

## STUDENTS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE CLASS VISIT PROJECT

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### Article History:

Received:  
April 26, 2018

Revised:  
July 23, 2018

Accepted:  
July 30, 2018

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**Abstract:** The article reports the classroom visit project experienced by 31 Thai university English major students taking a course titled Introduction to English Language Teaching (EN 391) during the first semester of the academic year 2016. The students worked in small groups, contacted the schools asking permission to observe the English classes. They observed the classroom and took notes of what they have seen and learned. They, then, in a small group, wrote a report and took turns sharing their findings in the classroom. After the completion of the project, the students were asked to answer the questionnaires with two open-ended questions addressing the experience and general impressions of the project. Data were analysed using basic descriptive statistics and content analysis. The results showed that the majority of the students had positive attitudes toward the class visit experience. They perceived it as being useful and memorable. The paper also discusses the implications of the findings.

**Keywords – Classroom visits, Attitudes, Experiential learning, Situated cognition, ELT**

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## INTRODUCTION

Humans have the capacity to predict events and reflect on their experience. This is how they live and learn. In education, students learn by remembering and putting what they have learned into use and reflect on it. Dewey (1938) has called for a more progressive form of education, moving away from the teacher-fronted lecture-based form of instruction. He would like educators to provide students opportunities to learn by doing

and learn from first-hand experience, rather than learning only from the books with the teacher in the classroom.

Recently, scholars and researchers have championed the practice of student-centred approach to education, where students were given a central role in the instructional process. Other names include ‘active learning’ (Mayer, 2011), ‘project-based learning’ (Barron & Darling-Hammond, 2008), ‘complex instruction’ (Cohen and Lotan, 1997) and ‘participative instruction’. Common to these are the new roles of the teachers, greater demands for preparation. The students are encouraged to be more active. In short, the practice of learning by doing or experiential learning requires active participation from all parties involved.

Experiential learning gives students opportunities to engage reality based on their own perceptions. This is especially crucial for professionals like teachers, engineers, nurses, or medical doctors. In the teaching profession, for example, EFL teachers build their personal theories and understanding of their practice based on their own experience (Maley, 2016).

Experiential learning can be enhanced through various instructional models, including learning through tasks/projects. Thadphoothon (2005), for example, used a project to promote the students’ critical thinking in language learning. Similarly, Zhao (2015) employed the project-based instruction to enhance Chinese students learning, motivated them, and boosted their attitudes towards language learning. It was found that projects are useful in promoting the students to reflect more on the language and their own learning (Thadphoothon, 2005). It was also found that the success of the project depended on several factors, including the support structure. The students needed several types of support: language, emotional, and technical ones.

Despite challenges, many teachers and researchers has implemented project-based instruction, partly because of its many pedagogical benefits. Johansen, Scaff, and Hargis (2009), for example, reported that interdisciplinary project-based instruction was conducive to the development of the students’ creativity. It also helps the students to develop their ability to be autonomous learners, their thinking skills, communication ability, leading to independent thinkers (Thomas, 2000).

In this article, I discuss the attitudes of the students, English majors, towards the class visit project, which was a project functioned as part of the course EN 391 Introduction to English Language Teaching. The course was offered a major elective for English major students. It was a 15-week course, entailing both theories and practice. Below is the course description:

Language acquisition and learning theories; language learning motivation; teaching methodology; learning styles; curriculum and syllabus design; classroom management; learner analysis; selection and production of teaching materials; learning assessment; problems in language learning.

The course is a part of the English major program, a 4-year degree program, offering at a private university in Bangkok, Thailand. The course is meant to give the students an overview of the course, what it entails and the scope of the ELT field.

Before I discuss more about the topic, I would like to discuss about the definition of *Introduction to English Language Teaching*. It is an elective course offered as part of the English Program at the Faculty of Arts in one of the private universities in Bangkok, Thailand. The course involves both theoretical and practical components.

