

STUDENTS' SATISFACTION ON LEARNING CONTENTS, PROCESS AND EFFECTS OF ED6043 EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH COURSE AT GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION, ASSUMPTION UNIVERSITY: A CLASSROOM RESEARCH STUDY

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Abstract: This study was a classroom research project, which investigated of the teaching effects of ED6043 Educational Research course on student learning for the purpose of improving instruction.

The research aimed to identify the students' perception towards the learning contents of ED6043 course firstly; then to determine their satisfaction towards the teaching and learning process of ED6043 course, and lastly to measure to what extent that ED6043 course helps students to do their thesis or independent study in the real practices.

The research used descriptive statistics, including frequency, percentage, means and standard division to do with the data. 66 students who finished studying ED6043 course completed the survey and the results revealed that:

1. More than half (61%) of the students didn't know anything about the educational research.

2. "Research planning: find a research problem, write research questions, and objectives" and "Review of Fundamental Statistics" were regarded as the hardest contents of ED 6043 course.

3. The most helpful contents of ED 6043 course were: How to Prepare for the proposal /final defense, and how to write chapter 1; meanwhile, though "Research planning: find a research problem, write research questions, and objectives" and "Review of Fundamental Statistics" were regarded as the hardest contents of ED 6043 course, they are also greatly helpful contents in the students' perceptions.

4. Students eager to learn "Review of Fundamental Statistics" more.

5. The means of students' satisfaction towards the course was 4.1864, which showed most students were quite satisfied with the present teaching and learning of the course.

6. Students agreed that this course to some extent helped them quite much to do their own thesis, independent study and future research.

Findings were reviewed and recommendations practical recommendations concentrated on how to arrange the learning contents and process more effectively and improving the learning effectiveness through more peer learning and case studies.

Keywords: Students' Satisfaction, Learning Contents, Process and Effects, ED6043 Educational Research Course, Classroom Research

Introduction

Teaching has gone a long way from the traditional lecturer-listener system. Today, teachers, especially at university level, are not just lecturers, but guides; students are not just listeners but co-explorers of knowledge. Education has become more interactive and experiential for both parties. Thus, teaching skills have also evolved, with more techniques available for teachers to use.

The wide variety of education-centered skills may seem overwhelming for a teacher. Fortunately, there is one method that helps a teacher see the aspects of his or her teaching that need improvement, which is classroom research.

Through classroom research, research itself will be more helpful when a teacher is trying to know about the needs of the students. Teachers who do their own research on the topics they teach, instead of depending on textbooks or traditional ways of teaching, can provide the students with a much better understanding of those topics for. As a result, the lecturers themselves can be more effective in sharing the knowledge with students and the quality of teaching and learning process and learning effect will be better ensured during the course.

Working at the first and biggest international university herein Assumption university, academic and development and performance are always the university focus and expectations. Quality Assurance for Higher Education in Thailand required that universities have to put every effort to encourage the research or creative work publication and conducting. Meanwhile, the fulltime lecturers and researcher are encouraged to not only conduct researches and studies but also to utilize the results or findings of the researches and creative work in their teaching. (QA: KPI 4, 2011) Thus, this researcher was initiated with the idea of conducting a classroom research to investigate of the learning effects of ED6043 Educational Research course for the purpose of improving the instruction and the quality of the course.

Research Questions:

1. What were the students' perceptions towards the learning contents of ED6043 course?

2. What were the students' satisfactions towards the teaching and learning process of ED6043 course?

3. To what extent that ED6043 course helped students to do their thesis or independent study in the

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real practices?

Research Objectives:

1. To identify the students' perceptions towards the learning contents of ED6043 course.
2. To determine their satisfactions towards the teaching and learning process of ED6043 course.
3. To measure to what extent that ED6043 course helps students to do their thesis or independent study in the real practices.

Conceptual Framework

Based on the objectives, the researcher investigated the research questions through a questionnaire. The information from the questionnaire that ED6043 Educational Research course students provided were analyzed and used to guide the reorganization of the learning contents, the design of the learning materials and the teaching and learning process, and the real practice of the learning effect. Figure1 showed the conceptual framework of this study.

