this form of teaching is used rather than trying to come up with their own understanding (Liu et al., 2025; Rijken & Fraser, 2024).

Resolving these issues immediately is necessary since any obstruction to poetry interpretation might impact negatively on other literacy skills and the advanced stages of cognition. Similarly, students who experience problems in analyzing the meaning of literary texts analytically may try to write an essay or a reflection, or read a text that they do not fully understand, containing diverse cultural interwoven ideas and opinions. Consequently, poetry instruction should shift from teacher-dominated interpretation to learner-centered activities that encourage exploration, collaboration, communication, and reflection through project-based learning (Bell, 2010; Kokotsaki et al., 2016). Implementation of PjBL together with Design Thinking is a form of instruction that could be effective in overcoming this setback. PjBL is centered on problem and inquiry-based learning, while Design Thinking follows stages consisting of empathy, problem definition, idea generation, making explicit prototypes, and testing. These processes aim at helping students embrace PjBL learning to engage their feelings regarding the expressive and

social aspects of poetry, notice difficulties in interpretation, brainstorm new approaches and improvement activities, and critically assess the learned material with the assistance of feedback and reflective processes (Buphate & Esteban, 2022; Cleminson & Cowie, 2021).

Design Thinking is an important approach in the era of project-based learning, especially in language education, because reading poetry involves critical thinking as well as social awareness. Several earlier investigations have shown a growing interest in exposition. Many have demonstrated that Design Thinking specifically helps to cultivate openness and improve social presence, collaborative problem-solving (Design Thinking and communication tools: turning students into teachers, n. pattern) in the classroom (Buphate & Esteban, 2022; Cleminson & Cowie, 2021). Moreover, the usage of forward-looking curriculum and technology-integrated project-based teaching environments has been closely tied to higher levels of learner involvement, interaction, and critical involvement during in-class work (Arqam & Asrifan, 2024; Erdiana & Yasin, 2025). Within the practice of teaching poems, perhaps some methods might facilitate the process of meaning-making and enable students to enhance creative writing skills as they become more aware and involved with the text of the poems available.

A number of different studies address the integration of project-based learning into language arts programs and reading interventions. Song et al., (2024) showed that PjBL substantially increased student achievement in reading and motivation towards learning via engaging context-rich tasks. Previous studies have shown that PjBL can support higher-order thinking and language learning; however, most of these studies have not specifically examined how PjBL facilitates students' interpretation of poetic language and meaning. Equally impressive are the findings of Ayoub Moubareck (2022) reporting that when being involved in creating certain reading materials, learners spent much more time and enjoyed better reading scores and participation in classwork. Other academic sources assert the positive role of PjBL for independent learning, cooperative learning, good communication, and educational gains. However, there are some challenges of implementing PjBL which have been identified to be mainly due to lack of self-efficacy of teachers, limited time, and the complexity of assessment (Kavlu, 2020). Similarly, studies on Design Thinking have mainly emphasized creativity, innovation, and problem-solving, but have rarely connected these processes to poetry comprehension, literary interpretation, and students' emotional engagement with poetic texts.

Therefore, the main research gap lies in the limited evidence on how PjBL and Design Thinking can be integrated as a unified instructional model for poetry learning. Previous research has not sufficiently explained how such integration can address students' difficulties in interpreting figurative language, constructing poetic meaning, and presenting literary responses through collaborative projects. Accordingly, this study addresses the gap by integrating PjBL as the project framework and Design Thinking as the iterative process for guiding students' inquiry, interpretation, creative production, and reflection in poetry learning. Such an approach is expected to make poetry learning more meaningful because it allows students to interact actively and creatively with poetic texts through analysis, interpretation, project development, and reflection (Rosenblatt, 1978; Bell, 2010).

This study aims to examine how the integrated PjBL-Design Thinking model supports students' poetry comprehension, classroom participation, and emotional engagement within a CAR context. This work has as its theoretical contribution the utilization of constructivist literary pedagogy that combines project work, cooperative learning, reader response theory and people-centered pedagogy. The outcomes of the

research are largely also relevant for teachers who are often affected by problems related to student engagement, such as the impossibility of promoting dialogue, group work or second-dance activity. Interest, art, refrains – all these were withdrawn from the poetic language in favour of the dominant feminine poetic style. Lastly, the shift in poetry reading instruction is expected to help students read poems more meaningfully and develop varied interpretations through active engagement with literary texts (Rosenblatt, 1978; Lazar, 1993).

