

CREATING ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP THROUGH A PROJECT-BASED LEARNING MANAGEMENT CLASS

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Abstract:

This research aimed to study the results of using a project-based pedagogy to create active citizenship. The researcher used Principles of Management class with 236 students to conduct this research. The researcher implemented this pedagogy in order to create active citizenship. Students were assigned to work in a team of 10-12 members. Each team had to apply their Management knowledge to develop a community-service project. Their tasks started from initiating the plan until completing the project. There were three project themes for students to choose from: 1) religious 2) educational and 3) environmental supported. The expected outcome “active citizen” in this research referred to people who possess knowledge and ethic and eager to utilize them to improve communities. The knowledge part consisted of knowledge, understanding, skills, and attitude. This part was evaluated by using questionnaire. The results showed a desirable outcome that students gained high level of knowledge (with a degree of 3.85/5.00). The ethic and willingness to contribute to the communities’ part was assessed by reviewing the students’ reports and analysing the results from their selected project themes and their wills to work on the projects. It was found that every team agreed to work on the suggested themes and all of them had put their efforts to complete the projects. The students reflected that besides deeper understanding about the subject, they were grateful to have the opportunities to contribute to the communities. It can be concluded that this project-based management class was effective in creating active citizenship.

Keywords: Active citizenship, Project-based Learning, Management

1. INTRODUCTION

It has long been discussed among educators of how to teach college students to become “active citizens.” According to Turfs University, an active citizen is “a person who understands the obligation and undertakes the responsibility to improve community conditions, build healthier communities, and address social problems” (Turfs University, 2013). Thailand’s Ministry of Education (MOE)’s vision is in-line with the concept of creating active citizenship. The MOE aims to provide education system that encourages Thai population to embraces knowledge and ethic, care for others and natures, and sustain their Thai identity. It further explains that a high quality and effective education system must focus on the needs of students. Therefore, educators should design their teaching methods to serve the students’ needs and oriented on their learning nature (Thailand’s Ministry of Education, 2013).

Then the question “How to create active citizenship?” becomes the major challenge for the educators including the author who is a faculty member of Management Department, Faculty of Business Administration at Chiang Mai University, Thailand. To find a solution for this challenge, I conducted this research by implementing a project-based learning technique in my “Principles of Management” class. The result of this research will show how well this technique works in terms of cultivating knowledge and ethics to the students. Suggestions will be given in the last part of this article.

2. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- 2.1 How does a project-based Management class create active citizenship in term of knowledge?
- 2.2 How does a project-based Management class create active citizenship in term of ethic?

3. LITERATURE REVIEWS

3.1 Project-based Learning

Project Based Learning (PBL) is an inquiry based process for teaching and learning. In PBL, students focus on a question or problem, then answer the question or solve the problem through a collaborative process of investigation over an extended period of time. Projects often are used to investigate authentic issues and topics found outside of school. During the inquiry process, students learn content, information, and facts necessary to draw conclusions about the question. Students also learn valuable skills and habits of mind during the process (Buck Institute for Education and Boise State University, Department of Educational Technology, 2013). When engaged in standards-focused Project Based Learning (PBL), students are working in teams to experience and explore relevant, real-world problems, questions, issues and challenges; then creating presentations and products to share what they have learned. The teacher’s role is one of coach, facilitator, guide, advisor, or mentor; it is not one of directing and managing all student work (West Virginia Department of Education, 2013). Project-based learning pedagogy is well accepted among educational institutes around the world. It was said that project-based learning is more effective than the conventional teaching techniques such as lecturing and taking paper exams. The real project problems would inspire students to search for information to find more ways to solve the problems (David, 2008). The project-based learning is a strategy that put learners at the center and the learners have to initiate their learning by collecting data, communicating and discuss with others, and concluding what they had learned on their own (Marx, 1997).The learners in this teaching system not only aim to gain knowledge but also aim to develop system thinking, practical skills, and positive attitudes towards what they learned (Foreman, 2003). The National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NACTM) stated that a successful education should enable learners to effectively apply their knowledge into practice. The learners should be able to answer the questions “what,” “why,” and “how” properly (National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM), 2000). Richards (1991) said that the learners do not become active learners by accident. Instead, they were taught through the system that was designed to give them opportunities to develop questions and find the answers to those questions on their own (1991).

