

MAKING MEANING OF EXPERIENCE THROUGH SERVICE LEARNING SUNDAY  
SCHOOL GPdI IN NGANJUK

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**ABSTRACT**

An ounce of experience is worth than a ton of theory simply because it is only in experience that any theory has vital, values and verifiable significance. An experience in a real project for interior designer is capable to generate and carry any amount of theory (intellectual interior design content). Experience becomes educative when critical reflective thought creates new meaning, values and leads to growth and the ability to take informed actions in site. "Service-learning is a process through which students are involved in community work that contributes significantly: to positive change in individuals, organizations, neighborhoods and / or larger systems in a community; and to students' academic understanding, civic development, personal or career growth, and / or understanding of larger social issues." (Minnesota Campus Compact, 1999). Project management in Interior Design Petra Christian University try to combine service learning method into the real project in its subject to make meaning of experience in a real sunday school renovation project at Nganjuk. Students can learn how to run a real projects well (scope of the work, time and budget), in touch closely with community, and new values of life which they can't get in an ordinary subject.

In this article we present the story in making meaning of experience, the advantages of using service learning method in project management study subject, which are the best practices used in project management of Interior Design Petra Christian University Surabaya. The author presents findings from experiences and hopes this findings will serve as a new model for interior design educators by using service learning method in a real project.

Keywords : Sunday school interior design, service learning, project management, Nganjuk

**INTRODUCTION**

Project management in Interior Design Petra Christian University is a subject that teaches the students to handle a real project that uses project management theory. Nowadays, many academic lecturers are primarily interested in interior design projects as examples of temporary organizations, rather than in questions about building a discipline for the delivery of goals. Indeed, they may well be skeptical about the ability to define the kind of normative or prescriptive nature of the knowledge that would be required for such a discipline, or the value of such guidance should it be available.

Service learning method is defined as a "course-based", credit-bearing educational experience in which students can participate in an organized service activity that meets identified community needs and reflect on the service activity in such a way as to gain further understanding of course content, a broader appreciation of the discipline, and an enhanced sense of civic responsibility. In this subject, I try to combine project management subject with service learning method for making meaning of experience in the student's learning. Having spent many years in the 'real' world of delivering interior design projects, I believe that there does need to be, and that there is, a discipline for managing projects; and further, that this discipline needs to be enlarged from how many perceive it today. Doing this will not be easy, but the result will be an enormously more useful and relevant body of knowledge.

A project in interior design is always new, unique and temporary set of activities, with a defined beginning and end, which uses resources in a planned and organized way with the purpose of reaching certain objectives. The temporary nature of projects stands in contrast with repetitive or permanent activities. The characteristics of a project require a specific type of management activities. Project management is accomplished through the application and integration of the project management processes of initiating, planning, executing, monitoring and controlling.[4]. The students will implement project management body of knowledge phases such as initiating, planning, executing, monitoring and controlling system into a real project in Nganjuk. Project management is recognized to be the key enabler of business change and a vital contributor to future business success [5]. That's why the students need to learn and practice in academic area first before they work as a professional in the future. Project management has evolved over time to a sophisticated and complex process, becoming the principal mean of dealing with change in modern organizations. As projects developed and knowledge was gained in this field, standards have occurred. Organizations and project management associations all over the world started to develop and follow these standards in order to optimize the project management activity.

In class, students get project management in theory and practice and the roles and responsibilities of the project manager. This subject, offers a practical approach to managing projects, focusing on organizing, planning, and controlling the efforts of the interior design project. Students participate in a real interior design projects where project plans are real designed and implemented. At the end of the class, students will understand why project management requires

a high degree of professionalism in interior design project, and how to achieve a big success that end in their future interior design projects.

Moreover, through this subject in interior design, Petra Christian University with its LIGHT value and “Caring & Global University” motto are also shows its commitment to serve others, preparing young people for leadership and service to improve Christian values in the community we are serving.

## **OBJECTIVES**

This subject is organized to develop a global perspective and approach to thinking and problem solving, viewing design with awareness and respect for the community issues through a Service Learning project with a ‘real’ client (community partner) and design project.

