

Buddhist Universities and Learning Management in the 21st Century

**Poolsak Homsombat¹, Phathomsit Sawaengwong², Chaiyasit Udomchokenamorn³,
Krerck Phisaiphun⁴, Eakachai Sriburin⁵, Sarinya Marasri⁶, Niraj Ruangsan⁷**

¹ Faculty of Education, Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University

² Faculty of Buddhism, Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University

³ Faculty of Social Science, Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University

⁴ Faculty of Education, Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University

⁵ Faculty of Education, Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University

⁶ Faculty of Education, Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University

⁷ Faculty of Education, Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University

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Abstract: The learning management in the 21st century for Buddhist universities in Thailand is highly important to develop competencies of learners for being able to learn, live their life in the society, live together with other people including applying these knowledge and understanding to the changing society in an appropriate, balance and sustainable manners, consistent with the intention of Buddhism educational management, integration with new sciences, mind and society development being task burden of Buddhist universities. This academic article therefore aimed to propose an idea and guidelines of learning management in the 21st century for Buddhist universities in Thailand. This study was carried out by means of the qualitative research methodology (documentary research) and the obtained data were verified by Focus Group Discussion (FGD) of six scholars from the faculties of Education, Buddhism, Social Sciences. The obtained data were interpreted by means of the descriptive analysis together with the inductive reasoning method. The study results revealed that significant guidelines of learning management in the 21st century for Buddhist universities are: (1) promoting the quality of teaching and learning of instructors in higher education institutions, (2) enhancing 3R 8C skill in learners, (3) enhancing C-Teacher skill in instructors, (4) integrating Buddhist methods of teaching with learning management.

Keywords: Buddhist universities, learning management, the 21st century

1. Introduction

The influence of the 21st century technologies plays an important role in determining human behaviors. It shapes up people to enjoy materialism and consumerism more and more, probably leading to behaviors and practices that deviate from social norms and cause problems related to unorganized society, people lack moral and ethics in responsibility for their own work tasks and for others in the society. Changes and progress of new technologies play a vital role in encouraging people to improve and develop themselves to keep pace with various changes, especially education must be improved to enable people to have knowledge and abilities in harmony with arising situations. Consequently, educators have made an attempt to improve curriculums in different levels to meet standards so as to be a core in solving problems and living a life in the society where changes can be expected at all times. It can be seen from studies and discussion that exist widely in the world society, ASEAN society and Thai society. Trends in the current world and future world include 7 characteristics, namely, technological skill, curiosity, imagination, business thinking, critical thinking and problem-solving, creative thinking and innovation development, cross cultural skills and global interest, and communication and cooperation skills. Thailand, by Office of the Higher Education Commission, has been aware of the importance of quality development of learners and determined Thai Qualifications Framework for Higher Education (TQF:HEd), B.E.2552 (2009) by setting up learning outcomes in 5 aspects, i.e. 1) morality and ethics, 2) knowledge development, 3) intellectual development, 4) interpersonal relationship and responsibility and 5) mathematical analytical thinking, communication skills and information technology skills (Office of the National Education Commission, 2017).

21st Century skills are skills necessary for learning management especially for learners in living their life in the age of economic growth of the current world. Those skills are learning and innovation skills, information, media and technology skills, and life and career skills (Battelle for Kids, 2021). Thus, learning management in a higher education level is extremely important in developing competencies of learners to be able to learn how to live their lives in the society and live with other people happily. Meanwhile, they are expected to be able to apply the obtained knowledge and understanding to the changing society appropriately, in a balanced way and sustainable manner.

Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University is a Buddhist university that plays a vital role in being the centre of Buddhist education at national and international levels. It aims to manage education for monks, novices and

laypersons. It offers undergraduate study programs, master's and doctor of philosophy programs. Its mission is to produce graduates, conduct research and development, promote Buddhism, provide academic services to the society and preserve art and culture. Its education is managed in accordance with King Chulalongkorn's wish (King Rama 5), the founder of the university who wished the university to become a place for studying Tipitaka and advanced level knowledge for monks, novices and laypersons by means of studying the teachings of the Buddha for thorough understanding and bringing new sciences to confirm and certify the jewel of the Buddha's teachings in order to disseminate to the society in the form of public learning management. Due to changes of the era, learning management of Buddhist universities must adjust their strategies to be consistent with the context of global society. Emphasis is placed on integrating Buddhism with sciences or new sciences under philosophy, namely, Buddhism education management that integrates with new sciences for mind and society development (Phra Maha Hunsu Nitiboonyakorn, 2014).