Method

Research Design

This study used Classroom Action Research (CAR) to assist in comprehension of poetry content among students through the inclusion of Project-Based Learning and Design Thinking. The specific CAR model that was employed in this case was suggested by Kemmis and McTaggart and has 4 key stages; planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. The study was conducted collaboratively by the researcher and the English teacher in three cycles. Each cycle consisted of instructional activities conducted in three meetings, followed by an assessment session. The pursuance of the cycles aimed at addressing the potentials of a student known in the domain of pedagogy, applying remedy measures in class, observing the changes as influenced by the actions taken and reviews the level of achievement. In between these cycles reflection was done to identify changes or improvements that had to be made until the cycle achieved the set objective.

Research Setting and Participants

The research was carried out in a public high school in Malang, Eastern Java, Indonesia, within the second semester of the 2025/2026 academic year. The study was limited to the pupils of social studies groups. The average number of students was 32, 11th year students in the age group of 16-17/18 years old, among them represented 18:14 female and male students respectively. The subject was a particular class chosen purposefully after an initial assessment revealed that the students were not only challenged in dealing with poetry, basically in such aspects as pointing out metaphors, meanings, and evaluations of texts, but also that the students were quiet and did not participate in reading activities very much. The target time for the study was the period between January 2026 and March 2026.

Preliminary Study

Preliminary data collection aimed to provide an overview of the existing problems in the classroom, prior to the commencement of the action research. The results of the data indicate that more students fail to understand poetry because, for starters, they have very few words in their lexicon. It is also difficult for them to operate at an analytical level. Finally, most are apathetic and rarely actively engage in the discussions in literature, for almost every. One can see nervous and unaware vagrant students hanging on to simple, clear, safe opinions and understandings that are being dispensed voluntarily by their teachers. What is further regrettable in a number of schools is that poetry is seen through the prism of wisdom acquired from different bards, and literature remains an empty book that is attempted to memorize on paper after a ton of instructions have been given. It may also be problematic that the functional ability of teaching staff here can secure more than three paragraphs at once. It has also been proven by the low performance of the learners on poetry tests, in which just forty percent of them were able to achieve the passing score of seventy-five percent. In this regard, it was proposed that the conventional teacher-

centered instruction and the relevant activities provided in the instructional material should be replaced with an engaging method of teaching. In the – Effective teaching in complex subjects like literature and poetry would need such an alternative design and teaching method.

Research Procedure

Planning Stage

At the preparation stage, the researcher had predefined all the materials for the instructional and research program that would have been needed before the action took place. A set of lesson plans was developed by integrating key elements of Project-Based Learning and Design Thinking, aligned with the principles of the Kurikulum Merdeka and the Profil Pelajar Pancasila, particularly critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and learner autonomy. Provisions of the relevant teaching resources, that is, learning materials, poetry texts, AV aids, study questions, and general rather than individualized tasks provided for group efforts, were designed to create opportunities for active participation of the students in the process of learning. For purposes of research, how students performed was assessed by the researcher by creating observation sheets, interview guides, field notes, and an achievement test that allowed both qualitative and quantitative data to be collected. The researcher even stated what they wanted the students to learn, how and why they decided to do what they did and their method of assessing the progress and the extent of it, well before introducing the intervention in the classroom.

Acting Stage

During the implementation phase, subject matter goals were presented through lesson plans, and teaching and learning activities were assessed against the lesson plans' content. In the process of learning, students were able to combine both Project-Based Learning and Design Thinking tools to improve their understanding of poetry. Students were also made to read and analyze poetry as a group before picking the key elements, and writing others in their own words, while generating creative representations on their projects that are poem-related. The process of Design Thinking, in line with the analysis of literary text, entailed feeling the vibe represented in the text, identifying the challenges of its interpretation, imagining possible outcomes, coming up with new ways of representing the text, and, as in any creative process, presenting the work of art that has been built up. When doing the mentioned activities, the teacher assisted in the conversations, pushed students to think critically, and actively engaged them while in school. To make all the activities successful, instructional aids were prepared for learners, such as multimedia presentations, illustrations, and group activities.

Observing Stage

The observing stage is a phase of the study in which the researcher and the teacher watch learners' instructional activities while working together. There were also multiple fibers of eye objectives, which gauged how students engaged with the material, how participating groups worked together, any responses the students had once reading a given poem, how much effort the students invested, and what the behavior was like from the pupils when, what should have been, the most fun earlier is now organized as a poem. In addition, when learners were engaged in projects, those who were paying attention to the behavior of learners in the target language also monitored drinking behavior, communication patterns, and the resolution of communicative problems in the learners.

Furthermore, their performance was assessed by their course activities, poster presentations, or end-of-cycle assessments. Apart from catering for the participants offered in class as a necessity, classroom assignments, project reports, presentations, and achievement tests given at the end of each age level were dependent on the intrusion of quests. For it was the procedures of the appraisal that helped this age level positional achievement to be gauged.

