

# THE STUDENTS' OPINIONS TOWARD LEARNING WITH KNOWLEDGE CONSTRUCTION PACKAGE IN INTEGRATION UNIT BASED ON SUFFICIENCY ECONOMY PHILOSOPHY

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**Abstract:** The objective of this research was to study students' opinions toward learning with Knowledge Construction Package in Integration Unit based on Sufficiency Economy Philosophy. The target group was 40 students in Grade 6 in the Demonstration School of Khon Kaen University, Primary Level, (Mo Din Daeng), Faculty of Education, Khon Kaen University, Munag District, Khon Kaen Province. The instruments using for collecting data of Action Research consisted of 7 sets of Knowledge Construction Package Integration Unit based on Sufficiency Economy Philosophy, and 7 Knowledge Lesson Plans (2 period/ each plan, 50 minutes each period). The instrument was used to investigate students' opinions on Knowledge Construction Package in Integration Unit based on Sufficiency Economy Philosophy. The Quantitative Data was analyzed by calculating the Mean, and Percentage. The Qualitative Data was analyzed in Descriptive Analysis. The research findings suggested that the propriety was in "Good" level and it affected students' proficiency and bring positive attitude towards learning activity management.

**Keywords:** Sufficiency Economy Philosophy, Constructivist Learning Environments, integration Units, Students' Opinions

## 1. Background and Statement of the Problems

The Constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand, 2007, requires the government to develop sustainable society, economics and national growth which will be promoted by implementing the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy and considering the benefits of the nation as a whole. In article 78, paragraph 1, the government state must promote and support the implementation of the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy under Section 83. At present, government agencies, Private organizations, communities, educational institutions and the general public, etc., employ the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy to conduct the business, develop career paths and apply as a rule of thumbs in people's lives broadly. (Isarangkoolnaayuthaya, 2009)

In accordance to the government's policies for more than 5 years, the government has adopted the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy to drive the policies into practice in order to strengthen immunity and balance economics, society and environment including preventing risks from national external and internal fluctuations. (National Economics and Social Development Council – NESDC, Research and Development Institute of Sufficiency Economy Philosophy Foundation – RSEPF, and Crown Property Bureau – CPB, 2012). Likewise, the National Scheme of Education, (2009-2016) its principle is also based on the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy which is emphasized on a life balance basis, reasonable satisfying and having world temporary knowledge in order to accomplish sustainable development and well-being of Thai people. This process will lead to the holistic

integration and to have educational reforms to develop learners naturally to the fullest potential at all levels of education. Especially in basic education, integration methods are used in both the same content group and different groups. The content is organized in accordance with the age and potential of the learners and learning activities can be learnt from real experiences or local knowledge. (Office of the Education Council: Ministry of Education, 2010) Particularly in 2011, on the year that King Rama IX has reached 84<sup>th</sup> birthday anniversary, he granted the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy to the people. The Ministry of Education and the Office of the Basic Education Commission therefore have policies and goals to drive the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy to schools. (Office of the Education Council, 2009)

The prudent implementation of a highly competitive capitalist economy stimulating extravagant consumption values and being too popular without considering the real benefits for both oneself and the public, resulting in the morality of the people in society decline and social conditions of students of the Demonstration School of Khon Kaen University Primary level, (Mo Din Daeng) has a sufficiently reduced characteristics. As shown in the basic quality assessment results for education. (Ordinary National Education Test : O-NET)

An evaluation of desirable characteristics of 6 Grader students under Khon Kaen Primary Educational Service Area Office 1, suggested that the highest percentage of the desirable characteristics to the lowest ones are namely as, self-discipline, love of nation, religion and king, and honesty. On the contrary, the lowest percentage is the observance of principles of Sufficiency Economy Philosophy in one's way of life. When considering the average scores in each characteristic, found that each aspect has a lower average score. (Khon Kaen Primary Educational Service Area Office 1, 2010, 2012)

