DEEP APPROACH LEARNING AND TEACHING: THE CASE OF PANYAPIWAT INSTITUTE OF MANAGEMENT

การเรียนการสอนแบบเชิงลึก: กรณีตัวอย่างของสถาบันการจัดการปัญญาภิวัฒน์

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Abstract

This article describes the importance of deep learning and teaching approach for the education system in Thailand. Learning and teaching methodology in Thailand tends to be a surface approach which does not lead to a life-long learning. Since the surface approach has been widely used; it leads to many problems, for example, unable to think critically, unable to interact effectively in class, and fail to be a good learner. Students and lecturers will be inactive in academic including professional development. This paper also describes what surface and deep approach is, and also explores the need to change to deep approach. Work based learning is the core philosophy in studying and teaching management of Panyapiwat Institute of Management (PIM). PIM Students will have to study and work in accordance with their major subjects. Trial and error is also the process they can use in the real work settings. In this article, the case of Panyapiwat Institute of Management will be presented as a case study of how students and lecturers prepare themselves to study and to teach at present. Some effects of Work based learning will be explored. Solutions for lecturers are also presented.

Keywords : deep study approach, surface study approach, critical thinking, life-long learning, students centered in learning and teaching

บทคัดย่อ

บทความวิชาการฉบับนี้อธิบายความสำคัญของการเรียนการสอนแบบเชิงลึกสำหรับระบบการศึกษาในประเทศไทย เนื่องมาจากข้อเท็จจริงที่ว่า วิธีการจัดการเรียนการสอนในประเทศไทยค่อนไปทางเป็นแบบผิวเผิน ซึ่งไม่นำไปสู่การเรียนรู้ตลอดชีวิต เนื่องจากวิธีการเรียนการสอนแบบผิวเผินถูกใช้อย่างแพร่หลายมากกว่า ซึ่งนำไปสู่ปัญหาหลายอย่าง เช่น ไม่สามารถคิดอย่างมีวิจารณญาณ ไม่สามารถมีปฏิสัมพันธ์ในห้องเรียนได้อย่างมีประสิทธิภาพ และล้มเหลวในการเป็นผู้เรียนที่ดี ส่งผลให้ทั้งผู้เรียนและผู้สอนไม่มีความกระตือรือล้นในการพัฒนาทางด้านวิชาการ และการพัฒนาตนเองในวิชาชีพ บทความวิชาการฉบับนี้จะอธิบายว่าอะไรคือการเรียนแบบเชิงลึกและอะไรคือการ

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เรียนแบบผิวเผินรวมถึงความจำเป็นต้องเปลี่ยนสภาพการเรียนการสอนในปัจจุบันให้เป็นแบบเชิงลึกให้หมด การเรียน
การสอนแบบ Work based learning เป็นปรัชญาที่สถาบันการจัดการปัญญาภิวัฒน์ใช้เป็นหลักในการจัดการเรียน
การสอน นักศึกษาต้องเรียนในห้องเรียนควบคู่ไปกับการฝึกปฏิบัติงานจริง ซึ่งตรงกับวิชาเอกที่นักศึกษาแต่ละคนศึกษา
อยู่ นักศึกษาจะได้ลองผิดลองถูกจากการเรียนและการทำงานในสถานที่จริง บทความวิชาการฉบับนี้จะใช้รูปแบบ
การเรียนการสอนของสถาบันการจัดการปัญญาภิวัฒน์เป็นตัวอย่างในการอธิบายถึงวิธีการที่ทั้งผู้เรียนและผู้สอนเตรียม
การเรียนการสอนอย่างไร ณ ปัจจุบัน ผลกระทบบางอย่างจากการเรียนการสอนแบบ Work based learning จะได้รับ
การอธิบาย รวมถึงเสนอทางแก้ปัญหาสำหรับฝั่งของผู้สอนซึ่งสามารถดำเนินการได้ทันทีอีกด้วย

คำสำคัญ : การเรียนเชิงลึก การเรียนแบบผิวเผิน การคิดอย่างมีวิจารณญาณ การเรียนรู้ตลอดชีวิต การเรียนการสอน
ที่นักเรียนนักศึกษาเป็นศูนย์กลาง

Introduction

If we look at the teaching and learning approach in Thailand, the most widely used approach is the surface approach. The author personally felt that it is not an effective teaching methodology; because, students just try to memorize their lessons to pass the examination and forget everything after all. Not only students use surface approach, lecturers also use it in preparing and teaching nowadays. Teaching Quality Assurance system is another factor to promote surface approach which is really devastating education system. In this paper, the advantages of deep approach and the need to change from surface to deep approach will be explored.

