

# INTEGRATING MODERN LEARNING MANAGEMENT INTO THE APPLICATION OF BUDDHIST LEARNING IN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS.

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## Abstract

This academic article aims to study and synthesize concepts of modern academic learning management and the development of Buddhist learning to integrate and apply in educational management. The study utilizes relevant documents and academic works on modern learning theories, Buddhist educational concepts, and research on learning management in school contexts. The content covers modern academic learning management, the development of Buddhist learning, learning integration, approaches to integration in schools, and the application of technology in Buddhist studies education at the higher education level. The results show that modern academic disciplines, such as active learning, student-centered learning, and the use of digital technology, can enhance the effectiveness of Buddhist learning by strengthening in-depth learning, analytical thinking, and reflective thinking in students. Simultaneously, Buddhist learning, based on the Threefold Training (morality, concentration, and wisdom), is a crucial foundation for the holistic development of students in terms of intellect, morality, and mindful living. Therefore, integrating modern academic disciplines with Buddhist learning creates a balance between academic knowledge and spiritual development.

This article thus highlights the importance of integrating modern academic learning management with the development of Buddhist learning in higher education institutions to improve the quality of education, develop students' essential 21<sup>st</sup>-century competencies, and cultivate morality, ethics, and civic responsibility, leading to sustainable human and social development in the Thai context.

**Keywords:** Buddhist education, Buddhist learning method, Educational institutions, Learning integration, Modern learning management

## Introduction

The changes in global society in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, under the influence of globalization, advances in digital technology, and the complexity of social, economic, and cultural problems, necessitate a shift in the educational system's concepts and learning methods. This involves moving away from solely knowledge transmission to the holistic development of learners in terms of knowledge, skills, and morality (Office of the Secretariat of the Council of Education, 2018: 1-3) Modern learning therefore plays a crucial role in promoting 21<sup>st</sup>-century skills such as critical thinking, problem-solving, collaboration, communication, and responsible use of technology (Titsana Khammanee, 2017: 23) However, a focus solely on academic and technological skills may neglect the moral, ethical, and spiritual development dimensions—fundamentals for peaceful co-existence in Thai society, where Buddhism forms the cultural and spiritual foundation. Applying Buddhist learning principles to the education system thus helps create a balance between material and spiritual development.

Buddhist learning is a process of human development based on the Threefold Training (Tri-sikha): morality, concentration, and wisdom. It focuses on developing appropriate behavior, training the mind to be mindful and focused, and using wisdom to live correctly (Phra Brahmaganabhorn (P.O. Payutto), 2016) This concept aligns with holistic learning, which aims to develop individuals holistically – physically, mentally, socially, and intellectually. Therefore, Buddhist-based learning is not limited to the teaching of Buddhist studies but can be integrated with modern sciences and various subjects appropriately. Integrating modern sciences with Buddhist learning in educational institutions is a crucial approach that connects academic knowledge with ethical values. This is achieved through student-centered learning methods such as active learning, project-based learning, and the use of educational technology, together with the cultivation of mindfulness, self-reflection, and learning from real-world experiences. (Phra Thep Wethi, 2011: 45-52) This approach not only helps to improve the learning efficiency of students but also promotes the development of desirable characteristics in line with the long-term goals of Thai education. Therefore, studying the integration of modern sciences into the application of Buddhist learning in educational institutions is extremely important, both academically and practically, to provide a conceptual framework and guidelines for developing teaching and learning that is consistent with the contemporary social context while sustainably preserving the core values of Buddhism.

## Managing modern academic learning in the 21<sup>st</sup> century

Modern science learning management is an educational concept and process that focuses on developing well-rounded learners in line with the changing context of 21<sup>st</sup>-century society. It shifts the role from teacher-centered teaching to learner-centered learning, encouraging learners to participate in constructing knowledge themselves through experience,

hands-on practice, and active learning (Titsana Khammanee 2023:17) This concept helps learners develop knowledge, critical thinking skills, and desirable attributes in a balanced manner.

