The Results of Learning by Serving Society

Anchana Sooksomchitra

*Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University, Bangkok Thailand

Abstract

The purposes of this research were to compare the students’ learning achievement before and after learning by using Computer-Supported Collaborative Learning approach based on service learning to develop public conscious and to identify students’ satisfaction towards learning by this method. The population of this study was senior students of mass communication administration curriculum on radio broadcasting major in total of 29 people. The data collected from students enrolled in the course CRD4902 Special Project in Radio from second semester in academic year 2012. The statistics used for analyzing the data were mean, standard deviation. The findings revealed that the students’ post-test result was higher than the pre-test result with a 0.05 level of statistically significant difference. The findings also revealed that there was a high level of students’ satisfaction method of learning. The analysis showed that the Service Learning through Computer-Supported Collaborative Learning approach can increase students overall Public Conscious.

© 2015 The Authors. Published by Elsevier B.V.

Peer-review under responsibility of Academic World Research and Education Center.

Keywords: Learning; Public Concus; Serving Society;

1. Introduction

The global shift derived from the technological advancement has placed significant influences on countries, especially developing countries around the world, including Thailand. The globalization has forced country to accelerate itself at a faster speed to meet with the global changes in order to be competitive in the world. The economic globalization has intensified national development, in which national citizens have also been affected from the economic pressure. This has led to the gradual alteration of Thai lifestyle to be more competitive and materialistic. The traditional ethics and morals have been seriously and continually altered, making an unbalance in regards of people’s state of mind and materialistic values, resulting in a decrease in public consciousness.

* Anchana Sooksomchitra. Tel.: 66871028285; fax: 6621601195.
E-mail address: anchana.so@ssru.ac.th
2. Review of Literature

Social consciousness can be regarded as one type of public mind, which is believed useful direction in developing a person’s mind in keeping up with technological advancement. Public mind refers to an act of taking responsibilities for public concerns (Warunpitikul, 1999) and a willingness to dedicate for the common good of society (Archpru, 2001). Public mind can be assessed by investigating the domains of knowledge, understanding and feelings, and behavior. Persons with a public mind may take actions in national property protection and natural resource conservation, and social activities for social wellbeing, or recognizing social problems and showing no ignorance in lending hand or being part of particular social groups to solve.

Public mind is therefore a way for individual to alleviate concerns and to be more conscious in public affairs for national development. The specifications of desirable characteristics stated in Section 2 of the Thailand National Education Standards communicate that Thai people should offer voluntary services for the benefit of the community, society and ultimately, the whole world, and in so doing become intellectual citizens with happiness. The indicators include sound physical and mental health, sufficiency of knowledge and skills for personal and national development, learning skill, adjustment and social skill, moral and social responsibility, and keen awareness of the dignity of being Thai (Office of the Education Council, 2002).

Service learning was defined as a method under which students or participants receive opportunities to learn and develop from direct experiences through active participation. The learning process introduces students or participants to ways of identifying problems and discovering solutions together. This is integrated into and enhances the academic curriculum of the students or educational components, which is in harmony with the National Education Act B.E.2542 (1999), in Section 6 and Section 24. According to Section 6, education shall aim at the full development of the Thai people in all aspects: physical and mental health; intellect; knowledge; morality; integrity; and desirable way of life so as to be able to live in harmony with other people. Section 24 (3) affirms that the teaching-learning process designed by educational institutes and related organizations must be learner-centered by providing them opportunities to learn from hands-on experiences and practicum, while also promoting reading as a part of life, and life-long learning.

Therefore, the principle of service learning can be one of learning tactics that helps students learn based on the knowledge constructed through community service. The role of content-based teaching will be less focused, but more on student-centered teaching which is based on individual interest and seeking answers from questions originated from themselves (Noppakun, 2000). Internet technology nowadays has truly facilitated designs of teaching and learning techniques that give students’ opportunities to a new world of learning. Web-based learning is at present an innovation, providing students a variety and convenience of learning patterns while at the same time responding to different needs of individual students.

The computer-supported collaborative learning (CSCL) theory can be implemented by the use of computers as the mediation, and developed through the computer network to facilitate collaborative working, in this regard, to manage the students’ learning condition (Ellis, C.A. et al., 1991). This innovation can be utilized in the combination of weblog, web board, chat/MSN and email (Na-Songkhla, (2004).

In these regards, this research paper was conducted in an attempt to examine the results of the utilization of computer-supported collaborative learning based on the service learning principle, with selected undergraduate students of Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University. The main goal of this research was to build public-minded consciousness among the students, which was designated as one of the desirable characteristics of Thai learners.