Intensive research will be done to aid students to develop the design and manage interior design real project. Students will focus on an interior design project management process that includes site and user exploration, research, development of a concept statement, space-planning, interior design elements, project initiating, planning, executing, organizing, directing and controlling. Students will learn to develop a project by considering community. Group research and schematic design will be focused. From this service learning experience in project management subject:

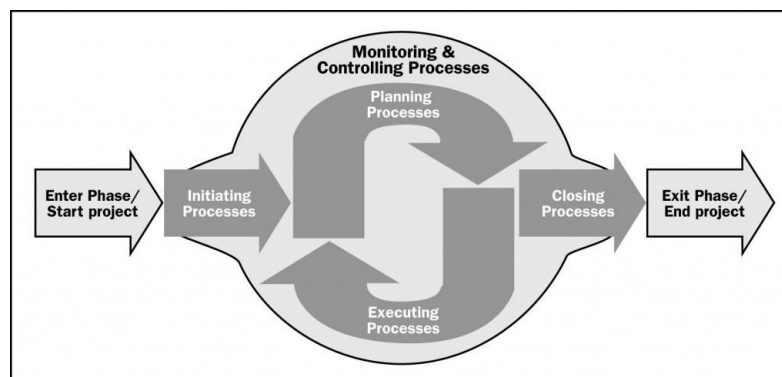
- Students will gain experience in research and applying research to the design. Emphasis will be given to understanding of community / social issues and interpretation in design.
- Students will develop solutions that respond to community / civic requirements.
- Students will gain experiences of meeting with community partners.
- Students will expand their knowledge of design concepts by reading and studying precedents.
- Students will provide proper space allocation for required tasks and functions.
- Students will gain experience in developing real design project through in site practice.
- Students will understand appropriate selection and use of materials.
- Students will demonstrate skills in oral presentation to both in class and to the public (community).
- Students will explore presentation techniques, using both hand and digital drawing techniques. Skillful, creative, professional presentations are expected.

- Students will gain experience in a real design process by using their interior design project management knowledge.

## SERVICE LEARNING PROCESS

Education in nowadays world, adjusting to the conversed times which require people to care for one another. Service learning is one of a teaching methodology that incorporates community service opportunities into academic curriculum as a way of improving students learning outcomes and promoting civic engagement. Moreover, an awareness of social sense can be built by education. In this class, for service learning process, we split a class of 120 students into ten big groups and that groups divided again into two small groups for a location. A small group will handle the furniture design and the other small group will handle the flooring, ceiling and wall design. There are 5 locations for this project. They are at Bra'an, Sentanan, Tembarak, Merjoyo and Pandan Asri. Each location consist of two small group.

Firstly, students meet up with clients at the site of Sunday school location and conduct field survey and exploration. In this term, students collects data for the design requirements, activities, problems that happens in site. Some of information obtained by interviewed to Sunday school's teachers or priest such as how many students there, existing location's problem and needs. They are also looking for colors that the students of each location like most, types of furniture they required, kind of activity and process during the Sunday school event took place. That phase we do as a preliminary step for data gathering and fulfillment process for interior design renovation. This phase in project management called initiating phase. We can see the initiating process in whole project management process group below.



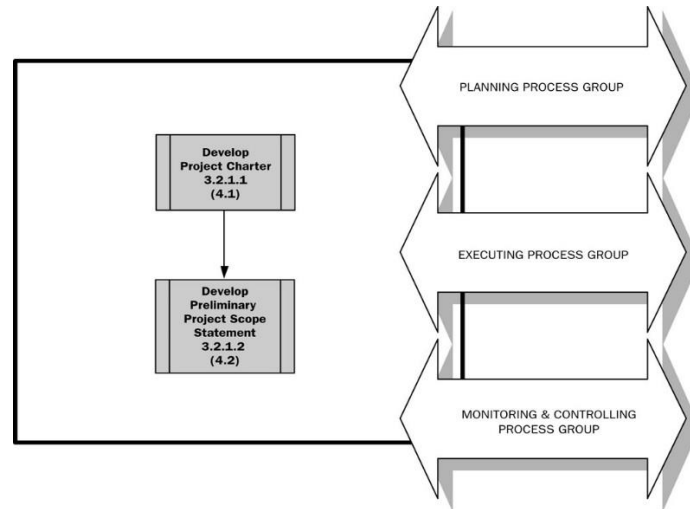


Figure.1 Initiating process in project management process group



Figure.2 Students initiating process

This initiating process group includes the interior design project management such as develop project charter and preliminary project scope statement. In developing project charter, students concerned with authorizing the project or, in a multiphase project, a project phase. It is the process used to validate or refine the decisions made during the previous develop project charter process. In developing preliminary project scope statement, students address and documents the project and deliverable requirements, furniture product requirements, boundaries of the project, method of acceptance and high level scope control. This process validates or refines the project scope for each phase [4]. The students use tools and techniques for making best outputs from below figure.3 and figure.4.

