PROJEK WARGA
PROJECT FOR SCHOOLS IN PENANG
(JUNE – SEPTEMBER, 2003)
EVALUATION REPORT

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INTRODUCTION

(A) Some basic information on the pilot project

The Pilot Project began with a 4-day training course, from May 29 to June 1, 2003, for 36 teachers (including a few heads of schools) from 12 secondary schools in the State of Penang, which is one of the 13 States comprising the Federation of Malaysia. Two trainers from the Center for Civic Education, Calabasas, California, conducted the course.

The actual project was carried out in 11 of the 12 schools over a two-month duration in July and August 2003. Each school has two groups of participants, consisting of 13-14-year old Form 1 and 2 (Year 7 and 8) students. The project culminated in a "showcase" in early September 2004, during which participating groups display their portfolio or materials and make an oral presentation. Prizes were awarded for the top projects.

The project began with a total of 606 student participants. This is the pretest N in Table 1 or the number responding to the pre-test questionnaire administered before students began the project. However, the posttest N or the number of students completing the posttest questionnaire after the completion of the project is only 464. Although some students left the project midstream, most of the 142 "missing" cases for the posttest were due to the fact that most teachers distributed the questionnaire only after the completion of the year-end school examinations when many students were absent from school.

Table 1: Student participants by school

Name of school	Pretest N	Posttest N	Difference
1. Teluk Kumbar	50	46	4
2. Seri Balik Pulau	40	40	-
3. Chung Ling	60	60	-
4. St. Xavier's	60	40	20
5. Peng Hwa	60	60	-
6. Penang Free	56	34	22
7. Raja Tun Uda	53	33	20
8. Sungai Ara	47	33	14
9. Bukit Jambul	62	20	42
10. St. George's	60	56	4
11. Al-Mashoor	58	42	16
Total	606	464	142

(B) Evaluation Objective and Contents

The objective of the evaluation is to examine the operation and effects of the pilot project, including its teacher-training component. This should help in considering whether the project should be extended to other schools and other States in the Federation, as well as provide possible lessons for making its future operation or implementation more effective.

Toward this objective, the evaluation contains the following parts:

- Part 1 presents the findings on the effect of the training course on the 36 teachers. It is based on a questionnaire filled by the teachers at the conclusion of the training course (see Appendix I).

- Part 2 reports pertinent feedback on project implementation and the factors affecting it. This feedback is from both students and teachers, obtained respectively from a post-test student questionnaire (see Appendix II) and from

a questionnaire administered on teachers at the end of the project (see Appendix IV).

- Part 3 reports the findings on the effect of the pilot project on student participants. The findings are based on a pre-test and a post-test questionnaire administered on the students at the beginning and end of the project respectively (see Appendix II and Appendix III).

- Part 4 supplements Part 2 and Part 3 by presenting the overall perception or evaluation of the project by teachers and students after the completion of the project. It is based on the post-test questionnaire for students (Appendix III) and the post- project questionnaire for teachers (Appendix IV).

- Part 5, the conclusion, summarizes the main findings and discusses some pertinent issues.

PART 1: THE TRAINING COURSE FOR TEACHERS

The purpose of the training course is to train the trainers. Teachers attending the course would be in charge of student groups doing the *Warga* project in their respective schools. They were thus asked to indicate, in two structured multi-part questions, whether the course has helped to prepare them for their future role and how ready they were to conduct the project in their schools. In addition, two open questions asked for their views on course and its conduct – what they liked most and least – to obtain information that may be useful in improving the training course.

(A) Benefits of training course for teachers

Teachers were asked whether the training course has benefited them in various ways, or provided them with various benefits, that are deemed relevant to making them better *Warga* project managers in their schools. The benefits range from general ones, such as increased knowledge of community problems, increased understanding of policy proposals, and better appreciation of civic education for youths, to becoming more prepared for specific tasks they would have to perform as future project managers, such as helping students to develop policy proposals and to use project materials. The benefits and teachers' responses to them are shown in Table 2. The most notable point in Table 2 is that nearly all the teachers responded that they "agree" or "strongly agree" that the course has benefited them in each of the seven ways enumerated. This clearly establishes the usefulness of the course to teachers.

Table 2: Benefits of training course for teachers

The course has benefited you in the following ways:	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. Better understand the public policy proposals that were discussed	18	16	1	1
2. Know more about problems faced by the community	12	20	2	2
3. Increased your knowledge of how to consult different sources of information	16	18	2	0
4. Increased your ability to solve problems in groups	18	16	2	0
5. Learned to teach others to propose changes that will benefit the community	9	26	0	1
6. Better appreciate the importance of providing civic education to youths	15	20	1	0
7. Understand the use of the folder and exhibits as methods of communication and persuasion	13	22	1	0

(B) Features of training course liked most and least by teachers

Besides the above, teachers were asked: What do you like best about the training course? A total of 30 out of the 36 teachers replied this question and provided 37 "mentions" of specific features they liked. *Group work* (and its various entailments, like persuasion and securing agreement) received the largest number of mentions, i.e. 16 of the total of 37. This is followed by *course activities* (like data-gathering and presentation), which received 10 mentions. The rest are: gains in *knowledge* (about public policy, the role of government and what citizens can do) with 6 mentions; conduct of the course (well-organized and providing clear guidance for what needs to be done) with 4 mentions; and the teaching of *responsibility* for self and community (a single mention). This suggests that what teachers find the most attractive about the course is *group activity*, or its component that requires teachers to carry out various activities in groups.