3. Methodology

The objectives of this experimental research paper were (1) to compare the score results in the public-minded consciousness domain of undergraduate students before and after studying by the use of computer-supported collaborative learning (CSCL and (2) to study the students’ level of satisfaction towards the computer-supported collaborative approach. The population of this research was the undergraduate students of the Faculty of Management Sciences of Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University. The samples were 29 students who registered in the CRD4902 Course: Special Program in Radio Broadcasting, in the Communication Arts Subject Group. The research period covered the second semester of the academic year 2012.
As this was an experimental research, the One Group Pretest-Posttest Design method was employed. The research tools thereafter included (1) the teaching and learning plan and the computers as the facility to support the collaborative learning; (2) public-minded consciousness pre-test and post-test to evaluate knowledge and cognitive skill in the public mind; and (3) students’ satisfaction questionnaire towards the teaching and learning process. The data analysis was conducted by utilizing means and standard deviation, to compare differences of the students’ public-minded consciousness scores between before and after studying by the use of the computer-supported collaborative learning approach, and to analyze the students’ level of satisfaction. The content analysis was also used for the qualitative data by systemizing and prioritizing the data before utilizing it as the information for further interpretation.

4. Findings

The comparative study of the students’ public-minded consciousness scores found that the mean score of the students’ knowledge and cognitive learning domains for the public mind before studying was 54.05 percent, whereas after studying the mean score was 73.65 percent. This indicated that there was a tendency towards an increase of public-minded consciousness. Furthermore, the finding unveiled that there was a difference between the scores acquired before and after studying by the use of the computer-supported collaborative learning based on the service learning principles at a significant level of 0.05.

A content analysis was conducted using the data acquired from the adoption of computer-supported collaborative learning. The author created a page on Facebook.com titled “Public Mind at RD SSRU (http://www.facebook.com/PublicMindAtRdSsru) to be used as the channel of communication. Given that the social network is a virtual place that supports collaborative and cooperative working of people sharing common goals, this utilization helped the students develop thinking skills and enthusiasm to reach the goal of building social awareness of public-minded consciousness on the Internet. To carry out the public-minded consciousness awareness building activities on the Internet, the author assigned and scheduled the lecturer and students to have discussion role plays, as well as assigning the students to submit their assignments through the Internet. In regards to the service learning, the students were assigned a group to survey in their own community in order to investigate the problems and needs of the community. This created a social contact between the students and local people in their own communities, which later facilitated the initiations of community service project proposals to be presented in the class and voted for actual implementation by the communities.

By this method, the students learned from their hands-on experience received from community surveys, and from reflections of their thoughts, as well as from those of their group members. Thus, the implemented project proposals were tutoring and Thai story telling projects. The students were grouped and assigned duties in running the projects. The project was 4 short documentaries in 6 parts telling stories that represented Thainess. A knowledge board was also built as a space for idea spreads, knowledge exchange and Q&A in an informal way, including WhatsApp and Line applications utilized.

The analysis of the students’ level of satisfaction towards the computer-supported collaborative learning approach reported an average score that indicated a high level of satisfaction of the students. A consideration upon each item revealed a high level of satisfaction toward the following: (1) interestingness of the teaching-learning process; (2) high level of accessibility to the learning and participatory channels; (3) convenience of the communication among friends; (4) flexibility of assignment submission due to no obstacle caused by physical limitation and the virtual characteristic of the channel; and (5) easiness and convenience in working on report papers. However, it was discovered that the following items gained a medium level of satisfaction: (1) applicability of knowledge into real life; (2) enthusiasm in assignment submission; (3) more time to be spent with the lessons; (4) the use of the computer-supported collaborative learning system as part of the instruction; and (5) gaining a full body of knowledge from the lessons.
5. Discussion

The findings of this experimental research emphasized the success of the students in building their awareness of a public-minded consciousness, performing their potentials and fostering their thoughts. Also, the technique helped the students enhance confidence in their capabilities. Lecturers are required to motivate students' interest in how to react in responding effectively to the social needs and concerns.

Moreover, students will develop their strength in exercising their capabilities in helping the society solve social problems. Finally, through community projects, students were exposed to valuable opportunities in a diversity of communities and to develop their knowledge, skills and attitudes, which will be a virtue for their living in the future.

6. Future Studies

The limitation of this research paper concerned the nature of this experiment, which was time-consuming. This resulted in an insufficiency of time for the students to finish the assigned tasks and activities in time. Future research may deal with designing and building a website particularly for teaching and learning experiment, with 2 groups of samples for a comparative study.

Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank the Research and Development Institute, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University, Bangkok, Thailand for financial support. Also, the researcher would like to thank Director of Centre for ASEAN Studies and Training for proof reading this research paper.

References

Sunandha Rajabhat University.