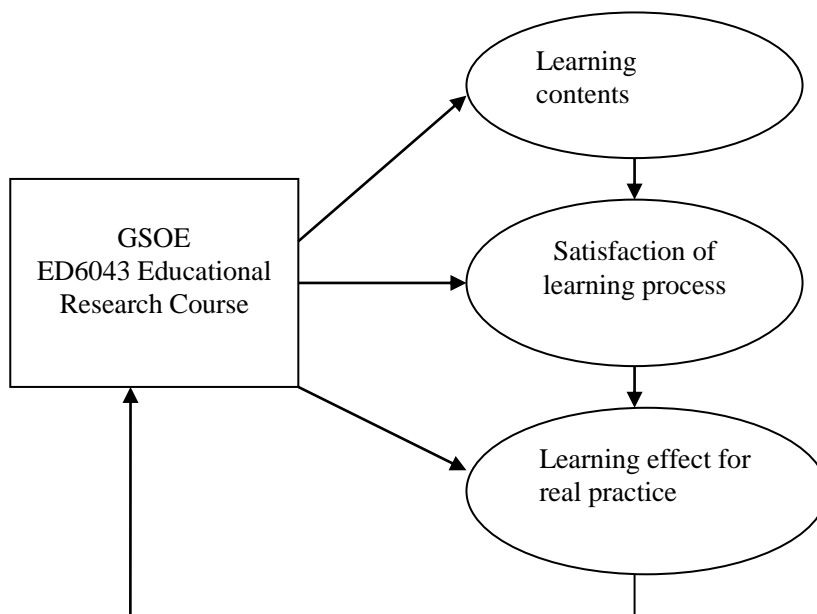


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of This Study

Review of Literature

1. Classroom research

Classroom research is not just teaching techniques and tricks; its basic idea may be like a systematic investigation of the effects of the teaching on student learning for the purpose of improving instruction.

Classroom research is different from traditional educational research in purpose and design. Traditional research, associated with colleges of education, is primarily concerned with finding the putative underlying "theories" of learning. However,

classroom research studies the variables from the real world of the classroom, the "results" of this research therefore will be more practical to guide the real classroom teaching. Classroom research thus is based more on "naturalistic" inquiry. In addition to being context-dependent, it is interactive, multiple-focused, interrelated, formative, and concrete.

Classroom Research is a term used to describe investigations into the status of student learning. These investigations produce feedbacks about student learning to instructors. The feedback is typically used to inform teaching decisions made by instructors in their individual classrooms.

2. QA requirement:

For improving teaching and learning, Quality Assurance requires all the universities in Thailand to encourage the faculty to enhance the number of research and publication, and also the unitizations of research and creative work. (QA: KPI 4, 2011)

3. A brief introduction to ED6043 Educational Research

ED6043 Educational research course is a course teaching theories, models, procedures of conducting research, foundational statistics for research, research design, sampling, instrumentation, data collection & analysis, interpreting the results, writing the research report, study on the researches, and practice of research conducting in order to solve problems which occur in teaching and learning in classroom and administration. It's a foundation course; all the GSoE

master's program students are required to take this course.

After the students have completed the course learning activities, the students should be able to perform the following tasks:

- Explain the nature, types, and the process of educational research including the significance and implication to educational practice.

- Analyze the educational situation for the identification of problem statement, research questions, research objectives, research hypotheses, theoretical framework, and conceptual framework.

- Design the research methodology with appropriate use of sampling techniques, instrumentation, data collection, and data treatment.

- Apply appropriate techniques for analyzing the qualitative data and quantitative data, with the focus on content analysis, correlation analysis, and the use of SPSS for Windows.

- Plan the writing of research proposal, research report, and dissemination of research findings.

The researcher as the course instructor has taught this course for three years. From the teaching observation, the research found usually many students worried a lot about this course when they registered the course and saw the course syllabus. Since many students are teacher, but most of them lack foundational skills and knowledge for conducting a research, such as the foundational statistics skills and research designing skill, and so on. Therefore, how to learn effectively and the most during the limited 15 sections became the major concern of the instructor. And from the teaching experience, since many students are also not very confident about English language reading and writing, so how to select the learning contents, design teaching materials, and improve the learning effects are the real objectives for this classroom research. In order to open more channels to communicate with student, provide the learning materials in a better and more effective way, and promote peer learning; this researcher also open a learning blog for this course since June,2010. The learning blog's address is www.ed6043.blogspot.com.

