Bridging the Gap: integrating cross-curricular integration in technical students' FYPs

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Abstract

Final-Year Projects (FYPs) within Malaysian TVET programs primarily focus on developing technical skills in students, but overlook the importance of vital communication skills for workplace preparedness. In this paper, FYP assessment rubrics from UTeM are analysed and found to give slight emphasis on language ability, specifically writing and presentation skills. This paper identifies gaps and recommends cross-curricular integration strategies that align with CEFR and IR 4.0 requirements. The integration of communication into FYPs, achieved through transforming rubrics, inter-faculty cooperation, and incorporating industry feedback, can lead to more comprehensive graduate development and improved employability success in Malaysia's evolving technical education context.

Keywords: cross-curricular integration; graduate employability; language proficiency; technical education.

1.0 Introduction

In the evolving climate of technical education, Final-Year Projects (FYPs) are not merely academic exercises—they are summative demonstrations of a student's readiness to make meaningful contributions to the industry. In the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) system of Malaysia, FYPs are the culmination of years of experience-oriented learning and technical problem-solving. While these projects effectively highlight students' technical acumen, one critical competency remains underdeveloped in a predictable fashion: communication.

It has been a historically crafted Malaysian TVET system that must meet the labour needs of fast-industrialising industries. As it first emerged during colonial times, with its initial emphasis on agriculture, mining, and manual crafts, the current system has gradually incorporated newer fields such as mechatronics, data science, and automotive technology. Nevertheless, the pedagogy behind TVET is generally skewed towards offering technical education, with a focus on both hard and soft skills, often at the expense of language, presentation, and written communication.

The Fourth Industrial Revolution (IR 4.0) has radically altered the definition of employability. Technical skills, though essential, are no longer enough. Graduates are now expected to be able to explain complex concepts, work with diverse audiences, and solve problems as part of a cross-cultural and interdisciplinary team. Communication is no longer a "nice-to-have" soft skill; it is an imperative survival skill for professionals.

Despite worldwide calls for holistic education, communication remains secondary, mainly in the development of FYP assessment rubrics in TVET institutions. Even where technical reports need to be submitted and oral presentations are presented, the primary focus of the assessment remains whether the technical solution is correct, rather than on how well it is communicated, justified, and contextualised. This lack is evident in employer feedback, where students may excel in design or diagnostics but struggle once required to explain their work to non-technical stakeholders, report on their findings, or perform well in team meetings.

Universiti Teknikal Malaysia Melaka (UTeM), another premier TVET-oriented institution in the nation, is faced with the same issue. An internal examination of its FYP rubrics reveals an inherent lack of prioritisation for communication aspects. Students are instructed to generate high-quality technical outputs. However, they are often offered little guidance or encouragement on expressing linguistic precision, presenting their ideas convincingly, or adapting to various communication settings.

It necessitates a core change in course design and evaluation. Cross-curricular integration—intelligent insertion of communication training across technical subjects—is a potential solution. This research examines the integration of language and communication skills into FYPs to make more employable, flexible graduates.

The purpose is twofold: firstly, to measure current FYP assessment practices against the coverage of communication; and second, to suggest pedagogical and structural reforms in line with industry and national education policy expectations. This way, the paper

contributes to the growing debate surrounding the need to break down disciplinary silos within TVET and develop a more integrated, industry-responsive graduate profile.

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Importance of Communication Skills in TVET Education
The promotion of communication skills as a key component in TVET students' education is gaining increasing recognition. Communication skills, which encompass both oral and written abilities, are at the core of graduate employability in an increasingly globalised and competitive world labour market (Billett, 2014; Satchwell, 2016). Whereas technical skills continue to form the core of TVET training, today's employers require graduates with the ability to express their ideas effectively, operate in teams and deal with a variety of stakeholders (Lynch, 2017; Rajab & Hamzah, 2020). In Malaysian TVET, the absence of technical competence compared to communication skills is particularly evident in FYPs, where students must demonstrate technical proficiency but often fail to present their work effectively using proper communication skills (Hussein, 2020).

