



Effectiveness of the Implementation of Project Kagalingan, Kalinangan at Kamalayan (KKK) in Improving Critical Thinking Skills and Awareness of Social Issues

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ABSTRACT

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This study examined the effectiveness of Project Kagalingan, Kalinangan at Kamalayan (KKK) in improving students' critical thinking skills and awareness of social issues of the students. The Grade 10 students of the University of La Salette, Incorporated High School were the respondents of the study and where the project was first implemented. The researchers used a sample size of 166 students to gather the data. A Descriptive quantitative method was utilized as a research design of the study. A researcher-constructed questionnaire was used to gather the primary data. The findings of the study highlighted that Project Kagalingan, Kalinangan at Kamalayan (KKK) was effective in enhancing the critical thinking of the students and raised their awareness to social issues. The project was executed very well overall, resulting in high levels of engagement and learning across a variety of dimensions. Because of this, the project's success in fostering a stimulating and memorable learning environment is demonstrated by the high level of participation and the encouraging comments given by respondents.

KEYWORDS:

Real-world challenges, Social issues, News Articles, Learning Strategy

1. INTRODUCTION

An important factor in a child's growth as a critical thinker is education. Since children are inherently interested, asking questions comes easily to them. As a result, from the moment they start asking questions, youngsters may be taught to think critically.

Lugtu (2018) claims that there has long been an issue with Filipino pupils' lack of critical thinking abilities. Furthermore, according to Marquez (2017), the main factor contributing to this issue is the emphasis placed on rote memorizing, with recitations and examinations only serving to reinforce pupils' innate ability to memorize information.

Pupils' critical thinking is demonstrated in many ways than merely their exam scores. Today's students must to be aware of the social challenges affecting both the nation and the globe. Students demonstrate critical thinking when they research a social issue and offer suggestions on how to make society better as a whole.

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Social concerns aren't one-off events that just impact a select few people. These are issues that affect a sizable portion of the populace regardless of socioeconomic class, age, gender, or affiliation with a particular organization. These are not only grievances held by individuals. To make society better as a whole, they need to be looked at and solved.

Based on the Senn, M. article. In an article titled "What is a Social Problem? A History of its Definition," many people have strong beliefs about how to approach social issues; what one person believes to be the source of a problem may be another's strong point of view. This can spark fervent debate and public conversation.

Books do not define the classroom; rather, it is a place where young minds cultivate both their academic and social consciousness. In today's rapidly evolving world, where these issues dominate the news cycle, it is more crucial than ever to provide students with knowledge and critical thinking skills regarding important social issues. Hence, students should be involved in discussing social issues because they can effect change. Students may increase awareness among their classmates, families, and communities by discussing social topics in class. Positive social movements and greater understanding may result from this.

John Kennedy G. Gabot et al, Effectiveness of the Implementation of Project Kagalingan, Kalinangan at Kamalayan (KKK) in Improving Critical Thinking Skills and Awareness of Social Issues

Early involvement in social issues helps adolescents develop the critical thinking skills necessary to become informed and valuable contributors to society. The importance of critical thinking skills in the educational system is rising. A student's ability to engage in active learning goes beyond just learning facts and reciting them; it is the result of critical thinking. According to Scriven et al. (2023), it enables students to actively and proficiently engage in the process of thinking, applying, analyzing, synthesizing, and/or evaluating knowledge and coming to well-reasoned conclusions.

The capacity of children to think critically and their awareness of social concerns fuel the dreams of many advocates for classroom debate and discussion of contentious public topics, as well as ideas of how to improve informed citizen engagement in democratic processes. Democratic education, integrated and issue-centered educational ideals, and educational concepts for social transformation are all based on the progressive movement in education (Evans, R. 2021).

