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Lecturer's Perception on the Integration of 21st Century Learning Skills in the Teaching of English Prose

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Abstract

This study aims at investigating lecturer's perception on the integration of 21st century learning skills or 4Cs in the teaching of English prose. This research employed a descriptive qualitative research design with a single case study approach. A semi-structured in-depth interview was used to obtain data from the subject of the research and the data was analyzed by using Braun and Clarke's six steps thematic analysis. The result of the research shows that (a) the lecturer has a positive perception on the integration of the 4Cs in the teaching of English prose; (b) the lecturer has a good perception and understanding on the content of the 4Cs; and (c) the lecturer also has good perception on the implementation of the 4Cs in the teaching of English prose by identifying four key elements related to the integration of the 4Cs in the teaching of English prose. The expressed perception aligns with the implementation of 4Cs in the teaching of English prose, where the lecturer strives to design English prose learning activities that are tailored to the elements of 4Cs to ensure that the target of improving students' 4Cs skills can be achieved. The present study implies the positive evaluation and comprehension of the lecturer, combined with the recognition of essential components for application, underline the prospect of expanding the quality of English composition education.

Keywords: 21st century learning skills, perception, English prose teaching

INTRODUCTION

Over the past two decades, the entire globe has experienced a period of profound change in various aspects, such as education, global trade and economy, technology and society. In education particularly, 21^{st} century skills become one of the most popular topics in all levels of education, from kindergarten to higher education (Singh et al., 2020). The 21^{st} century skills are a collection of several important skills formulated by the Partnership for 21^{st} Century Skills (P21) that should be given to the students in order to be successful in facing the challenge of workforce in 21^{st} century. The P21 identified a need to focus on 21^{st}

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century skills because workplace requirements have been shifted and expanded (Griffin & Care, 2015). These skills can help students to be better learners and prepare them for their future careers (Applied Educational System, 2020).

The 21st century skills broadly consist of three main skill sets or 3 Ls – *Learning Skills*, *Life Skills* and *Literacy Skills* (Singh et al., 2020; Stauffer, 2020). Learning skills encompass essential abilities for acquiring new knowledge, including critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and communication skills or 4 Cs. On the other hand, literacy skills are those that facilitate the creation and acquisition of knowledge through reading, media usage, and digital resources, including information literacy, media literacy, technology literacy, often referred to as IMT. Life skills are skills required for successfully leading everyday life which includes flexibility and adaptability, leadership and responsibility, initiative and self-direction, social and cross-cultural interaction or FLIPS (Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 2007; Singh et al., 2020; Stauffer, 2020).

The 21st century learning skills or 4Cs have become a global need and many countries have adopted or adapted the skills into their curriculum. The 4Cs are believed as the skills that are "required by an individual for his/her holistic development so that he/she can contribute to the progress and development of his society/nation and world" (Singh et al., 2020).

Many studies and researches have been conducted in many countries all over the world on the implementation practice of the 21st century learning skills. Trilling and Fadel (2009) suggests that every country in the world can share this universal vision of 21st century skills and can practice a common set of learning objectives and methods, and "every country can contribute to a global pool of expertise on how best to implement a 21st century education system, …an investment that produces a successful learning innovation in one country can have a large-scale effect as many other countries adopt and adapt the innovation for their own use" (Trilling & Fadel, 2009). Furthermore, Patrick Griffin, the project leader of Partnership for 21st century skills (P21), stated that most educational system in the world have embedded the 4 Cs skills into curriculum framework or related documents but "next steps in building upon this promising beginning should include…integration of research on specific classroom practices for developing 21st century skills" (Griffin & Care, 2015).

In response to the above statements, this study was conducted to see the integration of 21st century learning skills or 4Cs into material instruction on a specific classroom practice: English prose class. Although there have been so many researches on the integration of 4 Cs or 21st century learning skills in many different subjects from kindergarten to university levels but specific researches dealing with this 21st century learning skills in the teaching of literature (prose, poetry, and drama) are still very scarce.