Teachers were also asked: What do you like least about the training course? Only 12 mentions (from as many teachers) were received. Among these, 4 disliked having to speak and answer questions "in public" because of "stage fright"; 4 disliked too much "talk" or "lecturing" by trainers; and 2 disliked having to define what is a public problem or policy. These responses seem consistent with the above-indicated preference for activity or doing things to prepare the portfolio (although its oral presentation makes some teachers uncomfortable) as opposed to passive listening or "intellectual" talk.

(C) Teacher readiness to conduct project in school

For ensuring the success of the pilot project, the key question is whether the teachers are, or feel, sufficiently ready to manage or conduct the project in their schools. The above shows that that they have become more ready as a result of the training provided them, but it is their level of readiness that matters. Teacher readiness may depend more on the selection of teachers for the course than on the training course itself. It is learned that teachers frequently did not volunteer but were "asked" by school superiors to take part in the project. If this is likely to continue (as seems safe to assume), it is of some importance to know whether teachers would be sufficiently ready to serve as project managers after attending the training course. To assess this, teachers were asked to indicate where they stand on a seven-point scale ranging from "need assistance' (low readiness) to "comfortable" (high or sufficient readiness) in performing nine specific project-management tasks. The findings on teacher readiness, as shown in Table 3, are certainly encouraging, although not as positive as might be wished for. While there is a slight clustering at mid-point, the distribution of teacher responses is clearly skewed to the right, indicating a preponderance of teachers who feel comfortable with the nine listed tasks of project managers. It does not appear over-sanguine to conclude that the teachers are sufficiently comfortable or ready to conduct the project with their students.

Table 3: Teacher readiness to conduct project in school

Would you like more assistance or are you comfortable in the following?	Need Assistance 1	2	3	4	5	6	Confortable 7
1. Help students to select public policy problem	1	4	5	10	8	2	6
2. Play the role of director and facilitator	1	4	3	10	7	5	6
3. Manage others to work in a team	0	1	4	12	6	9	4
4. Encourage dialogue	0	3	5	10	9	4	5
5. Resolve problems	0	1	7	10	7	8	3
6. Encourage class participation	0	3	4	8	6	10	5
7. Define public policy	1	2	3	11	12	5	2
8. Conduct/facilitate a hearing	1	2	7	6	8	8	4
9. Brief judges	3	3	5	8	9	5	3

PART 2: THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROJECT

An important objective of the pilot project is to find what, if any, are the problems that would affect the project and its implementation in Malaysian schools. These problems can then be addressed or taken into account in the design of the project. This Part reports the main findings from the student post-test questionnaire and the teacher questionnaire after the completion of the project.

(A) Teacher and student interest in the project

To begin with, both teachers and students were asked: How interested are you in the project? Responses to this question at the end of the project are shown in Table 4. Almost 70 percent of teachers and 60 percent of students reported an above average level of interest in the project, i.e. rank 1 or 2. If the average rank 3 is included, the percentages are 89.7 for teachers and 83.0 for students. Of every six students, one was not interested. However, lack of interest, whether among teachers or students, does not seem to be a serious problem faced by the project.

Table 4: Interest in the project among teachers and students

How interested?	Teacher responses		Student responses	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
1 (Very interested)	12	41.4	137	29.5
2	8	27.6	134	28.9
3	6	20.7	114	24.6
4	2	6.9	32	6.9
5 (Not interested at all)	0	-	42	9.1
No response	1	3.4	5	1.1
Total	29	100.0	464	100.0

(B) Importance and adequacy of support for the project by school heads

Support for the project from heads of school is also assessed in terms of both its importance and adequacy. Table 5 reports the views of teachers on these two dimensions. Clearly the support of the school head is rated as a key factor by teachers: all 29 teachers returned a score of 3 or higher, with three quarters of them

rating it as of the highest importance. The support actually shown by school heads is slightly lower than its perceived importance, but is generally adequate or is not a problem: only one of the 29 teachers reported low support from the school head.

Table 5: Importance and adequacy of support by school heads

How important or adequate?	Important		Adequate	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
1 (High)	22	75.9	14	48.3
2	4	13.8	7	24.1
3	3	10.3	7	24.1
4	-	-	-	-
5 (Low)	-	-	1	3.5
Total	29	100.0	29	100.0

(C) Getting students to take part in the project: was it a problem?