The above reason illustrates the importance of a learning management process that encourages students to learn from a real life experiences which can stimulate students to stay alert. There is also a link between learning methods in each subject content to real life situation which is consistent with the learning management according to the Constructivist theory (Chaijaroen, 2008) According to the theory, learning is a student's internal process in which they themselves construct knowledge from the relationship between what they see and their prior knowledge by trying to bring their understanding about given situations and the phenomena that they see to create a cognitive structure or schema. Students are involved in that learning activities with enthusiasm until the students are able to create meaning, understanding, and the teacher is unable to change the intellectual structure of the students. However, the teacher can help students adjust the intellectual structure by arranging conditions that cause imbalances or causing intellectual conflicts and encourage students to be knowledge creators themselves (Rangabtook & Chaijaroen, 2008). It will further to encourage students to have knowledge and understanding about the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy and get inquire to that features in order to adjust the balance and be ready for changes in various aspects such as material, society, environment and culture. They should also be able to live their daily lives happily and sustainably.

The research team is therefore very interested in this topic which related to the development of concepts and guidelines for students in accordance with the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy by designing a knowledge building unit based on the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy by integrating to Thai Language subject (unit 1, reading and unit 2, writing), Science subject (unit 6: The process of global change) Social Studies, Religion and Culture subject (Unit 3 Economics and Unit 5 Geography). Besides, the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy plays an important component in this study which includes the following aspects. 1) **Problem Based**, it is used as a gateway to the lesson content to be learned which must be triggered by problems that are close to the real context. 2) **Resource**, it is the collection of content and information technology that is used by students to seek for knowledge. They are able to accomplish various learning tasks individually by themselves 3) **Scaffolding**, this can support students in problem solving or learning situations that cannot be completed or to be succeeded on their own. 4) **Collaboration** is to encourage students to exchanges ideas among themselves and allow them to have important reflective thinking, which will continue to adjust and prevent misunderstandings that arise while learning.

In designing the knowledge building package, the integrated unit based on the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy is aimed to study the learning outcomes, the features of Sufficiency Economy Philosophy and the opinions of students towards learning by the integrated knowledge building unit based on the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy.

This article presented the study of students' opinions on Knowledge Construction Package in Integration Unit based on Sufficiency Economy Philosophy. The findings will be used to improve and develop innovative designs and learning management to enable students to learn effectively. The process will result in skills for seeking knowledge and knowledge creation including developing learning outcomes and the features of Sufficiency Economy Philosophy.

## **2. Research Objective**

This research was aimed to study students' opinions on Knowledge Construction Package in Integration Unit based on Sufficiency Economy Philosophy.

## **3. Research Methodology**

**3.1 Target group** was 40 students in class 6/4 who enrolled in the 2nd semester of the academic year 2013 of the Demonstration School, Khon Kaen University, Primary Level (Mo Din Daeng) under the Faculty of Education, Khon Kaen University, Muang District, Khon Kaen Province.

### **3.2 Research Variables**

3.2.1 Independent Variable is the Knowledge Construction Package in Integration Unit based on Sufficiency Economy Philosophy.

3.2.2 Dependent Variable is students' opinions on Knowledge Construction Package in Integration Unit based on Sufficiency Economy Philosophy.

**3.3 Research Design** was a One Shot Case Study design.

### **3.4 Research Instruments**

3.4.1 Knowledge Construction Package, created by the integration of different learning content. It was consisted of the content in Thai Language subject, Science subject, Social Studies, Religion and Culture subject including the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy. The Knowledge Construction Package was consisted of 7 sub-units as follows;

Unit 1: Slogans to Prevent Landslides

Unit 2: Bad News of Tsunami

Unit 3: Drought Warning Announcement

Unit 4: Imaginary Pictures toward Flood

Unit 5: Famine Prevention by Sufficiency Principles

Unit 6: Together with Helping Earthquake

Unit 7: Knowledge about Windstorm by Using Sufficiency Principles

3.4.2 The learning management plan using is the Knowledge Construction Package in Integration Unit based on Sufficiency Economy Philosophy, consisting of 7 lesson plans, 2 periods per lesson (50 minutes/each period).

3.4.3 The questionnaire to ask for students' opinions on the integrated package of knowledge construction based on the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy. The questions are in 5 rating scales and open-ended form, which require students to express their opinions in 3 aspects which are: 1) content 2) characteristics of the Knowledge Building Package and 3) characteristics of learning activities.