Research Methodology

This classroom research used descriptive statistics, including frequency, percentage, means and standard deviation to analyze the data obtained from the students' questionnaires. It was a quantitative research; the population was all the students who studied- this course in recent three years, the total number is 88 students. The questionnaires were delivered to those 88 students in the following way: by emails, on the blog, and hardcopies as well. Finally, 66 students who finished studying ED6043 course completed the questionnaire and returned rate reached 80%

Findings/Results

Research Objective 1: To identify the students' perceptions towards the learning contents of ED6043 course.

Figure 2 showed students' perceptions towards the learning contents of ED6043 course, it revealed that: before ED6043, more than half (61%) of the students didn't know anything about the educational research. 9% of the students didn't know how to find a research problem, starting a research planning, the same amount of students didn't understanding nature, type and process of the research. And almost 12% students didn't know how to write chapter 1-2-3. Hence, the results revealed the students didn't too much about how to conduct a research before they learned this course.

From Figure 3, "Research planning: find a research problem, write research questions, and objectives" and "Review of Fundamental Statistics" were regarded as the hardest contents of ED 6043 course. Also "how to write chapter 2" was followed as the hard part for students as well.

Figure 4 showed that the most helpful contents of ED 6043 course were: How to Prepare for the proposal /final defense, and how to write chapter 1; meanwhile, though "Research planning: find a research problem, write research questions, and objectives" and "Review of Fundamental Statistics" were regarded as the hardest contents of ED 6043 course, they were also greatly helpful contents in the students' perceptions.

Figure 5 showed that students strongly desired to learn "Review of Fundamental Statistics" more. At the same time, students also wished to "learning more about the GSOE Writing format and template", then their expectation to learning the contents like "Research planning: find a research problem, write research questions, and objectives", and "how to write chapter 2-3" will be followed.

The details about students' perceptions toward the learning contents of ED6043 were shown in Table 1.

There were some other suggestions from the students' questionnaire, which were listed in Table 2.

Research Objective 2: To determine their satisfactions towards the teaching and learning process of ED6043 course.

The total means of students' satisfaction towards the course was 4.1864, which showed most students are quite satisfied with the present teaching and learning of the course. The means scores of students' satisfaction also showed that the students satisfied the most with that "The instructor prepares and organizes the course content very well" and "Teaching aids such

as learning blog, computer power points, etc., were well prepared with high quality.”

The details about students’ satisfaction toward the teaching and learning process of ED6043 were shown in Table 3.

Research Objective 3: To measure to what extent that ED6043 course helps students to do their thesis or independent study in the real practices

Most students that this course helped them quite much to do their own thesis, independent study and future research, since the total means scores were 3.9 at 5 point level. And they agreed the most that “Beside the thesis and IS, this course also help me a lot in conducting other research in the future”.

The details about students’ perceptions toward the learning effects of ED6043 in their real practice were shown in Table 4.

(see figure 2-4 and table 1-4 after references)

Recommendation for Classroom Practices

The findings of this research provided good support for the researcher to improve the classroom teaching from the following ways:

a) the researcher should try to organize and re-arrange the learning contents within the 15 sections: especially focusing on the learning contents of “Review of Fundamental Statistics”; “GSOE Writing format and template”, “Research planning: find a research problem, write research questions, and objectives”, and “how to write chapter 2-3”;

b) also try to improve the teaching and learning process more effectively with regard to

adjusting the required readings and assignments;

c) provide the students more opportunities to participate and engage in active learning, and more resources that students can assess to use for their, especially, teaching students more about how to use the library online data to support themselves in writing the chapter 2 and 5.

d) continue to use and add good learning materials onto the learning blog to help student’s pre-learning and self-learning

e) if possible, more peer learning, real experience and case studies should be used in the teaching and learning process in order to improving the learning effectiveness through more.