Reflecting Stage

At the end of each cycle, the researcher and the English teacher conducted reflection based on observation results, field notes, students' scores, and classroom responses. The reflection was used to evaluate the implemented actions and determine revisions for the next cycle. Rather than generic retrospection, the process was keen on the details in terms of assessing the strengths, weaknesses, hurdles, and attitudes of the students to the particular instructional activities. The triangulation of the information from students' scores, observations, and student-student interactions was used by the researcher to check if the objectives had been met. Some of the identified cases of restriction from the reflections of the first cycle have been pointed out as poor percentage participation in groups, less ability to utilize the given time frame effectively, and inability of the students to interpret metaphors or simile forms of language. A number of modifications were done in the subsequent cycle regarding the enhanced themes, orientation of instruction, and the group activity.

Research Instruments

The study employed various research tools to obtain most, if not all, of the data required on students' learning processes and learning outcomes. The main source of data for observation was the observation sheets used to track students' classroom interactions, participation, provision of responses and completion of tasks or activities. Field notes were compiled in order to get a bearing of any classroom settings, student conduct and cues or issues that the teacher must face during the tuition. Information about the study was obtained through the administration of interviews to the students, where students' perceptions and experiences of the implemented learning strategy were sought. It is also worth noting that periodically, at the conclusion of every cycle, the students were subjected to poetry comprehension tests. In addition, evidence was obtained in the form of photographs, the students' project works, and the classroom recordings, which were meant to complement the results obtained during the study.

Data Collection

Several data-gathering techniques were employed in the study to capture all aspects of the instructional action. During the teaching process, classroom observation was implemented with the specific aim of determining student activity and interaction. There were also some interviews conducted after every cycle so as to explore how the targeted students were receiving the strategy. For purposes of grading and fashion, a test was also of importance and conducted in poetry at the end of every cycle. Furthermore, both soft and hard copy resources, such as students' coursework and exam papers, a series of photographs and records and even PowerPoint presentations made during the monitoring period, were collected. Using a blend of these methods, the researcher was able to gather both qualitative and quantitative data bearing the expected outcomes of all the schemes.

Data Analysis

Quantitative data analysis

The student achievement test data were analyzed by getting the mean score for the students. In addition, the data was analyzed using the proportion of learning mastery percent. The former was used for ascertaining the extent of the improvement in the students' ability in understanding poetry across the cycles, and the latter served the purpose of singling out for analysis what proportion of students was able to attain a passing grade of at least 75%. In evaluating whether the instructional method was effective, part of their scores was compared with those obtained in the previous and next cycle of poetry.

Qualitative data analysis

The analysis of the obtained Qualitative data from the observation sheets, interviews, field notes and documents was done using application of the qualitative data analysis procedures, which comprised data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Prior to any interpretation, the researcher first coded, proofread and examined the data that were acquired based on the new key issues, which included: students' involvement and activity, interaction, collaborative work, and classroom dialogue. The material was later illustrated so as to attain meaningful interpretation and appreciation. The last phase of the research was based on action, where a summary was made to establish the issue with respect to repetition and assessment of the learning strategy that was applied.

Criteria of Success

The action was considered successful when at least 75% of students scored 75 or above in the poetry comprehension test. This success criterion was aligned with the principles of the Kurikulum Merdeka and P5, particularly in supporting critical reasoning, creativity, collaboration, and learner autonomy through project-based poetry learning. The second target was that the students were responsive and actively participated in all the activities executed in class, evidenced by increased interaction in discussion, group projects, and classroom speeches. Again, students were expected to be exposed to the positive learning process and thus gained confidence within the text phrase. However, where there was failure to achieve the agreed-upon standards, there was a satisfaction that the following cycle would concentrate on making revisions to the target without any other changes being acceptable.

Trustworthiness or Validity

Enhancing the credibility of the results, the study adopted methodological triangulation. Information collected from observations in classrooms, interviews conducted, achievements done in terms of examinations, and documents obtained were analyzed and compared in order to check their consistency and accuracy. Investigator triangulation was also applied, as the researcher collaborated with the classroom teacher during observation and reflection. Additionally, about some possible observations and answers during the interview, the researcher implemented the Fine checking technique in a way that the collected data will not be misinterpreted by ensuring that the information is also supported by the views of respondents.

Ethical Considerations

The researcher ensured that all activities performed in the course of this research were ethically sound. The study was allowed to begin only after acquiring the required approvals from the school head and class teacher. An information session was conducted where the purpose of the study and its procedures were explained to all the respondents who were asked to volunteer. The researcher treated the students' sex identity, nationality, and other related private information as confidential and only reserved them for academic use. Every data gathered was encrypted, and no data was taken from the datasets provided for the purposes of this study.