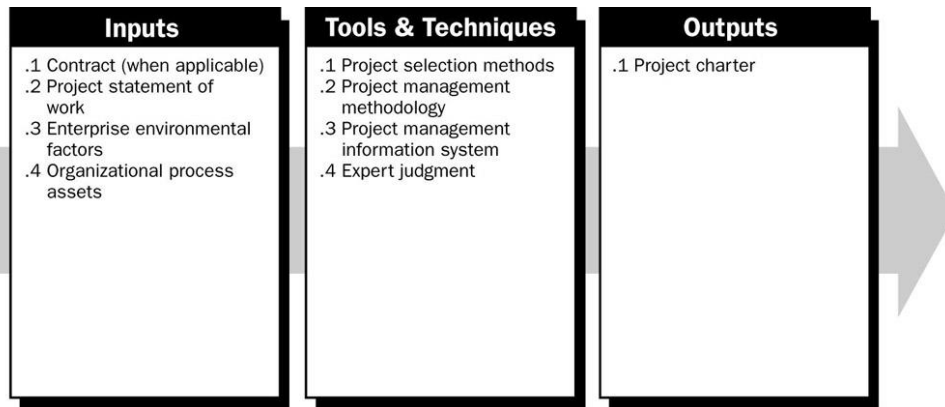


Figure.3 Develop project charter : Inputs and Outputs

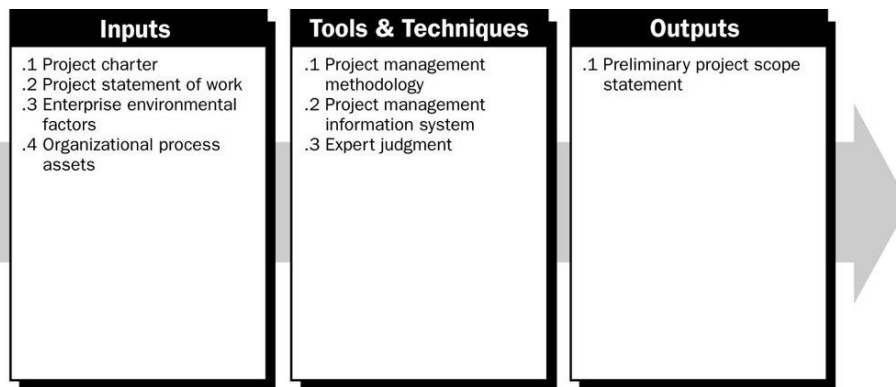


Figure.4 Develop Preliminary Project Scope: Inputs and Outputs

In this phase, the project team should consider the project in its cultural, social, international, political and physical environmental contexts. In cultural and social environment, the team needs to understand how the project affects people and how people affect the project. This requires an understanding of aspects of the economic, demographic, educational, ethical, ethnic, religious and characteristic of the people whom the students meet and affect the project. Each project leader group or project manager of students should examine the organizational culture, determine project needs and process in every step they conduct. Moreover, the team members should be knowledgeable about the local ecology and physical geography that could affect the project or be affected by the project.

Second phase, students will make a discussion group to discuss to solve problems and make a planning. Students develop solutions that respond to community / civic requirements. In this phase, students also make each division tasks and project implementation scheduling. After they

make a planning in tasks and scheduling, they make a contract and consult it with each group supervisor. The last planning phase is closed by each group has to present their interior design planning, working drawings, and contract signing with the stakeholder for each church for anything we will execute in site. This is the planning phase of project management. From this phase, they gain experience in research and applying research to the design. Emphasis learned to understanding of each location community / social issues and interpretation in design. Such as at GPdI Bra'an furniture, the teams tried to design and plan a furniture, using a particular measurement that can be used as a seat for adults and can be change to be a table when they used by children. So, the furniture will be adequate for adults and children. With some specific folding construction, the module of the multifunctional furniture system can be opened and closed by the user's hand, and it will be easy to use for children also. This is one of the solution they developed to respond community needs and requirements.