Soft skills, such as communication, are part of graduate employability, according to the Malaysia Education Blueprint 2015-2025; however, these skills are not fully covered in TVET curricula (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2015). The report emphasises the need for a holistic approach to education that integrates technical proficiency with interpersonal and communication competencies, essential for success in the global workforce. Current research still confirms this trend. Suhaili, Razak, and Deni (2025) found that English proficiency, particularly in oral communication, significantly improves work performance among Malaysian TVET graduates. Likewise, Kamaruzaman et al. (2025) identified communication, teamwork, and flexibility as skills that are future-proof for the 21st-century TVET workforce.

2.2 Challenges in Cross-Curricular Integration in TVET
While incorporating communication skills into technical curricula is imperative, several challenges arise when applying this strategy.

The compartmentalisation of technical and non-technical courses in conventional TVET programs is a significant challenge. According to Maclean and Wilson (2013), this has the effect of constraining the establishment of interdisciplinary skills where language and communication are isolated from technical skills. This isolated strategy can lead to graduates who are highly technical but struggle to effectively communicate their thoughts, particularly in workplaces that involve teamwork, negotiation, and public communication (Lynch, 2017). Faculty preparation and curriculum inflexibility are also important impediments to effective cross-curriculum integration.

Miller and Fox's (2017) study found that TVET instructors often face challenges when asked to integrate communication-focused pedagogy in technical classes, primarily due to a lack of training in interdisciplinary teaching practices. This issue is particularly concerning

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in disciplines such as engineering and technology studies, where instructors may be uncertain about teaching non-technical skills, thereby widening the divide between technical and soft skills education (Zainuddin et al., 2019). The other issue identified by Muthusamy (2018) is the rigorous schedules in TVET curricula, which are generally densely packed with technical instruction. Teachers do not have sufficient time to integrate developing communication skills into projects, particularly in high-stakes activities like FYPs (Varela et al., 2016).

Noraini et al. (2024) note that the FYP rubrics of various Malaysian TVET faculties fail to prioritise communication criteria, perpetuating the siloed delivery of technical and language training. Such structural barriers hinder overall skills development.

2.3 International and Malaysian Cross-Curricular Integration

Several international cases have demonstrated effective methods for integrating communication skills into technical training programs.

In European vocational education, a system named "dual education" successfully integrates work experience and theoretical education, and more and more, the skills of communication have been incorporated into such models (OECD, 2017). For instance, in Switzerland and Germany, vocational education is structured to enable students to practice technical presentations and project-based learning, in which they must communicate effectively with industry experts (Grollmann et al., 2015). These approaches not only boost students' confidence in presenting technical knowledge but also equip them with improved workplace communication (Baethge, 2016). In Malaysia, the need for cross-curricular integration has been acknowledged in certain national policy documents, including the Malaysia Education Blueprint 2015-2025, which advocates for a more balanced education system that promotes the development of both technical and soft skills (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2015).

However, the integration of these practices into the execution of TVET programs remains irregular. According to research conducted by Sudirman et al. (2017), although the acknowledgement of their need in Malaysian TVET continues to be increasingly significant, this remains the developmental phase in curriculum integration. Most TVET courses focus solely on technical information, with little to no formal training in communication skills, rendering graduates unprepared for what the workforce has to offer. This is further corroborated by UTHM (2024), which emphasises that ESL and communication education are still "unsung powers" in TVET, often being relegated to a peripheral role rather than centrality in technical learning.

Concurrently, Mohd Khirulnizam and Azwin Rahim (2024) showed how an online speaking module based on tasks successfully improved the polytechnic students' oral proficiency, providing a feasible approach to instruction for subsequent FYPs.

2.4 English Role in International Employability for TVET Graduates

In this age of globalisation, English is the de facto language of the global industry. English communicative ability is crucial for the employability of Malaysian TVET graduates,

particularly within multinational organisations. The Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) has already been employed to establish English language standards in Malaysian education, and several universities have introduced courses that comply with CEFR levels. This is not, however, prevalent in technical courses, especially for FYP testing.

