ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to study collaborative project-based and blended learning according to the principle of edutainment of participants in the APEC edutainment exchange program. The samples were administrators, and students from APEC Learning Community Builders (ALCoB). The study drew its theoretical basis from project based learning, collaborative learning, blended learning, and research studies on edutainment. A research methodology of quantitative was used. The research design consisted of two steps: collecting data related to factors from literature review and interviewing administrators, and students from APEC Learning Community Builders (ALCoB). The study findings were as follows: The principle of edutainment consisted of 3 factors; learning, playing, and experiencing. Project-based learning approach uses a production model: first, students define the purpose for creating the end product and identify their audience. They research their topic, design their product, and create a plan for project management. Students then begin the project, resolve problems and issues that arise in production, and finish their product. Students may use or present the product they have created, and ideally are given time to reflect on and evaluate their work. And collaborative learning consisted of 6 stages; (1) Topics and teams (2) Planning (3) Action (4) Final Report Preparation (5) Presentation (6) Assessment/Evaluation. Blended learning is learning which combines online and face-to-face approaches. There have 6 criteria for design blended learning; learning, learners, maintenance, scalability, resources, and sustainability.

The results from interviewed ALCoB members showed that AEEP is a fantastic program for everybody who has joined this project because they have got an experienced learning with enjoyment. The factors has effected the successful of the collaborative project-based and blended learning according to the principle of edutainment was management. AEEP has a great leadership and team work to manage project since beginning, between, and after. They combined many patterns of learning as collaborative learning, and project-based learning. Students who join edutainment project should have team work skill, communication skill and creative thinking skill. When design experiential learning, the host must design based on principle of edutainment (learning, playing and experiencing).

Keywords
Blended Learning, Collaborative Learning, Edutainment, Project Based Learning.

1) INTRODUCTION

With the spread of Information Technology, the importance of education is increasing. The educational system changed to be student-centered. Thailand National Education Act of B.E. 2542 (1999) gave the policy that education shall be based on the principle that all learners are capable of learning and self-development, and are regarded as being most important. The teaching-learning process shall aim at enabling the learners to develop
themselves at their own pace and to the best of their potentiality.

Recently, the emerging instructional method of 'playing to learn' has been gaining interest from educators and researchers alike. The difficulties of the instructional method that are the balancing act between enjoyment and educational value.

Edutainment (also educational entertainment or entertainment-education) is a form of entertainment designed to educate as well as to amuse. (Wikipedia, 2008) The concept of edutainment or "education and entertainment" is not new in a learning environment and its purpose is to make the learning process more enjoyable.

2) BACKGROUND

As to the unexpected future society and rapid changes of technologies, world famous scholars and experts have deliberated ideal model of future society and suggested a way to overcome the challenges of future society. APEC Future Education Consortium is for developing a community model of future education, embodying a ‘Total-supporting System,’ and advancing research activities to meet the challenges of the IT-based future society with emphasizing value oriented society and considering the harmony between technologies and human being through implementing the EduPark. (YoungHwan Kim, 2006)

The APEC Future Education Forum under the leadership of South Korea has done various activities during the past 7 years to conceptualize the future education in the Asia Pacific region. As a result, the Forum has come up with AEEP (APEC Edutainment Exchange Program). AEEP is an educational project with 15 of the APEC member countries participating. It aims at international education exchange through online and offline activities. AEEP is being spread through 15 APEC nations including Thailand, Mexico, and Vietnam. It is developing into a global agenda.

AEEP is a new type of model for international education cooperation that integrates the latest IT technology along with field education. Need for a standardized and specialized program that can meet the requirements for globalization and can also strength the educational competitiveness following international exchange. Need for 'Edutainment' increasing as the new concept of education in the future.

The 6th International ALCoB Conference & The 1st ALCoB Edutainment Exchange Program launched on August 15 – 21, 2008 at Busan, Korea. The First Round of ALCoB Edutainment Exchange Program consisted of 64 participants from Korea, Peru, Mexico, China, Indonesia, Vietnam, Philippines, Malaysia, and Thailand.

3) PURPOSE

The purpose of this study was to study collaborative project-based and blended learning according to the principle of edutainment of participants in the APEC edutainment exchange program. The samples were administrators, and students from APEC Learning Community Builders (ALCoB).

