

Ajarn Charlie

Tales and news of overseas teaching and living; from Korea to Germany, and all points in between!

Wednesday, March 09, 2011

Opinion: Thai public education needs major overhaul pronto

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- Newspaper section: News

Thailand is not alone in facing massive problems with the graduates produced by its universities. About 50% of the graduates cannot find jobs while the output remains high, with around 2 million graduates every year - a good business for the universities, a bad business for society.



Acquiring a degree does not guarantee a job, as many university graduates later find out.

Universities complain about students unwilling to learn, lacking creativity in finding solutions, superficially preparing for exams, while not understanding anything.

Students are distracted by mobile phones, iPads, iPods and iEverything, internet, Japanese cartoons, SMS and MMS, and many things more, right?

But distracted from what? From boring lecture classes as the main tool for broadcasting knowledge, and from textbooks that exclusively aim to prepare for answering examination questions. That is what we call passive learning.

Passive learning is ubiquitous in public education systems all over the world. Such public education systems were developed in the 19th century and mirror the ideals of industrialism, thus processing students in order to maintain manufacturing standards, as the works of Sir Ken Robinson show. One should not say "quality standards" instead, since the common definition of quality is to meet or exceed, expectations. The product of public education systems anywhere is far below what the economy and society needs.

In developing countries such industrial production systems in education are widely abused as a tool to impose dogma and doctrine, thus discouraging students from doing that what they naturally would do if left alone - acquiring values.

Eventually, the cost for public education permanently rises while governments everywhere are forced to cut subsidies and that at a time when the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation prepares for its "20 Years Education For All" conference in Jomtien next month.

The opposite of passive learning is active learning. Speaking about Generation C - connected, communicating, computerised, and, as a rule, born after 1990, as described by Booz & Company - learning will make more use of ubiquitous technology. Peer-to-peer instruction used in the context of project-based or problem-based learning means the teacher sets up the project or problem and may remain available as a consultant, critic and resource person, and provides formative and summative evaluation.

Once we have rewritten our curricula to ask the right questions instead of merely describing content, why should the teacher then be in the same room? In the United Kingdom exists a so-called Granny Cloud of mainly retired teachers that mentors school

2011 Bangkok Students

OH, East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet - Rudyard Kipling (1865-1936)

2005 Paju Korea T&J Academy

Sapphaya School Dream World Trip

Egypt and the Nile

children in India via Skype. The responsible researcher, Sugata Mitra, started in 1999 with the "Hole In The Wall" experiment in Dehli aiming to bring education to areas where no teachers are available or want to go (i.e. areas remote in any way - geographically, socially, or economically).

Mr Mitra has shown that four students sharing one computer, supported by a non-knowledgeable motivator, can reach the same level of education in English on their own as students of the best private schools with highly qualified teachers can do - irrespective of who, what or where they are. CNN, BBC and other media reported last year the advent of hybrid models that apply these findings within formal school education in British schools.

Why should the person we call a lecturer today, and maybe a facilitator or mentor tomorrow, not be available on request over Skype? Let's go one step further: Booz & Company expect the first digital university cooperation to be coming up by the end of this year.

All these tools can help us to develop more effective, more active, more engaging, and much less costly education systems that lead to students who can find, evaluate and apply information, and are able to communicate it across cultures, borders and barriers. The videotaped speeches of Sir Ken Robinson and Mr Mitra on YouTube, for example, show viewers' numbers in the millions - certainly, they didn't remain unrecognised in Thailand.

Peter Glotz stated back in 1999 that our day-to-day reality is full of inconsequence. While most job classifieds look for single fighters, the most important factor of production in any knowledge society is the ability to collaborate. Relevant basic skills are, for instance, complexity management, reasoning and rhetoric, negotiation and mediation, and communication and media. These basic skills play no major role within most current education systems.

There seems to be only one effective barrier preventing us from developing education systems that fit the needs of economies, societies and the individual students: such education models lack any chance to apply doctrine and dogma on active learners.

School education is designed after the university model since the 19th century, just as if becoming a professor would be the highest possible mark one could reach. In their helplessness, many countries focus on standards, rankings and other external measurements, only to make it worse. Many try to copy the Chinese education model, which produces the highest marks in PISA studies. They overlook, however, that since the invention of canons around the year 1250, no major invention came from China. Everything, from electricity to airplanes, from computers to communication tools, was developed in either Europe or the United States. The economic success of China is not a reason to copy their even more ineffective education system.