3.2 KUSA Concept

KUSA stands for Knowledge, Understanding, Skill, and Attitude. It is a human resource development approach explaining that the outcomes of effective human resource development should include those aforementioned factors. Knowledge refers to the core knowledge that is intended to provide to the

learners. Such knowledge may come from various forms such as books, documents, other types of archives, and the knowledge providers' experiences. Understanding means the getting correct comprehension of the knowledge. Skill implies the practical capability of utilizing the knowledge. Lastly, attitude means getting positive sensation towards the knowledge and willing to apply such knowledge (Morakotsilp, P. 2012).

3.3 Principles of Management

The term "management" refers to the process of using organizational resources to achieve organization objectives through the function of planning, organizing, leading, and controlling. Planning involves setting goals and figuring out ways of reaching them. Planning is considered as the central function of management. Organizing is the process of making sure the necessary human and physical resources are available to carry out a plan and achieve organizational goals. Organizing also involves assigning activities, dividing work into specific jobs and tasks, and specifying who has the authority to accomplish tasks. Leading means influencing others to achieve organizational objectives. As a consequence, it involves energizing, directing, persuading others, and creating a vision. Leadership is a key component of managerial work that management is sometimes seen as accomplishing results people. Controlling generally involves comparing actual performance to a predetermined standard. Any significant difference between actual and desired performance would prompt a manager to take corrective action. A secondary aspect of controlling is determining whether the original plan needs revision (Dubrin, 2009. pp.8-10).

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

I aimed to study the result of implementing a project-based learning technique in a standard class in order to create active citizenship to students. I followed the definition given by Turf University (2013) stating that "Active citizen is a person who understands the obligation and undertakes the responsibility to improve community conditions, build healthier communities, and address social problems." To put it in a simpler form, active citizen in this research means people who possess knowledge and ethic and eager to utilize them to improve communities. As stated in the introduction part, I chose "Principles of Management" as a class to conduct this research. The rationale was that I was responsible for this specific class and the content of this subject was applicable to conduct this research.

First of all I designed to modify this class from a pure lecture-based class to a project-based class. With the goal of creating active students in mind, I designed this class to be a combination of lecture, group projects, and exams. The projects were assigned 10-member groups to apply their learned management concepts into practice. The requirements of the project were aligned with the management functions: planning, organizing, directing, and controlling. In addition, I assigned the students to choose their project themes from three choices: 1) religion-supported 2) educational-supported and 3) environmental-supported. The common condition for every project was that it has to be community service. The students were also given opportunity to propose for other project theme upon their specific interests. This assignment was assigned on the second week of the class. The groups had to present their progress report on week 10th and then the final report on week 30th which was the last week of the semester.

Needed data for this research were collected through two research tools: 1) structured questionnaires and 2) students' assigned reports. The questionnaire includes 3 parts: general information of students; management principles learned; and students' suggestions. The questionnaire answered the first research objective "How does a project-based Management class create active citizenship in term of knowledge?" The questionnaire was designed based on the KUSA Concept. In other words, after the lecture sessions were over and the final project presentations, this questionnaire would be given to the students for them to do self-evaluate whether to what extent their Knowledge, Understanding, Skill, and Attitude were created by this project-based class.