4) REVIEW OF LITERATURE

4.1) Collaborative Learning

“Collaborative learning” is an umbrella term for a variety of educational approaches involving joint intellectual effort by students, or students and teachers together. Usually, students are working in groups of two or more, mutually searching for understanding, solutions, or meanings, or creating a product. Collaborative learning activities vary widely, but most center on students’ exploration or application of the course material, not simply the teacher’s presentation or explication of it. (Smith and MacGregor, 1992)

There are many techniques of collaborative learning, group investigation (GI) is a one of them. The stages of GI are:

- Topics and teams: Topics for study are identified and students are placed in teams.
- Planning: Team members decide what sub-topics are to be investigated as well as the goals of their study and how the topics are to be studied.
• Action: Team members gather information, review it, analyze/evaluate it, and reach some conclusions.
• Final Report Preparation: Each team must prepare a summary activity. It may be in the form of a report, a briefing, etc., for the entire class. The teams, via representatives, must coordinate this activity.
• Presentation: Each team presents its findings to the class. Reduce lecture/telling by using role plays, panels, simulations, etc.
• Assessment/Evaluation: The purposes, methods, and means of evaluation can be negotiated collaboratively among the students and the instructor. This is usually a tremendous learning experience in itself.

4.2) Project- Based Learning
Project-based learning (PBL) is a model for classroom activity that shifts away from the classroom practices of short, isolated, teacher-centered lessons and instead emphasizes learning activities that are long-term, interdisciplinary, student-centered, and integrated with real world issues and practices. One immediate benefit of practicing PBL is the unique way that it can motivate students by engaging them in their own learning. PBL provides opportunities for students to pursue their own interests and questions and make decisions about how they will find answers and solve problems.

Blended Learning consisted of 2 groups: offline and online. And each group split into 6 groups. Six offline component groups:
1. Workplace learning
2. Face-to-face tutoring, coaching or mentoring
3. Classroom
4. Distributable print media
5. Distributable electronic media
6. Broadcast media
Six online component groups:
1. Online learning content
2. E-tutoring, e-coaching or e-mentoring
3. Online collaborative learning
4. Online knowledge management
5. The web
6. Mobile learning

4.4) APEC Edutainment Exchange Program
AEEP divided into 3 phrases as following:

Pre-Activities (Online)
• Online Application
The participants are requested to fill out the personal- and self-introduction sheets and to select the project that they are interested in. Such data will be used to form multinational groups. All the participants are thus requested to fill out the sheets in a creative way.
• Online lecture and Evaluation
All the participants are requested to obtain copies of the basic lectures, not only those regarding the languages spoken and the etiquettes observed in each economy but also...
those regarding information concerning APEC, so they can participate in the program. Thereafter, they are required to take an online test regarding APEC.

- Team-building
When the participants have completed the test, multinational groups or teams will be formed based on the data obtained about the participants. Each team will choose a name and a slogan and will clarify the roles of its members: the team leader, plan maker, secretary, interviewer, and operator.

- Submission of Project Proposals and Preparations for Experiential Learning
Each team is requested to propose a project activity plan based on the theme that will be announced by IACE. After searching for data that are relevant to the project and exchanging ideas among themselves, each team, through its leader, should upload its proposal. Such project proposals will serve as sources of primary data for the preparation of the experiential learning activities.

Experiential Learning Activities (Offline)
- Opening Ceremony and Orientation
The opening ceremony will be held on the first day of the program, and the participants will be provided therein with general information about the program. Each team will also present its project proposal.
- Experiential learning activity 1
On the second day, all the participants will take part in experiential learning activities as teams, based on their respective team projects.
- Interim report and Feedback
All the teams are requested to submit their respective interim reports, and feedback regarding such reports will be given to them by ALCoB-T (APEC Learning Community Builders-Teachers). Such feedback should be utilized to improve the team projects.
- Experiential learning activity 2
Each team will participate in the activity, taking ALCoB-T’s feedback into account.
- Prepare for presentation on outcomes of the project
The execution of the team projects through experiential learning activities should be summarized in a final report. Each team is also requested to prepare to present such final reports at the 6th International ALCoB Conference.

Post Activities (Offline & Online)
- Presentation of the Outcomes of the Team Projects at the 6th International ALCoB Conference (Offline)
The teams will present their respective projects at the 6th International ALCoB Conference. The projects will then be evaluated, as presented, in terms of their expressiveness, concreteness, and creativity. Afterwards, the “Best Team Project” will be announced and awarded.
- Team Activities (Online)
The activities of the 1st AEEP participants will be continually promoted in the online community that was established autonomously. Such online community will serve as a venue for the participants to connect with the participants from other economies.