Modern learning management emphasizes contemporary learning theories such as constructivist thinking, which believes that learning occurs when learners construct meaning from their own experiences, with teachers acting as facilitators and designing challenging and meaningful learning activities. This approach fosters analytical thinking, problem-solving, and lifelong learning key competencies for learners in the present era. Furthermore, modern learning management highlights diverse learning styles, including active learning, project-based learning, problem-based learning, and interdisciplinary learning. These approaches provide opportunities for learners to develop collaboration, communication, and social responsibility skills (Office of the Secretariat of the Council of Education, 2018) These learning styles align with the 21<sup>st</sup>-century skills development goals, which aim to cultivate responsible citizens capable of adapting effectively to change.

In the context of Thai education management, modern science learning management is also used as a key mechanism for reforming teaching and learning to align with the policy of developing student quality, emphasizing the integration of academic knowledge with the development of morality, ethics, and life skills (Office of the National Education Standards and Quality Assessment (Public Organization, 2020) This concept is conducive to application in conjunction with Buddhist learning, which emphasizes the holistic development of human beings in terms of intellect, mind, and behavior. Therefore, modern science learning management is not merely a change in teaching methods or learning techniques, but a new paradigm in education that aims to create learners who possess knowledge coupled with morality, have the wisdom to live their lives, and can apply their knowledge to develop themselves and society sustainably. This is a crucial foundation for effective integration with Buddhist learning in educational institutions.

### **Developing Buddhist learning according to Buddhist principles.**

Buddhist-based learning is an approach to education that uses Buddhist teachings as a foundation for holistic human development. It focuses on nurturing learners to acquire knowledge in intellect, morality, ethics, and mindful living. The Buddhist learning concept is not limited to teaching religious content; it is a learning process that emphasizes the application of Buddhist principles in real life, enabling learners to develop themselves and live peacefully and sustainably with others in society. The core of Buddhist learning lies in the Threefold Training (Tri-sikha): morality, concentration, and wisdom. This framework provides a systematic and balanced framework for human development. Morality is the foundation for developing appropriate behavior, discipline, responsibility, and respect for social norms. Concentration is the process of training the mind to develop mindfulness, focus, and the

ability to concentrate on learning. Wisdom is the outcome of learning, leading to understanding truth, analytical thinking, and rational decision-making. Therefore, education based on the Threefold Training helps learners develop profound knowledge both externally and internally. (Phra Brahmaganabhorn (P.O. Payutto), 2016: 21–26)

The development of Buddhist-based learning is also related to the concept of Buddhist education, which emphasizes learning from direct experience, practice, and self-reflection to enable learners to gain true understanding, not just memorization of knowledge (Phra Thepveti, 2011: 58-65) This concept aligns with the principles of lifelong learning and the development of inner wisdom, which helps learners apply Buddhist principles to solve daily life problems and develop the correct attitude towards learning and life within the educational context. The development of Buddhist-based learning can be implemented in various forms, such as teaching Buddhist studies courses, organizing extracurricular activities, conducting morality and ethics camps, and integrating Buddhist principles into various subjects to promote value-based learning. Creating a learning environment conducive to mindfulness, compassion, and mutual respect is a crucial factor in achieving tangible results in Buddhist-based learning. Furthermore, the development of Buddhist-based learning plays a significant role in promoting the development of desirable characteristics in learners, such as discipline, honesty, responsibility, and civic responsibility. These are fundamental values essential for coexistence in democratic and multicultural societies. Therefore, learning the Buddhist way of life is not merely a religious tool, but an educational process that helps build mental and moral resilience in learners amidst the changes of contemporary society (National Office of Buddhism, 2019)

In summary, developing Buddhist-based learning is a crucial process for enhancing the quality of education by focusing on holistic human development in terms of knowledge, mind, and behavior. Applying Buddhist learning concepts in educational institutions, especially when integrated with modern learning methods, will enhance meaningful, profound learning that aligns with the goals of sustainable human development in Thai society.

