

# **Discussing the Theory and Practice of Propelling Class Reading Club from the Aspect of Knowledge Management**

Hsieh, Shu-Hsi  
Director of Library  
National Jhongli Home Economics and Commercial High School  
[s363@pclhvs.cl.edu.tw](mailto:s363@pclhvs.cl.edu.tw)  
Taiwan, R.O.C.

Li, Sheng-Lung  
Director of Library  
National Jhongli Commercial High School  
[slli@mail.clvsc.tyc.edu.tw](mailto:slli@mail.clvsc.tyc.edu.tw)  
Taiwan, R.O.C.

## **Abstract**

*In the 21st century, knowledge economy has been growing rapidly. In order to strengthen knowledge competitiveness and face the international competition of the new century, Taiwan should achieve the educational goal of lifelong learning, widely build up learning organizations, tend citizens who can learn through lives, and positively give impetus to whole people reading program. To meet the coming of learning society, knowledge management has become the key to tap the treasury of library-using education. Knowledge can be fully developed only by close sharing and intellectual interchange. Thus, it can diffuse effectively.*

*Reading and pursuing knowledge are the motive power of working out one's potentialities and inciting creative thinking. "Knowledge is power" is a wise saying of Francis Bacon, a British philosopher. He also stated, "Histories make men wise; poets, witty; the mathematics, subtle; natural philosophy, deep; moral, grave; logic and rhetoric, able to contend." This statement brings out very profound meanings. It verifies that reading can not only absorb the essence of books, but broaden one's general knowledge. The British Education Secretary, David Blunkett, said, "Turning the pages of a book is to open a window on the world. Books are the foundation on which other learning can be built." The saying well indicates that reading is the communication between mind and mind. It is also a valuable secret of being vigorous and keeping away from loneliness.*

*Class reading club is a place where one can further extend knowledge, achieve self-fulfillment, and happily learn and share with others. By applying the mechanism of knowledge management, the library is responsible for dividing duties to all the teachers and students. Through the mutual help within the organization, the procedure of knowledge-sharing can carry on, and then a learning organization of a school with creative power can be constructed. Since creative knowledge can be obtained by a series of accumulation, transmission, and utilization, the student's learning motive can be impelled, and the general knowledge broadened. In addition to selecting valuable books, the propelling of knowledge management, the innovation of teaching method, the application of multimedia such as TV, digital camera, Internet, etc. are all adopted so as to assist the practice of class reading club, to arouse the student's interest in study, to cultivate the ability of creative thinking, and to intellectually enrich the general knowledge. Thus, a congenial reading atmosphere pervades the whole campus.*

## **Proposal**

The strategy and processes of propelling class reading club at *National Zhongli Home Economics and Commercial High School* can be stated as the following. 1. All freshmen and sophomores attend the program of class reading club. 2. The specific books in each class will be periodically exchanged with the books in other class. Hence the students can have various types of reading materials. 3. Instructors also provide reading materials selected from library or other learning resources (including voiced books, electronic media and Internet.) Appropriate books or data would be specified as the subject learning materials. Students should write reading reports. 4. To work in coordination with the academic affairs office, which assigns the homework for summer vacation, we guide students to read extra curriculum reading materials and write reading reports during vacation. 5. Students can browse books or magazines in library after the class is dismissed. They can also post their reading reports on the "special column for extra curriculum reading report" set up on the Internet by library. 6. We hold a students' contest of extra curriculum reading report, and grade and register fine works. 7. We hold the symposium on extra curriculum reading report. Instructors and students will jointly set the name of the symposium subject, the way, time and place of meeting, and the list of teachers invited to instruct.

The performance of class reading club at *National Zhongli Home Economics and Commercial High School* is remarkable. We not only create a reading atmosphere pervading the campus, but also publish three special publications of reading report. One of our students wins the first place in a nation-wide high school freshmen's small thesis contest in the 2003 academic year. Another merit is the attendance of the

cross-schools contest of reading report on Internet, the 9411 round, Taoyuan County. We win the first place in the group of freshmen, the third place in the group of sophomores, and the third place in the group of juniors. All the merits have proved the effects of complementing each other achieved by strengthening knowledge management and propelling class reading club.