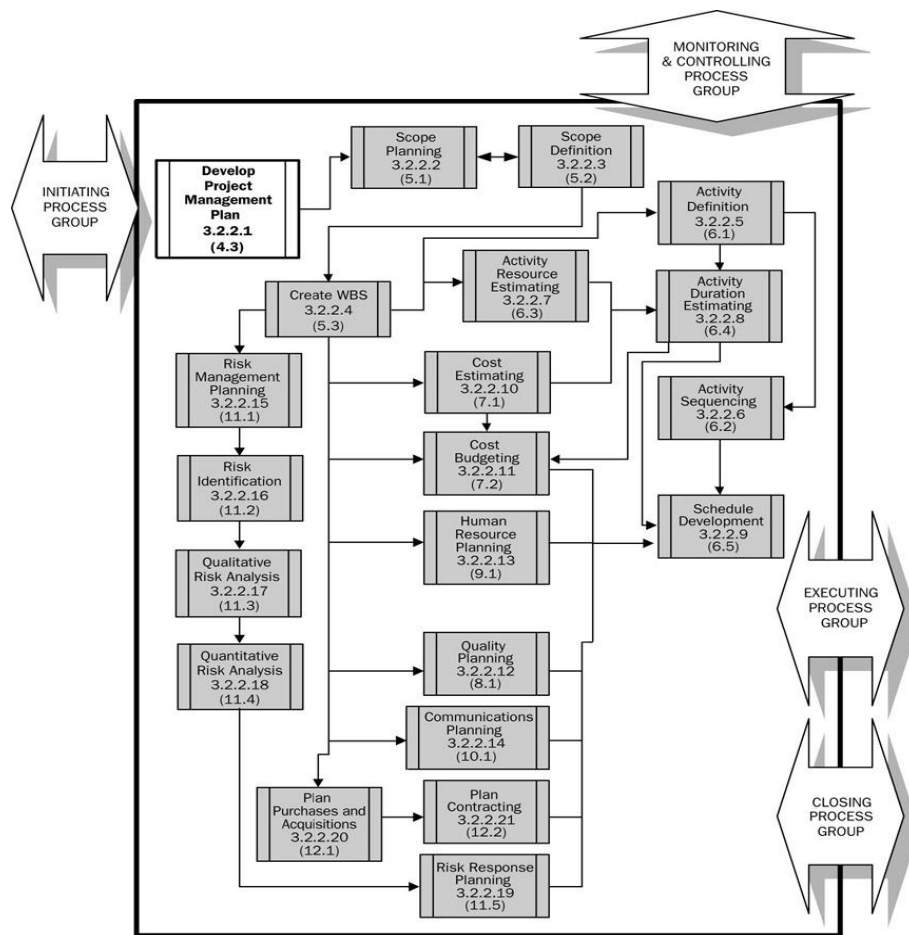


Figure.5 Planning Process Group



Figure.6 Students Planning Process (to choose material and color)

The Planning process group facilitates project planning across multiple processes [4]. The following list identifies the processes in each church the project team should address during the planning process to decide if they need to be done, and if so, by whom.

Historically, in the 1950s project management was first recognized as a separate management method, different from other management methods employed in government or corporate business [6]. Nowadays, project management has reached a global level, the methods of project management evolving in guidelines and international standards, generally accepted and employed. The attributes for global standards are: relevant, useful, acceptable, applicable, meaningful, used and valued, according to The Global Working Group [6]. So each project specification planning as a result of planning process group in the contract and drawings must be relevant, useful, acceptable, and applicable for execution phase. Students in this phase develop project management plan, scope planning and definition, create WBS, activity definition, sequencing, resource estimating and duration, schedule development, cost estimating and budgeting, risk response planning, plan purchase & acquisitions and plan contracting.

Third phase, is the executing phase. In this phase, students make a renovation and new furniture to fulfill each Sunday school needs and to solve their problems. Almost all of the church is an old building that was built using simple tools and man-made. So, it has a very simple construction and condition, no facilities found to support Sunday school activities. Each group executes all their plan from the second phase, which is written in their contract with the church. Almost all of the church's Sunday school has a small space and multifunction space for adult Sunday service also. Some of them also used as a living room function whether it isn't used for



church services. Therefore students make a creative design by make it knock down furniture or folding furniture. These offers more efficient in terms of size and storage. Most of them for shape and color, designed by the image in the bible. This phase needs 1 month processing time for furniture, ceiling, flooring and wall.