*Class Visit Experience*: The experience reported by the 31 English major students participated in the class visit project during the first semester of the academic year 2016 at a private university located on the outskirts of Bangkok, Thailand.

*Project-based instruction* refers to the learning activity where students are exposed to a wide range of stimuli and are required to complete the task. Students are expected to address the task on a holistic manner. In this study, the project refers to the class visit project.

*Attitudes towards the project*: The students' responses to the questionnaires designed by the researcher. The questionnaire consists of nine Likert-typed items. For each item, there are five choices to choose from, ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree.

The aim of the study was to investigate the students' attitudes towards their experience of the classroom visit project. The research questions were (1) What were the students' attitudes towards the class visit project?; (2) What have the students learned from the project?; (3) What were the benefits and shortcomings of the project as perceived by the students?.

The limitations of this study include (1) the number of subjects under the study. There were only 31 students, so any generalization is limited, (2) due to the limited availability of time, the students only observed one session of the in-service EFL teachers. Hence, the findings simply give the part of the accrual teaching performance and teaching activities.

To discuss about this topic, it needs review of literature, the I discussed about literature. Experiential education is not a teaching method, but a philosophy of education. Under this philosophy, learners benefit most from the 'experience' or the learning process

that occurs between a teacher and student that infuses direct experience with the learning environment and content. Based on the philosophy, teachers should design experience that would guide the students' learning (Dewey, 1938). Lately, several scholars in education have called for more opportunities for students to learn by doing and producing creative products, aka CCPR model (e.g. Sinlarat, 2017).

Under the CCPR model, Sinlarat (2017) describes four dimensions Thai students are expected to have. These include being creative (C), critical (C), productive (P), and responsible (R). The rationale behind the model is to equip the students with skills and abilities to live and work in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Central to the model is the role of the teachers and their skills, including their facilitation skills. For students, they are required to be active learners and produce ideas as well as products, moving away from the consumerism model to the production model.

In experiential learning, the teacher role is different from the traditional one, that is, they have to function as a facilitator, e.g. in designing activities, learning resources, and in providing useful and timely feedback. Research has shown that the teachers make a significant difference in the learning outcome (Darling-Hammond, 1999). In preparing the learners for the 21<sup>st</sup> century, teachers need to change their mindset, from treating students as passive learners to treating them as active and responsible learners (Baker and Richmond, 2008). As proposed by Sinlarat (2017), teachers should encourage the students to be more independent in their learning, focusing on developing their critical thinking skills and creativity.

In language education, students' interaction helps them to notice the language and allow more meaningful negotiation and comprehensible input (Long, 1996). This can be explained by several concepts and learning theories. One theory, in particular, is the constructivist theory (Vygotsky, 1978). Under the theory, learners learn within their zone of proximal development when they interact with peers, especially more capable ones. Likewise, Allan M. Collins, an American cognitive scientist, Professor Emeritus of Learning Sciences at Northwestern University's School of Education and Social Policy, has called for the promotion of what he refers to as 'situated cognition, that is, knowledge and expertise, including skills, are embedded in the activities of the community members. Hence, the best way to master anything is to learn from the professionals or the members in that particular community (Collins, Brown, and Newman, 1989). Another reason why students would greatly benefit from the class visit project was that the students as novices or apprentices could learn from the EFL teachers both cognitive and non-cognitive dimensions of the profession, many of which may not be mentioned or discussed in the

theories or textbooks, for example, the teacher's sense of plausibility (Maley, 2016). Such sense is crucial for professional development as well as skill training related to teachers.

In ELT, Harmer (2003) has suggested the three-step process where the students are expected and encouraged to put what they learned into use or real life situations. Huggand Wurdinge (2007) reported the implementation of the project under the name The Partnership for Learning Model (PFLM). The model entailed educators, students, community members, and employers, aiming to bridge the gap between classroom instruction and the real world. The initial results, based on the survey of 45 student participants, showed their positive attitudes towards the model. As high as 97 per cent of the students said they would take another PFLM course. The researchers noted the importance of preparation.