### **Analysis of thesis structure**

1. Prefix: The importance of constructing school as a learning organization by knowledge management
2. The theory and practice of propelling class reading club
  - (1) Foster the habit of reading extra curriculum books; advance the ability of creative thinking
  - (2) Construct a school-centered learning organization by the instructor's guide reading
  - (3) Set up the reader's database; establish the website of reading report
  - (4) Arrange extra curriculum reading materials and grow seeds of teachers and students
  - (5) Hold the web-based writing contest of reading report
  - (6) Hold the symposium on extra curriculum reading report
  - (7) The special publication of reading report
3. The range of this thesis
  - (1) Heighten the effectiveness of library-using education by knowledge management
  - (2) Propel class reading club by tapping library resources
  - (3) The difficulties of web-based class reading club and some suggestions
4. Future vision
  - (1) Exploit fully the resources of library and community
  - (2) Follow the evolution of the trend of knowledge economy
  - (3) Provide multiple learning resources

**Key Words:** knowledge management, library-using education, class reading club, learning organization

## I. Introduction

In the 21st century, knowledge economy has been growing rapidly. In order to strengthen knowledge competitiveness and face the international competition of the new century, Taiwan should achieve the educational goal of lifelong learning, widely build up learning organizations, tend citizens who can learn through lives, and positively give impetus to whole people reading program. Reading and pursuing knowledge are the motive power of working out one's potentialities and inciting creative thinking. "Knowledge is power" is a wise saying of Francis Bacon, a British philosopher. He also stated, "*Histories make men wise; poets, witty; the mathematics, subtle; natural philosophy, deep; moral, grave; logic and rhetoric, able to contend.*" This statement brings out very profound meanings. It verifies that reading can not only absorb the essence of books, but broaden one's general knowledge.

Only the goal of lifelong learning is achieved, can Taiwan face the international competition of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Information technology has developed rapidly in the new era, and traditional education obviously cannot fill the student's needs. Because of this, the former Minister of Education, R.O.C. (2000-2002), Dr. Ovid J. L. Tzeng, said, "The key point of the fulfillment of multi-intelligence is based on the spread of reading habit." He actively propelled the practice of class reading club to realize the educational policy of lifelong learning, and positively gave impetus to whole people reading program.

Class reading club is a learning program conducted by students, aiming to reach the goal of knowledge management by sharing experience, viewpoints, ideas and thinking models. In addition to selecting reading materials, they manage reading club through the assistance of modern technology, and computer network, so as to spend half the effort and gain double results. Reading club not only arouses the student's interest in study, but also cultivates the ability of creative thinking, and intellectually enriches the general knowledge. Books in school can be arranged to be recycling-books boxes to be read by different classes, and to stir up student's interest in reading. Besides, with the conscience to fight for social justice, reading club should step out from campus to cooperate with community, and to build up a society filled with fragrance of books. Finally, reading club is expected to become the pioneer of whole community construction, to train up the youth to be decent and respectable, and to help build a friendly and well-organized society.

## **II. Constructing school as a learning organization by knowledge management**

The diversified educational goal is based on mutual communication, which is different from traditional one-way teaching—one gives and another receives. The content of communication is not only the exercises of textbooks but the training of initiative and self learning. To teach one how to fish is much better than feed fish to him. Thus, the goal of lifelong education can be reached. Lifelong education has become the mainstream of education in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The application and integration of social resources blend with everybody's daily life. The integration of social resources consists of private individual, surrounding people, and the whole living environment.

The educational goal of a school is to disseminate knowledge, to train talented person for the country, and to strengthen the school's competitiveness in society. According to Organization of Economy Cooperation (OECD), knowledge is classified in four categories: know-what, know-why, know-how, and know-who. Traditional education emphasizes on teaching know-what to students, and puts the other three categories aside. To make knowledge a power, profit, and wealth, knowledge management is essential. It makes knowledge become the source of flowing water, so as to strengthen students' ability, and lead them to pursue and utilize knowledge. The efficiency of social innovation and talented-person training can also be improved. Definitely, only by close sharing and intellectual interchange, can knowledge be fully developed and diffused effectively.

