

**A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF PRIMARY 4 STUDENTS'
ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT AND PERCEPTION OF LEARNING
CHINESE AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE UNDER AN INQUIRY-
BASED LEARNING METHOD AT AN INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL
IN BANGKOK, THAILAND**

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Abstract: The objective of conducting this comparative research was to determine students' academic achievement in learning Chinese while being instructed under the teaching methodology of inquiry-based learning method in learning Chinese as a foreign language at an international school in Bangkok. How has learning under the inquiry-based learning method increased students' academic achievement and sufficiency for Primary 4 students, which prepared them sufficiently to pass their HSK (Hanyu Shuiping Kaoshi) Chinese proficiency test at their respective Chinese levels? This study examined both the effectiveness of the learning methodology and students' perception of their academic performance to determine how inquiry-based learning methods work in learning a foreign language. A pre-test and post-test were given to Primary 4 students in a Chinese class. The research was conducted from May 2020 to June 2020 in Chinese class. The topic was in Unit 1, "Greeting," which emphasized classroom activity, friends, and family. The lessons were conducted for four weeks, with 3 hours of class per week lasting for a total duration of 60 minutes. The sample size of this study was 18 students being instructed under the inquiry-based learning method. Results indicated that the student's academic achievement and performance in the Chinese language have increased in percentage under the inquiry-based learning methodology. The findings showed that the inquiry-based learning method results in higher achievement in students' academic performance. Students' perception of learning Chinese under the inquiry-based learning method was effective. Therefore, the findings of the study indicated a

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significant difference in gains instructed under the inquiry-based learning method at a significance level of .05 found in this study. Students achieved higher when exposed to inquiry-based learning methods in learning Chinese as a foreign language.

Keywords: Academic achievement in learning Chinese; Chinese as a foreign language; Hanyu Shuiping Kaoshi; Inquiry-based learning method;

Introduction

Chinese characters are made up of strokes, and learning to write these characters involves not only the number of strokes but also the order and the direction of each individual stroke. The approach of learning under the inquiry-based learning method will help students discover and answer their curiosity about how the Chinese characters have developed from ancient pictographic characters, which were largely based on things found in nature, to modern Chinese characters that we see today.

China's rise as the world's largest trading center and economic system has seen a parallel rise in the need for proficiency in the Chinese language. It is not surprising that there is paralleled growth in learning the Chinese language here in Thailand, as most of the Thais' ancestors are Chinese.

As technology advances, people can access more information and technology resources online. Teaching will not simply be focused on teachers becoming the resources. Compared to public schools in Thailand, international schools in Bangkok focus more on student-centered and inquired-based learning methods where students can use the resources they have to create, design, think, and solve problems as they do critical thinking.

The role of technology in teaching and learning Chinese characters are one of the most useful methods in teaching students in the 21st century (Zhan & Cheng, 2014). Online tools for language learning like Quizlet, Kahoot, Nearpod, online audio recording tools, videos, and podcasts are extremely useful in teaching and learning Chinese as a foreign language. Technology has become one of the world's most used resources. It is now used in education as seen in students' learning materials and assessments and language tests such as SAT Chinese subject test, AP Chinese Language and Culture Test, HSK (Hanyu Shuiping Kaoshi) test, and YCT (Youth Chinese Test). Chinese language teachers will have to use technology with standards in Chinese-language-teacher Education to guide students in their language achievement (Lin, Liu & Hu, 2013).