The executing process consists of the processes used to complete the work defined in the project management plan to accomplish the project’s requirements. The students in each project team should determine which of the processes are required for the team’s specific Sunday school project. This process group involves coordinating people (church congregation, carpenter and students team) and resources, as well as integrating and performing activities of the project in accordance with the project management plan. The whole process of executing that has been done by the students shown in figure.7 below.

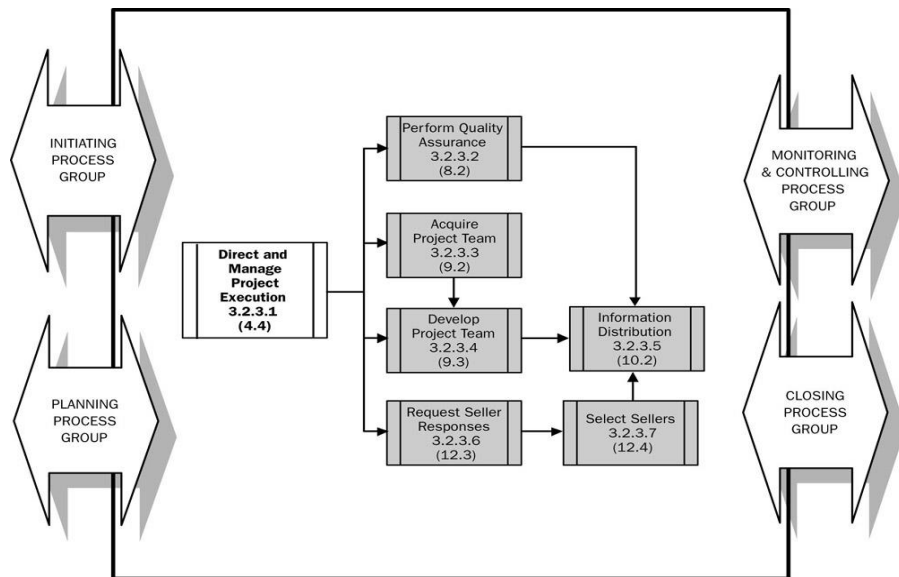


Figure.7 Executing process group



Figure.8 Students Executing Process

In the executing process, students work together with the priest of the church, Sunday school teachers, congregation and craftpeople. They learn from each other and explaining the overall project to the congregation, Sunday school teachers and craftpeople. The explanation serves two functions. First, it helps them understand how they fit into the total process. Second, it gives them a sense of pride – they understand what they are working on and that you respect them enough to make them a part of this outstanding project [1].

During the installation, the students make sure they work well together, and understand the exact process per phase required for them to do their jobs, and program exactly how they are to coordinate.

Normal execution variances will cause some quick re-planning on site. These variances can include activity durations, resource productivity and availability and unanticipated risks [4]. In variances, students require an analysis, which can trigger a change request that, if approved by church priest and congregation, would modify the project management plan and possibly require establishing a new baseline. Tutor in each group play their role in this execution to make a discussion group and give some advises to students for every modification or problems they face. We can see the execution process result from below pictures.

The students make improvement in walls, floors, ceilings and furnitures by using their interior design knowledge. This improvement made based by each church and suday school' problems, needs and activities.



Figure.9 Executing Result

The person who in charge in installation supervision supervised the complete installation, colors and its composition. They also review the design concept in the initial stages to determine any area in which the project might be adjusted to save more money or to make the installation go smoother and easier to do. Whoever supervise the installation, takes care of getting what is needed so nothing stops the working process from continuing their job.

Fourth phase, monitoring and controlling walk along together as the executing process begin and end to reach the time, budget and scope that are planned. The monitoring and controlling process consists of those processes performed to observe project execution so that potential problems can be identified in a timely manner and corrective action can be taken, when necessary, to control the execution of the project [4]. Each leader of time group controlled the scheduling plan and the execution process and managed it. They must finished the project on time. They observed and measured project performance regularly to identify variances from the project management plan. They are also includes in controlling changes and recommending preventive action in anticipation of possible problems. The students monitoring and controlling the process once a week in every weekend (Saturday).