For the students in school, the effect of "knowledge sharing"-- study and learn by mutual discussion-- is no less than that of a teacher's explanation. The Learning Record of the Book of Rites (an ancient Chinese book) stated, "Learning only by oneself makes one lonely and uninformed." To watch and to try to learn from each other can make students unite in spirit and share experience as well. Information, then, is diffused. It is just like killing many birds with one stone.

The setup of a database, such as data processing, document management, search engine, portal site, data storage, group software, job procedure, and web network, is the stepping stone of knowledge management. Planning in advance and collection of related data are the key points of setting up a database. Knowing how to invert personal knowledge into mutual sharing, to divide the work and cooperate with one another, and to integrate all the divisions is also important. School library is usually responsible for the setup of database. All teachers and students are assembled and assigned related jobs. Through the continuous management and mutual assistance, the process of sharing can keep on, and the fruit of learning and creation can be

brought forth. Creative knowledge can be obtained by a series of accumulation, transmission, and utilization. Constructing school as a learning organization by knowledge management can undoubtedly impel learning motive and broaden the general knowledge.

### **III. The effectiveness of library-using education**

Library, which has a vast hoard of national culture and is responsible for social education, is the cradle of a society filled with fragrance of books. It guides a person how to read and research. There is a Chinese saying, "Great Chinese articles come from Confucians, and publication business lasts forever." Since library can bring the culture to greater height of development, it is considered the most important grass-roots organization. Juang, Fang-Rung, curator of National Library of R.O.C., said, "Reading is a door which opens to all times and all places. Reading can step across different times and spaces, break down the fence between people, and build up a spiritual global village. One can stimulate the ability of imagination and creation by reading. An unlimited growing space is, then, created." The former Minister of Education, R.O.C. (2000-2002), Dr. Ovid J. L. Tzeng, also said, "The key point of the fulfillment of multi-intelligence is based on the spread of reading habit." Thus, reading is the key to the success of multi-intelligence. Reading can promote the development of one's nerve cells and prevent from degeneration. Other advantages of reading are the increment of force to resist frustration and the decrement of fear caused by ignorance. Reading can really enforce one's ability of organizing, and share others' achievement. To sum up, reading is the source of flowing water, and makes one's intelligence come into bloom.

To follow the steps of educational reform, library-using education has become the impetus of pursuing superior knowledge. Recently, it gradually changes from an additional activity into an important affair for the high school library.

The following are some of the functions of library-using education.

1. To strengthen the personal ability of searching and utilizing the resources and equipment of library
2. To expand personal learning fields
3. To promote the ability of self-learning
4. To arouse the interest of reading
5. To establish the habit of correct reading
6. To lead to a reasonable enjoyment of leisure

Library-using education and teaching activities should complement each other

since library-using education consists of a complete procedure of conducting research. Whether the library-using education will succeed or not depends on teacher's ideas and the degree of participation. All teachers should guide students to use library to promote the effectiveness of library-using education.

#### **IV. The theory and practice of propelling class reading club at *National Jhongli Home Economics and Commercial High School***

Class reading club is a new learning strategy. It consists of the learning of human relationship, mutual cooperation, experience, the sudden realization, and apprenticeship. This is also a new way of living, which conforms to the philosophy: "Life is learning, and learning is life." To attend the reading club, one should show the ability of reading and discussion. The ordinary schools emphasize only on students' reading ability, not on discussion. However, both are equally important in reading club, since discussion will strengthen the ability of thinking and criticism of the participants. Therefore, in addition to selecting valuable books, the propelling of knowledge management, the innovation of teaching method, the application of multimedia such as TV, digital camera, Internet, etc. are all adopted so as to assist the practice of class reading club, to arouse the student's interest in study, to cultivate the ability of creative thinking, and to intellectually enrich the general knowledge. The books in school can also be arranged to be recycling-books boxes to be read by different classes. Then, the students' reading interest will be highly promoted.

There are two purposes for *National Jhongli Home Economics and Commercial High School* to propel the practice of reading club. First, it is important to foster the habit of reading extra curriculum books and to advance the ability of creative thinking. Students, then, will collect, analyze, discuss, and critically sift the data. Second, a reading culture has formed when the instructor guides students to read, discuss, and share with one another through the topic of reading materials. Consequently, a school-centered learning organization will be constructed.