Suhaili et al.'s (2025) research suggests that subpar English communication ability reduces productivity during the first-year career phases, when graduates need to compose technical reports, hold meetings, or prepare presentation updates for non-Malaysians. It is not an issue of being grammatically correct, but confidence, clarity, and flexibility in transferring technical information.

2.5 Instructional Strategies for Integration of Communication

Throughout the globe, various pedagogies have successfully bridged this divide. Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), Problem-Based Learning (PBL), and collaborative pedagogy models have successfully integrated communication into technical curricula. At polytechnics in Singapore and Finland, students collaborate in multi-disciplinary project teams, commonly co-supervised by technical and language staff. These models provide comprehensive skill development, enabling students to improve simultaneously in both the engineering process and the skill of presenting their solutions and decisions effectively.

In the Malaysian context, recent research by Mohd Khirulnizam & Azwin Rahim (2024) supports this instructional design. Their research shows that task-based speaking modules—most notably those blended with real-world project settings—have a strong, positive effect on students' fluency and accuracy. This supports the feasibility of incorporating communication training into FYPs based on authentic, industry-related tasks.

3.0 Methodology

This study employs a qualitative research approach, emphasising rubric analysis in examining the use of language competencies in Final-Year Project (FYP) assessments across various technical programs at UTeM. The methodology comprises two components, i.e., rubric selection and rubric analysis.

3.1 Rubric Selection

The study examines the technical faculty rubric analysis at Universiti Teknikal Malaysia Melaka (UTeM). The rubric choice criteria were representativeness of the various disciplines, comprehensiveness of measurement of student performance, and alignment with national education policies. The rubrics were evaluated for weightage to communication skills, clarity of assessment descriptors, and alignment with employability competencies. Rubric selection criteria were (i) disciplinary range—guaranteeing cross-technical field insights; (ii) comprehensiveness—evaluating rubrics assessing written and verbal communication aspects; and (iii) alignment with national education policies—guaranteeing applicability to Malaysia Education Blueprint 2015–2025.

3.2 Rubric Analysis

The rubrics were analysed in an organised manner to gauge the extent of integration of communication competencies in FYP assessments. The analysis considered three dimensions: (1) weightage given to communication skills—ascertaining what percentage of marks was accounted for by language proficiency in written reports and presentations; (2) clarity of grading descriptors—evaluating to what extent communication-related competencies were defined in mark criteria; and (3) alignment with employability skills— checking whether communications aspects reflect industry requirements for workplace competencies.

Initial findings showed that while technical skills were critically examined, communication skills, including report writing, oral presentation, and problem resolution in a team setting, were hardly emphasised or vaguely defined.

4.0 Results

The assessment is broken into three items: Language Evaluation Criteria, Gaps in Language Proficiency, and Suggestions and Recommendations. The detailed analysis of the four Technology Engineering faculty rubrics is presented in Tables 1, 2, and 3 below.

Table 1: Language Evaluation Criteria

Criteria, Gap & Suggestions	Final Year Project Rubrics			
	Rubric 1	Rubric 2	Rubric 2	Rubric 3
Language Evaluation Criteria	*Minimal Weightage:* - The rubric allocates a minimal weightage of 0.50 to "Language," emphasizing grammar, spelling, and punctuation. While this addresses basic language mechanics, it does not evaluate the ability to convey complex technical ideas clearly or adapt language for diverse audiences. - The "Abstract" and "Chapter 1: Introduction" sections assess clarity and completeness but do not explicitly evaluate the linguistic style, coherence, or audience engagement.	*Lacks of Linguistics Clarity:* - The rubric includes a category, "Effective delivery of ideas," with a weightage of 1.50. This partially addresses oral language skills but focuses more on project familiarity and delivery rather than linguistic clarity, articulation, or audience engagement. - The "Poster" criterion evaluates the organization of content but does not assess the clarity or precision of the written language used.	*Emphasis is more on Technical Skills:* - Criteria such as "Project Planning," "Project Execution," and "Result and Analysis" centre on technical application, problem-solving, and data interpretation. - Marks are awarded based on the ability to perform experiments, analyse results, and achieve project objectives, with no explicit mention of communication skills.	*No Explicit Criteria for Language Skills:* - Sections like "Presentation Effectiveness" and "Ability to Answer Questions" might implicitly assume language proficiency but do not explicitly evaluate grammar, vocabulary, or clarity of expression.