Until they are exposed, social issues are often ignored or disguised. The news media acts as a spotlight, bringing societal concerns to the public's notice and sparking discussion among them. This might lead to a deeper understanding and knowledge of the issue. News coverage may inspire people to take action on social issues. Because the news highlights the human cost of problems and offers workable answers, it may encourage individuals to volunteer, donate, or support change. In the Philippine setting, social problem debate is therefore a component of the classroom matrix. The Department of Education incorporated the study of current and social concerns in junior high school, especially for Grade 10, into the K–12 curricula. This can be seen in the Curriculum Guide, crafted by the Department of Education in 2016.

As a result, the University of La Salette's Social Sciences Department's Project KKK (Kagalingan, Kalinangan, at Kamalayan) allows students to critically think about the news rather than only being passive information consumers. Students will be able to engage in civic debate, question authority, and push for change on significant social issues through this project.

This project is delivered through the use of news which is an essential source of knowledge on social issues, political initiatives, and current affairs. If students are not exposed to news in the classroom, they may be less informed about these topics and may be less engaged in the community. Through news, students are exposed to a variety of perspectives on current events and societal issues. Without this exposure, pupils could develop a limited perspective as children and struggle to understand complex issues with several conflicting points of view.

Thus, this study sought the effectiveness of the implementation of Project KKK (Kagalingan, Kalinangan, at Kamalayan) in improving the critical thinking and awareness of social issues of the students of the University of La Salette, Incorporated High School.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Critical Thinking Skills

The ability to think critically is valuable in both everyday situations and academic settings. Moreover, it plays a crucial role in identifying individual and group achievements in increasingly intricate global circumstances (Butler, 2012; Clarke et al., 2017; Griffin & Care, 2015; Kirchner, 2020). The capacity for logical and probabilistic reasoning, as well as the application of these abilities to contexts outside of their subject matter, are all included in the ability to think critically. The ability to apply critical thinking skills to solve problems that are not content-independent is another approach to define critical thinking.

As stated by Živković, S. (2016) states that learning has an impact on communication skills, which in turn fosters socializing and the development of connections that are advantageous to the environment and the other person. When people engage in different ways, learning happens more quickly. The objectives of critical thinking include the development of virtues like independence, the capacity to evaluate actions and their outcomes, and accountability for taking calculated risks when making decisions.

Moreover, critical thinking is thought to be a necessary ability for addressing a number of global social concerns, such as automation and climate change (Vince-Lancrin, 2019; Schick et al., 2014). Therefore, Butler et al. (2017) contend that critical thinking skills are a considerably better predictor of making wise decisions in life than IQ. Critical thinking is a skill that extends beyond memory.

Also, critical thinking skills development depends heavily on teaching pupils how to assess the reliability of news sources. Students improve their capacity to distinguish reality from false information and deepen their comprehension of social issues by evaluating the credibility of various news sources and recognizing biases (Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Communication, 2021).

Students must be media literate to navigate the complex information ecosystem of today, in addition to learning how to evaluate news and information for validity and dependability. By teaching students how to evaluate the credibility of news sources and spot bias, teachers help them become more critical consumers of information. This capacity is necessary for understanding and solving societal problems in an effective manner (Soundings Magazine, 2021).

John Kennedy G. Gabot et al, Effectiveness of the Implementation of Project Kagalingan, Kalinangan at Kamalayan (KKK) in Improving Critical Thinking Skills and Awareness of Social Issues

News Article in Classroom and Social Awareness

As a result, talking about the news with pupils provides their education with a "real world" perspective. Additionally, it supports students' exploration of parallels and contrasts and helps them appreciate the local environment within a global perspective. It is simple to include news into the curriculum, beginning with the most fundamental subjects of reading and numeracy, because of the broad range of news themes, such as politics, current affairs, and natural catastrophes (Global Dimension, 2016).

By exposing pupils to current events and societal concerns, including news into the curriculum promotes social consciousness. Their understanding of and engagement with social issues is sparked by this exposure, which improves their capacity to take part in civic affairs. Students can have a greater understanding of the intricacies of issues like immigration, climate change, and public health as well as the significance of being educated citizens by studying about these topics (Gonser, 2019).