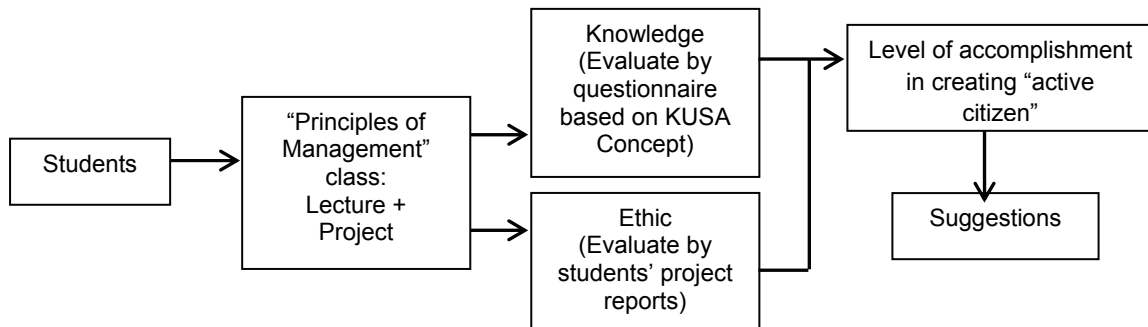
Another research tool was the students' reports. Those reports provided information about project ideas and results of the projects. This tool answered the second research objective "How does a project-based Management class create active citizenship in term of ethic?"

The research's population was Chiang Mai University's students who registered for the Principles of Management class in the first semester of 2012 academic year. The total population was 236 students

(Chiang Mai University’s Registration Office, 2012). This research was conducted on all of the 236 students in order to gain the confident rate of 100 percent.

5. RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

Picture 1: Research framework



6. RESULTS

The results of this research were provided in 3 parts: 1) Students’ general information 2) Knowledge students gained from this project-based Management class 3)

6.1 Part 1: Students’ General Information

I distributed 236 questionnaires on the last day of class, however, some students missed the class on that day and some students did not answer every question on the questionnaire. Therefore, there were 203 completed questionnaires or 86.02 percent of the total amount of the population that could be used to analyze the data for this research. The results regarding general information are shown in table 1.

Table 1: Students’ general information

Gender	Frequency (students)	Percentage
Female	158	77.83
Male	45	22.17
Age (years old)	Frequency (students)	Percentage
18	1	0.49
19	12	5.91
20	70	34.48
21	84	41.38
22	36	17.73
Faculty	Frequency (students)	Percentage
Sciences	73	35.96
Humanities	29	14.29
Agriculture	25	12.32
Education	21	10.34
Social Sciences	11	5.42
Political Sciences	10	4.93
Food Sciences	4	1.97
Arts, Media, and Technology	2	0.99
Others	18	13.79
Year in college	Frequency (students)	Percentage
1st	0	0.00

2nd	21	13.79
3rd	117	57.64
4th	58	28.57
Total	203	100.00

6.2 Part 2: Knowledge students gained from this project-based Management class

To evaluate the knowledge students gained from this project-based Management class, I based the questionnaires on KUSA concept. KUSA consists of knowledge, understanding, skills, and attitude. The results are shown in table 2.

Table 2: Knowledge students gained from this project-based Management class

KUSA	Level of knowledge (1=Lowest, 5=Highest) / Numbers of students						Interp e-tation
	Lowest	Low	Moderate	High	Highest	Mean	
1. Knowledge							
Know how to plan	0	1	37	132	33	3.97	High
Know how to put the right person in the right task	0	11	66	105	21	3.67	High
Know how to be a good leader as well as a good follower	1	5	43	113	41	3.93	High
Know how to work follow the plan and how to evaluate the performance	0	4	42	123	34	3.92	High
Know management principles and their relationships	0	6	48	116	33	3.87	High
Average						3.87	High
2. Understanding							
Understand the principle of planning and able to plan with a SMART principle (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Reasonable, Timeliness)	1	7	61	103	31	3.77	High
Aware of the importance of putting the right person in the right task	2	8	51	104	38	3.83	High
Understand the role and functions of good leaders and good followers	0	6	42	117	38	3.92	High
Able to do in time corrective action if the result of the works drift away from the plan	0	6	49	100	48	3.94	High
Understand the system of management and relationships of management functions	1	3	50	123	26	3.84	High
Average						3.86	High
3. Skill							
Able to analyze data in order to create a good plan	0	6	63	118	16	3.71	High
Able to work according to the assigned tasks	0	6	57	106	34	3.83	High
Able to motivate team members and be a good listener	4	7	79	95	18	3.57	High
Able to analyze work performance and effectively find ways to take suitable corrective actions	1	4	52	125	21	3.79	High
Able to accomplish the project (or change the project as	1	3	48	105	46	3.95	High