This table consolidates the prevailing language assessment requirements used in the assessment of technical students' FYP.

It is predominantly technical and project-based, with little concern for linguistic lucidity and practical communication skills. The language assessment requirements, as outlined in the rubric, place considerable emphasis on technical and project-based competence, with limited consideration given to linguistic lucidity and communication capacity. For instance, the "Language" category, with a weightage of 0.50, primarily assesses grammar, spelling, and punctuation. The weightage is light, given the sophistication of the text, and it does not

efficiently test the ability to explain complex technical ideas or adapt language to different groups. Modules like the "Abstract" and "Chapter 1: Introduction" address technical content as complete and precise, but do not necessarily address linguistic style, coherence, or reader engagement.

Table 2: Language Proficiency Gaps

Criteria, Gap & Suggestions	Final Year Project Rubrics			
	Rubric 1	**Rubric 2**	**Rubric 2**	**Rubric 3**
Gaps in Language Proficiency Assessment	*Missing of Language Criterion:* - There is no criterion for assessing advanced language skills such as persuasive writing, logical flow, or the ability to contextualize technical content for non-expert audiences. - Communication skills are implied under categories like "Abstract" and "Conclusion," but they lack explicit, standalone evaluation.	*Lacks of Language Proficiency:* - Oral communication is evaluated primarily for its technical content delivery without explicit emphasis on presentation skills such as tone, vocabulary choice, and adaptability to audience needs. - The poster evaluation lacks a dedicated focus on the linguistic quality of the written content, including its ability to effectively communicate the project scope and results.	*Absence of Language and Communication Assessment:* - The rubrics lack specific criteria for evaluating students' ability to write comprehensive reports, deliver oral presentations, or effectively communicate technical findings to various stakeholders. - Presentation and documentation are implied but not explicitly defined or weighted in the evaluation process. *General Conduct and Ethics:* - While professional ethics and responsibilities are included, the evaluation does not address how well students articulate their ethical considerations or responsibilities in written or spoken formats. *Alignment with Broader Educational Goals:* - The lack of language-focused criteria suggests a missed opportunity to align the evaluation process with the interdisciplinary and communication-oriented objectives outlined in frameworks like the Malaysia Education Blueprint 2015-2025.	*Focus on Visual Aids Over Verbal Precision:* - The rubric emphasizes multimedia use and dressing, which are aspects of presentation, but does not assess how language impacts overall communication. *Literature Survey and Writing:* - Although there is a focus on "Using sufficient and related references," it does not address the student's ability to integrate and paraphrase sources effectively, which involves advanced language skills. *No Reference to Audience Engagement:* - Effective communication, particularly through language, is key to engaging an audience, but this is overlooked.

Table 3: Suggestions & Recommendations

Criteria, Gap & Suggestions	Final Year Project Rubrics			
	Rubric 1	**Rubric 2**	**Rubric 2**	**Rubric 3**
Suggestions & Recommendations	*Include Specific Sub-Criteria Under "Language"* - to evaluate coherence, readability, and the use of professional terminology. - Introduce a section focusing on how well the report communicates its findings to non-technical stakeholders.	*Expand "Effective Delivery of Ideas"* - Include articulation, vocabulary use, and adaptability in oral communication. - Add language-related sub-criteria for the poster evaluation, focusing on clarity, conciseness, and audience appropriateness.	*Incorporate Communication Metrics:* - Add explicit criteria for assessing report writing, clarity, structure, and technical documentation. - Include marks for oral presentations, evaluating aspects like articulation, audience engagement, and clarity of technical explanations. *Weightage for Language Proficiency:* - Allocate specific weightage for communication skills, ensuring a balanced evaluation that reflects both technical and soft skill development. *Support for Cross-Curricular Goals:* - Introduce collaborative exercises that integrate communication with technical tasks, encouraging peer feedback and interdisciplinary learning.	*Add Language Proficiency as a Criterion:* - Include an assessment of grammar, vocabulary, and clarity under sections like "Presentation Effectiveness." *Evaluate Written Communication:* - Introduce a criterion to assess the language used in project documents for coherence, conciseness, and professionalism. *Focus on Question Response Language:* - In the "Ability to Answer Questions" section, add a descriptor for evaluating how effectively the language is used to convey responses.