Getting students to take part in the project is an obvious concern, not only because the project is not part of the regular curriculum but also because it requires considerable time and effort from students. Table 6 reports the experiences of teachers in this regard. Three quarters (22 of 29) of the teachers reported that getting students to take part in the project was not a problem. However, of these 22, five pointed out that securing the commitment or active involvement of student participants was a problem.

Table 6: Was getting student participants a problem?

Problem in getting Students to participate?	Teacher Responses	
	Number	Percent
No	17	58.6
No, but commitment is	5	17.2
Yes	6	20.7
No response	1	3.5
Total	29	100.0

(D) Student freedom in carrying out the project

Both for the purpose of the project and for sustaining student interest over the duration of the project, it is important for students to be essentially in control and to see the project as their own. Two conditions are probably crucial to this sense of ownership among students: that they control the choice of topic or public problem to be examined in the project and that they are largely in control of the preparation of the project portfolio, which is the main product of their efforts.

Table 7: Choice of project topic: by students or teachers?

The topic was chosen:	Teachers		Students	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Entirely by students	9	31.0	149	32.1
Mainly by students	17	58.6	233	50.2
Mainly by teachers	1	3.5	34	7.3
Entirely by teachers	2	6.9	18	3.9
Other	-	-	19	4.1
No response	-	-	11	2.4
Total	29	100.0	464	100.0

Table 7 shows that the first condition was sufficiently fulfilled: 82.3 percent of students and 89.6 percent of teachers reported that students were mainly or entirely responsible for choosing the project topic.

Table 8: Portfolio preparation: student freedom vs. teacher control

Student freedom vs. teacher control	Students	
	Number	Percent
1 (Students completely free)	58	12.5
2	75	16.2
3	181	39.0
4	67	14.4
5 (Controlled by teachers)	82	17.7
No response	1	0.2
Total	464	100.0

Table 8 shows that students have more control of the choice of project topic than of the preparation of the project portfolio. According to students, the preparation of the portfolio is as much controlled by teachers as by students themselves. Some control by teachers was probably unavoidable, especially when the project was seen as a competition among schools. Question is, did the significant or significantly felt level of teacher control dampen student interest and involvement in the project? This is examined next.

(E) How active were students in carrying out the project?

Students were asked: How active were you in carrying out the project? Table 9 shows that a majority of student participants, i.e. 58.2 percent, reported they were more than averagely active (ranks 1 and 2), while another 25.9 percent reported an average level of activity (rank 3). As noted by some teachers [see paragraph 2(4)], not all student participants were sufficiently committed to the project. However, lack of commitment or involvement does not seem to have been a serious problem, as inactive students amounted to only 15.3 percent.

Table 9: How active were student participants?

How active?	Student Responses	
	Number	Percent
1 (Very active)	126	27.2
2	144	31.0
3	120	25.9
4	51	11.0
5 (Not active at all)	20	4.3
No response	3	0.6
Total	464	100.0

(f) Student use of various sources of information

Table 10 below shows how frequently various sources of information were used by students, as reported by teachers and by students themselves. All the six listed sources were used by students but in varying degrees. For each source as well as their combined use, a simple index is constructed (explained in the accompanying

note to the table) to measure the extent of use. Teachers reported a level of use that is slightly higher than that reported by students. However, both groups agree in their ranking of these sources in terms of their use by students. Newspapers and the Internet are the two most used sources, with use indices of 0.82 and 0.71 respectively, while government departments constitute the least used source, with a use index of only 0.39.

Table 10: Student use of various sources of information

Sources of Information	Teacher responses				Student responses			
	F	S	N	Index	F	S	N	Index
1. Libraries	14	12	2	0.71	104	274	84	0.52
2. Newspapers	21	6	1	0.86	311	138	15	0.82
3. Internet	18	9	1	0.80	257	143	63	0.71
4. Government departments	9	12	7	0.54	76	212	174	0.39
5. Interviews	16	9	3	0.73	171	195	97	0.58
6. Family and friends	16	9	3	0.73	218	184	62	0.67
All sources	94	57	17	0.73	1137	1146	495	0.62

Explanatory Note:

- **F** = Frequently, **S** = Sometimes, and **N** = Never
- The index measures the extent to which a source is used. An F is scored 2, an S is scored 1 and an N is scored 0. The index is constructed as follows, using libraries as illustration. Based on the responses from 28 teachers, the maximum possible score (if all the 28 respondents indicate frequent use) would be 56 (i.e. 28 times 2), the total score for actual use is 40 (i.e. 14 times 2 plus 12 times 1) and the index of library use is 0.71 (i.e. 40 divided by 56). Based on the responses received from 462 students, the maximum use score would be 924 (i.e. 462 times 2), the actual use score is 482 (i.e. 104 times 2 plus 274 times 1) and the use index is 0.52 (i.e. 482 divided by 924).