In science education, it was found that field trips affected the students' attitudes towards science (The Science and Environment Council of Sarasota County, 2007). A study conducted by Turpin & Cage (2004, cited in The Science and Environment Council of Sarasota County, 2007, p. 1) demonstrated that "an activity-based approach to science improves secondary students' achievement in science." In the same report, attitudes were perceived as having a combination of sub-constructs, including awareness, perceived benefits, motivation, and enjoyment (p. 1).

In any mode and form of learning, learners' attitudes play a crucial role in the success or failure of their learning. Attitudes are defined as feelings and thoughts of individuals about or towards something, someone, or some phenomena. Those thoughts and feelings are the results of their experiences, directly, indirectly, or the combination of both. In language learning, one of the factors affecting one's language learning achievement is one's attitudes. In the context of second language acquisition, the notion of attitude is not a new construct (Gardner and Lambert, 1972; Gardner, 1988). One's attitude has been cited as a factor contributing to the language learning variables such as persistence and achievement.

Research studies found attitudes as an important factor in language learning. Zeinivand, Azizifar, and Gowhary (2015) investigated the relationship between Iranian EFL learners' attitudes toward English and their speaking skills. This correlational study reported that there was a significant relationship between the learners' attitudes toward English and their speaking skills.

In sum, a project-based instruction has its root in the theory of learning by doing (Dewey, 1938). At the heart of this experiential learning model is the emphasis on the provision of learning experience to the students to create their own meaning and

understanding. It is, in many aspects, the student-centered approach to teaching. Research has shown it to be useful and beneficial to the students.

## METHOD

“Class Visit” was an assignment, a part of the course titled Introduction to English Language Teaching (ELT), offering as a major elective. The class visit required that the students worked in small groups, based on their own preferences. In total, they were nine groups. They, as a group, contacted the schools by themselves. They chose the school of their choice and asked the school for a class visit. They then worked with the teacher on the letter seeking permission and other logistic issues. To be specific, they were only required to visit a single session, lasting for 50 minutes to 60 minutes. The aim of the class visit was to help the students taking the course understand the work of school teachers and their English instruction in the real world. Prior to their visits, they were instructed on basic language teaching theories and concepts. They were encouraged to ask permission before taking photos and strictly follow the guidelines.

A week before, the students were instructed on what to observe and the key questions to answer. Here are the guidelines.

**Table 1 Guideline questions**

Area	Key questions
English language skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Does the teacher show good command and knowledge of English?</li> <li>➤ Does the teacher demonstrate breadth and depth of his or her knowledge and skills of English?</li> <li>➤ How is his or her English pronunciation?</li> </ul>
Classroom Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ What is the layout of the classroom?</li> <li>➤ Are there any posters or pictures in the classroom?</li> <li>➤ Is the room well-light?</li> <li>➤ Is the room clean?</li> <li>➤ Are there any distractions?</li> <li>➤ How are the desks and chairs?</li> </ul>
Rapport between teacher and students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ How does the teacher hold interest of students? Is the teacher respectful, fair, and impartial?</li> <li>➤ How does the teacher encourage participation?</li> <li>➤ How does the teacher interact with students?</li> </ul>
Teaching Methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ What is the dominant teaching method?</li> <li>➤ Did the teacher use any group activities? How?</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ What did the teacher do at the beginning / the end of the class?</li> </ul>
Personality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Is the teacher well-groomed?</li> <li>➤ Did the teacher appear confident?</li> </ul>
Feedback and Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ How does he or she provide feedback?</li> <li>➤ How did the teacher evaluate the students?</li> </ul>
Background of students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ How many students were in the classroom?</li> <li>➤ How were they deated?</li> <li>➤ What was their English language background?</li> <li>➤ What were the learning habits of the students?</li> <li>➤ Were the students motivated to learn?</li> </ul>
Instructional Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ What is the dominant language of instruction?</li> <li>➤ Did the teacher use any other media to support or aid his instruction?</li> <li>➤ Did the students understand/follow the instruction?</li> </ul>
Use of Instructional Media and Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Did the teacher use any teaching aids / materials?</li> <li>➤ What instructional technologies (computers with Internet access) were being used in the classroom?</li> </ul>
Classroom Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ How did the teacher manage the classroom?</li> <li>➤ How did the teacher enforce discipline and control?</li> <li>➤ Was the instruction properly managed?</li> </ul>