2. Learning management

Learning management is intention to achieve learning. Good learning management gives rise to good learning. Instructors play an important role in encouraging learners to achieve learning. Instructors who have teaching principles, knowledge and skills will help learners to achieve meaningful and valuable learning, in particular today that learning process is not limited only in a classroom. As a consequence, learning management or called as learning activities are highly important that instructors must learn, understand and put into practice correctly and in a fulfilled way. National Education Act B.E.2542 (1999) concluded learning management by taking into account the difference between persons or learners and everyone can learn. Therefore, in order to organize learner-based learning management, learning management administrators must possess at least 3 basic beliefs, i.e. everyone is different, everyone can learn and learning takes place everywhere, anytime. Education in the 21st century substantially emphasizes learners, discovery learning, working together with a team of learners, flexible lessons, and respect for diversity, allowing learning to promote and support learners. The significant point of instructors for the new era is no emphasis is placed on "teaching" but inspiring learners. Designs of learning process are focused and the role of instructors is to be a learning guide. The 21st century core content includes 3Rs. 3R refers to the skills of reading, writing and arithmetic and 4Cs comprise 1) critical thinking is the ability to think clearly and rationally, understanding the logical connection between ideas, 2) communication is the ability to use words, languages, ICT and psychology for communicating with other people successfully, 3) collaboration teamwork is the ability to work with other people, 4) creativity is the ability to imagine or invent something new, new ideas, new methods known as innovation. Critical thinking and problem-solving, communication, creative thinking for living a life in the 21st century are something that cannot be taught, learners must learn by themselves. In other words, instructors must not teach but design and facilitate learning, allow learners to learn by doing and solve problems by themselves while instructors provide them advice and learning will take place in their mind and brain. Such learning is called problem-based learning (PBL) (Government of Thailand, 2019).

Learning means the act, process, or experience of gaining knowledge or skill that brings change in behaviour, development of ideas and abilities by means of experience and interaction between learners and environment. Three domains of learning can be categorized as 1) Cognitive Domain means intellectual and thinking development. There are 6 major levels of the cognitive domain, namely, (1) knowledge means the recall and recognition of specific facts, procedural patterns, and concepts that serve in the development of intellectual abilities and skills, (2) comprehension is the ability to give meaning, interpret, summarize or write the designated content in a new way while the core content is not changed, (3) application is the ability to adopt materials, methods, theories, concepts to use in situations different from what have been learned, (4) analysis is the ability to separate, classify complex elements into parts that show relationship between small parts, (5) synthesis is the ability to collect or bring various elements or parts to combine to create a new story or produce a new thing, (6) evaluation is the ability to judge or estimate prices of things based on criteria or standards such as judging in sport, judging in court cases or evaluating something is good or bad, correct or incorrect by processing all existing knowledge. 2) Affective Domain includes the manner in which people deal with things emotionally such as feelings, values, appreciation, enthusiasm, motivation and attitudes and 3) Psychomotor Domain refers to the use of motor skills, coordination and physical movement. It can be seen that learning management is important because it is a tool that promotes the love of learning in learners, encourages them to pay attention to lessons and achieve learning. Whether or not learners will reach learning goals and how much they can be successful in their lives depend on good learning management of instructors or the instructors. If instructors know how to choose good and proper learning management, it will have a positive effect on learners' learning as follow: 1) Learners gain knowledge and understanding subject content or activities they have learned. 2) Learners have skills and expertise in subject content or activities they have learned. 3) They have positive attitudes towards what they have learned. 4) Learners are able to apply what they have learned to their everyday life and 5) Learners are able to bring what they have learned to seek more knowledge in the future. To promote learners to have prosperity and progress in physical, emotional, social and intellectual aspects, the best way is giving them education. From what mentioned earlier, it

is noticeable that learning management is highly important in educating learner (Academic Promotion and Registration Office, 2014).

3. Learning management in higher education level

The National Plan of Education B.E.2560-2579 (2017-2036) determined the goals to develop potential of Thai people to possess the 21st century skills, namely, to produce graduates with specific proficiency and excellence, life and career skills, social skills, learning and innovation skills, information and media literacy, computing and ICT literacy, etc. (Office of the National Education Commission, 2017). The 21st century learning focuses on skill development in critical thinking and creative thinking. Emphasis is placed on encouraging learners to be knowledgeable, intelligent, to possess literacy skills and be able to seek knowledge by themselves while teachers/instructors have ability to use new technologies in their teaching. Therefore, teachers/instructors have to give importance to promoting learners to be able to create innovation. Higher education institutions must adjust themselves and keep pace with global changes, and implement education management to serve the 21st century skills in order to deliver their products to agencies in an appropriate and efficient manner including producing graduates in response to Higher Education Act B.E.2562 (2019) that gives importance to education management adhering to social responsibility, academic freedom, independence, equality and good governance principles (Government of Thailand, 2019).