Overview of Learning and Teaching Methodology in Thai Universities

The first official university in Thailand was established in the period of the King Rama 6, March 26, 1917 (A Brief History of Chulalongkorn University, 1994). Thai tradition is quite similar to other Asian nations that the youngsters have to pay respect to the adult; therefore, Thai learning environment was rather "one way communication". Furthermore, in the early age of this university, most of lecturers were from the Royal Court graduated from abroad. The higher education at that time was mainly for the noble sons. That was the time of absolute monarchy where the king ruled. Students attended the class just to sit and listen. They were not allowed to argue with the instructors. They studied their lessons just to pass the examination; and this learning methodology still remains until present in most universities. Thamraksa (2011) stated that "The teacher-centered practice is deeply rooted in the Thai society, wherein "hierarchy" lies as a central value." "Teachers, who have a much higher status than students, are regarded as the second parents whose missions are not only to impart knowledge but to teach morals and mold their students to be good citizens in society as well. The image that is generally assigned to a teacher is that of a "righteous guru" who possesses great knowledge. As such, it goes

without saying that in the learning process, the teacher, not the learner, is placed right in the center." Therefore, it is clearly seen that the Thai learning methodology is mainly the surface approach. Teachers just increase the quantity of information; and students only memorize them, then utilize the facts and method they acquire, according to Saljo, 1979. (as cited in Marton, et al, 1993).

Disadvantages of One-Way Communication

The fact that students cannot argue, expect, and suspect their teachers, they have no chance to ask the questions. Students just walk along the track that their lecturers have drawn. It is undeniable that even the most intelligent scholar can make mistakes; teachers also do that. Some Thai teachers expect their students to do everything with very strict criteria; but, they do not think that different students need different approach. Some students can learn very fast. Just one word, they can do what the teacher wants. The question is "what about the slower ones?"

Another disadvantage is that students cannot solve their problems in the real situations. It's true that sometimes a person graduating from university with honor cannot apply what they had studied when he or she encounters the problems.

"The point of problem solving as a method is to enable the student to manipulate the internal relations within their conceptual knowledge, such as definitional relations, casual relations, form of representation,

mathematical relations, sign-signifier relations, etc., much as they would manipulate the world in order to learn about it." (Laurillard, 1993, p.54)

The teachers tried to get their students to remember everything, not understanding, in a period which is impossible. It is obvious that students cannot understand and rarely memorizing or sometimes they are bored by the lessons (Ramsden, 1992, p. 52).

The Surface Approach

Surface approach is the approach focusing on memorizing. Students who use this approach may not understand the lessons; but, they will remember only the part that can make them pass the exam or get the assignment done. Sometimes, this approach might develop from the hate or loathing to study in some part of the unit or the whole subject or the whole course. According to Biggs (1999) stated that "Teaching and assessment methods often encourage a surface approach, because they are not aligned to the aims of teaching the subject, as in the case of the above psychology teacher." Therefore, "the first step in improving teaching, then, is to avoid those factors that encourage a surface approach." Biggs (1999) also showed the interesting factors from both students and teachers using such an approach as described below.

From students' side, students lack an intention to understand the lessons and just try to pass the minimum requirement of the subject; because, that subject might less

important or not a compulsory unit or misunderstanding the requirements and provide inadequate content in their assignments. Moreover, the causes of developing surface approach might be from too heavy workload or inability to understand the lessons in deep level which can lead to very high anxiety.

From teachers' side, some teachers teach their unit in an outline form which is only the 'skin' of the unit, without exploring the core; and, write the examination paper in short answer or multiple choices. Furthermore, some teachers have negative attitude towards the unit which could lead to decreasing the expectations of students' success. Another factor is that some teachers rush their students by giving too little time to do their assignments which also leads to the surface approach.

