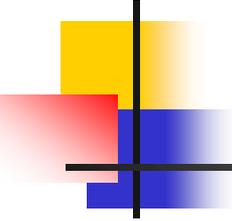


DEVELOPING 21ST CENTURY SKILLS OF VIETNAMESE STUDENTS THROUGH THE “GREEN SUMMER” MOVEMENT

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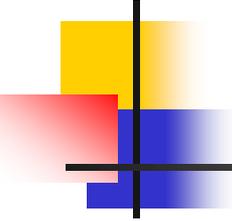
Introduction

The paper presents a number of definitions on 21st century skills emerged recently before introducing the Green Summer movement in Vietnamese universities, its activities for nurturing 21st century skills in students and why it attracts so many students in Vietnam, and recommendations for improving the movement.



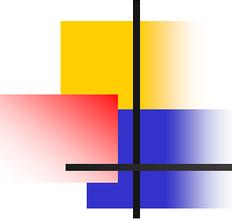
What are 21st century skills?

- The Assessment and Teaching of 21st Century Skills (AT21CS) consortium which includes Australia, Finland, Portugal, Singapore, the United Kingdom, and the United States organizes 21st century skills, knowledge, and attitudes, values, and ethics into four categories:



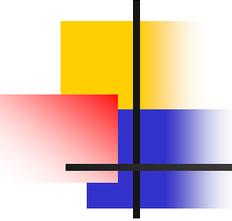
What are 21st century skills?

- **Ways of Thinking:** creativity and innovation, critical thinking, problem solving, decision making, and learning to learn (or metacognition)
- **Ways of Working:** communication and teamwork
- **Tools for Working:** general knowledge and information communication technology (ICT) literacy
- **Living in the World:** citizenship, life and career, and personal and social responsibility, including cultural awareness and competence.



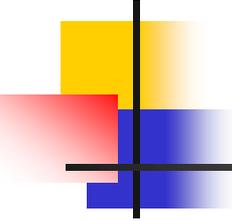
What are 21st century skills?

- Another definition comes from the book *The Global Achievement Gap* by Tony Wagner (2008), co-director of the Harvard Change Leadership Group.



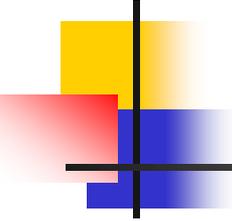
What are 21st century skills?

1. Critical thinking and problem solving
2. Collaboration and leadership
3. Agility and adaptability
4. Initiative and entrepreneurialism
5. Effective oral and written communication
6. Accessing and analyzing information
7. Curiosity and imagination



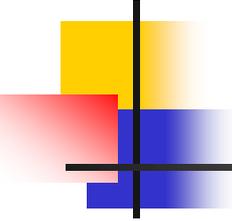
What are 21st century skills?

- The Partnership for 21st Century Skills (Minnesota, US) developed a unified, collective vision for 21st century learning that will strengthen American education. The Partnership defined *21st century skills are the skills students need to have in order to succeed in work, school and life.* They include:



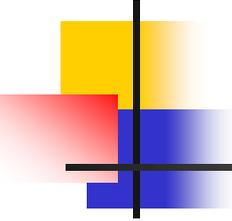
What are 21st century skills?

1. **Core subjects** (Economics, English, Government, Arts, History, Geography, Reading or language arts, Mathematics, Science, World languages, Civics)
2. **21st century content:** global awareness, financial, economic, business and entrepreneurial literacy, civic literacy and health and wellness awareness



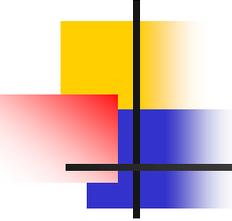
What are 21st century skills?

3. **Learning and thinking skills:** critical thinking and problem solving skills, communications skills, creativity and innovation skills, collaboration skills, contextual learning skills and information and media literacy skills
4. **Information and communication technology literacy**
5. **Life skills:** leadership, ethics, accountability, adaptability, personal productivity, personal responsibility, people skills, self-direction and social responsibility



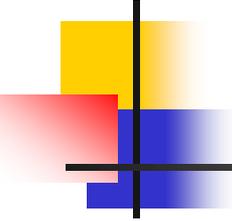
Why students need 21st century skills

- The reasons that our university students need 21st century skills can be identified in the followings:
 - As computers and machines can cost-effectively do more and more jobs, the workplace will soon need fewer people with only basic skill sets and more people with higher-order thinking skills.



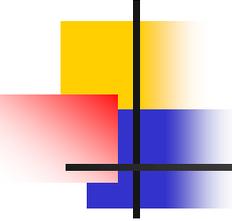
Why students need 21st century skills

- Supply and demand in a global marketplace increases competition for workers who can add value through applying nonroutine, complex thinking and communication skills to new problems and environments.