The same concept—that utilizing news stories in the classroom exposes pupils to a wide range of social issues—is also expressed by Soundings Magazine (2021). Their awareness of these problems is raised by this exposure, which also motivates them to consider carefully the reasons behind the problems and possible remedies. Students who participate in this sort of learning become better educated and engaged citizens.

Furthermore, integrating current events into instruction helps students comprehend and engage in real-world problem-solving. This method fosters a deeper knowledge of social issues and the significance of civic involvement by helping students make the connection between what they learn in the classroom and the outside world (Edutopia, 2021).

Implementation of New Strategy

On the other hand, learning and education are processes that are conscious of their objectives. Here, gaining information, mastering a particular skill, and molding the student's character are the main goals. Students must understand that their learning outcomes, together with changes in behavior and character, are signs of a successful learning process before putting a technique or activity into practice. High learning outcomes indicate that pupils are knowledgeable (Budiariawan, 2019).

Dukalang & Lestari (2018) contend that in the current era of globalization, human resources with more competence are essential. Enhancing the quality of learning through effective design is one way to develop human resource competences and skills, allowing students' cognitive, emotional, and psychomotor capacities to grow (Lubis, 2019). This is a crucial component of the learning process in the classroom, where all students are involved. The programs and activities

used in the classroom should foster the pupils' overall development.

According to Lubis et al. (2023), first observation data indicate that teachers have controlled the learning process by depending only on textbooks while implementing an outdated method in the classroom. Due to their inability to comprehend, their inability to speak out of boredom, and their unwillingness to ask questions, students' engagement in the learning process reduces as a result (Junaidi et al., 2023).

As such, teachers can use a range of techniques to encourage their pupils to study more. In addition to giving students interesting learning resources, teachers may assist students in developing more motivation (Haniko et al., 2023). Teachers are essential to the process of increasing students' enthusiasm to study since they spend so much time in the classroom with them (Ariano et al., 2019).

With the supported literature found in related studies, the researchers intend to find the effectiveness of the implementation of Project KKK (Kagalingan, Kalinangan, at Kamalayan) by the Social Sciences Teachers in improving the critical thinking skills and awareness of social issues of the students.

III. RESEARCH METHODS

The research design that favorably helped the researchers to find, formulate, and gather information from the respondents is using descriptive-quantitative research which aims to assess the effectiveness of the implementation of Project Kagalingan, Kalinangan, at Kamalayan (KKK) in improving critical thinking skills and awareness of social issues of the students.

This study was conducted at the University of La Salette, Incorporated High School, Junior High Department situated at Malvar, Santiago City, Isabela. This is a premiere institution providing quality catholic education in the region. It is accredited by the Philippines Accrediting Association of Schools, Colleges and Universities (PAASCU), and has been given a commendation of a Level II accredited status.

The respondents of the study were the Grade 10 students of the University of La Salette, Incorporated High School, Junior High Department where Project KKK was applied. The number of respondents is determined through random sampling. The total population of Grade 10 students is 287. With a confidence level of 95% and a marginal error of 5%, the required sampling size is 166.

The researchers used a survey questionnaire as a research tool in this investigation. A survey questionnaire is a set of questions used to collect, assess, and interpret people's diverse points of view during a survey. A survey questionnaire is also a systematic way of gathering information from a particular group. The research

John Kennedy G. Gabot et al, Effectiveness of the Implementation of Project Kagalingan, Kalinangan at Kamalayan (KKK) in Improving Critical Thinking Skills and Awareness of Social Issues

questionnaire was utilized as a 5-point Likert Scale to represent the evaluation of the implementation of Project Kagalingan, Kalinangan, at Kamalayan (KKK).

The questionnaire used in the study was constructed by the researchers containing the statements identifying the evaluation of the students in the implementation of Project Kagalingan, Kalinangan, at Kamalayan (KKK) and its assistance in improving critical thinking, and awareness of social issues of the students.