Results

The Implementation of Project-Based Learning and Design Thinking in Teaching Poetry Comprehension

The results demonstrated that Project-Based Learning (PjBL), when combined with Design Thinking, was efficiently added into the phases of the classroom action research. Students gradually became more active in discussing poetic meanings, asking questions, sharing interpretations, and revising their project outputs. Specifically, poetry learning shifted from teacher-centered explanation to collaborative exploration, creative interpretation, peer collaboration, and reflective engagement. Specifically, the poetry lesson was changed from a teacher-centered learning process. Here, students will be centric-oriented, doing teamwork, interpretation, creativity, goal-oriented, and reflective thinking. As the gems of the strategy, the students discussed some questions and words, defined some terms, cooperatively prepared some projects, and finally presented some solutions in the class. The teacher implemented the Design Thinking stages—empathize, define, ideate, prototype, and test—within the PjBL activities. In the prototyping stage, students transformed their poetry interpretations into creative outputs, such as visual representations of poetic meaning, group presentation drafts, and simple learning media, before receiving feedback and revising their work. Classroom observation results showed a consistent increase in students' participation across the research cycles. Based on the observation sheets, the participation score increased from 72.50 in Cycle 1 to 82.75 in Cycle 2 and further improved to 90.25 in Cycle 3. Similarly, active involvement improved over time from 68.75% in Cycle 1 to 84.38% in Cycle 2 and has reached 93.75% in Cycle 3. These findings show that the level of appreciation of poetry increased in students after the conduct of the joint project work that involved poetry learning activities.

Table 1. Students Classroom Participation During the Implementation

Observation Indicator	Cycle 1	Cycle 2	Cycle 3
Average Participation Score	72.50	82.75	90.25
Active Participation Percentage	68.75%	84.38%	93.75%
Group Collaboration Score	74.00	83.50	91.00

Table 1 clearly exemplifies a substantial increase in the rate of classroom activities from students pursuant to the project-based learning and design thinking. The overhead participation credit increased from 72.50 to 90.25 in Cycle 3, while active participation significantly increased from 68.75% to 93.75%. Additionally, the group collaboration score increased from 74.00 to 91.00, while the presentation confidence score increased from 70.50 to 89.75 in Cycle 3. This data indicates the class is breathing in more students' engagement and collaboration rather than fear and showing of low self-esteem as the lesson progresses.

The Improvement of Students Poetry Comprehension Achievement

The quantitative evidence showed a modest increase in students' poetry comprehension, with the most notable change appearing in the mastery percentage. The Design Thinking stages supported this process by guiding students to explore poetic themes, define interpretive problems, generate possible meanings, develop creative prototypes such as visual representations, presentation drafts, or simple interpretive media, and revise their interpretations through peer and teacher feedback. The mean score remained relatively stable across the cycles, while the lowest score and mastery percentage showed clearer improvement. This pattern suggests that the integrated PjBL-Design Thinking approach may have helped more students reach the expected mastery level, particularly those who initially struggled with poetry comprehension. However, this finding should be interpreted cautiously because the study did not isolate the individual effect of Design Thinking from PjBL. In line with Mujiono et al. (2024), who examined the integration of Design Thinking and PjBL in the Indonesian EFL context, the present study extends the discussion by applying this integrated framework specifically to poetry comprehension through classroom action research. Therefore, the findings indicate a positive change in students' poetry comprehension within the specific context of this classroom action research conducted in one public high school in Malang.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of Students Achievement Scores Across Research Cycles

Statistical Indicator	Cycle 1	Cycle 2	Cycle 3
Mean Score	84.13	85.51	85.86
Highest Score	89.67	90.00	90.00
Lowest Score	76.00	76.67	77.67
Standard Deviation	4.18	3.31	3.63
Mastery Percentage	71.88%	84.38%	93.75%

Table 2 shows that students tended to gain a higher level of poetry comprehension as they progressed through each of the three research cycles. With the overall average value in the 1st cycle of 84.13 points, this rate increased in Cycles 2 and 3, respectively, with the mean of up to 85.98 and 85.86. As for the uppermost mark, it witnessed a surge to 90.00 from a previous rate of 89.67, while the lower limit likewise gained an increase from 76.00 to 77.67. As the percentage of mastery for tasks performed in Cycles 1 and 2 numbers 71.88%, that of the final Cycle 3 is significantly larger, equaling to 93.75%. Such outcomes also suggest that there were more successful students in this cycle than in the other two. However, the comprehension percentage in the cycles has increased only in certain areas, such as the number of top scores recognition scores ($p < .05$). Even though the standard deviation score increased in %50 of the respondents in Cycle 3 after it decreased 40% in Cycle 2, there was still a marked improvement as compared with the earlier schools' performance that was thoroughly deficient.