(G) Problems in collecting information

Both teachers and students were asked whether students faced problems in collecting information for the project and to state the problems faced. Table 11 shows that teachers are more likely than students to report that students faced difficulties in collecting information for the project. A total of 18 teachers, or 62.1 percent of them, reported that students faced problems, while only 24.6 percent of students reported that they did. More than half, or 56 percent, of the students, compared to 37.9 percent of the teachers, indicated that no problems were faced, while 19.4 percent of the students did not respond to the question.

Table 11: Did students face problems in collecting data?

Did students face Problems?	Teacher responses		Student responses	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Yes	18	62.1	114	24.6
No	11	37.9	260	56.0
No response	-	-	90	19.4
Total	29	100.0	464	100.0

What problems were faced by students in collecting information? Table 12 shows the problems identified by teachers and students separately. The number and percentage of teachers/students identifying each problem are also shown. As can be seen from the Table, students identified a greater variety of problems than teachers did. However, the two groups of respondents identified the same three most important problems, namely lack of cooperation from those approached by students, time constraint and the scarcity of information on the topic chosen by students for the project. The most frequently cited problem is the lack of cooperation from relevant parties. This was reported to be a problem by 31.0 percent of teachers and 10.3 percent of students. All mentions by teachers of lack of cooperation explicitly refer to government departments. Most students complaining of lack of cooperation probably meant government departments as well. However, only 12 of the 48 students specifically named government departments as the uncooperative party. The other two main problems identified by both teachers and students are the lack of time and the scarcity of information on the chosen topic, or the difficulty of locating such information. Time constraint was seen as a problem by 20.7 percent of teachers and

4.3 percent of students, while the scarcity of information was a problem according to 10.3 percent of teachers and 5.0 percent of students. Compared to these three leading problems, the other problems are clearly minor.

Table 12: Nature of problems faced in collecting data

Part I. Problems identified by teachers	**No. of teachers**	**Percent of teachers**
1. Lack of cooperation from government departments	9	31.0
2. Time constraint	6	20.7
3. Information on chosen topic is scarce	3	10.3
4. Other	1	3.4
Part II. Problems identified by students	**No. of students**	**Percent of students**
1. Lack of cooperation from parties concerned	48	10.3
2. Information on chosen topic is scarce or hard to find	23	5.0
3. Time constraint	20	4.3
4. Transport	6	1.3
5. Others (each mentioned by 5 students or less)	18	3.9

(H) The time period or duration of the project

Finally, teachers and students were asked for their views on the duration of the project. The purpose is to find out whether they see the project duration as too long, too short or about right. Table 13 shows that the evaluation of the project duration is also broadly similar among teachers and students. The duration was seen as about right by a majority of both groups, but by a larger majority of teachers (65.5 percent) than of students (50.4 percent). However, the responses of both groups are slightly skewed towards the “too short” end: almost a third of teachers and students seem to favor a longer duration. They probably felt that this would help to address the time constraint noted by some teachers and students in the preceding paragraph.

Table 13: The duration of the project

The project duration is:	Teacher responses		Student responses	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
1 (Too long)	-	-	28	6.1
2	1	3.5	47	10.1
3	19	65.5	234	50.4
4	5	17.2	89	19.2
5 (Too short)	4	13.8	58	12.5
No response	-	-	8	1.7
Total	29	100.0	464	100.0

PART 3: EFFECT OF PROJECT ON STUDENT PARTICIPANTS

This Part examines whether participation in the project has affected the students in certain specified ways. Its limitations should be noted from the outset. The most serious is that control groups were not used in all the 11 schools. The plan was to have each school identify twice the number of students required for the project and then randomly divide the total into two groups so that one would serve as the control group. However, unknown to the project sponsor, the schools actually selected the number of students required for participating in the project and started running it before the scheduled time. Another limitation arises because 140 of the 464 students completing the posttest questionnaire failed to fill in their identification number. For these 140 cases, it is not possible to match or pair their individual posttest with their individual pretest and to calculate the test statistic appropriate for ascertaining whether there is a significant pretest-posttest change in each of the dependent variables. Thus the statistical test of significance (and other analysis) in this part is based on only 324 (i.e. 70 percent) of the 464 student respondents. The 140 cases left out include all the students from the last three schools listed in Table 1. Effectively, therefore, the analysis here is confined to eight of the eleven schools that took part in the pilot project.

The dependent variables are the effects of interest. These variables are coded V1 to V7 and shown in Table 14. Indicated in parentheses at the end of each variable are the questions that measure it in the pretest and posttest questionnaires (see Appendices II and III). V1 and V2 are each measured by means of a single-part question, while the other variables are each measured by a multiple-part question. The questions or their parts elicit responses to a five-point scale. For each multiple-part question, the mean score of its component parts is used as an index. The exception is the question measuring V3 or understanding of public policy: the index for this variable is the proportion of ten questions correctly answered by the respondent.