needed) and meet the projected objectives							
Average						3.77	High
4. Attitude	Lowest	Low	Moderate	High	Highest	Mean	High
Perceive that you had made a valuable contribution to the -	0	6	29	94	74	4.16	High

Table 2 (continued)

KUSA	Level of knowledge (1=Lowest, 5=Highest) / Numbers of students						Interpretation
	Lowest	Low	Moderate	High	Highest	Mean	
4. Attitude							
- society and being proud of yourself.	0	6	29	94	74	4.16	High
Feel confident	1	5	52	111	34	3.85	High
Feel that you are a good leader	2	7	97	76	21	3.53	High
Feel that you are a good team member	0	3	56	103	41	3.90	High
Feel that you can do a better job next time	0	4	35	93	71	4.14	High
Average						3.91	High
Total KUSA Average						3.85	High

The results in table 2 show that from this project-based Management class, students gained knowledge (K) at a level of 3.77 (high), understanding (U) 3.86 (high), skills (S) 3.77 (high), and attitude 3.91 (high). The total KUSA is 3.85 (high). These results show that the teaching method applied to this Principles of Management class generated a desirable outcome in terms of providing knowledge to students.

6.3 Part 3: Ethic and willingness to contribute to the communities students developed from this project-based Management class

I used the data from students' report to evaluate the ethic and willingness to contribute to the communities students developed from this project-based Management class. The reports provided information concluding project names, themes, descriptions, and their results. The information was summarized in table 3.

Note: Project themes in the tables are:

1) Religion-supported project 2) Educational-supported project 3) Environmental-supported project

Table 3: Projects information

Project name	Project themes			Project description	Results
	1	2	3		
1. Putting Our Hearts together to Support Buddhism Practices	√			Clean a selected temple and invite people to participate in Buddhism practices arranged by the temple (projected activity of 9 times).	The team reached its activity goal (9 times) and it exceeded its goal by being able to invite outsiders to participate in temple cleaning activities on a constant basis.
2. Community Service at a Christian Church in Chiang Mai	√			Clean the church and buy 3 trash bins to donate to the church.	The team found out that the church already has its employed cleaner in which it does not need routine helpers. Thus, the team changed its activity to be "Big Cleaning Day" and set the entire weekend to "big clean" this church. The team members also donated money to buy 3 trash bins to the church.
3. Buddhism Leads	√	√		Promote on-campus students to	The team set up 4 times of giving-lent to monks on Wednesday on campus and invited other

Us to Grow				participate in giving lent to monks every Wednesday and give Buddhism practice books to the ones who come.	students to join. There were approximately of 20 on-campus students joined this activity each time. The team gave those students Buddhism books as they had planned and also went beyond their plan by distributing the books to other interested on-campus students. The total of 325 books was given away.
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Table 3 (continued)