Higher education institutions in the 21st century have 4 major duties: 1) to implement education management by taking reasons, worthiness and needs of the country into consideration including expanding education opportunities to learners in different groups, to provide diversity of curriculums or variety of teaching and learning to facilitate lifelong learning, study after work to develop potential and working skills of people of all ages. Emphasis is placed on enhancing learners to have morality, ethics, self-responsibility and responsibility for family, community, society and the country. 2) Tasks related to conducting research and creating innovation consistent with requirements and needs of the country in order to use in country development and solve problems in the country in a tangible manner for the benefit of academic prosperity. 3) Tasks related to providing academic services to the society – Higher education institutions have duties to provide academic services, academic advice and to disseminate a body of knowledge generated from teaching and learning management, conducting research and creating innovation to government sector, private sector, communities and the society for applying the knowledge to the benefits and enhancement of lifelong learning and 4) tasks related to foster and cherish art and culture by preserving, restoring, carrying on and disseminating local and national wisdom, and to integrate the preservation of art and culture with teaching and learning as well as activities of learners (Santi Ngamsert, 2000).

4. Enhancement of the quality of teaching and learning management of instructors in higher education institutions

Bureau of Higher Education Standards and Evaluation (2018) proposed a guideline to promote the quality of teaching and learning management of instructors in higher education institutions by studying the concepts of UK Professional Standard Framework (UKPSF), United Kingdom and Australian Professional Standard for Teachers, Australia. The standard of professional instructors are determined in 3 aspects as areas activity, knowledge and professional value and the standard of professional instructors are classified into 4 levels as Associate Fellow, Fellow, Senior Fellow and Principal Fellow, consistent with and similar to Australian Professional Standard for Teachers that determined the standard of professional instructors in 3 aspects, i.e. professional knowledge, professional practice and professional engagement and the standard of professional instructors are classified into 4 levels as Graduate, Proficient, Highly Accomplished and Lead. Higher education institutions in Thailand have a guideline to improve the quality of teaching and learning management of instructors in order to promote and support instructors in higher education institutions to develop themselves to be competent and efficient in teaching and learning management. There are 3 significant components as follow:

Component 1 – Knowledge consists of 2 dimensions, i.e. (1.1) knowledge in a field of study, (1.2) knowledge in teaching and learning.

Component 2 – Competencies comprise 4 dimensions, i.e. (2.1) to design and plan learning activities of learners in an efficient manner, (2.2) to implement learning activities in an efficient manner, (2.3) to enhance learning atmosphere and support learning of learners, (2.4) to measure and evaluate learning outcomes of learners and be able to give feedback creatively.

Component 3 – Values consist of 2 dimensions, namely, (3.1) value in teaching profession development and self-development in a continuous manner, (3.2) maintaining ethics in teaching profession.

The quality of teaching and learning management in each component requires 4 levels of quality in each component, showing development of instructors in teaching and learning management. The 4 important levels are as follow:

Level 1 – Persons who have knowledge and understanding of their science and ability to apply it, have knowledge and understanding of science of learning , are able to design activities, organize learning atmosphere, use resources and instructional media by considering learners and factors affecting learning, are able to measure and evaluate learning outcomes of learners, are able to bring evaluation results to improve and develop learning management and themselves continuously, are open-minded to listen to opinions of relevant persons and follow organization ethics of teaching profession.

Level 2 – Persons who have level 1 quality in teaching and learning management, have deep knowledge in their science and regularly monitor and track the progress of their science, have knowledge and understanding of the science of learning, are able to implement learning management appropriately to groups of learners, monitor and track learning outcomes of learners systematically, give advice to fellow teachers and promote the practice in accordance with organization ethics of teaching profession.

Level 3- Persons who have level 2 quality in teaching and learning management, and expertise in their science, science of learning and transdisciplinary learning, bring research results in the classroom to improve learning management, are able to be a mentor or advisor at organizational level in learning management and policies on teaching profession ethics.

Level 4- Persons who have level 3 quality in teaching and learning management, are the leader in their science, science of learning and transdisciplinary learning, are accepted by people both inside and outside the organization, participate in setting policies and strategies in developing a body of knowledge and learning management at national and international levels, are policy leader in teaching profession ethics.

5. Enhancement of 3R 8C skills for learners

Learning management in the context of rapid change should take the 21st century skills into account. It began in the United States of America based on the concept “Skills for the future: learning in the 21st century”, developed by Partnership for 21st Century Skills that wished to see youths having 3R skills which include reading, writing and arithmetic and 8C skills which comprise critical thinking & problem solving, creativity& innovation, cross-culture understanding, collaboration, teamwork & leadership, communications, information & media literacy, computing & ICT literacy, career & learning skills (Kanok Janthong, 2017) and compassion; moral, compassion, kindness, discipline (Watchara Jatuporn, 2018).