There are several common problems found regarding the teaching of English prose. The main problem is a common perception of students who think that studying English prose is difficult because they have to read a lot and it is time-consumed. They perceive English prose to be uninteresting course since they do not like reading a lot while English prose class have abundance of novels and short stories to read. Their perception affects their mood when joining the English prose class. This is in line with a research result conducted by Susiowati and Sukarini (2017) in Indonesia. The other problem that is usually faced by students is language barrier. Some students have limited vocabulary and when they read literary works, they usually find many new vocabularies or new expressions which they are unfamiliar with. Many students still struggle with vocabulary when reading and analyzing English prose, which can limit their understanding of the text. Students' difficulty in understanding figurative language become the next problem in English prose class. Many students also

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struggle to understand figurative language, such as metaphors and similes, which can make it difficult for them to fully comprehend and analyze the text. Furthermore, problems may also occur from the teacher or the lecturer. When the lecturers' or teachers' method in teaching prose is not interesting and even make their students bored, students have low motivation and lack of confidence to express their ideas in front of the class. These problems are almost similar with the case found in Turkey (Isikli & Tarakcioglu, 2017).

The integration of 21st century learning skills or 4cs in the teaching of English prose is believed can stimulate students to think critically and encourage them to actively participate in classroom interaction (Kamp, 1999; Germaine et al., 2016). Using 4Cs-based instruction in teaching English prose can encourage teachers or lecturers to provide some interesting ways of teaching or communicative approaches to make students interested and enjoy the learning process. This integration is anticipated to empower students to comprehend passages, to read with fluency, to expand their vocabulary, and to find pleasure in both reading and writing. Also, it will enable the learners to extend their knowledge of vocabulary and structures and to become more proficient in the four language skills and develops the ability of speaking English correctly and fluently (Chambers & Gregory, 2006).

This study was aimed at investigating lecturer's perception on the integration of the 21st century learning skills or 4Cs in the teaching of English prose. The lecturer's perception can reflect how well he knows and understands the 4C skills and how good he will implement it into his teaching and learning process.

21st Century Learning Skills (4 Cs)

The 21st century learning skills, also referred to as the 4 Cs, educate students about the cognitive processes necessary to adapt to and thrive in a contemporary professional setting. The 4 Cs are *critical thinking skill*, *creativity skill*, *collaboration skill*, and *communication skill*. The critical thinking skill is to help students in finding solutions to problems, the creativity skill is designed to help students in thinking outside of the box, the collaboration skill is to help students in working with others; and the communication skill is to help students in talking to others.

1. Critical thinking skill

Critical thinking skill is usually defined as the practice of solving problems. Problem solving means approaching a problem responsively by working together and exchanging ideas and collaborative problem solving is particularly useful when dealing with problems that are complex (Griffin & Care, 2015). Critical thinking and problem solving are considered by many scholars to be the new basics of 21st century learning (Trilling & Fadel, 2009).

Critical thinking was originally developed as a western concept but it is now seen as an essential skill of 21st century education worldwide and has been recently the focus of many research articles and education conference's themes (Saleh, 2019). Critical thinking skills should be part of students' learning experience and schools should be responsible to develop and evaluate critical thinking skills through teaching and learning process (Firdaus et al., 2015) because it requires students to "acquire, process, interpret, rationalize, and critically analyze large volumes of often conflicting information to the point of making an informed decision and taking action in a timely fashion" (Ontario, 2016).

The importance of developing students' critical thinking skills has become the objective of education these days (Hakim et al., 2018). Through the acquisition of critical thinking skill, students do not merely memorize a set of facts or figures. Rather, they develop the ability to independently explore and uncover information. They proactively ask questions,

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engage with their surroundings, and even encourage others to think critically as well. Critical thinking skills are necessary for students to succeed in the future. Therefore, the skills of critical thinking should be applied and developed in core curriculum and teaching and learning process to produce students who the ability to think critically and become quality thinking future leaders (Firdaus et al., 2015; Asgharheidari & Tahriri, 2015).

2. Creativity skill

The skill of creativity involves the practice of thinking outside the box. Students can cultivate this ability by problem-solving, devising new systems, or simply experimenting with unexplored ideas and approaches. Creativity can also be defined as the ability to put creative thought into action and offer ideas that contribute value to addressing challenges (Venckuté et al., 2020). In addition, creativity empowers people to see concepts in a different light, leading to innovative thinking and problem solving (Applied Educational System, 2020) and it is the key to success in almost all areas of life, personal and professional (Kaufman & Sternberg, 2019). As a method of adaptation, creativity holds equal significance. By enabling students to perceive concepts from a fresh perspective, this skill becomes a driving force behind innovation.