Table 14: Change in dependent variables: overall

Dependent variable (DV)	Mean (N=324)			t Statistic
	Posttest	Pretest	Difference	
V1: Interest in public affairs (Q9, Q4)	3.1852	3.2994	-0.1142	-1.365
V2: Discussion of public affairs (Q12, Q7)	2.5802	2.8981	-0.3179	**-4.314**
V3: Understanding of public policy (Q13, Q8)	0.6244	0.6219	0.0025	0.195
V4: Importance of good citizenship (Q14, Q9)	3.9731	4.0564	-0.0833	**-2.197**
V5: Personal efficacy (Q16, Q11)	3.3272	3.3636	-0.0364	-0.679
V6: Trust in others (Q18, Q13)	3.2432	2.9895	0.2537	**4.572**
V7: Acceptance of individual Freedoms/diversity (Q19, Q14)	3.3488	3.3164	0.0324	0.602

Note: A t-statistic shown in bold is significant at 0.05.

(A) Effects of the project: overall

Table 14 also shows, for all the 324 students analyzed and for each dependent variable, the posttest and pretest means, the difference between these two means and the t-statistic for testing the significance of the individually paired difference between the posttest and pretest. The results of the tests of significance are shown in the last or far right column of the Table. The t-statistics that attained a level of significance of 0.05 are shown in bold. Two of the three that are significant show a decrease rather than a hoped-for increase in the variables concerned (i.e. V2 and V6) after the completion of the project. Thus the only hoped-for effect that is found to be statistically significant is in V6 (trust in others).

Besides the tests of significance, the pretest and posttest means for each dependent variables shown in Table 14 merit attention. Recall that the range for V3 is from zero to one and that for all the other variables is from one to five. Two observations can be offered. First, the mean scores (both pretest and posttest) show that students generally judged themselves to be quite average (slightly above or below the midpoint score of 3) on all the variables, except for their belief (scored about 4 out of 5) on the importance of good citizenship. They rate good citizenship as important, despite their average level of acceptance of individual freedoms/diversity and their average scores on the other variables (i.e. interest in public affairs, discussion of public affairs, understanding of public policy, personal efficacy and trust in others) that are probable ingredients of active citizenship. Second, the posttest-pretest

difference is very slight, except possibly for V2 (discussion of public affairs) and V6 (trust in others). Furthermore and rather curiously, for four of the seven variables, including V2, the difference is negative, or in the "wrong" direction.

What has been just presented pertains generally to all the 324 students with paired pretest and posttest observations. The remainder of this Part refines the analysis by examining variations in effect according to gender, race and father's education level. The last named factor serves as an indicator of the socio-economic status of the students. The breakdown of the students by these categories is as follows:

- Gender: 187 (57.7 percent) males and 137 (42.3 percent) females
- Race: 158 (48.8 percent) Chinese, 135 (41.7 percent) Malay, 22 (6.8 percent) Indian and 9 (2.8 percent) others. (With almost half of its population consisting of Chinese, about two-fifths consisting of Malays and the rest mostly Indians, Penang has the largest Chinese population of all the states in the federation.)
- Father's educational level: 16 (4.9 percent) primary, 168 (51.9 percent) secondary, 49 (15.1 percent) post-secondary, 83 (25.6 percent) university and 8 (2.5 percent) unknown.

(B) Effects of the project: by gender

3(6) Table 15 presents the findings by gender. Without speculating on the reasons for the puzzling "negative" findings, the overall finding of a significant increase in V6 (trust in others) as the only hoped-for effect applies to both male and female students.

Table 15: Change in dependent variables: by gender

DV	Male (N=187)				Female (N=137)			
	Mean			t Statistic	Mean			t Statistic
	Posttest	Pretest	Difference		Posttest	Pretest	Difference	
V1	3.2299	3.1497	0.0802	0.6860	3.1241	3.5036	-0.3796	**-3.342**
V2	2.5348	2.8610	-0.3262	**-3.1000**	2.6423	2.9489	-0.3066	**-3.092**
V3	0.6053	0.5802	0.0251	1.1418	0.6504	0.6788	-0.0285	-1.648
V4	3.9786	4.0153	-0.0367	-0.6610	3.9656	4.1126	-0.1470	**-3.075**
V5	3.3519	3.3305	0.0214	0.2680	3.2934	3.4088	-0.1154	**-1.772**
V6	3.2930	2.9754	0.3176	**4.1660**	3.1752	3.0088	0.1664	**2.089**
V7	3.3877	3.3717	0.0160	0.1990	3.2956	3.2409	0.0547	0.852

Note: A t-statistic shown in bold is significant at 0.05.