There's nothing special with Chinese culture, it is just that in China live 20% of the global population whose demand and supply bring China to the top of economic trade. Chinese university presidents complain that their graduates lack creativity, the ability to innovate and that the best still need to leave to study abroad. Only there, in a different environment, many of them turn into top scientists, highly creative and innovative. Should we not think about that a bit more?

Thailand doesn't need 10,000 Einsteins. It needs one Einstein, 10,000 qualified academics, and a skilled workforce of 10 million. Each level of public education has to play its part in this system. With developing a new education system we do not only increase the quality of education but also decrease the cost of education - cheaper while better.

If we start now, we have a good chance to take a global lead, which might well realise the old dream of Thailand becoming an education hub that attracts students from all the countries where public education is becoming increasingly unaffordable, while failing to provide employability.

Is there anybody out there who wants to help us develop a solution that works?

Ulrich Werner is adjunct professor and director of international business development at Asian University in Chon Buri.

Posted by Teacher Charlie at [Wednesday, March 09, 2011](#)

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The mind is everything; what you think you become.

Buddha

Teacher Charlie's Stories

- 2011 Panita and Anders Wedding
- 2010 Tales of Thailand - Motorcycle trip from Bangkok to Pattaya
- 2010 Isan's Ban Phu Buddhist Hell Park
- 2007 Vũng Tàu, Vietnam - "An anchorage swamp" filled with oil
- 2007 Vietnam Travel DOs and DON'Ts
- 2007 Vientiane Laos - A city quickly dying
- 2007 Train Trip from Quang Ngai to Nha Trang, Vietnam
- 2007 Thailand's Chiang Saen - A Mekong River Town
- 2007 Sailing into a New Year - Sicily to Malta
- 2007 Saigon to Chu Lai by Vietnam Airlines
- 2007 Saigon Out and About
- 2007 Saigon Gambling and Gold Trading
- 2007 Riding the Dragon - A Vietnam Train Journey
- 2007 Quang Ngai, Vietnam - A day at the train station
- 2007 Nha Trang Vietnam - One Wild Town!
- 2007 Midnight ramblings from Saigon Vietnam
- 2007 Mekong River Trip to Pakbeng, Laos
- 2007 Hanoi Vietnam - A Magical City!
- 2007 Hanoi Impressions
- 2007 Christmas Eve, a Full Moon and a train to another adventure
- 2007 Chiang Saen to Chiang Klong via Hard Bia overland
- 2007 Arrival in Saigon
- 2007 Ajarn Charlies' 25 Vietnam Driving Rules
- 2007 A ship south into the Mediterranean
- 2007 A Laos bus trip with an AK-47 for support
- 2007 A Flight to Chu Lai and the Bus Ride from Hell !
- 2006 An American Thanksgiving in Germany
- 2006 A Pattaya Thailand Christmas
- 2005 South Korea Walking a Tightrope
- 2005 Sapphaya Elementary School Field Trip to Bangkok's amusement park 'Dream World' and the old Thai capital city of Ayutthaya
- 2005 Highway to Hong Kong
- 2005 ERIC Teacher Training in Thailand
- 2004 Teaching and Living in Sapphaya Thailand

- 2004 Cambodian Oil Security
- 2004 Cambodia's Mysterious Mekong River Dolphins
- 2004 A Thai Sport's Day Pageantry
- 2004 A Thai Christmas Story in Rural Chai Nat Province
- 2004 A teacher's story in Chai Nat Province Thailand
- 2004 A Cambodian Coastal Adventure - Phnom Penh to Sihanoukville
- 2004 A Cambodian Coastal Adventure
- 2003 A Cambodian Christmas Story
- 2002 The Turkish Aegean Coast
- 2002 A travel log across Turkey - Diyarbakir to Istanbul

Mekong River Faces

Resource Links

- Academic Earth
- American Dialect Society
- Audio - Audacity
- Audio - Audacity Training Video
- Breaking News English
- British Council Podcasts
- CMU Medical Education and Technology Review
- Conversations - ESL Discussions
- Crawford the Cat Videos - Health and Social Skills
- Digital Audio Books - Free!
- Documentary Films 1
- Documentary Films 2
- Documentary Films 3
- EC English Lessons - Malta
- English Club
- English Test - Leipzig Germany
- English Tips - Thailand
- ESL Assessment Tests
- ESL Pod - Los Angeles USA
- ESL Pod Blog - The Best!
- ESL Schools-Lado College Washington, D.C.
- ESL/EFL Student Activities
- Flashcards - The Best!
- Forgotten Books - All free!
- Glossary - Civil Engineering
- Glossary - Construction Terms
- Glossary - Emergency Management Terms
- Grammar - Azar
- IELTS Dominic Cole's Blog
- IELTS Essays-Excellent Site!
- IELTS Free Preparation Sites
- IELTS Writing Task 1: Words showing movement or change
- Interesting Things for ESL
- Jobs - Ajarn.com Thailand
- Jobs - Dave's ESL Cafe
- Jobs - ESLemployment.com