### **3.5 Research Procedures and Data Collection**

In this study, the research team conducted an experiment and collected data to study the results of learning management by using the is the Knowledge Construction Package in Integration Unit based on Sufficiency Economy Philosophy with 6 Grader students. The steps for collecting data are as follows;

3.5.1 The learning management by using the Knowledge Construction Package in Integration Unit based on Sufficiency Economy Philosophy was created by the following steps;

3.5.1.1 The researcher introduced the students about learning methods through the Knowledge Construction Package in Integration Unit based on Sufficiency Economy Philosophy.

3.5.1.2 Students were divided into 10 groups of 4 students. Each of which students per group derived from different learning outcomes in Thai language subject, Science subject and Social studies, Religion and Culture subject. Each group of students has mixed grades and abilities.

3.5.1.3 Students were assigned to complete 7 sets of learning activities which were instructed by the following steps;

**1) Problem Based Given:** Students were assigned to study and find out the solutions from the situation given in class.

**2) Resource Based:** It was to search for information in order to solve problems from the resource library and the help from the scaffolding in case that the problems could not be resolved.

**3) Learning Collaboration:** Students discussed in groups and the learning processes were recorded. Students presented learning mission results in front of the class in order to share additional suggestions for each mission among groups.

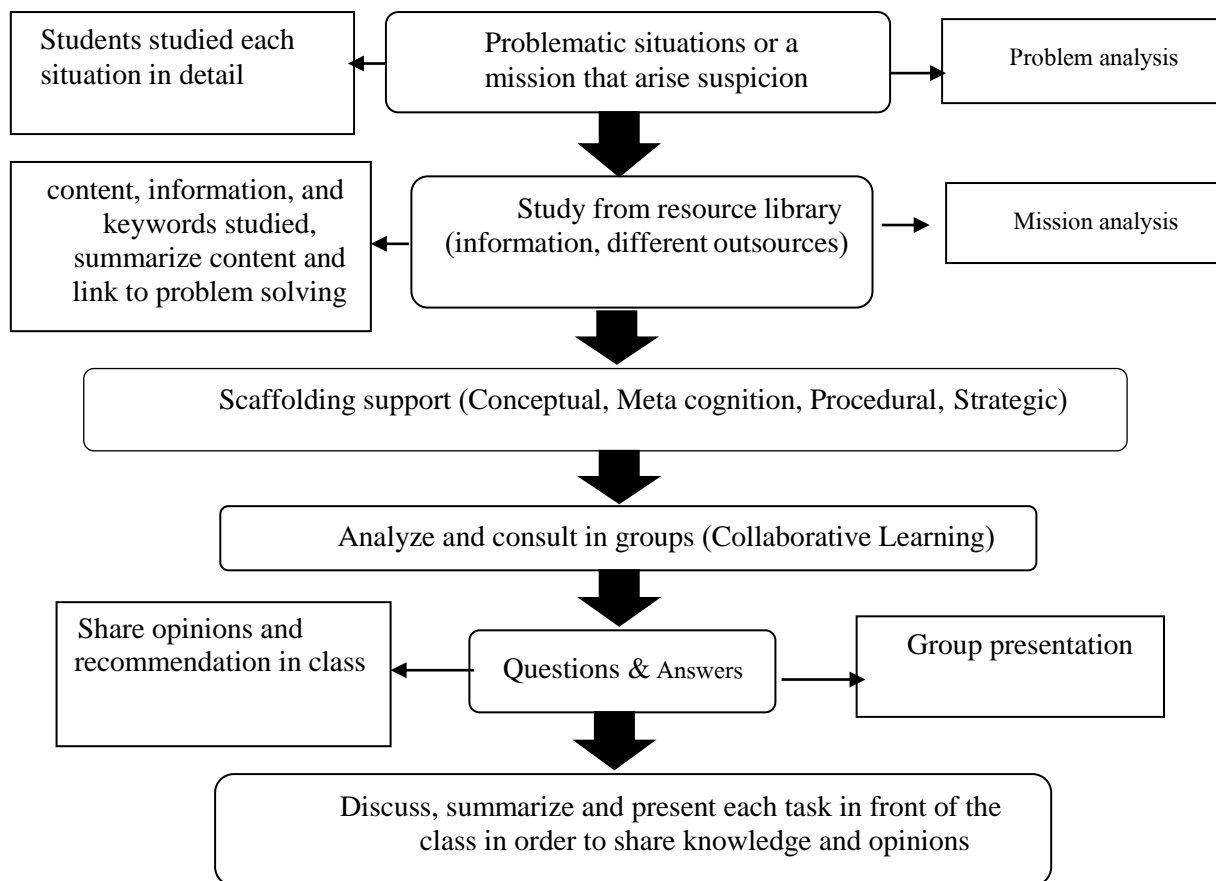
**4) Idea Conclusion:** Students summarized their understanding by answering questions, summarizing what they learned from the learning activities in order to construct the knowledge by themselves.