(C) Effects of the project: by race

Table 16 presents the findings by race. The significant positive effect on V6 (trust in others) is found to apply to Malay and Chinese students, but not to the small group of Indian students. For Chinese students but not for the others, it is found that they also show a significant increase on V3 (understanding of public policy). In fact, for Indian students, no significant change is found on any of the dependent variables.

Table 16: Change in dependent variables: by race

DV	Malays (N=135)				Chinese (N=158)			
	Mean			t Statistic	Mean			t Statistic
	Posttest	Pretest	Difference		Posttest	Pretest	Difference	
V1	3.1630	3.5556	-0.3926	**-2.730**	3.1899	3.0380	0.1519	1.439
V2	2.5407	2.8444	-0.3037	**-2.914**	2.5380	2.9241	-0.3861	**-3.704**
V3	0.5785	0.6141	-0.0356	**-1.698**	0.6658	0.6361	0.0297	**1.787**
V4	3.9048	4.0624	-0.1577	**-2.472**	4.0054	4.0280	-0.0226	-0.436
V5	3.3052	3.4578	-0.1526	**-1.952**	3.2987	3.2544	0.0443	0.551
V6	3.2370	3.0622	0.1748	**1.890**	3.1759	2.8696	0.3063	**4.039**
V7	3.1500	3.0944	0.0556	0.683	3.5000	3.4446	0.0554	0.698

Note: A t-statistic shown in bold is significant at 0.05.

DV	Indians (N=22)			
	Mean			t Statistic
	Posttest	Pretest	Difference	
V1	3.3182	3.3182	0.0000	0.000
V2	2.9091	3.0000	-0.0909	-0.257
V3	0.5818	0.5545	0.0273	0.548
V4	4.1364	4.1169	0.0195	0.149
V5	3.5364	3.4182	0.1182	0.525
V6	3.6455	3.3818	0.2636	1.378
V7	3.4659	3.5568	-0.0909	-0.471

(D) Effects of the project: by father's educational level

Finally, Table 17 presents the findings on the effects of the project for four student groups distinguished on the basis of their father's educational level. Again the only significant positive effect found is on V6 (trust in others). This finding holds for three of the four groups, the exception being students whose fathers have a post-secondary (but not university) education.

Table 17: Change in dependent variables: by father's educational level

DV	Primary (N=16)				Secondary (N=168)			
	Mean			t Statistic	Mean			t Statistic
	Posttest	Pretest	Difference		Posttest	Pretest	Difference	
V1	3.0625	2.9375	0.1250	0.307	3.1250	3.3393	-0.2143	**-1.751**
V2	2.0000	2.6875	-0.6875	**-2.905**	2.5893	2.8869	-0.2976	**-3.039**
V3	0.5625	0.5812	-0.0187	-0.337	0.5952	0.6071	-0.0119	-0.651
V4	4.0536	4.0268	0.0268	0.157	3.9328	4.0085	-0.0757	-1.318
V5	3.3000	3.2125	0.0875	0.233	3.2476	3.3571	-0.1095	-1.365
V6	3.3750	2.7875	0.5875	**3.522**	3.2857	3.0167	0.2690	**3.587**
V7	3.3125	3.2188	0.0938	0.550	3.3140	3.2336	0.0804	1.013

Note: A t-statistic shown in bold is significant at 0.05.

DV	Post-secondary (N=49)				University (N=83)			
	Mean			t Statistic	Mean			t Statistic
	Posttest	Pretest	Difference		Posttest	Pretest	Difference	
V1	3.1633	3.5510	-0.3878	**-1.986**	3.3253	3.1325	0.1928	1.246
V2	2.5306	2.9388	-0.4082	**-1.924**	2.7229	2.9277	-0.2048	-1.298
V3	0.6510	0.6204	0.0306	0.893	0.6759	0.6578	0.0181	0.788
V4	3.9650	4.1662	-0.2012	**-2.221**	4.0293	4.0895	-0.0602	-0.901
V5	3.3755	3.4857	-0.1102	-0.935	3.4337	3.3277	0.1060	1.328
V6	3.1469	3.2735	-0.1265	-0.790	3.1494	2.8048	0.3446	**3.081**
V7	3.3724	3.3265	0.0459	0.346	3.4006	3.5090	-0.1084	-1.048

PART 4: PERCEPTION OF THE PROJECT BY TEACHERS AND STUDENTS

The preceding Part presents the findings on the effects of the project on certain selected or pre-determined dependent variables. In addition, both teachers and students were asked in general or unstructured questions what they like most and like least about the project. The responses obtained refer largely to other effects of the project, i.e. effects other than the pre-determined variables. They are thus presented in this Part to round off the examination of effects. The responses of the 29 teachers and 464 students who completed the post-project questionnaires are discussed separately. The responses of students show a much greater variety than those of teachers. To limit the analysis to the main kinds of responses, only project effects or features mentioned by more than 10 percent of the respondents concerned will be included.