### **Managing the learning of modern Buddhist studies in educational institutions.**

The teaching of modern Buddhist studies in educational institutions is a process of designing and implementing learning that systematically integrates contemporary educational principles with Buddhist teachings. The primary goal is to develop learners' in-depth understanding of knowledge, comprehension, morality, and the application of Buddhist principles in daily life. This approach does not focus solely on the transmission of religious content, but rather emphasizes learning processes that promote critical thinking, analysis, and intellectual reflection, such as student-centered learning and active learning. Experiential learning aligns with the Buddhist educational concept of cultivating wisdom through practice and self-reflection. Applying this concept to Buddhist education shifts the teacher's role from knowledge transmitter to learning

facilitator, providing opportunities for active student participation. Furthermore, it should be based on the Threefold Training (Tri-sikha): morality, concentration, and wisdom. This serves as the foundation for designing learning activities that encompass behavioral, mental, and intellectual dimensions. Examples include activities that promote discipline and ethics (morality), mindfulness and concentration through meditation or self-reflection (concentration), and analytical and reasoning based on Buddhist principles (wisdom) (Phra Brahmaganabhorn (P.O. Payutto), 2016: 401-510) This approach to learning helps students develop in a balanced and sustainable manner.

In the educational context, the teaching of modern Buddhist studies can be implemented both as a dedicated subject and through interdisciplinary integration, linking Buddhist principles to the learning content of other subjects, as well as student development activities and extracurricular activities. This aims to create a learning environment conducive to cultivating morality, ethics, and peaceful co-existence in society. This approach ensures that the learning of Buddhism is not separated from the students' real lives. Furthermore, the teaching of modern Buddhist studies can incorporate educational technology to support the learning process, such as the use of digital media, learning management systems, and online platforms, to increase flexibility and diversity in learning. However, the use of technology should be designed to align with the Buddhist goal of developing the mind and intellect, rather than focusing solely on convenience or the modernity of the tools (Office of the Secretariat of the Council of Education, 2019:18).

In summary, integrating modern Buddhist studies into educational institutions is a crucial process that enhances the learning of Buddhism, making it more contemporary, meaningful, and responsive to the needs of 21<sup>st</sup>-century learners. Appropriately integrating modern knowledge with Buddhist principles will foster learners who possess wisdom, morality, and the ability to live balanced lives in contemporary society.

## **Guidelines for integrating the learning of modern Buddhist studies in educational institutions.**

Integrating modern Buddhist studies into educational institutions is a learning management approach that aims to systematically combine contemporary educational knowledge with Buddhist teachings. The goal is to develop meaningful learning in students across intellectual, moral, and life skills. This approach addresses the challenges of 21<sup>st</sup> century education, which seeks to cultivate students with critical thinking skills, lifelong learning, and ethical values. It comprises four key approaches:

The first key approach is to design learner-centered learning using the Threefold Training (Tri-sikha) as a framework to guide the learning process. Teachers can use morality (Sila) as the foundation for creating discipline and a supportive learning environment; concentration (Samadhi) as a tool for developing mindfulness, focus, and readiness to learn; and wisdom (Panna) as the goal of activities that promote analytical thinking, reflection, and the synthesis of knowledge.

Integrating these concepts with active learning and project-based learning will help learners achieve balanced external and internal learning.

The second approach involves integrating Buddhist principles into the content and learning activities of various subjects, not limited to Buddhist studies. It connects Buddhist values such as mindfulness, compassion, responsibility, and non-violence with modern knowledge and real-world social issues. This approach helps students see the relationship between academic knowledge and daily life, and enables them to apply Buddhist principles appropriately in decision-making and problem-solving.

The third approach is to utilize modern learning models that align with Buddhist learning development, such as problem-based learning, project-based learning, and reflective learning. These methods provide opportunities for learners to practice rational thinking, collaboration, and contemplation of the consequences of their actions based on Buddhist principles of cause and effect. Such approaches enhance in-depth learning and the development of learners' inner wisdom.

The fourth approach is to create a learning environment and culture in educational institutions that is conducive to learning Buddhist principles. This should emphasize activities that promote mindfulness, compassion, and peaceful co-existence, such as mindfulness practice in the classroom, volunteer activities, and learning through community service. Integrating modern academic knowledge with Buddhist values in practice, creating a Buddhist-based learning culture within the organization will help shape learners to develop both academic and moral values sustainably (Phra Thep Weti, 2011:72)

In summary, integrating modern Buddhist studies into educational institutions is a crucial process for developing balanced and responsive learning in the contemporary social context. It harmoniously connects educational knowledge with Buddhist values. This approach not only enhances the quality of student learning but also serves as a vital foundation for developing individuals with wisdom, morality, and the ability to live meaningful lives in modern society.