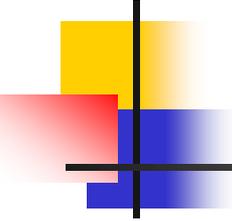
Why students need 21st century skills

- To promote civic engagement, the students also need to learn how and why to be engaged citizens who think critically—so that they can be able to solve problems or review policies to address social challenges.



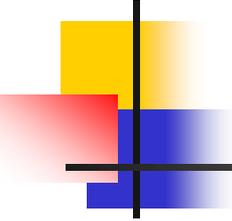
Why students need 21st century skills

- The students need to be able to work with others, need to be able to communicate effectively orally and in writing so that they can share their opinions, defend their rights, propose new policy, etc.



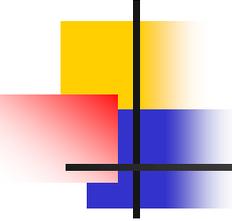
Why students need 21st century skills

- The interconnectedness among countries created by globalization requires students around the world to learn how to communicate, collaborate, and solve problems with people beyond national boundaries.



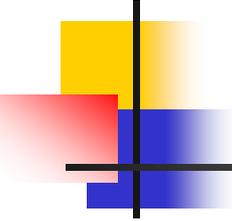
History of the Green Summer movement

- Traditionally, universities in Vietnam often have their own programs in bringing their students to local communities to participate in activities which help to protect the environment or improve people literacy, especially in remote areas. These activities are often held in summer time (July and August) when almost all students have finished their academic year.



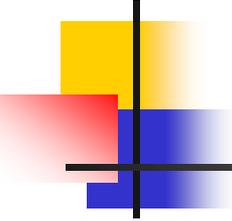
History of the Green Summer movement

- In 1994, The Ho Chi Minh City's Youth Union initiated the Summer Culture Light (Anh Sang Van Hoa He) movement which united all summer activities organized by universities located in Ho Chi Minh City.



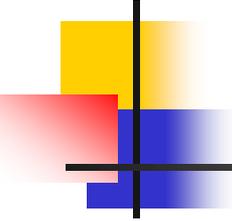
History of the Green Summer movement

- In 1997, The Ho Chi Minh City's Youth Union renamed this movement to Voluntary Green Summer Movement which is presently often called in short Green Summer (Mua He Xanh).



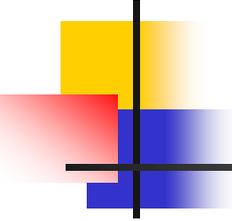
History of the Green Summer movement

- In 2000, The Vietnam Youth union decided to use the name **Green Summer** for all students' summer community-based programs in Vietnam and it is organized by the Youth union at each university during the summer time.



History of the Green Summer movement

- The number of students participated in this movement has been increasing quickly in recent years. At Ho Chi Minh City, in 2014, over 90,000 students have registered in different programs, compared with 57,000 students in 2013.



History of the Green Summer movement

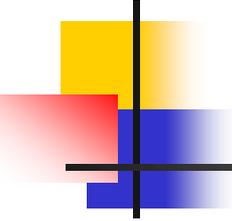
- By the time, the movement has not been limited within Vietnam but gradually broadened to some countries in ASEAN such as Laos and Cambodia, and sometimes participated by volunteers from other countries, such as Korea and The United States in 2007, Malaysia in 2014.

History of the Green Summer movement



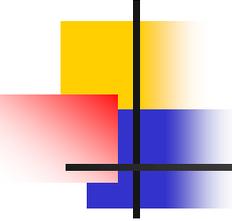
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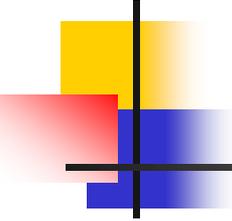
Goal and activities of the Green Summer

- The ultimate goal of the Green Summer, through community-based activities, is *to enhance students' perception about society, improve their self consciousness and creativity, to link practice with learning, reality with theories and society with schools.* This movement can be compared to place-based or community-based learning/education in Western countries.



Goal and activities of the Green Summer

- Based on this goal, popular activities held by universities in Vietnam are to help local communities in:
 - cleaning up the environment (roads, beaches, rivers, etc.)
 - repairing or building public infrastructure (bridges, roads, canals, etc.) and houses for the poor people



Goal and activities of the Green Summer

- enhancing children's capacity in writing, reading or using computer
- organizing short courses and transferring technology/techniques in different careers (mainly in agriculture sector)
- organizing culture and sport activities, mainly for the kids

Goal and activities of the Green Summer

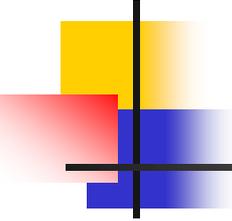


Goal and activities of the Green Summer



Goal and activities of the Green Summer



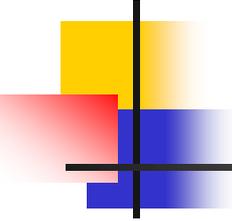


Why the Green Summer attracts so many students

- Every year, thousands of students around Vietnam participated in the Summer Green. The question may arouse that why this movement can attract such a huge number of volunteers.