Table 2 identifies gaps in the current assessment framework regarding language proficiency, particularly in assessing the higher-order communication skills required for

professional and academic success. Table 2 also reveals broad gaps in assessing language ability, particularly in more advanced communication skills.

No specific measure is described for assessing persuasive writing, logical coherence, or the ability to contextualise technical information for non-specialist readers. While communication skills are mentioned in sections such as "Abstract" and "Conclusion," they are not explicitly or systematically assessed. Similarly, oral communication is primarily judged on the technical content delivery, as opposed to presentation features such as tone, vocabulary use, or responsiveness to diverse audiences. Poster grading focuses on visual organisation but overlooks the linguistic value of textual content, which is essential for projecting findings and communicating the scope effectively.

Table 3 presents suggestions and proposals to enhance the evaluation rubric by incorporating specific language evaluation criteria that improve students' communication skills within technical settings. Among the suggestions and proposals in Table 3 above, some have been identified and can thus be applied while creating an integrated and balanced framework of evaluation. One of these includes the addition of sub-criteria, such as coherence, readability, and the use of professional terms, under the "Language" category.

Moreover, the addition of a special section dedicated to evaluating how reports present their findings to non-technical parties would equip the students with the capability of conveying complex ideas to different stakeholders effectively.

The "Effective Delivery of Ideas" section can be elaborated to include articulation, vocabulary usage, and flexibility of delivery.   For poster evaluations, the addition of sub-criteria on clarity, brevity, and suitability for the audience would ensure that the written becomes a supplement to the visual and augments communication in combination. Adding explicit communication metrics to the rubric would make it even more robust by evaluating report writing, technical documentation, and the clarity of technical explanations in oral presentations. Attendance-grabbing qualities and articulation may also be noted, thus motivating students to develop comprehensive presentation skills.

5.0 Discussion

5.1 The Disproportionate Focus on Technical Criteria
The findings of the rubric analysis reveal a continuing trend: FYP assessments in UTeM and other Malaysian TVET universities continue to prioritise technical deliverables—such as design accuracy, innovation, and system functionality—at the expense of relegating language and communication to a secondary consideration. This overlooks the needs of modern workplaces, where engineers, technologists, and technicians are expected to collaborate in multidisciplinary teams, create client-focused documentation, and communicate information to diverse stakeholders.

This asymmetry reveals a pedagogical shortfall in how "technical competence" is defined and explored. Effective communication capability needs to be conceived as an

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enabler of technical ability, not an add-on. Graduates need to be not only able to design a solution, but to sell its value, justify its rationale, and guide others in its implementation. These are far from soft, optional skills—they are basic professional competencies.

Additionally, the absence of sub-criteria in rubrics—i.e., argument coherence, structure clarity, tone, and adaptability to the audience—conveys a clear message to students: communication is not a significant factor in the final evaluation. This perception decreases motivation to develop these competencies, thereby contributing to the actual competency gap that employers later highlight.

5.2 Real-World Communication: A Missing Dimension
TVET graduates can expect to transition into fast-paced industries where the ability to respond briefly and clearly—whether in a design meeting, progress report, or customer support scenario—is as important as the technical solution itself. Nevertheless, most FYP rubrics address communication in either tokenistic or abstract language, without any indication of how students are meant to demonstrate these skills.