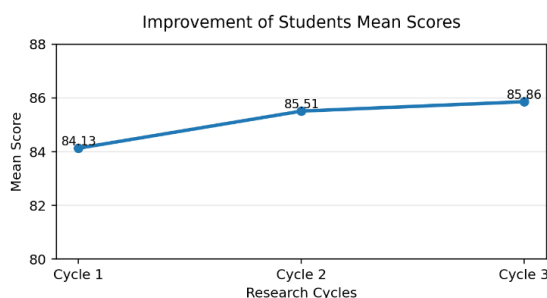


Figure 1. Line Chart of Mean Score Improvement

The mean score changed only slightly across the cycles. It increased from 84.13 in Cycle 1 to 85.98 in Cycle 2, before showing a small decrease to 85.86 in Cycle 3. Therefore, the achievement trend should be interpreted cautiously, as the most meaningful improvement was reflected in the mastery percentage rather than in the mean score. It then increased to 85.86 in Cycle 3, showing an additional improvement of 0.35 points. The total improvement from Cycle 1 to Cycle 3 was 1.73 points. This gradual increase suggests that students became more capable of identifying figurative language, interpreting symbolism, understanding imagery, and developing critical responses toward poetry texts.

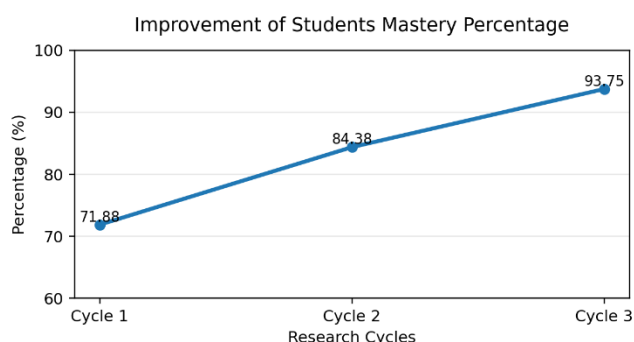


Figure 2. Line Chart of Students Mastery Percentage

Figure 2 shows that students' mastery percentage increased consistently across the three cycles, from 71.88% in Cycle 1 to 84.38% in Cycle 2 and 93.75% in Cycle 3. The percentage increased from 71.88% in Cycle 1 to 84.38% in Cycle 2 and reached 93.75% in Cycle 3. This trend indicates that the classroom actions helped more students reach the expected mastery criterion. However, this increase should be interpreted as an improvement in mastery distribution rather than as strong evidence of a substantial rise in overall mean scores.

Students Responses and Classroom Participation toward the Implementation of Project-Based Learning and Design Thinking

The qualitative findings that emerged from classroom observation, field notes, and interviews indicated that when Project-Based Learning meshed with Design Thinking was executed, students showed a high level of appreciation for it. It was observed that in the classroom, several students showed reluctance to participate entirely in the poem learning activities at the start of the study. Initially, some students were reluctant to answer or discuss poetry because they feared making mistakes and depended on the teacher's explanation. However, field notes showed that the empathy and ideation stages encouraged students to share personal responses and propose interpretations in groups, indicating a shift from passive learning to more active participation. Nonetheless, over time, as collaborative project-based activities became effective and therefore inevitable, the learners' behavior towards classroom activities improved; they became more active, and their motivation was heightened, enhancing classroom interaction.

During the different research cycles, the responses of students improved continually. Table 3 shows that students' motivation increased from 73.25 to 91.25, while classroom engagement rose from 74.00 to 92.50 across the cycles. This indicates stronger motivation and more active participation in poetry learning. Much the same way as the analysis for motivation scores, students saw an increase in their confidence levels. The confidence score increased from 71.50 in Cycle 1 to 89.00 by the end of Cycle 3. Also,

students' feedback about poetry was analyzed in the context of words, pictures, and actions. Correspondingly, the proportion of learners who favored the use of poetry in this way increased throughout the research process from 65.63% in Cycle 1 to 81.25% in Cycle 2. At the end of Cycle 3, 93.75% of all students had a positive idea about learning poetry.

Table 3. Students Responses toward the Implementation of PJBL and Design Thinking

Response Indicator	Cycle 1	Cycle 2	Cycle 3
Motivation Score	73.25	84.50	91.25
Confidence Score	71.50	82.75	89.00
Positive Response Percentage	65.63%	81.25%	93.75%
Classroom Engagement Score	74.00	85.25	92.50

Table 3 demonstrates an improvement of the students' attitude towards the implementation of Project-Based Learning infused with Design Thinking in different research stages. The score measuring the level of motivation rose from 73.25 to 91.5 and the score for confidence increased from 71.50 to 89. This suggests a shift from a negative to 65.63 per cent positive response, as illustrated in the Table below, which also translates into a difference in learning practice from low to high classroom engagement levels of 74.00 and 92.50 respectively. The results suggest that students gradually became more active and positive toward poetry learning, particularly through collaborative activities, creative projects, and enjoyable presentation tasks.