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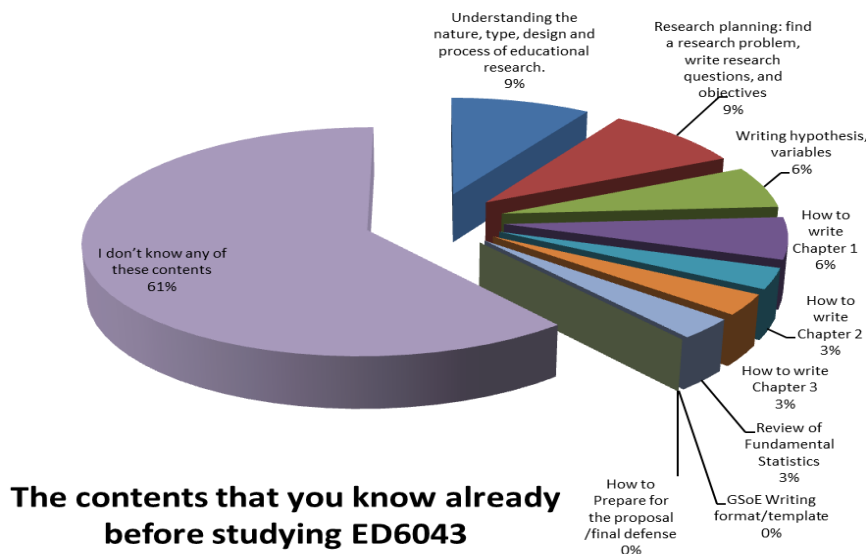
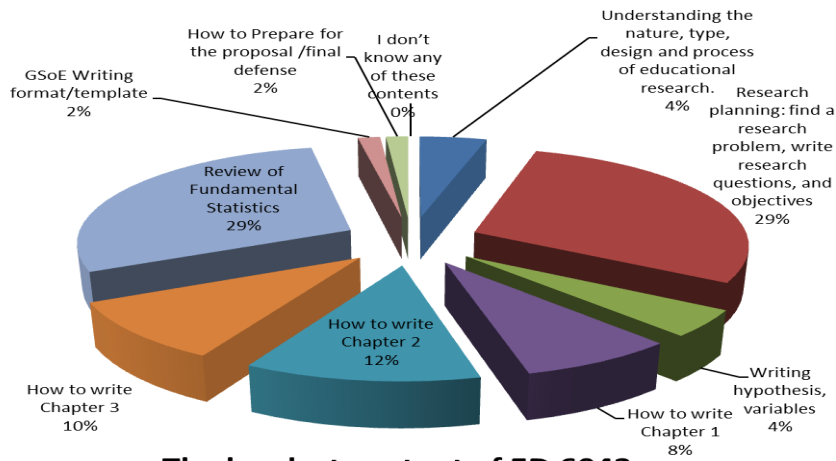
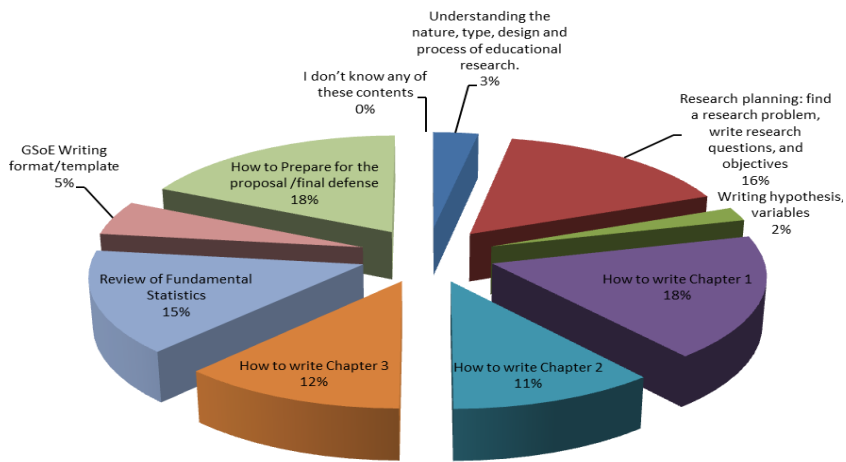