The feasible methods can be stated as the following.

1. All freshmen and sophomores attend the program of class reading club.
2. The specific books in each class will be periodically exchanged with the books in other class. Hence the students can have various types of reading materials.
3. Instructors also provide reading materials selected from library or other learning resources (including voiced books, electronic media and Internet.) Appropriate books or data would be specified as the subject learning materials. Students should write reading reports.

4. To work in coordination with the academic affairs office, which assigns the homework for summer vacation, we guide students to read extra curriculum reading materials and write reading reports during vacation.
5. Students can browse books or magazines in library after the class is dismissed. They can also post their reading reports on the “special column for extra curriculum reading report” set up on the Internet by library.
6. We hold a students’ contest of extra curriculum reading report, and grade and register fine works.
7. At the end of a semester, we invite Chinese teachers to assign extra curriculum reading materials during summer vacation as homework. The instructors will grade all the reading reports, and select fine works to publish in the school’s publication, to post on a special column for extra curriculum reading report on the Internet, to stick on the bulletin board of library, or to print in the special publication of reading report.
8. We hold the symposium on extra curriculum reading report. Instructors and students will jointly set the name of the symposium subject, the way, time and place of meeting, and the list of teachers invited to instruct.

Class reading club is a place where one can further extend knowledge, achieve self-fulfillment, and happily learn and share with others. We anticipate that the students will participate actively and exploit this field with us. The performance of class reading club at *National Zhongli Home Economics and Commercial High School* is remarkable. We not only create a reading atmosphere pervading the campus, but also publish three special publications of reading report. One of our students wins the first place in a nation-wide high school freshmen’s small thesis contest in the 2003 academic year. Another merit is the attendance of the cross-schools contest of reading report on Internet, the 9411 round, Taoyuan County. We win the first place in the group of freshmen, the third place in the group of sophomores, and the third place in the group of juniors. All the merits have proved the effects of complementing each other achieved by strengthening knowledge management and propelling class reading club.

## **V. Some difficulties and suggestions of propelling reading club on Internet**

To face the coming of knowledge economy and the changes of social structure in a very short moment, traditional school education obviously cannot meet the requirements of the time. The advent of Internet has made the dream of distance teaching come true, and has opened another window on learning. Internet is the most convenient tool for human to communicate each other. By a click of the mouse, we



have a great deal of information before our eyes. Our knowledge field and living vision are broadened. Ministry of Education of Taiwan, R.O.C. has set up a new web site for high school students-- [www.shs.edu.tw](http://www.shs.edu.tw) on September 5, 2005. The site provides a platform of learning, interaction, and publication for 700,000 students of high schools all over the country. It will become a new space for students to share and communicate with each other.

The popularization of Internet has improved the way of traditional library services. The borrowing between libraries has become more common, and the road to lifelong learning can move freely without hindrance. All class reading clubs in different levels of schools can perform actively. In order to conform to the practice of The Cross-schools Reading Clubs on Internet for High Schools Around the Country, my school's library encourages students to energetically attend this meaningful reading club. By the gradual and transforming influence of good books, the students can broaden their general knowledge and vision. However, the performance is not as good as we have expected after a burst of feverish activity. We try to find the answers for the causes by questionnaires.

The questionnaires were given out to the students attending the reading clubs on Internet on February 22, 2006. The researching objects were 100 freshmen and sophomores of *National Jhongli Home Economics and Commercial High School*, including home economics, clothing-making, business management, accounting, and data processing departments. Totally, there were 100 questionnaires given out, and the effective questionnaires were 80 copies. The rate of return was 80%. The questionnaire was made through relating literature review, including various documents of reading clubs. There were four parts in the questionnaire: the conditions of the reading club, personal participation, learning performance, and the difficulties and improvements for the reading club. We adopted the statistics software SPSS 10.0 to analyze all the data. Finally, we inferred the conclusion from the data and advanced some suggestions.

The following are three difficulties for the practice of propelling reading club on Internet.