Project name	Project themes			Project description	Results
	1	2	3		
4.New Generation Helps Promote Buddhism	√			Clean selected temples and did fund raising (goal = 1,000 Thai Baht) to donate to a temple	The team went to clean a selected temple close to campus for two times and received compliments from the monks. In addition, it was able to raise 2,480.50 Thai Baht (higher than its goal) and donate all of that money to the temple.
5.Light of Dharma	√			Fund raising to buy light bulbs to the needed temple. (goal = 6 light bulbs as prior requested by the temple)	The team raised fund by walking donation boxes around campus and was able to raised 1,232 Thai Baht. However, this amount of money could only bought 5 light bulbs and 1 light bulb stand. The team accepted that their performance was lower than their expected goal.
6.Teach Buddhism Philosophy to the Dark Growing Sprouts	√	√		Teach 30 first grade blind students about basic Buddhism philosophy.	The team consulted with the school teacher and was informed that their teaching materials may suit the students in pre-school level better. Therefore, they change their target from 30 first grade students to 20 pre-school blind students. The feedback was good the blind students had fun and gained knowledge about Buddhism. The team did extra activity by collecting money among team members to buy snacks and learning aids to the students they taught.
7.Dharma on Wheel	√	√	√	Making 30 copies of Dharma books to give to interested people who come to temple.	The team collected plastic water bottles and sold them to raise fund to make books. They gained enough money to make 30 books as projected and still have money left. They used the extra money to buy bird and fish food to feed birds and fish in the temple they donate books to.
8.Dharma Leads to "A"	√	√		Making 60 copies of Dharma books to distribute to students. The goal is to encourage them to put higher efforts to study to make their parents happy.	The team made 60 copies of Dharma books and focused the content on gratefulness to parents. After giving the books away for a week, the team used questionnaire to evaluate whether the ones who read the book feel more grateful to their parents and plan to study harder or not. The result showed that 97 percent of them accepted that the book taught them to be grateful to their parents and after they had read the book, they had courage to study harder to make their parents proud of them.
9.Community Service by College Students to Community	√		√	Clean temple and do fund raising to gain enough money to donate cleaning supplies to temple. The team plan to collect 40 kilograms of plastic water bottles to sell to raise fund.	The team collected a total of 47 kilograms and sold them for 512 Thai Baht. Then, they used that money to buy cleaning supplies to clean a selected temple. They used those supplies to clean the temple for a day then donate them to the temple. They asked for feedback from the monks and received good feedback. They were encouraged to continue this project after this class is over.
10.Wat	√		√	Clean a selected	The team cleaned a selected 2 times as planned

(Temple) Wash				temple 2 times (with a goal of 3 big bags of dried leafs each time) and donate home supplies to the monks	and able to raised fund of 340 Thai Baht to buy detergent to the monks.
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Table 3 (continued)

Project name	Project themes			Project description	Results
	1	2	3		
11. Story Books to the Blinds		√		Type 20 story books into and give them to the blind school to make braille books for blind students and teach those students after their school time.	The team typed 30 books (able to do 50% higher than its original goal) and taught 10 blind students after their school time through the semester (achieved the goal). The team reported that from this activity, they started to have passion and would like to continue this project on their own.
12. Sharing Love and Knowledge to the blind students		√	√	Develop 8 learning materials for blind students.	The team developed 8 plaster 3-D models as learning materials for blind students. Those models were material to teach how seeds and trees grow. The teachers said that those models were practically useful.
13. 2-Sided Papers for the Blind Students		√	√	Collect 2-side used papers to donate to a selected blind school to make braille books (goal= 2 big boxes).	The team collected 2 boxes of 2-side used papers and donated them to the blind school as they planned.
14. ASEAN Classroom		√		Install information boards about ASEAN in a classroom at a selected school and arrange an activity to teach students about ASEAN.	The team installed 4 information boards about ASEAN in grade 2 and grade 6 classrooms and arranged in-class activities with both classes. They used games to help students learn and did evaluation test afterwards, all of the students could answer questions correctly. The teachers were grateful and would like the team to do the same kind of activities to other classes as well.
15. Armed the Kids with knowledge		√		Teach kindergarten students about nutrition and personal hygiene.	The team taught a class of 21 kindergarten students and did an evaluation afterwards, 19 out of 21 students could answer all of the questions correctly.
16. Teaching the Blind		√		Teach blind students after their school 3 times a week for the entire project length.	The team was able to reach their goal of teaching blind students on a continual basis for the entire semester. They reflected that they grew relationships between them and the students tightly. They did extra activity from their original plan by collected money among the team members to buy snacks to the blind students when the project ended.
17. Trash sorting			√	Arrange an environmental project by teaching students on campus to sort their trash before putting them into different types of trash bins.	At the beginning stage, the team had difficult time teaching other students to properly sort their trash. Then team then put more effort on the project by taking turn to stay at the trash bin area and explain to people at that point. The team reached their goal at the end of the project and received compliments from teachers and students in the faculty.
18. Trash Creates			√	Collect recyclable trash on campus	The team spent 2 weeks to collect recyclable trash around campus and was able to collect 46