Figure 2: the Contents that Students Knew Already before the Class



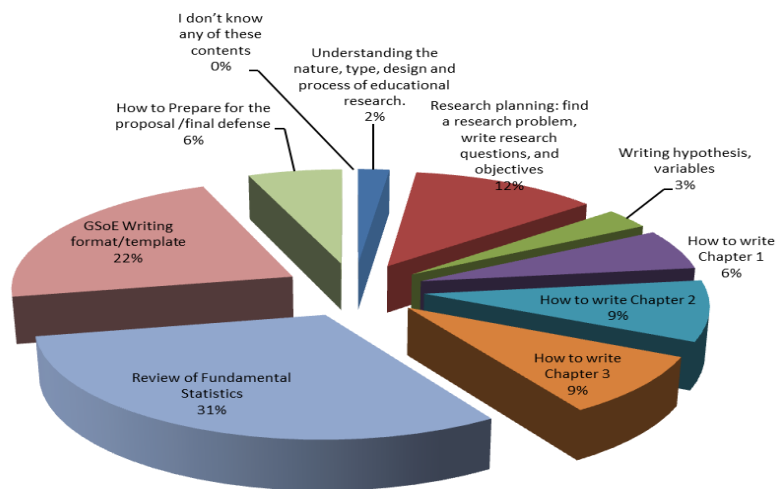
The hardest content of ED 6043

Figure 3: The Contents that Students Felt the Hardest



The most helpful content ED 6043

Figure 4: the Contents that Students Felt the Most Helpful



The contents that you want to learn more

Figure 5: the Contents that Students Want to Learn More

Table 1 Students' Perceptions towards the Learning Contents of ED6043 Course

Students perceptions towards the learning content of ED6043	The contents that you know already before studying ED6043		The hardest content of ED 6043		The most helpful content ED 6043		The contents that you want to learn more	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Understanding the nature, type, design and process of educational research.	6	9	3	4.5	2	3	1	2
Research planning: find a research problem, write research questions, and objectives	6	9	19	29	11	16	8	12
Writing hypothesis, variables	4	6	3	4.5	1	2	2	3
How to write Chapter 1	4	6	5	8	12	18	4	6
How to write Chapter 2	2	3	8	12	7	11	6	9
How to write Chapter 3	2	3	7	10	8	12	6	9
Review of Fundamental Statistics	2	3	19	29	10	15	20	31
GSoE Writing format/template	0	0	1	1.5	3	5	15	22
How to Prepare for the proposal /final defense	0	0	1	1.5	12	18	4	6
I don't know any of these contents	10	61	/	/	/	/	/	/
Total	66	100	66	100	66	100	66	100

Table 2 Students Perceptions towards the Learning Contents of ED6043 Course

The contents that students hope this course can add (if possible)	f
Individual practice on thesis in class	1
Learn more about Literature review	5
A prerequisite class of inferential statistics	2
Research instrument designing	3
Questionnaire reliability & validity checking	2
More strategy for how to prepare proposal /final defense	1

Table 3: Students' Satisfaction towards the Teaching and Learning of ED6043 Course

No	Satisfaction towards of Teaching and Learning	Means	St. D
1	The course objectives and content meet the academic advance, and meet my expectation.	4.0303	.67868
2	The teaching and learning have completely covered the course objectives and content.	4.0455	.68908
3	Required readings and assignments were appropriate and useful to the study of this course.	4.0455	.66638
4	The instructor possesses the strong knowledge and the expertise in the course content.	4.3182	.63631
5	The instructor prepares and organizes the course content very well.	4.3485	.56819
6	The teaching method and class activities were appropriate, interesting, and effective in helping students understand the lesson very well.	4.1364	.67679
7	The instructor has paid attention and provided assistance to students who are different in knowledge, skills, and needs.	4.1818	.72130
8	The instructor possesses the warm and kind personality students like to contact, and available for student contact.	4.3636	.48473
9	The students have the opportunity to participate and engage in active learning.	4.0545	.58656
10	Teaching aids such as learning blog, computer power points, etc., were well prepared with high quality.	4.3485	.61999
11	The instructor conducted the fair and equal treatment to all students.	4.2121	.51186
12	Students are confident in the knowledge and skills learned from this course.	4.1515	.74920
Total		4.1864	0.6324

Table 4: ED6043 Course's Learning Effects perceived by the Students

No	To what extent that ED6043 helps students to do their Thesis or IS	Means	St. D
1	The course helps me get a good topic that I can use in my thesis writing.	4.0455	.95163
2	The course helps me know the process of conducting thesis and IS.	4.1212	.66830
3	The course provides a lot resource that I can use for my thesis and IS.	3.7576	.70297
4	The tentative proposal to a great extent that becomes my real research proposal.	3.4697	1.12619
5	To some extent, this course helps me to graduate earlier.	3.4697	1.09853
6.	Generally, this course helps me a lot to do my thesis and IS.	3.9394	.99040
7.	Beside the thesis and IS, this course also helps me a lot in conducting other research in the future.	4.5000	.58835
Total		3.9004	0.8752