3.5.2 After completing the tasks by using the Knowledge Construction Package in Integration Unit based on Sufficiency Economy Philosophy, the following data was collected;

3.5.2.1 Students were assigned to take the unit tests in order to measure their achievement.

3.5.2.2 Researcher had students take a survey about their existing sufficiency characteristics.

3.5.2.3 Students were assigned to do a questionnaire about their opinions toward the Knowledge Construction Package in Integration Unit based on Sufficiency Economy Philosophy. After that, the data was compiled from the observations of the students in order to analyze the qualitative data with learning detail diagram as shown in picture 1



**Picture 1** Learning Processes of Learners by using the Knowledge Construction Package in Integration Unit based on Sufficiency Economy Philosophy

### 3.6 Data Analysis

The analysis of the data obtained in this study consisting of quantitative and qualitative data in accordance to the achievement tests, Sufficiency Characteristic questionnaires and the opinion questionnaires toward the Knowledge Construction Package in Integration Unit based on Sufficiency Economy Philosophy. The research team presented data analysis accordingly to the purpose of this presentation which were included the questionnaire after the study the integrated knowledge construction package based on the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy. The frequency of data was designed to find out quantitative mean ( $\bar{X}$ ). The data was also taken from open-ended questions to analyze, interpret and summarize as a qualitative data.

## 4. Conclusion and Discussion of the Results

### 4.1 Research Results

According to the study of students' opinions toward the Knowledge Construction Package in Integration Unit based on Sufficiency Economy Philosophy, it was found that, their satisfying level of using this method was in a good level. The package was influential to students' learning and created their positive attitudes toward learning activities.

### 4.2 Discussion of the Results

From the study of the opinions of the students towards learning by the Knowledge Construction Package in Integration Unit based on Sufficiency Economy Philosophy, the resulted

suggested that the students were satisfied in a good level. It affected their knowledge constructions and could also create positive attitudes toward learning activities in class due to the following reasons;

4.2.1 The characteristics of the content in the Knowledge Construction Package in Integration Unit based on Sufficiency Economy Philosophy was consisted with disasters and natural resources, the package was designed into sub- categories which were landslides, earthquakes, tsunamis, floods, storms, droughts, famines, by implementing Sufficiency Economy Philosophy. It was furthermore combined with different writing forms and then was integrated in accordance with academic principles which resulting in appropriate links of knowledge construction. For example, students wrote slogans for landslide prevention, writing news about tsunami, flood, storm, writing warning about drought, famine, advertisement writing for inviting item donation to help earthquake victims. They also composed creative writing about how to employ the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy in their everyday lifestyles. They moreover classified the content of the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy by using simple and concise language. The pictures attached in the booklets were colorful and interesting, allowing students to read and understand more easily. The content used was closely related in their everyday lives. The booklets were used as sources of information covering all matters sufficiently, completely as needed. They allowed students to understand the lessons well and they were able to create knowledge self-understanding of the lesson content. They further encouraged students to be enthusiastic in their studies and motivated students to search for knowledge with awareness in finding information easily. The booklets meets students' needs and promote learners in terms of learning content by connecting prior knowledge to the creation of new knowledge which can be used to solve problems in other situations. (Gerdthai, 2011), (Athana, 2011), (Wutpredee, 2013), (Silachan & Kanjug, 2014), (Saenmanot, 2014), (Gamlunglert & Chaijaroen., 2015), (Gamlunglert, et al., 2016).