(A) Teachers

What teachers liked most about the project falls under three broad categories; these categories as well as the number and percentage of teachers who mentioned each of them are shown in the upper part of Table 18. More than half, i.e. 55.2 percent, of the teachers mentioned the positive effect of the project on the personal development of students (such as independence, self-reliance and confidence) and their social skills (such as communications and cooperation or working with others). The next category of benefits for students, mentioned by 37.9 percent of teachers, is the development of students' research skills (such as having to think creatively and experience in collecting data, including through interviews). The third category of benefits, mentioned by 24.1 percent of teachers, is interaction with the community and awareness of community problems.

The most frequently named as the most disliked feature of the project by teachers, as seen in the lower part of Table 18, is the workload or the demands of the project on effort and time, from both teachers and students. It was mentioned by almost half (or 44.8 percent) of the teachers. The only other notable disliked feature, mentioned by just over 10 percent of teachers, is the lack of cooperation given by government departments to students gathering data for the project.

Table 18: What teachers liked and disliked most about the project

Part I: Features of project liked most by teachers (N=29)	**Mentioned by:**	
	Number of Teachers	**Percent of Teachers**
1. Promote personal development/social skills of students	16	55.2
2. Promote research skills of students	11	37.9
3. Interaction with and awareness of community	7	24.1
Part II: Features of project disliked most by teachers (N=29)	**Mentioned by:**	
	Number of Teachers	**Percent of Teachers**
1. Workload or demands on effort and time	13	44.8
2. Lack of cooperation by government departments	3	10.3

(B) Students

The features of the project that students liked most are shown in the upper part of Table 19. The feature most frequently mentioned – by 129 students or 27.8 percent of them -- is group work. Students typically refer to this feature of the project by indicating that they liked particular characteristics that group work entails, principally interaction and cooperation with other students, and the opportunity for making new friends. The feature mentioned by the next largest number of students, i.e. 118 students or 25.4 percent of them, is its public policy content: students appreciate the opportunity it affords for understanding and dealing with public problems. The third and final feature is the activity of collecting information and preparing the portfolio. This main activity of the project involves group work (the most frequently mentioned feature), but 95 students or 20.5 of them singled it out as the feature of the project that they liked most.

Table 19: What students liked and disliked most about the project

Part I: Features of project liked most by students (N=464)	**Mentioned by:**	
	Number of Students	**Percent of Students**
1. Group work (interaction, cooperation and making friends)	129	27.8
2. Understanding and dealing with public problems	118	25.4
3. Collecting information and preparing portfolio	95	20.5
Part II: Features of project disliked most by students (N=464)	**Mentioned by:**	
	Number of Students	**Percent of Students**
1. Teamwork problems (e.g. conflict, unequal contributions)	79	17.0
2. Demands on time (especially having to miss classes)	77	16.6
3. Demands on effort	49	10.6

Three features of the project were mentioned as most disliked by more than 10 percent of students. They are teamwork problems, demands on time and demands on effort. These were mentioned by 79, 77 and 49 students, or by 17.0, 16.6 and 10.6 percent of students respectively. The teamwork problems mentioned have mainly to do with conflict with and among team members, arising mainly from differences of opinion and the inequitable sharing of work. The demands of the project on the time of students were such as to occasionally require students to miss their classes in school, and it is this feature that students frequently complained about. The third and final least liked feature or effect, namely the demands on student effort, presumably refers to the considerable burden that was imposed on students by the tasks of collecting information and preparing the portfolio.

The features of the project that are liked most, whether by teachers or students, would appear to have benefited the students in one way or another. This perception of project benefits is confirmed by students, as can be seen from Table 20. Almost three quarters, or a total of 73.1 percent of students – that is, those indicating a rank of 1 or 2 in the Table – clearly agree with the statement that the project has benefited them or their class. Those who remain "neutral" (rank of 3) constitute 15.5 percent of students, while those who clearly disagree with the statement (rank of 4 or 5) total only 9.5 percent of students.

Table 20: Student agreement on project benefits

Project has benefited students or their class	Student responses	
	Number	Percent
1 (Strongly agree)	216	46.6
2	123	26.5
3	72	15.5
4	21	4.5
5 (Strongly disagree)	23	5.0
No response	9	1.9
Total	464	100.0

It can reasonably be held that the features of the project that are disliked most by students are simply the unavoidable price of its perceived benefits. This is certainly the case with respect to the investments in time and effort required of students and is largely true of the "friction" involved in working with others in a group. This raises the question as to whether students regard the price as something worth paying for the benefits received. Their evaluation as to whether the project is worthwhile would seem to be of some importance in determining the viability of the project.

A summary answer to the above question can be obtained by asking students whether they are satisfied with their participation in the project and whether they would like to participate in the project if it were to be carried out again in future. Their responses to these two questions are presented in Table 21. Part I of the Table shows that 58 percent of students indicated positive satisfaction (rank of 1 and 2), compared to only 14.5 percent who indicated dissatisfaction (rank of 4 and 5), with their participation in the project. Part II of the Table reinforces this favorable evaluation of their experience by students. Two-thirds or 66.2 percent of students indicated a clear desire (rank of 1 and 2) to take part in the project in future, compared to 14.3 percent who indicated otherwise (rank of 4 and 5).