In addition to the key questions, the students were instructed on how to do proper classroom observation. The following principles were discussed in the classroom.

#### Principles of classroom observation

- Be thankful to the school and teachers.
- Even when video-filming, audio-recording, and photo-taking are allowed during the lesson, methods disruptive to students' concentration is strictly prohibited.
- Please do not speak to the students during the lesson.
- Please greet and thank the teacher after class.
- Dress politely. Wear DPU uniforms. Consider yourself a teacher trainee.

Source: Adapted from UNESCO's guidelines for classroom observation research

The visits were conducted between August – September 2016. The data presented here were from 31 students. Out of 40 students enrolled in the course, 31 of them answered the questionnaires.

After the class visits, the students were required to write reports based on the key questioned prepared. They then were required give their presentations and participated in



the discussions in the classroom. The in-class presentations were completed by the end of September 2016.

To sum up, the research relied on three sources of data, the students' responses to the questionnaire, their written responses to the open-ended questions, and the class discussions.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

### Findings

The findings were the results of the analysis of three data sources: the students' responses to the 8-item questionnaire, (2) their written responses to two open-ended questions, and their classroom discussions. The analysis was done in order to address the three research questions: (1) what were the students' attitudes towards the class visit project?, (2) what have the students learned from the project?, and (3) what were the benefits and shortcomings of the project as perceived by the students?. The findings are as follows:

**Table 2 Gender of the respondents**

Male	Female	Total
8 (25.8%)	23 (74.2%)	31 (100%)

from 31 students under the study, the majority of the respondents were female (74.2%). Eight of them (25.8%) were male.

**Table 3 Responses to "I liked the class visit."**

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I liked the class visit.	10 (32.3%)	21 (67.7%)			

The first item directly asked the students to express their opinion regarding their class visit experience. It was found that the majority of the students agreed and strongly agreed with the statement: "I liked the class visit"



**Table 4 Responses to “learning many things from the class visit.”**

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I have learned many things from the class visit.	17 (54.8%)	13 (41.9%)	1 (3.2%)		

The majority of the students (30 or 96.70%) agreed and strongly agreed that they had learned many things from the class visit. Even though this item is broad, it is a general item probing into their attitudes.

**Table 5 Responses to “learning about the roles and duties of English teachers.”**

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I have learned more about the roles and duties of English teachers from the class visit.	13 (41.9%)	17 (54.8%)	1 (3.2%)		

The students agreed and strongly agreed that they have learned more about the roles and duties of English teachers from the class visit (96.7%). Only one of them (3.2%) was sceptic about this benefit.

**Table 6 Responses to “importance of good pronunciation.”**

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The class visit helps me better understand the importance of having good English pronunciation.	12 (38.7%)	13 (41.9%)	5 (16.1%)		1 (3.2%)

The majority of the students agreed and strongly agreed that the class visit helped them to better understand the importance of having good English pronunciation (80.6%). Five (16.1%) were unsure.

**Table 7 Responses to “want to be English teachers.”**

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The class visit makes me want to be an English teacher.	5 (16.1%)	6 (19.4%)	18 (58.1%)	2 (6.5%)	

The majority of the students were undecided if they would like to be an English teacher (58.1%). However, as high as 35.5% of them (11 students) agreed and strongly agreed that the class visit made them to want to be an English teacher.