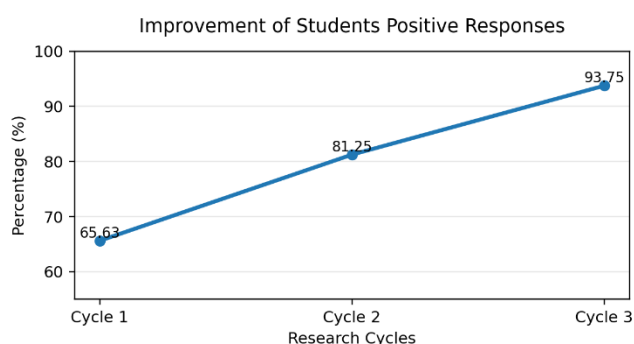


Figure 3. Line Chart of Students Positive Responses

The line chart of Figure 4 clearly shows that students' approval of the teaching method in the context of the research intensified significantly. Approval went up by 15.62% from Cycle 1 to Cycle 2 and increased by even more, 12.50 per cent in Cycle 2 to Cycle 3. Overall, the percentage showed a cumulative increase of 28.12 percentage points from Cycle 1 to Cycle 3. This means the hypothesis that progressively involved students feel more energized, self-assured, and interested in completing the curriculum when they are sharing the instructional space proved to be true.

In general, the results from answered questions in the logged projects reveal a documentary of the usage of the Design Thinking approach together with Project-based Learning elevated the value of poetry in terms of its implementation, communication achievement, and disposition towards learning. In contrast, the improvement in academic achievement was more modest than the gains in classroom participation and students' positive responses. The scores in all three stages indicate a steady increase in participation in the assignment, success in the assignment, level of learning, desire, self-assurance, and retention. Hence, such a method of teaching may be classified as capable of promoting greater understanding of poetic texts among the students in a classroom situation in an action research effort.

Discussion

This study has demonstrated that Project-Based Learning (PJBL) in conjunction with Design Thinking has produced a striking improvement in the understanding of poetry texts, classroom interaction and students' interest and participation in the teaching process conducted within the confines of a classroom. The empathy stage encouraged students to connect poetic themes with personal and social experiences, while the define stage helped them identify the central meanings, figurative expressions, and interpretive problems within the poems. The findings suggest that the use of PJBL with Design Thinking was effective in responding to the instructional issues that were unearthed in the survey, such as inactive learners, students who had a placebo approach to expounding on poetry, and students' problems in interpreting imagistic metaphors and related issues. Finally, the evaluation stage provided opportunities for peer and teacher feedback, which supported students in revising their interpretations and improving the clarity of their literary responses. Thus, Design Thinking contributed to the learning process by making poetry interpretation more iterative, reflective, collaborative, and learner-centered. Students who were initially reluctant to participate gradually became more willing to discuss poetic meanings, negotiate interpretations in groups, and present their responses with greater confidence.

All in all, the methods of PJBL and Design Thinking helped to transform the learning settings in which the students turned out to be not mere functional extensions of the teachers but as active agents of interpreting the literature. Project-based learning, as posited by Song et al., (2024), boosts student engagement in learning precisely because students come forward in real investigations, group studies and the final production stages when they have to think reflectively. The other position on education argues that the more pedagogical Design Thinking strategies are (to some extent) opposed to social communicative engagement, which is endorsed mostly by language educators. Specifically, the authors in the latter case show the development of competencies and attention of learners in terms of engagement with tasks through Design-cut teaching. What has also been confirmed by other authors is that there is a relationship between the use of project-based learning and the levels of class participation (Song et al., 2024).

The act of Classroom participation increases may be outlined in the scope of the Constructivist Theory, which suggests that knowledge is not a fixed entity, but rather a product of learners' activities, engagement, and reflection. Comprehension of poetry involves not just decoding arbitrary texts but also means deconstruction of symbolic language, reading between the lines, making and accounting emotional and intellectual decisions, etc. Working during the research has allowed us to implement group work, which has stranded the so-called interpretations in purposeful activities and did so in a process that even used what is known as Design Thinking, which included methodologies of empathising, problem definition, ideation, prototyping, and testing. These strategies seem to have curtailed students' overreliance on teachers' speech, from which they also gradually intensified their literary study attention (Buphate & Esteban, 2022; Rohmah et al., 2024).