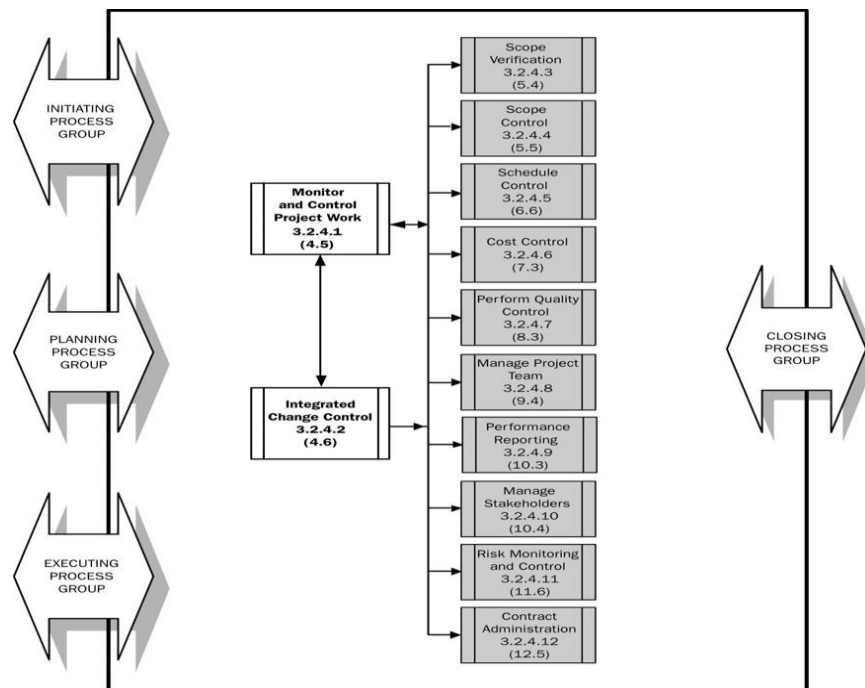


Figure.10 Monitoring and controlling process group

The person in charge for monitoring and controlling process never leave a job site until it presents the very best effect it can for this stage of the project. If they have not yet completed the project when they leave for the day, they must be sure the area is thoroughly vacuumed, moped and cleaned.

Last phase in this service learning process is the closing process. In this phase, we hand off and deliver to stakeholder the completed interior design project. The closing out process includes the following project management: close project and contract closure. Close project is the process necessary to finalize all activities across all of the process phases to formally close the project. Contract Closure is the process for completing and settling each contract, including the resolution of any open items, and closing each contract applicable to the project.

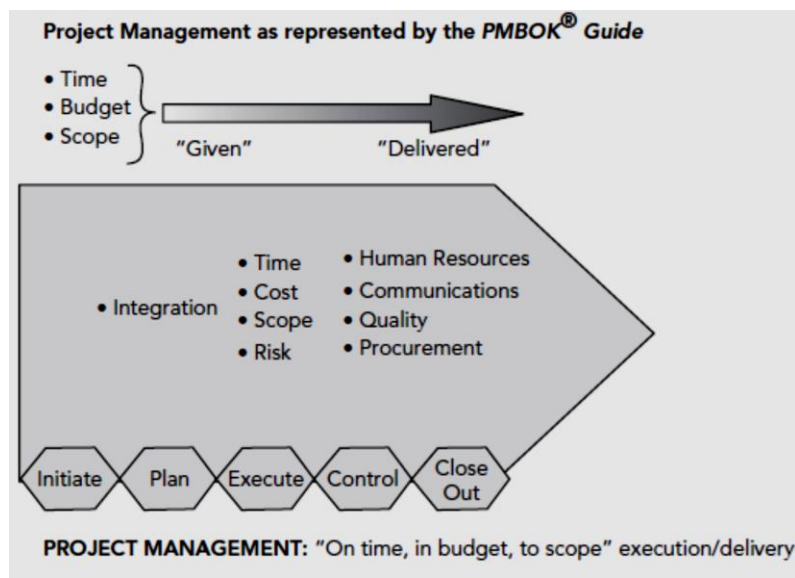


Figure.11 Project management as represented by the PMBOK Guide

Those last phase (close out) closed by making a handover ceremony and signing a newsworthy event. Each students' group make a Sunday school Christmas celebration in each location at the same day. They hand off the project to the priest, congregation, Sunday school teachers and Sunday school children. In this phase, students gives them Sunday service, many games and gave some present to the winner of the games, prayers and good bye ceremony.