**Table 8 Responses to “learning about teaching methods.”**

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I have learned about the teaching methods from the class visit.	9 29.0%	19 61.3%	3 9.7%		

The majority of the students (90.30%) agreed and strongly agreed with the statement: “I have learned about the teaching methods from the class visit.” Three of them were undecided.

**Table 9 Responses to “useful activity.”**

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The class visit is a very useful activity.	12 38.7%	17 54.8%	2 6.5%		

The majority of the students agreed and strongly agreed that the project was very useful (93.5%). Two of them (6.5%) were undecided about this statement.

**Table 10 Responses to “the importance of teachers in the process.”**

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The class visit makes me realize the importance of teachers in the learning process of the students.	16 51.6%	14 45.2%	1 (3.2%)		

The majority of the students agreed and strongly agreed that the class visit made them realize the significance of teachers in the learning process of the students (96.8%). Only one of them (3.2%) was undecided.

### ***Results from the students’ written responses***

Qualitative Analysis - In addition to the above close-ended questions, the students were also asked to explain the knowledge and skills that they had learned from the class visit project. Their answers reflect both cognitive and non-cognitive dimensions.

Figure1: One of the group presentations



The students said one of the benefits was the way to successfully communicate with young children plus the importance of body language. One of the students said that: “I have learned how to communicate with young children and the importance of body language.” As an English teacher, having good language skills help, as realized by one of the respondents, “I have learned the importance of speaking skills and how the teacher communicates with the students.”

Some students mentioned that they have learned from the in-service teachers, I got a chance to practice my speaking skills and communicate with the teacher.” They realized that teachers with good teaching skills can make the difference, “I have seen the teaching skills of the teacher. The skills make the students want to learn English.” Another student has said that she has realized that the teacher’s knowledge and communication skills are very important for the profession.

They also mentioned several non-cognitive competences such as personality, punctuality, the need to be patient, and teamwork skills. Besides, as the experiential learning project involves group work. This is what has been mentioned as the benefit of the project: “I have learned how to work in groups, the importance of the relationship between the teacher and the students, and some teaching methods.”

Other respondents said, “I have realized that teachers need to be able to manage the classroom, and maintain the learning atmosphere in the classroom. Being a teacher means having patience. They have to teach both academic and life skills. Besides, teachers need to be able to use media to help make the instruction captivating and successful.”

Another student noted, “I have learned many teaching methods, and the need to understand children and the need to be patient. I have realized that teachers should seek ways to make the instruction easy for the students to understand. One way to check the students understanding of the lesson is to ask them to perform. ”

The class visit helped them to realize some dimensions of language instruction: “I have learned about the steps in teaching and the fact that language learning is habit formation. I have also learned that teachers need to make their instructions easy and fun for the students.”

The students were also asked to reflect on the challenges of being EFL teachers in Thailand. Their responses reflected their deeper awareness of the profession. For example, they realized that teaching young children was a real challenge. One of them put it that: “The teacher was very kind. It’s so hard to control one’s feeling with young children, but he (the teacher) could control his feeling.” They also realized that the challenge of being a school teacher is in the classroom, as voiced by one of the respondents: “I think the real challenge of teachers is in their classrooms – when they have to communicate and deal with the students in class.”

The class visit also helped the students to realize that teaching in general involves a great deal of preparation, as voiced by one of the respondents: “I think teaching is a challenge because the teacher has to prepare and do many activities in the classroom.” They also realized that making the students understand the lesson is not an easy task: “The real challenge also lies in the fact that teachers have to help make the students understand the lessons.”

In addition to emotional management and communication ability, the English teachers needed to be able to manage their classrooms successfully. One of the respondents advocated this realization: “The management of the class is the real challenge.” Classroom management involves the need to control the children as well as making the instruction interesting, as one respondent put it that one of the important skills the teacher has to master is the ability to manage and control the classroom. How to control the children and how to make the presentations interesting for the students were two of the most cited skills for Thai EFL teachers. Another student wrote that that: “ The teacher I observed had to

make the students listen to him, pay him attention rather than playing or sleeping in the class.”