Another important finding concerns the gradual change in students' poetry comprehension achievement across the action cycles. The mean score increased only modestly across the cycles. However, the most notable pattern was the increase in mastery percentage from 71.88% in Cycle 1 to 93.75% in Cycle 3. This pattern suggests that the classroom actions may have helped more students reach the expected learning criterion, although the design of this study does not allow a causal claim that Design Thinking was the main factor behind the improvement. This tends to concur with the

existing analysis that the utilization of the PJBL methodology demonstrates, in most cases, respect to the peculiarities of certain groups of learners consequent to the creation of a setting where learning is collaborative and such cognition-enhancing activities as multi-modality and scaffolded instruction are adopted to deconstruct complex literacy activities (Míguez-Souto & Gutiérrez-García, 2022; Ramos-Ramos & Botella Nicolás, 2022).

The data reveal that, on average, there has not been much change in the students' performance, whereas the percentage of 'very good' improved. It indicates the excellent results of those students who have difficulties with literary texts. It is important, as with students in schools, the understanding of poems is not 'flatly distributed' as it is in the case of all other topics, due to different levels of vocabulary mastery, interpretative inclinations and the very specifics of the reading skills. Through collaborative activities and repeated interpretation tasks, some students may have benefited from peer support, multiple exposures to poetic texts, and opportunities to construct meaning in different ways. Thus, the findings should be interpreted as positive classroom changes during the integrated intervention, rather than as evidence that Design Thinking alone directly caused the observed improvement. This is also typical of PJBL-based literacy education, where intervention does not serve as the improvement of the absolute achievement rates but provides access to the concept for those in need (Berrón Ruiz & Monreal Guerrero, 2020; Song et al., 2024).

In the aspect of literary instruction, the success in understanding the poetry is proof that the combination of PJBL and Design Thinking can play a pivotal role in responding to the one major problem of poetry instruction: the highly abstract and elusive poetic diction. Generally speaking, poems tend to involve something riddle-like or given to an enigma that cannot be captured only by reading on the surface level. Readers must decode historically invested or aesthetically rendered codes of symbolism, imagery, metaphor, produce a poem's internal voice, and understand implicit messages – none of which is explicable from or denied by the text. Contemporary poetry classrooms seeking student engagement are buoyed up by this research since the co-creation of poetry and the object for poetry is seen as an object for inquiry and art in which learners represent and model various aspects of the created poetry and its elements. The conclusion of our discussion is further analyzed to suggest that it is properly the reason for any administrative issues with the Project-Based Language Learning (PJBLL) approach, to the advantage of students. This discussion will analyze the application of PJBLL in literary courses like poetry and short story writing (Suwastini & Rahmayanti, 2024).

Poetry learning has gained a tremendous boost in both appreciation and enjoyment in how students respond to it, which is also a significant breakthrough in the study. Measures of students' interest, self-efficacy, responsiveness, and favorable attitudes perpetually went up from the first to the last cycles of the study. These results show that the experimental treatment influenced not just students' achievements but also their cognitive involvement, feelings, and emotions in the process of teaching literature. This cannot be overstressed because more often than not, interpretation of poetry demands that students take a stance, confront ambiguity, and participate in risk-taking in the course of discussion in the classroom. In the absence of such trust or in the presence of the fear of making mistakes, participation in literature primarily declines. The increase in self-confidence and eagerness noticed in the students is a sign that the change provided a warmer, more catalytic and psychosocially safe environment for practicing the instruction of poetry (Cleminson & Cowie, 2021; Erdiana & Yasin, 2025).

The development of emotions that the article describes can be understood as a result of the specific pedagogical features of Design Thinking, which is based on the

principles of empathy, taking chances, seeking feedback and adjustments rather than immediate good, and finally relishing the process of innovations. What is nice for the acquisition of such a paradigm, and how does the latter help at the point of learning literature, is especially good. After experiencing such a trend shift, those students who lacked confidence in expressing their thoughts and ideas might now participate more vigorously. This is because the classroom discourses were not 'fill-in-the-blank' types with reasonable questions but instead became subject to processes of creation and interpretation. Design Thinking was also reported as effective with respect to language learning in aspects of the improvement of skills, motivational justification and group processes – in particular, where trial and error is permissible for learners to reconceptualize their ideas and improve them after feedback and revision (Buphate & Esteban, 2022; Cleminson & Cowie, 2021).

The current research preserves existing literature indicating that problem-based learning (PJBL) fosters language literacy, provides for self-regulated learning, stimulates critical thinking, and encourages students' active involvement in the learning process. It has been revealed in many studies that collaboratively enacted meaning-making in textual activities, such as project - based learning, also helps learners develop an enquiry-style approach to their reading. All these refer to the indicated ideas, but they offer a more specific example that proves that the advantages extend to understanding and appreciating poetry, which includes the development of the skills of discerning thoughts or ideas or drawing meaning from symbols and literary devices. In this regard, the current study puts forward the suggestion that students' cognitive load can appreciably be reduced by integrating project-related strategies within the task demands by targeting not only expository and argumentative texts but also narrative and poetic texts in which students are supposed to engage in labored interactions (Imbaquingo & Cárdenas, 2023; Shi, 2024).