Cronbach’s Alpha was used to test the reliability of the questionnaire. The researchers floated the constructed questionnaire to 30 random Grade 10 students in different sections. The second part of the questionnaire focusing on the aid of the project in the critical thinking skills of the respondents got a 0.77 value which means that it is good and acceptable. Statements about the aid of Project KKK in raising awareness of social issues of the students got a value of 0.73 which also means it is good and acceptable. The statements about the overall implementation of the project have a computed value of 0.84 which was interpreted as good. The overall level of reliability of the questionnaire got a score of 0.94 which means it is excellent. Thus, this led the researchers to use the constructed questionnaire to gather data.

The questionnaire was floated online. Hence, their Gmail address is required. A link to the survey was sent to their Facebook account or email address via Google Forms. Respondents are expected to be completely honest in their responses.

When the questionnaire was distributed, the researchers explained the study's purpose and nature to the respondents, as well as assured them that their names were not published and kept private. The researchers checked the response of each respondent for interpretation and made sure that there was no item in the Google form left out.

Following the data collection, the researchers asked the aid of a statistician for the interpretation and analysis of the data.

The data gathered underwent a descriptive analysis. Weighted Mean was used to describe the effectiveness of the implementation of Project KKK in improving their critical thinking skills and awareness of social issues. The average of each response in each item in the questionnaire is calculated and interpreted.

To determine the effectiveness of the implementation of Project KKK and its aid in improving their critical thinking skills and awareness of social issues, the 5-point Likert Scale was used. The scale and its description are as follows:

Numerical Value	Mean Rating	Description
5	4.21-5.00	Highly Effective
4	3.41-4.20	Effective
3	2.61-3.40	Moderately Effective
2	1.81-2.60	Slightly Effective
1	1.00-1.80	Not Effective

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the findings of the study, its analysis, and interpretation of data gathered.

Table 1. Mean Responses of the Effectiveness of Project KKK in Improving Critical Thinking Skills

Critical Thinking Skills	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
1. The project allows us to distinguish between facts, opinions, and biases.	4.36	Highly Effective
2. The project allows to evaluate the source’s credibility.	4.31	Highly Effective
3. The project allows us to think and formulate solutions.	4.39	Highly Effective
4. The project allows us to evaluate classmate’s solution to the issue.	4.36	Highly Effective
5. The project allows us to engage with our classmates and exchange information relevant to the news.	4.39	Highly Effective
6. The project allows us to reflect on the current issues in the society.	4.48	Highly Effective
Overall Mean	4.38	Highly Effective

The table above shows the item and the mean responses of the effectiveness of Project KKK in improving the critical

John Kennedy G. Gabot et al, Effectiveness of the Implementation of Project Kagalingan, Kalinangan at Kamalayan (KKK) in Improving Critical Thinking Skills and Awareness of Social Issues

thinking skills of the students. As gleaned in the table, The findings reveal that the project is highly effective in fostering critical thinking skills, with all areas receiving a "Highly Effective" rating. The weighted mean scores for each skill ranged from 4.31 to 4.48, indicating strong positive feedback from respondents. The highest score was for the project's ability to help participants reflect on current societal issues (4.48), while the ability to evaluate the source's credibility received the lowest, yet still highly effective, score (4.31).

The overall weighted mean score of 4.38 underscores the project's success in achieving its educational objectives, demonstrating its value as a tool for enhancing critical thinking skills.

To support the activities in Project KKK that help students develop their critical thinking skills, Eudotopia (2021) has published research stating that when students evaluate the credibility of news sources and information, they can identify bias, propaganda, and false news by learning how to perform rhetorical analyses of news stories. This is a crucial step in helping students develop their critical thinking skills.

Additionally, as noted in the study by Jatmiko et al. (2018), children will learn to attain the maturity of thinking when they can comprehend, analyze, infer, and assess situations around them. Students gain the capacity to think more thoroughly and critically about a variety of subjects by participating in these activities.