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Figure.12 Students Closing Out Process

Service learning is a teaching and learning approach that integrates community service with academic studies to enrich learning, teach civic responsibility and strengthen communities. It engages students in addressing real unmet needs or issues in a community and actively involves them in a decision-making at all levels of the process [3]. In this interior design service learning subject, we are integrating community service in five location of GPDI Sunday school at Nganjuk

with academic studies of project management to enrich learning, teach our class responsibility and strengthen community in Nganjuk village. The students learn from the priest, congregation and craft-people about life values and some finishing techniques, so do they (the priest, congregation and craft-people) learn interior design knowledge and Petra' LIGHT' values from the students. The last one, students serves the children the Sunday service. Among the many benefits that service-learning practitioners across the country identify, the students get many useful interior design real project experiences that enhance their cognitive development-their intellectual capacities. All theories they get in class, they try to practice it in the real project they face. Learning project management theory help them to finish all the project on time, in budget and scope they planned. At the end of Sunday service, the priest, congregation, Sunday school teachers and children say good bye to our students and shed tears for farewell.

### **Model of Service Learning**

This interior design project in project management subject use an experiential learning model for developing and implementing service learning research process. In this moment, we try to use Kolb's learning model. The adult learning specialist, David Kolb [2], has described the learning process as a four-phase cycle in which the learner: (1) does something concrete or has a specific experience that provides a basis for (2) the learner's observation and reflection on the experience and his or her own response to it. These observations are then (3) assimilated into a conceptual framework or related to other concepts in the learner's past experience and knowledge from which implications for action can be derived; and (4) tested and applied in different situations. There is dialectic between the external process of active experimentation and the internalized reflective observation. This transformation of information is the key to creating interior design knowledge and is crucial to understanding that learning is an active process. We can see the Kolb's learning cycle model from figure.13 below.

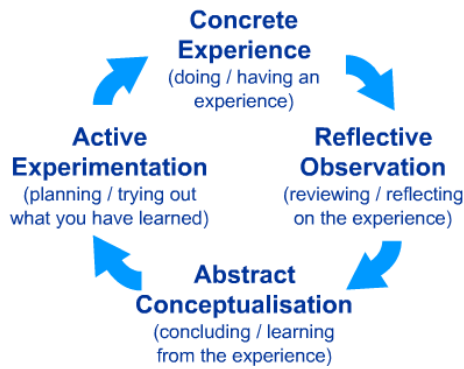


Figure.13 Kolb's Learning Cycle Model

In Nganjuk projects, student active experimentation created concrete experience in interior design knowledge and their reflective observation seen in their reflection transform experience into new and usable understanding. So, they learning a lot from their experience in service learning project management subject this time. Their service for each Sunday school church experience reflects a real comfortable life (which they never feel before in their life), a relationships between their service and field study, a relationship between friends, a relationship between community and them, skills to build and making a renovation in interior design. So they gain new perspective, understanding, skills and values of life. Experiences they gained can be seen from their final reports and reflections. Theory and research they made indicate that service-learning nurture students' intellectual development, academic knowledge, and their problem solving skills.

## RESULT

Experience level contributes to successful service-learning in many ways. From the students' reflections, this service learning method is making meaning of experience for students in project management subject. They're not only experiencing project management skills, communication skills, and interior design skills, but also management skills, life skills, and sharing LIGHT values of Petra Christian University. This subject integrates community service with academic study to enrich learning, teach civic responsibility and strengthen communities in all churches of GPdI, Nganjuk.

This is a direct service, engaging face-to-face with individuals who are in need and assisting them to do something they not be able to do in their interior design renovation. Indicators

of outcome expectations in knowledge, comprehension and application can be assessed by seeing the realization and final report which on time, on budget and on scope of planning. Indicators of service expectations for competence and caring can be seen by their attendance, punctuality (arriving on time for service and delivery), and interior design working quality. Stakeholder satisfaction (church' priest and congregation) also our indicators of project success and indicator of personal growth in problem solving. Through this service learning on five location of GPdI Nganjuk, students making a lot of meaning of experience.

## **SUGGESTION**

For the next project, we need to try to join project with other department or knowledge or university. So, the experience they gained will be wider and students can gain more experience in other study field. This will enable us to develop more nuanced understandings of the experiences students have and the meanings they ascribe to their service-learning activities too.

After the installation is complete, we need to evaluate our performance whether their expectations have been met or not. We need to do a post-occupancy evaluation after the job is completed – usually at three months, six months and a year [1]. So, we can fix it at the next service learning program in the same subject of project management.

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