Lives				and sell them. Then use that money to buy food for stray dogs on campus.	kilograms of plastic water bottles and 11 kilograms of used papers. Then the team sold them and received 575 Thai Baht and used that money to buy dog food and was able to feed stray dogs on campus for 1 week which met their goal.
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The results show that every team agreed to work on the suggested themes: 1) Religion-supported project 2) Educational-supported project and 3) Environmental-supported project. This may indicated that the students agreed to with the idea of developing ethical projects that help the communities which implied that they meet the definition of being active citizen in terms of posing ethic and willingness to contribute to communities. One project may cover more than one theme. The most chosen project theme was religion-supported theme. The details of each project were summarized as shown in the table. It was noticeable that even though students were given option to develop their projects on other theme upon their interest, all of them agreed to choose from the given options. From an informal conversation with students, they reflected that they thought this was a good opportunity for them to make a valuable contribution to the community. They added that in their daily life, they did not have much opportunity to do so even though they would like to. Some students gave opinion that in their daily life, they did not think about helping the communities but this project really raise their awareness about this issue. From 203 students, only 1 student said that he preferred pure lecturing pedagogy than a mixture of lecturing and project-based learning pedagogy. His reason was that the project consumed too much of his time and he preferred to spend his time on other tasks. However, the other 202 students (99.51 percent) liked this new teaching style. They reflected that besides deeper understanding about the content of the subject, Principles of Management, they were grateful to have the opportunities to contribute their knowledge to improve the communities.

7. DISCUSSION

The research results show that this experiment of applying a project-based pedagogy on the Principles of Management class with a goal of creating active citizenship was successful. Both features of active citizenship, knowledge and ethic and willingness to contribute to the communities, were achieved as projected. The results of this experiment align with the project-based concepts. The feedbacks from the students as well as from the communities were all positive. However, it was observed that many of the students' projects were similar. For instance, many teams' projects under the religion-supported theme were to clean temples and to make Buddhism books to distribute to other people. Another incident was that when students would like to raise money, they either thought about asking for donations or collect plastic water bottles to sell. This may indicate that the students were not very creative in developing new ideas and were not proactive to search for new ideas. For further experiments or implementation of project-based in other classes, the instructors should aware of this issue and may need to guide students to be more creative on developing their project ideas.

8. CONCLUSION

It could be concluded that creating active citizenship through a project-based learning Management class could be accomplished. Such pedagogy could successfully develop knowledge and ethic and willingness to contribute to communities to the students. The researchers suggests that for implementing such pedagogy in other classes in the future, the instructors should encourage students to be creative on developing their projects since it turned out that students came up with the same project ideas.

9. SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

“Active citizenship” have broader definition than it was defied I this research. I suggests that this same research methodology should be applied to other type of classes such as Sciences classes to compare the results of the experiments. In addition, in this research, the size of the class was large (236 students), therefore, I suggest that the same experiment should be applied to smaller classes. The size of the class in this research was a major challenge for this experiment. The smaller class size may provide a better result toward this same experiment.

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