During the FYP presentation period, for instance, students fall back on reading from slides or reciting scripts, afraid to improvise or answer questions. This is not due to a lack of ideas, but rather fear generated by a lack of communicative confidence. Such tendencies are fostered by rubrics that fail to reward spontaneity, adaptability, or critical thinking in oral presentation.

This is a liability from the perspective of global competitiveness. Malaysia's aspiration to be a high-income, innovation-driven nation rests not only on technical proficiency, but also on how its graduates perform in collaborative international research, client negotiations, and multicultural project teams.

5.3 IR4.0 and CEFR: Opportunities for Strategic Alignment
The FYP reform discussion must be viewed within the broader policy environment, particularly regarding IR4.0 and CEFR blueprints.

IR 4.0 demands graduates who are flexible, interdependent, and capable of operating in complex systems—both technological and human. Communication lies at the centre of this project. For example, engineers need to be able to explain AI-driven processes to non-technical stakeholders or document code reasoning in a way that is readable across departments. These tasks require far more than grammar—they require rhetorical sensitivity, audience awareness, and the ability to structure information persuasively.

Similarly, the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), widely applied in Malaysian education, provides a framework for assessing linguistic competence. Its principles, nevertheless, find little application in technical fields. If FYP rubrics were matched with CEFR descriptors—particularly in writing (e.g., B2: "can write clear, detailed texts on a wide range of subjects") and speaking (e.g., B2: "can interact with fluency and spontaneity")—it would provide both students and teachers with more precise targets and observable outcomes.

The embedding of CEFR-based results in FYPs would not only support language development but also institutional accountability. Students would be better placed to self-assess, teachers would have more defined targets, and institutions would have a mechanism to ensure congruence between graduate output and national standards.

5.4 Pedagogical Innovations for Cross-Curricular Integration

Cross-curricular integration need not mean the inclusion of "more English lessons" in already saturated technical curricula. Instead, the aim is to incorporate communication tasks into technical projects through interdisciplinary cooperation.

Such innovations are illustrated in:

- Co-teaching arrangements, where English lecturers work with technical supervisors in FYP development, offering linguistic feedback on reports, pitches, and presentations.
- Integrated workshops, where students learn to present technically and gain feedback on both presentation and content.
- Authentic simulation exercises, such as client briefings, product demonstrations, or technical writing projects (e.g., manual, executive summary, or product specification).
- Peer review processes, in which students critique and review each other's writing or presentation drafts using communication-specific rubrics.

These methods do not require curriculum redesign, but redesigning how existing assessments can be developed to develop several competencies simultaneously.


6.0 Conclusion

The inclusion of languages and communication skills in the FYP presents an important thrust to bring Malaysian TVET curricula closer to the interdisciplinary challenges of today's workplace requirements. It is plausible that TVET institutions can produce the holistic skill set essential to thriving within an interconnected global system by mitigating the loopholes in the present-day FYP rubric, coupled with cross-curricular approaches. TVET institutions can equip students with the comprehensive skill set needed for success in an interconnected world by addressing the deficiencies in current FYP rubrics and embracing cross-curricular approaches.

Future recommendations for research and practice should involve (i) developing common FYP rubrics with the integration of language proficiency and communication skills, (ii) faculty training on pedagogies for interdisciplinary teaching, (iii) encouragement of collaboration between technical and language educators in developing integrated learning activities; and longitudinal studies to determine if cross-curricular integration enhances student outcomes. By embracing these strategies, Malaysian TVET programs can fulfil their mission of producing technically competent graduates who can successfully operate in diverse and dynamic professional environments.