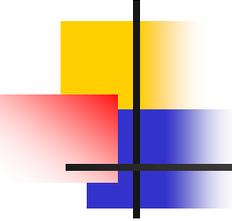
Why the Green Summer attracts so many students





Why the Green Summer attracts so many students

- According to the founder of the movement, there are four main factors that make the movement attractive to students:
 - the movement exploits typical personalities of the youth: involving and volunteering
 - the movement has well inherited from the past initiatives, been broadened (to other groups of people and organizations) and socialized naturally (invested/funded by different organizations)



Why the Green Summer attracts so many students

- the movement is recognized as an effective approach in educating young citizens, in training future leaders and therefore it is supported by all universities
- the movement has its own romantic style as the youth can find friendship, love and share their dreams during the activities

Why the Green Summer attracts so many students



Why the Green Summer attracts so many students



Why the Green Summer attracts so many students

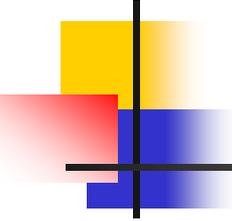


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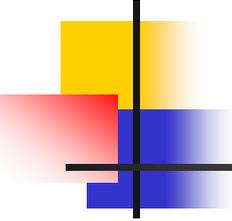
Which 21st century skills the Green Summer provides

21 st century skills	Levels of attainment
Ways of Thinking: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - creativity and innovation - critical thinking - problem solving, decision making - learning to learn 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓
Ways of Working: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - communication - teamwork 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓
Tools for Working: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - general knowledge - ICT literacy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ ✓ ✓
Living in the World: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - citizenship - life and career - personal and social responsibility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓



Which 21st century skills the Green Summer provides

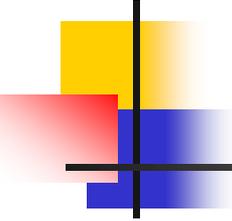
- Beside the 21st century skills that students can get through the Green Summer, discussions with those students have discovered that the movement also helps them to recognize their real abilities, to be much more confident in applying their abilities in real world.
- In addition, they become much more open in communication and life, much more responsible in their learning.



Advantages and challenges of the Green Summer

■ Advantages:

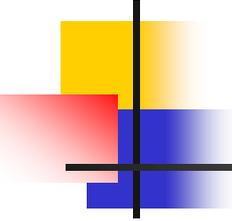
In comparison with the university youth unions around the world, the youth unions in Vietnamese universities have great advantages in having their official role in universities which is reflected in the Education Act and the Higher Education Act, and they are organized and directed systematically from the central unions to university classes.



Advantages and challenges of the Green Summer

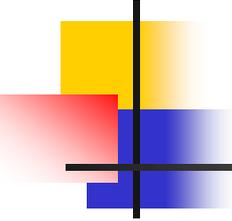
■ Challenges:

- Do not have enough fulltime staff for managing and organizing activities as most of the staff in the unions are selected from the students and teaching/administrative staff and they work on a part-time or extra-work basis.



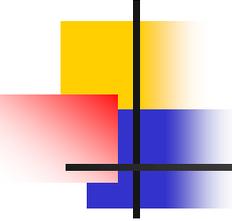
Advantages and challenges of the Green Summer

- Budget share (from the university budget) for the youth union activities is very limited so that the unions have to search donations from business for most of their activities.



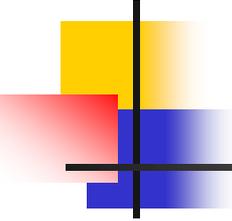
Advantages and challenges of the Green Summer

- For maximizing the attainment of the 21st century skills, university students should have opportunities to participate in voluntary activities at national or regional levels. However, limited budget and lack of support from regional countries have hindered significantly such opportunities.



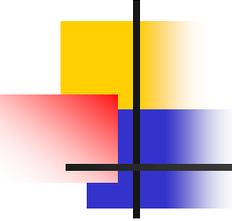
Recommendations

- As evaluated by the author, ICT literacy is the least attainment that students can get through the Summer Green programs because few programs adapt to this needs. This result is not only for the students involved in the programs as volunteers but also for the young people in the communities participated in the programs. Therefore, the movement should create much more activities which can enhance ICT literacy for the youth.



Recommendations

- The Green Summer movement cannot be successful without the participation and leadership of the youth unions in Vietnamese universities. The universities should provide enough fulltime administrative/skillful staff and budget for the union activities.



Recommendations

- In order to help university students to learn how to communicate, collaborate, and solve problems with people beyond national boundaries and enhance their global awareness, especially within the region (ASEAN), formal supportive agreements among regional countries or universities for the Green Summer of Vietnam and such a movement in other ASEAN countries are necessary.