- [Jobs - Teaching Thailand](#)
- [Jobs - Vietnam Works](#)
- [Learning English Grammar - Germany](#)
- [Phonics Worksheets](#)
- [Podcast - ESL Pod](#)
- [Podcast Alley](#)
- [Randall's ESL Cyber Listening Lab](#)
- [Song Lyrics](#)
- [Songs - Great site!](#)
- [Study Zone Interactive - Canada](#)
- [Thai School Life Blog](#)
- [Thailand's Paknam Web](#)
- [The Fundamentals of the Thai Language \(Fifth Edition\)](#)
- [TOEFL Pro Blog](#)
- [Translation - Google!](#)
- [Video - English with Jennifer](#)
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- [Videos - English Meeting Best of the Web](#)
- [Videos - Korea English Arirang TV](#)
- [Videos - National Geographic](#)
- [Videos - PodEnglish - Fantastic Resource](#)
- [Videos - PodEnglish - Fantastic Resource](#)
- [Videos - Sozo - Awesome site!](#)
- [Videos English 4 Kids](#)
- [Videos- Teacher Training Videos](#)
- [VOA Captioned Youtube Reports](#)
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- [VOA Special English with Captioned Videos](#)
- [VOA US Study Resource Guide](#)
- [Writing - Creativity Portal](#)
- [Writing - Place for Writers](#)
- [Writing - Purdue's Online Writing Lab](#)
- [Writing: Elements of Style by William Strunk](#)

Cambodian Mekong River Adventure

Blog Archive

- ▼ [2011 \(401\)](#)
 - ▶ [April 2011 \(7\)](#)
 - ▼ [March 2011 \(106\)](#)
 - [Chinese score low in English proficiency test](#)
 - [English contest offers Asians scholarships](#)
 - ['Mo' Recognized For Improvement At Banquet](#)
 - [Young women blending entrepreneurship, philanthrop...](#)
 - [The monks and I: Teaching and learning in Thailand...](#)
 - [The golf course inside an airport](#)

Thailand-No 3G and half a MB maximum is the realit...

HRH Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn Presides at th...

IELTS test in Italy and Sri Lanka – March 2011 (Ac...

Cesium Fallout from Fukushima ALREADY Rivals Chern...

IELTS test in the UK – March 2011 (Academic Module...

IELTS Speaking tests in Malaysia and Nigeria – Mar...

Using TV and movies as a teaching tool

How Soon Before your Cell Phone Replaces your Wall...

Education Ministers commit to achieve Education fo...

Quakes batter Thailand's north

Tsunamis in the Mekong River?

Japanese Teacher at inlingua Bangkok needed

Teacher Charlie - I felt the earthquake in Bangkok...

A must watch 抢救切尔诺贝利 The Battle of Chernobyl - Eu...

Steven Pinker: Language as a Window into Human Nat...

UNIVERSITY OF CAMBODIA STUDENT RECEIVES SCHOLARSHI...

Vietnamese students will leave for Japan as previo...

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University of Southampton School of Law offers LLM...

Thai Ambassador presents donation to None-saard Sc...

13 Thai teachers and students visit US university

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America's tallest tower

IELTS test in Pune, India – March 2011 (General Tr...

Phuket, Unhappiest Province in All Thailand: Surve...

Great Robot Race Reaches Sisattanak High School in...

UN's Asia-Pacific Meeting in Thailand to Assess Ro...

IELTS Speaking test in Sri Lanka – March 2011

Country GDP compared to US states and Chinese prov...

ASIA: Countries vying to become education hubs

Vietnamese schools urged to improve foreign langua...

Peking University professors of Chinese lecture in...

Vietnam 9th among nations sending students to US

Irish families queue up for new life abroad

Weekend teacher in Bangkok at inlingua Internation...

Flights from Japan sold out as foreigners seek an ...

Library of Congress launches Music Consortium Trea...

Vietnam registers to join PISA in 2012

ACE - Australians for Cambodian Education

TEFL teacher required in Koh Chang in April 2011

High standard of English required for students see...