Even though class control was perceived by many students as being crucial for being school teachers, some students had discovered another dimension of the teaching profession – student motivation. This realization was evidenced by one student’s response to the open-ended question. She wrote that the teacher had to try hard to make the students enjoy the lesson and paid attention to their study. During the course of classroom discussions, many students noted the importance of motivation.

### ***Results from the students’ discussions***

The discussions were those conducted in the classroom after the class visits. Each group was given about five minutes to present their learning experience orally: what they did and what they had learned. The discussions were done followed the classroom presentations.

The majority of the students discussed the importance of teamwork. They noted the challenge of working in a group and as a group. The project gave them opportunities to learn from each other. They had learned not only the content, i.e., the knowledge related to ELT, but also the human aspects of work, including communications and negotiation skills.

The roles and responsibilities of the teachers were also the topics discussed. The students were in common agreement that it is a challenge working as an English teacher. Similar to their written responses, they discussed the role and skills of the teachers. They realized that being an English teacher demanded both language skills and attitudinal aspects of work. This included their ability to manage and control the students. Another skill the teacher needs in the ability to capture the attention of the students. The success of the students’ learning, according to the discussions, depended very much on the quality of the teachers.

Time was perceived to be crucial for the success of the project. Many students discussed that they did not have enough time to carry out the project as they had to do other assignments. Many students said they had different learning schedules and it was hard for them to find the most convenient time for everybody in the group.

## Discussions

### *Overall Findings*

The study, as mentioned earlier, relied on three sources of data: (1) the students' responses to the questionnaire, (2) their responses to the two open-ended questions, and (3) the class discussions. Overall, the students enjoyed doing the project. It was found that the majority of the students had positive attitudes toward the class visit. All of them (100%) agreed and strongly agreed with the statement: "I like the class visit project." They said it was useful and they liked it. Their presentations and class discussions confirmed this finding. They liked the project as it gave them more than what they had expected to learn and get from the 3-credit course.

The majority of the students (96.70%) agreed and strongly agreed that they had learned many things from the class visit. This included the greater awareness of the teachers' roles and responsibilities. They also recognized the skills needed for English language teachers, i.e., having good pronunciation. In addition, they noted that they had learned more about the language teaching methods.

There was no significant difference between the students' genders and their attitudes toward the class visit experience: males and females were not differed in their attitudes towards the project. This means that the project was positively perceived by most students. This seems to suggest that the model has universal pedagogical values.

### *Benefits of the class visit project*

The benefits of the project cover cognitive and non-cognitive aspects of learning. Most of them agreed and strongly agreed that the teachers really matter in the learning process of the students. Among the challenges mentioned were the ability and skills of the teachers to hold the attention of the students and to control or manage the classroom. The reported benefits, expanding beyond their original expectations, they reflect several dimensions of within the realm of situated cognitive' paradigm (Collins, Brown, and Newman, 1989).

Many students mentioned the fact that the class visits allowed them to reflect on their own English skills. Many mentioned the importance of having good pronunciation and the ability to speak English well. The project allowed them to develop their awareness of the teaching profession, especially the ELT one. For example, they also noted the importance of having personality, patience, teamwork skills. In short, the benefits of the class visit project covered the cognitive as well as non-cognitive aspects of learning.



### *Challenges of the class visit project*

Based on the classroom discussions, the student reports, and their responses to the two open-ended questions, it was found that the classroom project was a challenge for the students as well as for the teacher. For the students, they needed to work collaboratively in groups. In the process, working in small groups was a challenge in itself. Many students complained that their team members were not cooperative, did not work as hard as they did, or they were not responsible to the assigned tasks.