Creativity can be taught and developed. It is based on something that everyone is born with: imagination. People from different backgrounds and educational experiences have made creative, innovative contributions to all aspects of art, culture, science, and knowledge (Trilling & Fadel, 2009). All students have the capacity to be creative. To develop this capacity, teachers should be there to lead and model creative learning through creative teaching (Bedir, 2019). They can be developed through practice over time (Trilling & Fadel, 2009) and are relevant in all subjects of the curriculum and all aspects of life (Lucas & Venckuté, 2020).

To implement creativity skill in classroom activities, the P21 prepared some descriptors of creativity. At least, creativity has three strands: thinking creatively, working creatively with others, and implementing innovations (Venckuté et al., 2020). From the creativity strands, creative thinking is the first action to be performed by students. Creative thinking can be imagining situations and events, generating new characters or scenarios, producing tentative explanations or solutions, and planning actions (Bedir, 2019). The key actors refer back to the teachers or lecturers. They need to find some different ways to trigger their students' creativity in more interesting activities.

3. Collaboration Skill

Collaboration skill means getting students to work together, achieve compromises, and get the best possible results from solving a problem (Stauffer, 2020). It is the practice of involving multiple people working together to achieve a common goal and is important because whether students realize it or not, they will probably work with other people for the rest of their lives (Applied Educational System, 2020).

Collaboration is a skill across professions and disciplines (Newell, C. Bain, 2018), needs a commitment to work skillfully with others in groups (Bedir, 2019), and aims to develop collective intelligence in terms of helping, suggesting, accepting, and negotiating through interactions with others mediated by technology (Henukh & Astra, 2021). Collaboration in a 21st century context requires the ability to "work in teams, learn from and contribute to the learning of others, use social networking skills, and demonstrate empathy in working with diverse others" (Ontario, 2016). Therefore, collaboration competency is usually described as the ability to learn from others; to understand and respect the needs,

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perspectives, and actions of others (empathy); to deal with conflicts in a group; to facilitate collaborative and participatory problem-solving (Straková & Cimermanová, 2018) and to work flexibly, effectively, and fairly with others to complete a collective task (Henukh & Astra, 2021).

Some definitions of collaboration presented above imply the sense of cooperation and sharing responsibility and accountability. In the context of teaching and learning, it refers to students working together to achieve a shared goal when every member has a role to play in accomplishing tasks towards that goal (Saleh, 2019). Teachers or lecturers who want to promote collaboration in their classes should understand and provide some activities to students in directing them to achieve collaborative skills (Henukh & Astra, 2021). Engaging in collaborative exercises assists students in comprehending how to effectively address problems, devise solutions, and determine the most suitable course of action. Furthermore, it provides them with valuable insights into the reality that others may not always share the same ideas as they do.

4. Communication Skill

Communication skill of 21st century learning skills is defined as the practice of conveying ideas by using a variety of methods (Applied Educational System, 2020) to express themselves effectively, whether in productive skills or receptive skills (Bedir, 2019). This skill is very important for students to learn how to convey ideas effectively among different personality types (Stauffer, 2020). It includes skills in conveying ideas clearly and persuasively orally and in writing, the ability to convey opinions in clear sentences, convey clear commands, and be able to motivate others through good speaking skills (Hasanah et al., 2020).

In 21st century context the skill refers not only to the ability to "communicate effectively, orally, in writing, and with a variety of digital tools" but also to listening skills (Ontario, 2016). Communication activities should be the main focus of teachers/lecturers who are really concerned with developing their students' communication skills. To achieve the aims of communication skill in classroom activities teachers/lecturers must develop communication-based activities to exchange information, feelings, and meaning through verbal and non-verbal messages; they also need to present their lessons using various channels of communication and multimedia formats, use tone of voice, facial expressions, gestures and body language effectively (Bedir, 2019).