This improves their academic performance and equips them to solve problems in the real world. As adolescents put these abilities into practice, kids develop methodical, deliberate approaches to challenges, which results in more complex and mature mental processes. This level of cognitive maturity is necessary for making wise decisions and navigating the intricacies of modern society.

Table 2. Mean Responses of the Effectiveness of Project KKK in Improving Awareness of Social Issues

Awareness of Social Issues	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
1. The project informs me about social happenings in the country and in the world.	4.50	Highly Effective
2. The project allows me to integrate and connect personal experiences and observations.	4.30	Highly Effective
3. The project allows me to broaden my	4.46	Highly Effective

	perspective in social issues.		
4.	The project encourages me to be socially participative.	4.36	Highly Effective
5.	The project prepares me for real-world challenges.	4.40	Highly Effective
6.	The project helped me to develop an interest in social issues.	4.42	Highly Effective
Overall Weighted Mean		4.41	Highly Effective

The table above represents the mean of the different items about the effectiveness of Project KKK in raising awareness of social issues. As represented in the table, the respondents stated that the project highly effectively informs them about social happenings both locally and globally (4.50), allows the respondents to integrate and connect personal experiences and observations (4.30), consents the respondents to broaden their perspective in social issues (4.46), the project encourages the respondents to be socially participative (4.36), the project prepares them for real-world challenges (4.40), and the project helped them to develop an interest in social issues (4.42). Overall, the high effectiveness ratings across all dimensions reflect the project's success in raising awareness and understanding of social issues among the respondents. The overall weighted mean of 4.41 reaffirms the project's strong influence and its importance as an educational tool in fostering socially aware and participative individuals.

One way that the Social Sciences Department educates the students on many social issues is through Project KKK. This is to provide important and pertinent news to the students in the classroom. Thus, in Gonser's research, S. By exposing students to current events and societal challenges, including news into the curriculum promotes social awareness, as stated in the 2019 article "How to Prepare Social Studies Students to Think Critically in the Modern World." Students are exposed to a variety of societal issues through news items, which helps to broaden their knowledge and promote critical thinking on these topics. This approach pushes students to think about how they may help to solve these issues in addition to educating them about current events (Soundings Magazine, 2021).

John Kennedy G. Gabot et al, Effectiveness of the Implementation of Project Kagalingan, Kalinangan at Kamalayan (KKK) in Improving Critical Thinking Skills and Awareness of Social Issues

Table 3. Mean Responses of the Respondents to the Effectiveness of the Implementation of Project KKK

Implementation of the Project	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
1. News shared with the class is relevant.	4.33	Highly Effective
2. The project connects us to real-world problems.	4.50	Highly Effective
3. There are values learned from the project.	4.47	Highly Effective
4. The project enhances basic skills in researching and communicating.	4.37	Highly Effective
5. The involvement and participation of the class is active.	4.28	Highly Effective
6. It allows communicating perspectives and diverse viewpoints.	4.43	Highly Effective
7. It helps us develop self-esteem and confidence.	4.42	Highly Effective
8. The overall flow of the project is commendable.	4.43	Highly Effective
9. It contributed much knowledge in overall learning.	4.45	Highly Effective
Overall Weighted Mean	4.41	Highly Effective

Table 3 presents the data about the evaluation of the respondents to the implementation of Project KKK. As shown in the table, the respondents found the news shared in class to be highly relevant. This relevance is crucial for maintaining engagement and ensuring that discussions are meaningful and connected to current events (4.33). The highest rating was for the project's ability to connect participants to real-world problems. This indicates that the project successfully bridged the gap between academic learning and practical, real-world

applications (4.50). The project was also highly effective in imparting values (4.47), the project enhances their researching and communication skills (4.37), the class involvement and participation are active, indicating that the project encourages student engagement (4.28), the project allows them to communicate diverse perspectives and viewpoints and was agreed by the respondents (4.43), the project helps develop the self-esteem and confidence of the respondents (4.42), the overall flow of the project is commendable (4.43), and the project contributed significantly to the overall learning of the respondents (4.45).