### *Insights into learning*

The findings imply that the learning of the students is highly individualized and personal. The students, thus, should be encouraged and allowed to explore and investigate their own learning and the practice of the in-service teachers. The findings also suggest that the teaching of the EFL teachers, too, has both personal and individualized. Teachers, as pointed out by Maley (2016) “build their personal theories of teaching and learning through a continuing process of reflection on their lived experience” (p. 1). English language teachers are professionals who need a number of years to master their pedagogical expertise.

The project allows the students to learn from examples, examples produced and experienced by the experts. This mode of learning is useful for novices (Collins, Brown, and Newman, 1989; Arzarello, Ascari, and Sabena, 2011). On reflection, it seemed that the in-service teachers were aware of their duty to act and function as learning resources.

Many students expressed their awareness that being English teachers require a multiple of skills and positive attitudes towards the teaching profession. Moreover, they also realized that teachers were important in the learning process.

### *Characteristics of good English teachers*

One of the classroom discussions was on the topic of ‘good teachers’. In their opinion, a good teacher should have more responsibilities such as preparing a lesson plan for the class, finding ways how to teach student effectively, and preparing the teaching materials. For them, the key word is responsibility. Many of the teachers agreed that being a good English teacher requires more responsibilities than those of the other careers’. They agreed that English teachers must be responsible for their own teaching, the learning of their students and that requires a lot of hard work and dedication. This aspect is in line with



what Kadha (2009) has discovered, that is, teachers' work is dynamic, including the ability to plan the lessons.

According to Kadha (2009), good teachers need to be skilful, professional, well prepared, and enthusiastic. Moreover, they should be adaptive, ready to develop themselves professionally. In this study, the students noted that desirable teachers were those who were kind and had positive rapport with the students.

The students had become aware of the crucial role of the teachers. This realization is significant, as we know that in research the quality of the teachers directly and indirectly affects the learning outcome of the students (Darling-Hammond, 1999).

#### *Importance of classroom management*

One of the most cited skills of school teachers reported by the students was the ability to manage the classroom. Teachers, according to the students, need to be able to control the students. Moreover, they need to be able to make the presentations interesting for the students. Based on the findings, it is a real challenge for teachers to motivate the student to learn and to pay attention rather than playing with classmates in the class. Classroom management is one of the competencies of the teachers. However, the students did not explore the possible causes of having effective classroom management. Research has found that effective classroom management is better done through negotiation and consultation, rather than using coercive power (Marzano, Marzano, and Pickering, 2003).

To sum up, the students had positive attitudes towards the class visit project. They perceived it as being useful and educational. The project provided them with cognitive and non-cognitive experience. Many of them realized that teaching English required a myriad of skills and abilities.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTION**

The article described the class visit project experienced by a group of Thai students taking a course titled Introduction to English Language Teaching (EN 391). Thirty-one students participated in the study. The study was conducted in 2016 at a private university located on the outskirts of Bangkok. The students answered the questionnaires and two open-ended questions addressing the experience. They also discussed their experiences after their oral presentations. The results showed that the majority of the students had positive attitudes toward the class visit experience. They perceived it as being useful, giving both cognitive and non-cognitive dimensions of learning and experience. They had

learned more about the teaching methods and the role and responsibilities of the English teachers. Many of them also expressed their wish to become English teachers in the future.

Based on the findings, the following recommendations have been made for student development:

1. It is suggested students be encouraged to learn from the real world, especially the professionals in their community. This requires that the teachers adjust their roles, from knowledge givers to learning facilitators.
2. This mode of learning required a great deal of preparation, especially networking between a tertiary institute and schools. This requires extra work in terms of communication and negotiation.
3. There are bound to be both expected and unexpected problems and challenges. Any teacher attempting to implement this kind of instructional model needs to be flexible and prepare their students to be adaptable and flexible. In terms of the transportation cost, the students should be informed prior to their project participation. They need to be informed about the plan, the setup and agreements, and the time constraint.

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