The concept, however, is not always easy to be implemented in practice. Some problems may arise and the implementation of communication activities has been a serious challenge for the teachers due to different reasons (Kara, 2017). This includes difficulties in teaching listening, speaking, reading and writing which are resulted from some linguistic, personal, social and educational factors (Saleh, 2019). Therefore, the enhancement of students' communicative skills necessitates the adoption of a more interactive and communicative teaching approach by teachers. This can be achieved by incorporating activities like group work, role play and oral presentations into their teaching methods. The using of Think-Pair-Share (TPS) or Problem Based Learning (PBL) model can be used to enhance students' communication skill.

Teaching English Prose

In general, literature is classified into three categories or genres: prose, poetry, and drama. Prose is a genre in literature providing complex language use and extraordinary context which will give a unique challenge for students to understand the whole meaning

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(Rahman & Iwan, 2019). It consists of fiction and non-fiction work. Fiction is the form of any narrative or informative writing that deals with information or events that are not factual, but rather, imaginary, while non-fiction, deals exclusively with factual events, descriptions, and observations (Huan, 2020). Two core components become the identity of prose: (1) words in their best order and (2) telling stories or narration, the relating or recounting of a sequence of events or actions. It includes novels, romances, short stories, myths, essays, biographies, and diaries (Al-Hafizh, 2010).

The main purposes of teaching English prose are to improve students' competences. They are: literacy competence, linguistic competence, socio-cultural competence, and character-building competence. To improve those competences, lecturers should therefore find some alternative and interesting ways to attract students to read and follow their instruction during the teaching process of English prose subject. Lecturers should also establish an environment that encourages students to cultivate authentic responses to literary texts, emphasizing that a true understanding of literature can only be attained through the development literary competence.

Some lecturers usually use three traditional methods in teaching English prose: giving lecture, assign reading and discussion methods. These methods are mostly teacher-centered and give less portion to students to express the meaning of text they understand and inhibit students' personal response to the text (Ezeokoli, 2016). Some other teachers try to find some methods suitable to their students. A study conducted by (Norling, 2009) revealed that some teachers help their students to find new and exciting book that would enable them to develop their reading. Teachers also give a brief introduction to a text or reading the beginning of the book together with the students as a method to awaken interest. The supplementary methods are giving them presentation, summaries, and reviews (Norling, 2009). In addition, some teachers in United States schools adopted reader-response approach to complement teacher-centered instruction (Bean et al., 2015; Ezeokoli, 2016).

METHOD

This study employed a descriptive qualitative research design. Qualitative research, in its simplest form, involves using words as data, which collected and analyzed in various ways (Braun & Clarke, 2013). According to Merriam (2009), qualitative research aims to gain insight into how individuals who have personally experienced certain events interpret and understand those experiences. In order to be more focus in investigating the topic of this research, a case study approach was used.

According to Yin (2018), a case study is an empirical approach that delves deeply into the examination of a contemporary phenomenon, taking into account its real-world context, especially when the boundaries between the phenomenon and its context are not clearly defined. A case study also allows for phenomena to be studied in depth and to achieve this depth, and therefore it is considered a bounded system (Creswell, 2009), which allows for specific phenomena and events to be studied. In addition to that, to qualify as a case study, the data must be in some way representative of the phenomenon (Birnbaum et al., 2005). In case study research, it is necessary to operationalize the process of recruiting and gaining access to research participants.

The participants of this study are selected by using purposive sampling. This implies that the participants in this study are chosen by the researcher in accordance with the requirements and objectives of the research project. In this study, one lecturer who taught English prose course in English Literature study program in a higher education institution located in Makassar City, South Sulawesi, Indonesia, was chosen as the participant. This

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study employed the method of selecting the subject based on specific criteria (purposive selection) because the researcher attempts to discover unique aspects of the research topic in this study.

This research employed a semi-structured in-depth interview. This interview "combines predefined questions like those used in structured interviews with the open-ended exploration of an unstructured interview...to gather systematic information about a set of central topics, while also allowing some exploration when new issues or topics emerge" (Wilson, 2014). In this form of interview, the researcher has prepared an interview guide beforehand, but does not strictly follow it, neither in terms of the exact phrasing of questions nor the sequence in which the questions are presented (Braun & Clarke, 2013).