4.2.2 According to the characteristics of the Knowledge Construction Package in Integration Unit based on Sufficiency Economy Philosophy, students were satisfied its appropriateness in a good level because the presentation of the lesson content was in the form of a booklet called "Knowledge Bank". The booklet was consisted with appropriate font size and colorful pictures. The knowledge construction package was classified into categories such as knowledge bank, problematic situations, missions, and scaffolding bases. All these factors encouraged students to be more interested in studying and understanding the content of the lesson. They could also help students to build knowledge together with develop their learning achievement. The research team had designed the situations, problems and missions that emphasized students' feelings who involved as parts of each situation such as about the occurrence of floods, landslides, windstorms, drought, and famine or earthquake news. Likewise, the Tsunami which affects eating sufficiently was also designed in the task because it is a natural phenomenon that may occur in real life situation which can have direct impact on students. Some situations were asserted from news and facts.

The above reasons were consistent with students' opinions which indicated that "*knowledge construction, resources, and real-life situations lead to learners' enthusiasm to find out the answers, and the help of knowledge scaffolding are able to help them think, solve problems and answer questions from the assigned missions*". These factors provided students with a better understanding of the lesson content. Students could constructed knowledge and understood in the lesson content by themselves. They also encouraged learners to be enthusiastic in their studies, trying to find solutions. The situation and problems given encouraged them to search for knowledge in order to use that information to solve the problems. The results were relevant with the studies of Gerdthai (2011), Athana (2011), Samart, et al., (2011), their research studies indicated that the constructivist teaching was an activity for students to face with problems, take action and gain direct experiences. There was exchange of opinions and ideas. The students were very enjoyable and interested in the media and teaching.

4.2.3 Due to characteristics of learning activities in the integrated knowledge construction package based on the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy, students rated the appropriateness in a very good level. The research team had designed learning activities by focusing on students working in groups in order to practice the exchange of ideas between friends, allowing students participation in both groups and whole class discussion. They learned how to work systematically as a team. They also obtained a chance to think critically and solve problems with reasonably. These processes gradually brought students' enthusiasm and enjoyment in knowledge searching such as in seeking knowledge about different disasters task. Students learned the causes, methods of solving and preventing problems when

disaster strikes. They further learned the principles of the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy of the King Rama VI and applied the knowledge to practice for sufficient living. They also were led to enhance their creative writing skills and imagination from the principles of the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy theory. Those activities led them to interact with friends and teachers, becoming more outgoing and leave the chance for them to exchange opinions and present ideas which can be relevant or irrelevant to the topics. However, they would finally be able to find their best judgments and conclusion. The results shown were corresponding with the studies (Samart, 2009), (Gamlunglert, 2010) and (Silachan & Kanjug, 2014) which claimed that the benefits of learning activities of the constructivist theory were students working into groups. It allowed members to consult, ask questions, discuss and exchange opinions from various perspectives. Students could express their opinions from their studies and then used them to create their own knowledge. They were able to apply that knowledge into their daily lives. Students could truly work together in discussions and sharing ideas with others, helping each other in groups. They were enthusiastic and competitive to solve problems which were from real situations under the assist of teachers. (Gamlunglert, 2010). The findings were further consistent with the concepts of Chaijaroen (2008), Samart, et al. (2011). They indicated that the teacher created problems or situations in order to encourage students to study, search for information and provide opportunities to seek for knowledge independently in carrying out tasks according to the situation of each issue. If students answer incorrectly or do not understand the tasks, the teachers would give advice until they could answer give solutions correctly to the points.

## **5.Recommendations**

### **5.1 Suggestions for Research Implementation**

5.1.1 The research results should be expanded to use the Knowledge Construction Package in Integration Unit based on Sufficiency Economy Philosophy with students in other schools in order to study the learning outcomes, skills, analytical processes and problem solving skill including their characteristics of Sufficient Economy features.

5.1.2 The implementation the integrated knowledge construction package based on the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy in learning management should be considered about the relation of the students' contexts, content of creating an integrated unit, and the appropriate of characteristics of the knowledge construction and suitable environment of the schools.

### **5.2 Suggestions for Further Research**

5.2.1 Learning activities with the Knowledge Construction Package in Integration Unit based on Sufficiency Economy Philosophy should be integrated with more different subjects. Also, the package should be continually employed in class.

5.2.2 Different factors, such as the number of members in the group, learning atmosphere, environment contexts, learning time-consuming, technology media, video clips or comic features should be studied in order to see the impacts of each factor toward the learning package.

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