6. Enhancement of C-Teacher skills

Teachers/instructors need to be equipped with essential skills called C-Teacher which include (1) Content – teachers need to have accurate knowledge and skills in what they are teaching. If teachers do not have the expertise in what they are teaching or disseminating, they are unable to achieve the learning goals. (2) Computer (ICT) integration: teachers must have skills in employing technology to support learning management since teaching and learning activities equipped with technologies will stimulate learners’ interest. The higher efficient teaching and learning activities are designed, the more desirable skills will be enhanced, (3) Constructionist: teachers must understand the idea that learners are able to create a body of knowledge by connecting existing knowledge to new knowledge and experience they obtain and practice in numerous activities. Teachers/instructors are able to employ this idea for planning learning activities so that learners will have opportunities to create various knowledge and work through the application of knowledge and experience obtained in class or self-study, (4) Connectivity: teachers/instructors have to be able to manage activities that generate connectivity between learners, learners and instructors, and among instructors in the same or different education institutions including connectivity between education institutions and education institutions and communities to create learning environment, becoming direct experience for learners, (5) Collaboration: teachers/instructors play a vital role in learning management on the basis of collaboration learning between learners, and learners and teachers/instructors in order to practice working as a team, self-learning, exchanging opinions and information, resulting in learner development in life and career skills, (6) Communication: teachers/instructors possess communication skills in terms of explaining, giving examples, choosing media and presenting media including managing environment to support learning so as to pass down knowledge to learners in an appropriate manner, leading to understanding and ability to learn for achieving the set goals, (7) Creativity: teachers/instructors need to create diversified and brand-new teaching and learning activities, environment should be managed to support learners’ learning on the basis of self-learning as much as

possible. teachers/instructors need to play their part more than persons who directly disseminate knowledge and (8) Caring: Teachers/instructors must have compassion and kindness given to learners, need to express their sincere love and care to learners so that learners have trust in them, resulting in relaxing learning environment which is a situation that learners will be happiest in learning and learn best (Thanomporn Laohacharatsaeng, 2013).

7. Buddhist methods of teaching

Teaching and learning in accordance with Buddha's methods of teaching can be applied to meet the context of a changing society like Thai society in a good manner because Thailand is a land of Buddhism. Its history is associated with Buddhism in every dimension profoundly. Thus, Buddhism has been an important root of Thai way for more than 2,000 years. Buddha's teachings have an influence on principles of thinking, the way people behave themselves, culture and traditions for such a long time in Thailand.

Buddha's way of teaching or Buddhist teaching is filled with 5 models as follow: (1) '*Ekanbyakarana* (Pali)' refers to one side confirmation such as goodness brings happiness, badness brings suffering, merit should be made, sin should be avoided. (2) '*Vibhajjabyakarana*' is the way points are outstandingly separated. For example, someone asks women and men, which ones are better. The answer cannot be confirmed on one side. The answer should be like some women are better than some men, some men are better than some women. The answer should be conditional. (3) '*Patipucchabyakarana*' is asking before teaching. (4) '*Tapanabyakarana*' is holding a problem but not predicting. Buddha did not answer something because he viewed that it is not useful or it is not the right time to be known. (5) '*Upamabyakarana*' is teaching by making a comparison.

Buddha gave methods of teaching that let learners realize fact by using different methods suitable for each individual's habit. He could bring the nature to be instructional media that can be seen clearly. When he saw things, people or unexpected situations that would be useful for teaching, he would bring them to be a tool of teaching. It can be seen that the Buddha viewed the value of "audio visual aids" and his teaching is his routine work regardless of time and place (Banyawat Fangkam, 2020)

8. Conclusion

Learning management in Buddhist universities in Thailand by integrating Buddhism with new science to develop mind and society in accordance with the philosophy of the universities consistent with the movement and changes in the society in the 21st century leads to the development of new way of teaching and learning. Both teachers/instructors and learners need to adjust themselves to blend with the teaching and learning guideline in the 21st century. The important things are (1) enhancement of the quality of teaching and learning management of instructors in higher education institutions in order to promote and support instructors in higher education institutions to develop themselves to have competencies and efficiency in teaching and learning management; knowledge, competencies and values. Each component is determined to have levels of quality in each component, totally 4 levels showing the development of teachers/instructors in teaching and learning management, (2) enhancement of 3R 8C skills for learners, (3) enhancement of C-Teacher skills for teachers/instructors, (4) integration of Buddhist methods of teaching with learning management.

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