In this study, the collected data was analyzed by using thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within qualitative data (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). "It minimally organizes and describes your data set in (rich) detail. The goal of a thematic analysis is "to identify themes and use these themes to address the research or say something about an issue" (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). To achieve this goal, there are six steps to be conducted in doing thematic analysis according to Braun and Clarke (2006), they are: (a) familiarizing with the data; (b) generating initial codes; (c) searching for themes; (d) reviewing themes; (e) defining and naming themes; and (f) producing the report. The following is the explanation of the 6 phases of thematic analysis extracted from (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The researcher conducted in-depth interviews to the lecturer to investigate his overall perception towards the 21st century learning skills and its implementation in the teaching of English prose. The lecturer's perception is divided into two parts: on the content of the 21st century learning skills or the 4Cs and on the implementation of the 4Cs. Both perceptions of the lecturer are best described in the following table:

 Table 1. Lecturer Perception

No	The Lecturer's Perception on	
	The Content of 4Cs	The Implementation of 4Cs
1	Critical Thinking is the ability to solve problems	Good preparation
2	Creativity means thinking from a different angle	Students Centered Learning
3	Collaboration is working together to complete tasks collectively	Varied Learning Activities
4	Communication skill is the ability to express ideas and thoughts	Varied Learning Resources

From the table above, it can be explained that:

- 1. Generally, the lecturer has a positive perception on the integration of the 4Cs in the teaching of English prose because he can describe all information and knowledge about the 4Cs positively.
- 2. The lecturer has a good perception and understanding on the content of the 4Cs because he can express well the key statements related to each of the 4Cs.
- 3. The lecturer also has good perception on the implementation of the 4Cs in the teaching of English prose. He can identify four key elements to support the successfulness of the integration of the 4Cs in the teaching of English prose.

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Discussion

In general, the result of the finding shows that the lecturer has positive perception on the integration of the 4Cs in the teaching of English prose. Positive perception is a personal judgement about certain object positively or as expected. The positive perception comes from the individual satisfaction about certain object that becomes his source of perception, the individual knowledge, and the individual experience of the object perceived (Robbins, 2003). The lecturer's positive perception is his positive interpretation when evaluating information and knowledge related to the object that is perceived. In this case, if someone has positive perception, he tends to accept and support the object he perceives and this perception will affect him to do an action, that is positive action.

Regarding the lecturer's perception on the content of the 4Cs, the researcher concluded that the lecturer possessed the basic understanding of the 4C elements. He could relate the critical thinking skill to the concept of problem solving in general. This is in line with what the expert stated that critical thinking and problem solving are considered by many scholars to be the new basics of 21st century learning (Trilling & Fadel, 2009). The lecturer's perception on the critical thinking skill reflects that the competency in critical thinking is not just related to problem solving in generic sense, it can also be moreover, critical thinking explained as the ability to question norms, practices, and opinions and to reflect on someone's values, perceptions, and actions (Straková & Cimermanová, 2018). When discussing creativity skills, the lecturer was also able to explain well what he understands about creativity as part of the 4Cs. Creativity as a part of 21st century learning skills is widely known as the practice of thinking outside the box. The lecturer said that students can learn how to be creative by giving solution to problems, making systems, or just trying something they haven't tried before. He also added some other descriptions of creativity by stating that students' creativity skill could be improved by giving them creative ways of teaching which can encourage their creative thinking.

Similar response was shown by the lecturer when talking about collaboration skill, the lecturer could spontaneously describe the basic principle of collaboration skill as the part of 4Cs. The lecturer emphasized "working together" as the principle of collaboration skill. Students need to work with others in order to achieve common goal or objective. This is in line with what Stauffer (2020) states on collaboration skill that it means getting students to work together, achieve compromises, and get the best possible results from solving a problem (Stauffer, 2020). In relation to communication skill, the lecturer described it as a sharing idea process with other people in some ways and media forms. What he explained is related to the basic definition of communication skill as a part of the 4Cs which is commonly defined as the practice of conveying ideas by using a variety of methods to express themselves effectively, whether in productive skills or receptive skills (Bedir, 2019).

Concerning the implementation of 21st century learning skills-based instruction in the teaching of English prose, the perception constructed by the lecturer was certainly influenced by "the organization, identification, and interpretation of sensory information to represent and understand the environment. The researcher found that the lecturer's perception on the 21st century learning skills was formulated from his opinion, thought, feeling, and experience when implementing the strategy in his teaching of English prose.