Table 21: Student satisfaction with project

Part I: Satisfaction/dissatisfaction with participation in project	Student responses	
	Number	Percent
1 (Very satisfied)	154	33.2
2	115	24.8
3	122	26.3
4	42	9.1
5	25	5.4
No response (Very dissatisfied)	6	1.3
Total	464	100.0

Part II: Desire to participate in project in future	Student responses	
	Number	Percent
1 (Would like very much)	224	48.3
2	83	17.9
3	82	17.7
4	43	9.3
5 (Not interested at all)	23	5.0
No response	9	1.9
Total	464	100.0

PART 5: CONCLUSION

This Part gathers together and discusses the conclusions for Parts 1 to 4.

(A) Part 1: The training course for teachers

The duration (four days) and contents of the training course for teachers, together with the detailed manual or guidebook provided them, seem sufficient for preparing teachers to conduct the project in their various schools. Teachers generally reported that the course has enhanced the knowledge and skills that they need for conducting the project with their students. More importantly, they reported a sufficiently high level of readiness to perform the various specific tasks that would be involved in carrying out the project with their students.

It is difficult to say to what extent the success of the training course depends on the specific contribution of the two experienced trainers from the Center for Civic Education. Nevertheless, it seems advisable to make use of the services of these or other experienced trainers, if available. At any rate, attention to the choice and preparation of trainers would help to ensure the effectiveness of the training course for teachers.

(B) Part 2: The implementation of the project

In general, the project was satisfactorily implemented in the various schools. A key factor is that the project was well enough received by all the parties concerned, namely heads of schools, teacher-managers and students. The reception of the project by students is especially important and encouraging. Teachers did not experience difficulty in getting students to participate in the project. And a majority of student described their participation in the project as active.

Implementation also proceeded largely according to the plan or design of the project. Students enjoyed a high degree of freedom in choosing the topic for study. Influence over portfolio preparation was more or less equally shared between students and teachers. However, this did not deter a majority of students from active involvement in the project's activity of gathering information and preparing the portfolio. Student use of the various sources of information was also quite high, except for government departments.

A quarter of the students reported facing problems in gathering information, with the two notable problems being lack of cooperation, mainly from government departments, and inadequate time. There seems little that can be done about the first problem, although more publicity for the project may help. The second problem may be addressed by slightly increasing the duration of the project. Most students did not complain about the present duration of two months, but more students would welcome a slight extension than oppose it.

(C) Part 3: Effect of the project on student participants

Student scores on all seven selected variables are generally moderate in both the pretest and posttest. The pretest-posttest differences on selected dependent variables are slight. The main hoped-for effect found is the significant increase in the variable of trust. This holds for students as a whole and in most cases when students are distinguished by gender, race and father's educational level. The only other significant increase found is in the understanding of public policy among Chinese students. Control groups are not used in all schools. However, even if the findings of significant effect hold with control groups, the effect of the project on the selected variables would still be fairly described as very limited.

The above should caution against expecting quick and big effects from a project such as this. Indeed, such an expectation would seem highly unreasonable. Attitudes and beliefs tend to be stable in the short term and to change only gradually and over a considerably longer of time than the duration of the project. Seen in this light, the paucity of detected effects after only a two-month "treatment" period is far from conclusive evidence that the project is incapable of producing any effect with respect to the selected variables.

A few teachers pointed out to the young age of the students involved as a possible reason for the meager effects. In their view, Form 2 or 14-year-old students in Malaysia are too young to readily appreciate their role in the public arena and to reap the full benefits of the project. These teachers suggested that the project be carried out on older students, such as 16-year-olds in Form 4.

(D) Part 4: Perception of the project by teachers and students

In contrast to the meager effects as measured by pretest-posttest differences on selected variables, a considerable number of both teachers and students pointed to certain positive aspects and significant benefits of the project. The perceived benefits include the personal development of students, enhancement of their social and research skills, and an increase in their social awareness and understanding of public problems. From the perspective of the objective of the project, these findings must be deemed encouraging: the most liked features of the project and their perceived benefits are surely essential requirements of active and effective citizenship.

Students also provided clear endorsement of the project after its completion. Most students believed that the project has benefited them or their class. Most of them also expressed satisfaction with their participation in the project and the desire to participate in the project in future.

(E) Overall

Notwithstanding the paucity, and hence remaining uncertainty, with respect to the effect of the project on the selected variables in Part 3, the favorable findings on the preparation of teachers in Part 1, the implementation of the project in Part 2 and the perception of the project by teachers and students in Part 4 would seem to augur well for the future of the project.

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