Newspaper Reading for Language Students

Online Resources for Teaching Natural Disasters

IELTS test in the USA – March 2011 (General Traini...

Teaching IELTS: 9 Vital Tips And Tricks

IELTS TASK 2: Government should build more nuclear...

IELTS test in Lahore, Pakistan – March 2011 (Acade...

Why do Koreans return home after studying abroad?

Eleven more Christchurch earthquake victims named

Dow Corning works with AMCHAM to support needs of ...

Cultural exchange strengthens U.S., Thailand, Sing...

Thai English School needs 6 English teachers

IELTS Speaking test in the UK – March 2011

Confucius Classroom in Thailand Held Educational a...

IELTS Test in Malaysia – February 2011 (Academic M...

Vietnam Students Weak at Foreign Languages, Expert...

Start drooling, slowpokes: Internet2 ramps up to 8...

Stars leave for Thailand for MBC's '50th Anniversa...

IELTS test in Mexico – March 2011 (Academic Module...

Astonishingly Detailed Photo of Sun

IELTS Breaks the 1.5 Million Tests Mark

Why Save America's Educational PBS ?

"Strange" school found with odd regulations, "virt...

IELTS test in Australia – March 2011 (General Trai...

BBC - Record numbers of international students

Chinese biggest tourist spenders in Australia

6 PhD Scholarships in Transport and Traffic Engine...

Hutchinson Technologies moving jobs to Thailand

Opinion: Thai public education needs major overhau...

Retired CF teacher raises money to build Cambodian...

Vietnam struggling to have 1 million IT workers by...

How to Spot a Liar

Thailand: "You're Not in Kansas Anymore"

IELTS Essay Task 2: Environmental problems (Band

7...

Antarctica And The Discovery Of
A 2,000-Year-Old M...

Japanese Elementary Teachers
Take On Teaching Engl...

Korean student defector spurs
reunification dialog...

IELTS Speaking test in the UK –
February 2011

Thailand's wine education expert

Mobile Teacher Programme
Burma Education Partnersh...

Koh Lipe, Thailand

In Cambodia, Koh Kong Emerges
as an Eco-Tourism De...

IELTS test in UK and UAE –
February 2011 (Academic...

Sacred places: A new luxury train
ride offers a jo...

REMARKS BY RONG CHHUN,
PRESIDENT OF THE
CAMBODIAN ...

Motorcycle School in Northern
Thailand

IELTS test in Iran – February
2011 (Academic Modul...

IELTS test in Vietnam and
Australia – February 201...

Thailand Educators Network
(TEN): Educational chan...

Symposium "500 years:
Europeans in Siam"

IELTS test in Australia – February
2011 (General T...

Deworming Day in Cambodia
aims to educate, treat &...

Thailand's Golden Triangle:
Where cooking, massage...

Concerns Grow Over Medical
Tourism in Asia

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▶ 2001 (5)

▶ 1998 (3)

▶ 1997 (1)

Charlie's Blogs

- Thailand Aviation - Aerospace News and Photos
- Cambodia Tonight - Life and Times in Cambodia

Chinese Emperor Kuan Tsu, 5th century BC

**"If you are thinking 1 year ahead,
plant seeds**

**If you are thinking 10 years ahead,
plant a tree**

If you are thinking 100 years ahead,

educate the people."

***"I don't want a nation of thinkers,
I want a nation of
workers."~John D. Rockefeller***

**Greece and the Volcano Island of
Santorini**

**SE Asian Educational NGOs,
Organizations and International
Schools**

- New International School of Thailand
- Thailand - St. Mark's International School
- Laos - Panyathip School
- Thailand - Bromsgrove International School
- Schools for Cambodia
- Laos - Train Teachers
- Cambodia - Savong School
- CAMBODIA - Village Development Project

Do what you have to do
Resolutely, with all your heart.
The traveller who hesitates
Only raises dust on the road.

Buddha
Dhammapada.

**2008 Christmas Party at inlingua Siam
Paragon Bangkok**

International Schools and NGOs

- NGO Centre - Vietnam
- Berkeley Bangkok

**"Go and look behind the Ranges-
something lost behind the Ranges.
Lost and waiting for you. Go! " -
Rudyard Kipling**

Mekong River Boats

Cambodia's Koh Rong Island

1998 Greek Archaeological Tickets

**2005 Bangpleeathamrung School
Samutprakran**

***A journey of 1,000 miles must
begin with a single step -
Philosopher Lao Tzu***

Brain Food

- World's First Computer

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