1. The discussion subject is not easy to attract the youth.

What the Generation E youth concern about is fashion, news of stars, video games, school works etc. To speak of international or domestic events as well as extra-curricular readings, they just put all those aside. That is why so many of them only have superficial knowledge.

2. The stress of school work for tests is great.

For high school students in Taiwan, the stress of school tests, which are always directed by the college entrance examination, is always a nightmare. A hard-working student will not go home directly after school, but go to the cram school or library to study more. Because a narrow miss will lead to different destination miles away while taking the college entrance examination, students focus only on the books related to examination.

3. There are not sufficient various activities in high schools.

The diffusion of knowledge by Internet is far reaching and limitless. Well-planned various activities can broaden students' knowledge and vision. But most high schools put so much emphasis on reading for examination.

According to the discussion and the result of questionnaires, I extend the following suggestions.

1. The multi-goals of reading club on Internet should be practical.

The UNESCO's 4th World Adult Education focused on the notion of "The Right to Education." *The right to education is at the very heart of UNESCO's mission and is an integral part of its constitutional mandate. The Right to Education is a fundamental human right. It occupies a central place in Human Rights and is essential and indispensable for the exercise of all other human rights and for development.* As a goal of pursuing multi-purposes and globalization, education activities focus on learning behavior. The learning environment on Internet adopting the design of "Learner Control" conforms to the educational goal. The popularization of Internet has broken out the barriers of time and space, and changed traditional teaching methods. This new path of knowledge transit is called "the transit of educational paradigm." The teacher has transformed from the giver of knowledge into the provider of knowledge according to the characteristics of the students. Similarly, students are learning by themselves positively. This is to return the "right of learning" to students. Thus, each teacher must propel reading club on Internet to foster the students' good habit of lifelong reading, and knowledge sharing. Also, the students' perceptual discussion ability will be strengthened.

2. The goal of lifelong learning should be carried out.

Reading club on Internet is, so to speak, "learning of classroom." Through the ideas of knowledge management, students read and learn the knowledge from Internet, and share and discuss with others. To last the good habit of lifelong reading, we can reach the goal of building up a society filled with fragrance of books.

## VI. Conclusion

Facing the evolution of multi-cultural society, we must provide various teaching materials to lead students to discern between right and wrong, to think questions, and to solve problems by applying serviceable knowledge. In 1983, Gardner, an American educator, claimed that human beings had eight kinds of intelligence: linguistic, spatial, logic-mathematical, bodily-movement, musical, social, self, and natural. All teachers should conform to the requirements of the time, and adjust to changing circumstances. Class reading club is a good tool to guide students to task their intelligence.

The 263<sup>rd</sup> issue of Commonwealth, a Magazine published in Taiwan, R.O.C., stated the theme in its opening sentences, "All developed countries in the world are preparing for entering the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Educational issues take precedence in these countries. For educational reform, there is no shortcut but method, that is, the fostering of the habit of reading and the ability of lifelong learning are the foundation of competition in knowledge economy." Definitely, the knowledge improvement brought by information revolution has ignited the passion for reading. Library scattered all over the world play a key role in impregnating the atmosphere of reading. Michael Gorman, president of the American Library Association, remarked that *we need the library because we are humans and the library embodies the qualities of learning and culture which we need. He would like to see libraries expand their role, and noted that the poor of our society do not have the luxuries of access to technology and a place to be.* If everybody likes to use library, the social reading atmosphere can definitely be improved.

The 21<sup>st</sup> century is a time of knowledge economy. Peter Drucker, the guru of management science, pointed out that for the first time in history, human beings put great emphasis on knowledge. To face the international competition in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Taiwan should achieve the educational goal of lifelong learning, widely build up learning organizations, tend citizens who can learn through lives, and positively give impetus to whole people reading program. Information technology has developed rapidly in the new era, and traditional education obviously cannot fill the student's needs. We hope students can use the high school students' website to enter the knowledge treasury to cheer their hearts and regulate the disposition. They can sail on the sea of books to improve themselves and to broaden the vision by multi-reading. Therefore, everybody can make friends by literature, and appeal to philanthropy with the help of friends. Our goal is to create a favorable learning environment and build up a society filled with fragrance of books.

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