Good preparation is the first point came to the lecturer's mind when discussing about the implementation of the 21st century learning skills or 4Cs. The opinion is based on the idea that implementing the 4Cs requires a separate learning design that is specifically designed from the beginning to emphasize the four skills of the 4Cs that are intended to be developed during the learning process. Good preparation will certainly make this 4Cs-based teaching

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run well and can produce the development of students' abilities as intended from the beginning. His emphasize on good preparation implied that 4Cs-based teaching cannot be implemented suddenly without any preparation before coming to the class.

The second point is students-centered learning. The lecturer claimed that 21st century learning skills focused more on students' active participation rather than on lecturer's instruction. It means that the lecturer is not the only source of information for students anymore. They could search for knowledge and information from anywhere and the lecturer should prepare some forms of activities which could facilitate the students in discussion, debating, or other learning activities in class. The statement on students-centered learning confirmed Dewey's concept on education reforms. Dewey stated that "...the old model of schooling—students sitting in rows, memorizing and reciting—was antiquated. Students should be active, not passive...They should cooperate, not compete." (Gibbon, 2019).

Regarding the third point of the lecturer's perception, varied learning activities, the researcher found that the lecturer had serious efforts to design varied learning activities not only to attract students' attention to actively follow the learning process but also to ensure that the activities were directed to improve students' competences in order to achieve the targeted 4C skills. He argued that the classroom activities need to be designed differently to keep the students interested and prevent their boredom. The activities should be varied according to the topic and the learning targets in every meeting. The lecturer also said that that when integrating 4C skills into the teaching the lecturer must be creative to determine which activities are appropriate for students to guide them improving their 4C skills and in the same time they can also achieve the goal of English prose teaching. At this point, designing activities during the preparation stage became very important. The lecturer confirmed the idea and added one important point that all the activities must be designed to be integrated with the targeted 4C skills.

The fourth point he proposed related to his perception on the implementation of 21st century learning skills-based instruction in the teaching of English prose was varied learning resources. He realized that the students could easily got access to various media in their every-day life. So, he tried to adapt his way of teaching to the needs and habits of the students. He thought that it was one way to approach the students and to ensure the success of his 4Cs-based teaching. He also insisted that online media were very interesting for the students. He thought that although most of literary works they discuss in the class were products of old works of famous authors but the analysis and discussion on those works are now available on online media or internet and they could be easily accessed by the students. Therefore, what he tried to do was encouraging and directing the students to access and read them outside the classroom and brought them to the class to be discussed with their peers. He believed that it would help them to have broader insight on the literary works they were learning or discussing.

CONCLUSION

From the findings, the lecturer holds a favorable viewpoint regarding the incorporation of 21st century learning skills, including the 4Cs, in the pedagogy of English prose. Perception encompasses an individual's subjective viewpoints, cognitive processes, personal encounters, and emotional responses pertaining to the subject matter of the 4Cs (communication, collaboration, critical thinking, and creativity) and its incorporation within the pedagogy of English prose. The instructor demonstrates a comprehensive comprehension of the 4Cs framework in the context of learning. The integration of the 4Cs elements into the English prose course creates a favorable perception of 4Cs-based education within the

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classroom learning environment. The stated viewpoint is consistent with the incorporation of the 4Cs framework in English prose instruction. In this approach, educators' endeavor to create English prose learning tasks that are specifically aligned with the components of the 4Cs, with the aim of effectively enhancing students' proficiency in these areas. This study highlights the significance of including the 4Cs into the instruction of English prose. The favorable perception and comprehension of the lecturer, along with the recognition of crucial components for application, underscore the possibility of improving the caliber of English composition education.

While there have been numerous studies on the importance of 21st-century skills in education, this research stands out due to its specific focus on the teaching of English prose. By narrowing down the context, this study offers nuanced insights that might not be evident in broader research. Furthermore, by employing a single case study approach, the research provides an in-depth understanding of a lecturer's perception, adding a layer of depth to the existing body of literature. This study, therefore, not only contributes to the academic discourse on the 4Cs but also offers practical insights for educators and institutions aiming to enhance the quality of English prose instruction.

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