The Deep Approach

Meanwhile, the deep approach is the mode focusing on interesting and understanding the lessons which is developed from feeling of 'need to know', which could lead to understanding the unit thoroughly. (Diseth, et al, 2006) Students will try to focus on the connotation or deep content of the main ideas, themes, principles, and experiences. (Warburton, 2003) They will have positive feeling when handle the assessments by using the deep approach. They will end up with the questions they want to know the answers and feel pleasure when they get the answers that are more than they expect. Like surface approach, Biggs (1999) also explored the factors why

students use the deep approach in controlling the assessments.

From students' side, students have an intention to focus and understand the units in deep level and work with the task in significantly and appropriately which might be from the curiosity of students own. Another factor is that students have the preference and proficiency naturally for doing their tasks thoughtfully.

From teaching environment, teachers teach with precise topics or subjects and extract the positive response from students, such as asking questions. Then, teachers teach in what students have already known and try to get rid of misconceptions and go through the depth of the subject. Moreover, teachers create positive working environment which students do not feel pressure. Finally, the most important thing for teachers is that they have to practice what they are teaching regularly (Biggs, 1999: 14-17).

Why Deep Approach?

According to the deep approach theory, students are given the opportunity to speak more than the surface one. Studying from text books and in class is not enough, learning to understand how the things operate in the world is more important. From the direct experience of the author, when the author studied at Bangkok University in the second year; that was the first time to experience the deep approach in the subject entitled "Introduction to Literature: Prose and Fiction" (one of the English major subject). Students did not have to read a lot of uninteresting novels, but the reading materials

in the course were just a number of short stories. The lecturer said, "this is just an introduction course and the major is not English literature; thus, students do not have to read the Shakespeare's series or any other long epics." He also opened the opportunities for everyone to speak and think critically in small group discussion. Furthermore, he also told us to keep writing journal after finishing lesson each week. This way made students understand and, without notice, remember the lesson automatically. His teaching method taught students to think critically also. At that time, the author had never known this was the deep approach. Therefore, the lecturer was counted as a level 3 instructor because he could teach students to study as adult students (Biggs, 1999 : 24). According to Ramsden (1992), it can be assumed that understanding is the most important step in learning (p. 41). Moreover, the more understanding students can do, the more memorizing which will depict in the long-term memory will be. "The long-term memory is assumed to be limitless; that is, learning something new will not "overload" long-term memory and push something else out." (Dominowski, 2002 : 30)

From the above paragraph, it can be seen that the lecturer examined his students before the lecture begins. What are the preconceptions or expectations that his students have in mind about the subject? The answer is "nothing". Therefore, he had to prepare something before coming to class. That was the objectives, assessments, approach, and other techniques in order to suit his students who have no background about English or American literature. That was his presage. Then, he used deep approach by giving activities or asking some questions related to the learning for his students to extract the answers they want. That was his process. At the beginning of the semester, he said that the one who can memorize his whole book does not mean he or she could pass the exam. It was true. He always said 'you have to think critically and ask questions.' The author agrees with this; because, 'The differences between lazy and active students are that active students will actually mull over ideas and do their own thinking, rather than accept statements at face value. Active students try to find answers, then formulate more questions.' (Barnes, 1995 : 34)

Thinking Critically

Another key success for students in the university is to think critically. Black (2005) suggested that thinking critically should be added in a curriculum. One thing that is quite obvious is that lecturers may assign their students to write a book or literature review by giving them some guide line and some hints. Another way to develop critical thinking is class debating (Walker, 2001 : 82). Originally, students tried to find the way to prove their thoughts were right or wrong where lecturers can develop this to be a topic of debating and provide some guide line to students with knowledge they have discovered. At this stage, they know how to study new thing, and their

friends will support his or her point. The subject is right or wrong will depend on the context; that is no absolute truth. Students have to learn how to make judgment which can modify and expand their knowledge.

"You can argue a point and then someone comes up with a better point and I feel that if you're gonna be involved with, in debates, you can be opinionated to a degree, but I would say to someone, 'Be flexible, be able to retract your opinion because you can be right a lot of time but you won't be right all the time. If someone else is more right, take their viewpoint.' I think the most important thing is not whether you win, it's developing this awareness, understanding the material and that comes through being flexible in your own opinion." (Walker, 2001 : 96)

Panyapiwat Institute of Management

Panyapiwat Institute of Management (PIM) is an educational institute found by CPAll Public Company Limited with a mission to produce the graduates based on the motto of its abbreviated name: PIM = Practicality, Innovation, and Morality. Students who enroll in any degree course of PIM are going to work as an internship in the arranged work places. Around 70% of students are studying Retail Business Management major (RT major). In a semester, for example, Block B students attend the class for three months (one quarter); after that, they go to work for three months. After four years, students will graduate with Bachelor Degree in Business Administration (Retail Business Management).