5) METHODOLOGY
A research methodology of quantitative was used. The research design consisted of two steps: 1. collecting data related to factors from literature review and 2. interviewing administrators, and students from APEC Learning Community Builders (ALCoB).

The first step was collected data from literature review, then did content analysis. And the second step was structured-interview. The target of interview was administrators and students who joined The 1st ALCoB Edutainment Exchange Program launched on August 15 – 21, 2008 at Busan, Korea.

The questions were following: 1) “What are your opinions about the APEC Edutainment Exchange Program?”, 2) “What do you think about the procedure of the APEC Edutainment Exchange Program?”, 3) “What are your opinions about the activities in the APEC Edutainment Exchange Program? And any suggestions”, 4) “If The APEC Edutainment Exchange Program launch in your country, what do you think about it? Do they need to
change any activities for suitable with your country’s contexts or not?”

6) Results

The findings from reviewed literature were following: 1) The principle of edutainment consisted of 3 factors; learning, playing, and experiencing. 2) Project-based learning approach uses a production model: first, students define the purpose for creating the end product and identify their audience. They research their topic, design their product, and create a plan for project management. Students then begin the project, resolve problems and issues that arise in production, and finish their product. Students may use or present the product they have created, and ideally are given time to reflect on and evaluate their work. 3) Collaborative learning consisted of 6 stages; (1) Topics and teams (2) Planning (3) Action (4) Final Report Preparation (5) Presentation (6) Assessment/Evaluation. 4) Blended learning is learning which combines online and face-to-face approaches. There have 6 criteria for design blended learning; learning, learners, maintenance, scalability, resources, and sustainability.

The results from interviewed 8 persons who participated in The 1st ALCoB Edutainment Exchange Program launched on August 15 – 21, 2008 at Busan, Korea found that AEEP is a fantastic program for everybody who joined this project because they got an experienced learning with enjoyment.

The first research question asked “What are your opinions about the APEC Edutainment Exchange Program?” Student from Indonesia responded “It’s very a good program for me as a student. Because, from this program, I can learn anything which aren’t studied in my classroom, like experiential learning, leadership.” And student from Mexico said “This program is so awesome because have the opportunity to share with students from other countries about your life, your school, traditions, and gives you the chance to make friends and share information experiences, I really loved this program.” It showed that AEEP was an interesting project because it’s an international project.

The second research question asked “What do you think about the procedure of the APEC Edutainment Exchange Program?” Student from Vietnam answered “I think the procedure of the AEEP is quite perfect. We will be safe and secure during the program. We can also join the good-quality activities in the program.” In this question was pointed out the procedure was well managed. They have teamwork and wonderful leadership although student from Korea said “It was too tight for participants. During both of online activity and offline activity, our young high school students had to try hard for everything. Although I pointed the problems in AEEP, I love AEEP and everything about it because the time just passed. AEEP is the best program for every participant.” It can be said that AEEP will keep in mind of all participants.

The third question asked “What are your opinions about the activities in the APEC Edutainment Exchange Program?” Students from Thailand said “I like an experiential learning but making presentation waste time so much.” and Mexico’s member said “About the activities over there I think every activity was so good, I know that we have to do a lot of work but everything was so funny.” So one of the principle of designing activities is to connect deeply with student’s interests and passions although activity is so hard or spend a long time but student’s attention retain and joyful.

The last question asked “If The APEC Edutainment Exchange Program launch in your country, what do you think about it? Do they need to change any activities for suitable with your country’s contexts or not?” All of the answer have showed that AEEP can be launched in their country by adjust in field of tradition, tourism and education.
7) Conclusions.

The APEC Edutainment Exchange Program can be the pilot project for designing edutainment program in Thailand by using collaborative learning, project-based learning and blended learning according to principle of edutainment.

The research results show most important factors to enhance successful of AEEP found to be the management. AEEP has a great leadership and team work to manage project since beginning, between, and after. They combined many patterns of learning as collaborative learning, and project-based learning. Students who join edutainment project should have team work skill, communication skill and creative thinking skill. Online activities can be a tool to find new friends and pre-survey for self interest of each student in order to indentify topics for study and teamwork. But the host must concern about time-zone of participants to join via online. When design experiential learning, host must design based on principle of edutainment (learning, playing and experiencing). The challenge of the project was one of the attractions. Seymour Papert has found that learners become deeply engaged by “hard fun” – in other words, learners don’t mind activities that are hard as long as the activities connect deeply with their interests and passions (Papert, 1993). So I think it can be possible that edutainment project will launch successful in Thailand because we have a good example project and we can apply suitable activities in context of Thailand.

REFERENCES


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