These results are also important, as they provide new and innovative insights into PJBL and the advantages of adding Design Thinking to the reading and analysis of literature. The existing research is focused on the use of PJBL in the design of study models. However, the inclusion of Design Thinking enriches this pattern with a somewhat more round cycle where considering and inquiring into the design of an object or a problem, and reflecting are added to the process. Empathizing with poetic voice, defining interpretative ambiguity, ideating meanings, prototyping creative responses and testing interpretations in collaborative discussion processes. It can easily be suggested that these activities could have accomplished even greater depths of entrenchment than conventional project tasks alone. From this explanation, we can comprehend that Design Thinking is a tool that enhances creativity, as opposed to only a framework for doing. Moreover, as shown in this study, it is possible to use Design Thinking in a complementary manner in teaching literature (Buphate & Esteban, 2022; Cleminson & Cowie, 2021). In terms of the theoretical structure, these conclusions assist in deepening the mago-realist constructivist literary pedagogy through highlighting the fact that the comprehension of poetry is much more successful when it is done actively than when the students are merely spoken to. It is equally reasonable, within the framework of literary education, to emphasize reader-response approaches that posit that the triangulation of the reader, the text, and its social space is significant. Within this study, it provides a way to improve various textual analysis activities through dialogues/critique, designing frameworks and various projects that 'get consumed' as well as giving lots of feedback. Moreover, these teaching methods do more than to enhance comprehension but are also related to aspects

of critical literacy, reading, writing and language and yet reflective of literature (Rohmah et al., 2024; Song et al., 2025).

This practically means that teachers of literature and pressure students will have to change from teachers' dictation of literature to more student-centered ones that permit the use of inquiry, communication among learners, and availing poetic texts for the interpretation in a given way without implementing the last generations of scholars' then prevailing interpretations. Both PjBL and Design Thinking are incorporated in poetry learning because they are both rigid in molding cognition and free in encouraging creativity, and because they challenge students to avail themselves of vertical and horizontal interpreting of the literary text. In consequence of this type of instructional practices, however, the potential is unblocked, and students grow taking pleasure in the comprehension process of poetry, as well as they acquire critical thinking, communication, confidence, collaboration and interpretative literacy competencies, which are very much important in modern and advanced forms of pedagogy. Therefore, such a curriculum may be efficiently used as a teaching mode of literary education for learners at the high school level who are reluctant and non-participative in poetry due to being demotivated by the schools (Arqam & Asrifan, 2024; Song et al., 2025).

Conclusion

The findings have shown that the application of the learning approach in question significantly enhanced the results of understanding poetry among learners, as evidenced by gains in learning in the succeeding research cycles. The students displayed better skills and proficiency in identifying, understanding and analyzing any and all figurative, symbolic, imagery or implied meaning in their poetry texts. In other words, the use of elements such as integration of inquiry, project design, and creative approaches facilitated the in-depth understanding of literature, including poetry, in the classroom. These results also indicate that the synergy in the application of PjBL and Design Thinking created a different and more accelerated mode of teaching and learning poetry.

The data from the research in question has not only shown the significant improvement of the academic level, but has also confirmed changes in the behavior of the schoolchildren in the learning process, which were manifested in the increased level of in-class activities, active work in groups and presenting in front of the class, as well as motivation to learn and pleasure in learning poetry. Even students who were withdrawn and unresponsive convened for discussion, interpretation, and implementation in the form of group work and literary genres. It is worth mentioning that such an arrangement of instruction techniques, such as Project-Based Learning is grounded in constructivist and experiential learning, while Design Thinking originates from human-centered and creative problem-solving practices in the field of design. When integrated in language and literature instruction, both approaches can support students' active learning, language development, and appreciation of literary works. That is to say that the model not only has a theoretical basis on which it can be explained, but it is also possible to explain it in practical terms in reference to the poetry teaching methodology used in sections of language and literature courses.

Nevertheless, it is necessary to note that the scope decreases due to restrictions embedded in the study. It was conducted within a single classroom environment and lasted for a short period, and is based on classroom action research, thereby limiting generalization or model building. Future studies should examine the implementation of PjBL integrated with Design Thinking in broader school contexts, different student

populations, and various literary genres. Since this study was conducted within a limited period, the observed changes in students' participation and learning behavior should be interpreted cautiously. Longer-term studies are needed to determine whether these changes can be sustained beyond the classroom action cycles.

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