From the above paragraph, it is clearly seen that students have only three months to study all subjects enrolled in a semester (approximately 6-7 subjects). Their schedules are very tight and do not have much time to review the lessons or working on their assignments carefully. Therefore, a surface approach is their way to survive. For example, in the compulsory English courses, many students always come to class late. Some of them come to class just in the day they are required to attend a quiz. And, some of them never appear.

Not only students need to survive by using surface approach, but also lecturers need to do so. After three months of teaching Block B students, Block A students begin their semester after their three months internship. That means lecturers have only a week to prepare for their teaching. Furthermore, lecturers do not have only teaching duty; they also have to do administration jobs. And they have to do other activities including producing academic works in response to the Thai Qualifications Frameworks for Higher Education (TQF) from Ministry of Education. PIM's lecturers do not have enough time to have a break, no time to think or create new innovation to introduce to students. Preparing the lesson during the week is a trouble. And, producing a good academic article or a research paper is impossible.

The solution for the case of PIM is difficult, because one academic year for students is to study three months and go to work for three

months and repeat again for the rest of the year. Another problem is that CP All Co., Ltd. is in need of people to work in 7-11 shops around country. That is why students have to attend the class for three months and go to work for three months.

The lecturers' side could be possible. PIM might arrange lecturers to teach only three quarters in a year by divide lecturers to four teams. The table below illustrated how to arrange lecturers in one academic year.

Semester 1.1	Lecturers team B, C, and D on duty. Lecturers team A have a break.
Semester 1.2	Lecturers team A, C, and D on duty. Lecturers team B have a break.
Semester 2.1	Lecturers team A, B, and D on duty. Lecturers team C have a break.
Semester 2.2	Lecturers team A, B, and C on duty. Lecturers team D have a break.

This is the first basic step to solve the problem that lecturers have not enough time to work. By doing so, lecturers will have more time to think and create more academic work or new innovation for their students.

For the case of PIM students, in class "Discussion Techniques" facilitated by the author, case studies, group works, and oral presentations are applied in order that students can extract their own answer. Since the author

would like to change the class environment from a class lecture to a speaking workshop as Ahmad and Sulaiman (2013) introduced in their paper those mentioned activities can promote deeper learning and understanding. (p. 174)

The Need to Change to Deep Approach

As mentioned in the background of learning and teaching methodology in Thai university that the teacher-centered practice is deeply rooted in Thai society; and difficult to uproot also. Thamraksa (2011) suggested that the reasons of changing learning and teaching approach in the Thai education are needed; because, the world of information and economic change rapidly. Students need to think critically and independently. Another point is to be responsible and involve in learning. Finally, students need to be self-direct and become active participants in academic team. However, the difficulties in changing may occur as follows. First of all, some teachers may refuse to change; because, they look at changes as a treat. They still stick with the old image of the teachers as a "righteous guru". Next, some teachers think that the way they are doing is the best; therefore, they do not open to the new approach. However, some teachers are too eager to change without concerning the realities of classroom situation and lack of knowledge to apply the new approach to the classroom setting. Besides, some teachers accept to change; but, the policy of that educational institute does not support or inadequate of

funding. Finally, some students do not comply with the new approach; because, they still need teachers to feed them the lessons (Thamraksa, 2011).

Conclusion

It is clearly seen that deep approach is the ideal learning and teaching methodology. Students have chance to try, ask some questions, and extract the answers by themselves. Whether it is right or wrong, students can learn from that experiment by their teachers being the facilitators. This method is useful for students directly and it leads towards sustainable learning and teaching. (Cebrian, Marcus, & Humphris, 2013) Understanding is the most important step of learning, since it leads to long term memorizing.

In Thailand, although the chance of changing from teachers centered to student centered is **nearly** impossible; the process of changing requires extensive hard work from both teachers' side and students' side. Especially the case of PIM, the way to manage learning and teaching must response the CP All's policy. This is very difficult, because CP All is the main supporter of PIM. In my opinion, no matter how long it is, the changes must occur sooner or later.

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