## **The application of technology in the teaching of Buddhism in higher educational institutions.**

Developing teaching and learning in higher education institutions in the digital age requires the application of educational technology to enhance efficiency and expand learning opportunities for students, especially in the teaching of Buddhism, which has unique characteristics that emphasize content learning, intellectual reflection, and mental development. Therefore, the application of technology must consider its alignment with the goals of Buddhist learning while appropriately utilizing digital tools (Office of the Secretariat of the Council of Education, 2019)

The application of technology in Buddhist education at the higher education level can be implemented in various forms. For example, using learning management systems to support blended learning and online learning allows students flexible and continuous access to Buddhist

content, teachings, the Tripitaka, and various learning materials (Ministry of Higher Education, Science, Research and Innovation, 2020) This approach facilitates self-directed learning and lifelong learning, aligning with the Buddhist educational principles that emphasize the pursuit of knowledge and continuous intellectual development. Furthermore, digital technology can be used as a tool to promote in-depth learning and reflection, such as using multimedia, videos, infographics, and interactive media to explain Buddhist principles, philosophical concepts, and the historical context of Buddhism in a more easily understandable and engaging way (Titsana Khammanee, 2017:140) This type of technology use overcomes the limitations of lecture-based learning and provides opportunities for students to participate in knowledge construction through discussion and reasoned exchange of ideas. The application of technology in Buddhist education can also be linked to active learning and experiential learning, such as using online platforms for Dharma discussions, self-reflection through online journals (e-Reflection), and learning from real-world problems in contemporary society. By using Buddhist principles as a framework for analyzing and solving problems, this approach helps learners connect Buddhist teachings to real life and develop critical thinking skills alongside spiritual development. However, the application of technology in Buddhist studies at the higher education level should consider the balance between technology use and mindfulness practice and inner learning. Since Buddhist learning emphasizes mindfulness, self-awareness, and deep reflection, learning design should use technology as a supporting tool, not as an independent goal. Therefore, teachers play a crucial role in guiding and designing learning activities that use technology appropriately, in line with the goals of intellectual and moral development in learners.

In summary, the application of technology in the teaching of Buddhism in higher education institutions is a crucial approach to enhancing the quality of learning in line with the changes in the digital society. It seamlessly integrates modern technological disciplines with the learning of Buddhist principles. If designed and used appropriately, technology can be a vital tool for promoting in-depth learning, intellectual development, and the sustainable cultivation of ethical values among university students.

## Summary of results

Integrating modern disciplines with Buddhist learning has the potential to enhance the quality of education in line with the contemporary social context, without abandoning the core essence and fundamental values of Buddhism. Three key findings emerge: Firstly, modern disciplines in education, active learning, student-centered learning, and the use of digital technology can support Buddhist learning processes, fostering deeper understanding and systematic intellectual development. Secondly, Buddhist learning is characterized by its focus on holistic development of learners in terms of knowledge, skills, morality, and consciousness. Integrating modern disciplines enhances the diversity of this learning process, making it more relevant to the learning styles of learners in the digital age. Learners can participate more actively

through analytical thinking, reflection, and experiential learning, aligning with the Threefold Training: morality, concentration, and wisdom. Thirdly, the application of technology in Buddhist learning, particularly in higher education institutions, expands access to Buddhist knowledge and promotes lifelong learning. However, technology should be used as a supporting tool, not as the primary goal, to preserve the essence of mindfulness, contemplation, and inner learning the core of Buddhist learning. This highlights the importance of integration. The study found that integrating modern academic disciplines into Buddhist-based learning in educational institutions plays a crucial role in developing students' essential 21<sup>st</sup> century competencies, alongside instilling morality, ethics, and civic responsibility. This approach to learning helps create a balance between academic progress and spiritual development, a key objective of Buddhist education.

Furthermore, this integration is significant in terms of policy and educational development because it provides an approach that can be applied in curriculum design, teacher development, and learning activities that align with the context of Thai society, which has Buddhism as its cultural and spiritual foundation. Promoting Buddhist learning through modern sciences thus preserves religious values while preparing learners for the changes of the modern world sustainably. In short, integrating modern sciences with Buddhist learning in educational institutions is not merely a combination of learning tools or methods, but rather an educational development process aimed at shaping learners to be worldly-aware, possess wisdom for life, and have morality as a foundation for living in society, leading to balanced and sustainable human and societal development.

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