These results show that the project is an effective teaching tool that promotes social awareness, critical thinking, and personal development. The project's success in fostering a stimulating and influential learning environment is demonstrated by the high level of participation and the encouraging comments given by participants. Its success is confirmed by the high overall weighted mean of 4.41, which also implies that these kinds of projects might be advantageously included in a more comprehensive educational curriculum to improve student learning and development. According to Edutopia (2021), incorporating current events into courses helps students comprehend and discuss real-world concerns, which further enhances the educational experience.

One program that helps kids develop their beliefs, knowledge, and abilities in a comprehensive way is Project KKK. The Social Sciences Department's concept is an innovative approach to preparing students for the socially conscious society of today. Haniko et al. (2023) claim that instructors might employ a variety of strategies to motivate their pupils to study more as a result. Teachers can help students become more motivated in addition to providing engaging learning materials. Since they spend so much time in the classroom with their students, teachers are crucial to the process of improving students' excitement to study (Ariano et al., 2019).

IV. CONCLUSION

The following are the conclusions derived in the light of the findings:

1. All the aspects of the project received high ratings, indicating a strong positive reception from the participants. Each statement received a "Highly Effective" interpretation, showing that the project effectively met its objectives in various areas. The majority of the respondents evaluated that Project KKK was an effective strategy for improving critical thinking skills. Students gain the capacity to think more thoroughly and critically about a variety of topics by participating in these activities. This improves their academic performance and equips them to solve problems in the real world.

John Kennedy G. Gabot et al, Effectiveness of the Implementation of Project Kagalingan, Kalinangan at Kamalayan (KKK) in Improving Critical Thinking Skills and Awareness of Social Issues

2. The participants rated all aspects of the project's influence on social awareness and engagement very highly. Each statement received a "Highly Effective" interpretation, demonstrating that the project was successful in informing participants about social happenings and connecting personal experiences to broader issues. This suggests that the project was successful in keeping participants well-informed about current events and social issues.

3. All evaluated criteria showed consistently high effectiveness ratings for the project's implementation, demonstrating a comprehensive and significant educational experience. Regarding relevance, connection to real-world problems, skill growth, class engagement, communication of varied viewpoints, personal development, and contribution to overall learning, the respondents all agreed that the initiative is well-received and evaluated as useful. These outcomes indicate that the project is a valuable educational tool that fosters critical thinking, social awareness, and personal growth. The strong engagement and positive feedback from participants highlight the project's effectiveness in creating an enriching and impactful learning environment.

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John Kennedy G. Gabot et al, Effectiveness of the Implementation of Project Kagalingan, Kalinangan at Kamalayan (KKK) in Improving Critical Thinking Skills and Awareness of Social Issues

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APPENDIX

Mechanics and Guidelines for Project Kagalingan, Kalinangan, at Kamalayan (KKK)

The following are the mechanics and guidelines in news reporting by Project KKK:

THE NATURE OF THE NEWS

1. The content of the news is limited to the problems happening concerning education, government, environment, health, economy, and social issues.
2. Avoid delivering news such as murder, accidents, illegal drugs, entertainment, and sports.
3. The context of the news report can be local, national, and international.

PROCESS OF NEWS REPORTING

1. In every meeting, one student will be assigned to deliver a piece of news.
2. The assigned student should include the following:
 - a) The Headline
 - b) Content of the news
 - c) Source
3. Aside from the assigned student, the teacher will choose one student for each assigned task. Here are the following tasks:
 - a) Reiteration of the news
 - b) Proposed solutions and recommendations
 - c) Reflection on the overall discussion of the news
 - d) Conclusion
4. Afterward, the teacher will facilitate the generalization about the short discussion of the news.

POINTS GIVEN TO THE STUDENTS

1. The student assigned to deliver news on a certain issue will be given 100 points.
2. Some students who will be called for the reiteration of the news, proposing solutions and recommendations, and reflecting on the news will be given 80 points.
3. Other students are required to bring their news and the classification of their news will be strictly monitored. They will be given 60 points.