6.1 Implementation Framework

In order to implement these recommendations, a Three-Phase Implementation Model is proposed:

Figure 1: Three-Phase Implementation Model for FYP Cross-Curricular Integration
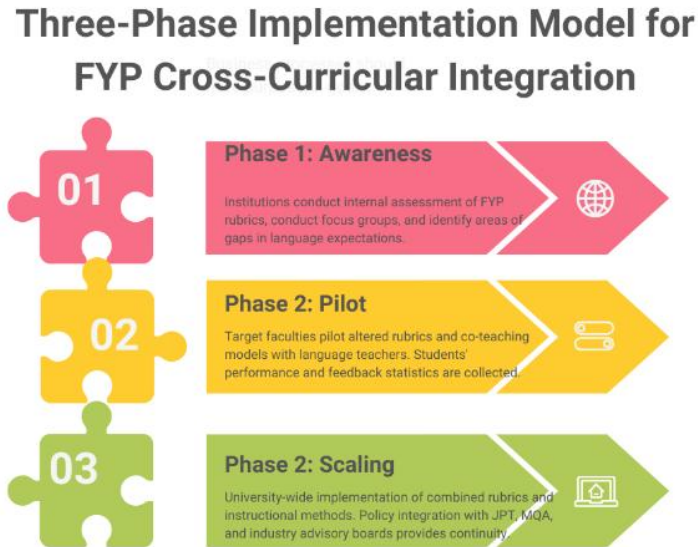
Generally, the disparity in FYP assessments is not one of language failure, but rather a result of pedagogical and structural design issues. Malaysian TVET institutions can enhance the readiness of their graduates by integrating language and technical material into a single rubric.

Therefore, including communication items does not dilute technical content; it enhances students' capacity to thrive in a demanding, international job market. The key recommendations are: i) develop a national FYP rubric template with communication descriptors; ii) develop co-teaching partnerships between technical and language teachers; iii) infuse CEFR-mapped learning objectives into FYP assessments; iv) offer training subsidies for upskilling faculty in integrated instruction; and roll out pilot projects in at least three Malaysian TVET universities by 2026.

7.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

This study reveals a significant shortfall in the integration and evaluation of communication skills in Malaysian TVET Final-Year Projects. As important as technical competence remains, the absence of formal, substantive measurement of communication competencies

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erodes graduates' employability and adaptability. In an era marked by digital disruption, interdisciplinary collaboration, and globalisation, this can no longer be continued.

TVET graduates must not only be able to design solutions, but also to explain, justify, document, and present them to various audiences. The inclusion of communication outcomes in FYPs is a viable, scalable, and high-impact solution to bridging this gap.
Key Recommendations:
- Develop national FYP rubric templates with CEFR-aligned communication descriptors.
- Facilitate co-teaching partnerships between technical lecturers and English educators.
- Embed audience-focused tasks (e.g., presentations, executive summaries) within FYP milestones.
- Offer targeted faculty development in cross-curricular pedagogy and rubric design.
- Launch pilot projects in a minimum of three Malaysian TVET institutions by 2026, with industry involvement in rubric validation.

With these reforms, Malaysia's TVET institutions can move toward the vision outlined in the Malaysia Education Blueprint 2015–2025: graduates who are balanced, workplace-ready, and equipped for both technical excellence and human connection that matters.

Article Contribution to the Related Field of Study

This study adds value to TVET, curriculum development, and ESP by focusing on the long-standing discrepancy between the acquisition of technical skills and the development of communication skills in Malaysian TVET institutions. It brings into focus the negligence of communication skills in FYP assessment and training, demonstrating how existing rubrics overemphasise technical products at the expense of students' capacity to express, record, and present their work, which are essential abilities within both domestic and international workplaces.

The study recommends a pedagogically viable, interdisciplinary instructional approach that integrates communications components into technical FYPs in support of the Malaysia Education Blueprint 2015–2025 and IR4.0 readiness. It validates the growing necessity for transformative pedagogies in TVET, where technical material, language, and communication are seen as interconnected in an integral manner rather than separately.

In addition, the paper lays the groundwork for future research in instructional design, rubric development, and co-teaching of technical and language teachers. The paper serves as a valuable guideline for policymakers, curriculum planners, and educators interested in enhancing graduate employability, particularly in multicultural and multilingual workplaces. Lastly, this research offers a pragmatic roadmap toward more cohesive, employer-oriented, and communication-enhanced technical education.

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