

DEVELOPMENT OF A NON-FORMAL EDUCATION PROGRAM BASED ON SELF-DIRECTED LEARNING AND PARTICIPATORY LEARNING APPROACHES TO ENHANCE READING HABITS OF DISTANCE LEARNING OF NON-FORMAL EDUCATION STUDENTS

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Abstract: This research focuses on the development of a non-formal education program based on self-directed learning and participatory learning approaches to enhance reading habits of distance learning non-formal education students. This research is conducted based on self-directed learning and participatory learning by using the principle of program development by Boone that consists of 3 components: 1. Planning, 2. Design and implementation and, 3. Evaluation and accountability.

Keywords: Self-directed Learning, Participatory Learning, Quasi-experimental Research

Background and Significance of the Issue

Literacy is at the heart of basic education and essential for creating opportunities for disadvantaged people to enhance their income and have a sustainable life (UNESCO, 2010). Literacy promotes not only greater dignity of the entity but also channels to obtain health services, education and a commitment to motherland (Komchadluek, 8 September 2009). Being illiterate creates barriers for all people currently, as reading is an essential tool necessary in our day-to-day livelihood. In the past, both public and private agencies provided activities to promote reading both in and out of school by trying different activities for reading promotion. Nevertheless, reading achievements of the Thai people in 2009 showed that the rate of reading decreased to 60% compared to 2005 (National Statistical Office, 2009). The study, "Why is reading not developed to the extent", states that the major obstacles of reading development for Thai people are: 1) A rapid and powerful step of "Internet", 2) Low quality books, and 3) Poor reading habits (Siamrath weekly review, 2010).

The office of the non-formal and informal education is the central organization responsible for promoting non-formal education to the public. As a result, people who are not enrolled in school can gain knowledge for basic education. Distance learning is popular among people who are at a disadvantage, who have missed opportunities or lack formal education, as well as inconvenience to receive other educational services, especially the usual school attendance. (The Office of the non-formal and informal education, 2009).

Distance learning is quite independent because learners must learn by themselves. Learners must pay attention and show enthusiasm less than formal education because of there being less teacher direction. As a result, distance learning of non-formal educational students will need to have greater self-discipline, than simply sharing time in the classroom and learning from different sources. Self-directed learning is essential for this group of students because self-directed learning is an important factor to facilitate the learning by putting emphasis on the preliminary responsibility of learners in learning and the belief in the endless human capacity (Knowles, 1970). It is not only self-directed learning which is important for developing reading habits of distance learning of non-formal education students but also encouraging learners to participate in learning will be beneficial in the learning exchange as well as sharing experiences and comments. At this point, learning will be created because learners will gain some knowledge from using other people's experiences therefore participatory learning helps to solve problems more accurately since it is human nature to solve its own problem. Everyone will gain a sense of participation to share ideas and work together which will make the process transparent, clear and strong in society (Narinchai Pattanaponsa, 2004). Hence, when non-formal education students believe in their own endless ability and potential, it will promote development of their reading habits greatly which in turn will lead to success in learning targets.

Research Objectives

1. To analyze the case study for good reading habits promotion program in Thailand and foreign countries.
2. To develop a program of non-formal education with self-directed learning and participatory learning to promote the reading habits of distance learning of non-formal education students.
3. To study the results of non-formal education program that researchers developed and implemented for non-formal education students with distance learning.
4. To study factors and recommendations regarding implementation of non-formal education program developed for distance learning of non-formal education students.

Research Definitions

Non-formal education programs are activities of non-formal education management referring to Boone (1985) which identified key component in three parts:

1. Planning,
2. Design and Implementation,

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3. Evaluation and Accountability involved in the concept of self-directed learning by Knowles and participatory learning.

Program represents details about management of experiences that emphasize development and promotion for normal students or special characteristic students so that students are encouraged to develop in accordance with the required purpose of program. The component of the program consists of objectives, targeted groups, instructors, teaching and learning activities, content, teaching materials as well as measurement and evaluations.

Self-directed learning is the management of teaching and learning that learners diagnose their learning needs, formulates learning goals, choose learning strategies and evaluate learning outcomes through the seven steps of self-directed learning by Knowles (1970), which include:

1. set a learning climate for learner,
2. create learning mutual planning,
3. arrange for a diagnosis of learner needs and interests,
4. enable the formulation of learning objectives with learner,
5. design the suitable learning methods for learner,
6. execute learning activities for achieving the objective,
7. evaluate the quality of the learning with learner

Participatory learning means participation in organizing non-formal education programs with staff to promote reading habits. Participants provide initiatives, discussions, decisions and implementation in accordance to their own thinking and consideration as well as solving problems precisely or achieving required targets.

Reading habits refer to the expression of behaviors that like to read books or other publications. This reading has to be consistent, continuous, of all places, whole-time and in every chance in order to develop reading habits which can be measured by using 4 behaviors of people expressed through:

1. Interest in reading and love to read,
2. Spending free time to read and search for books to read,
3. Willing and happy to read by themselves without force as well as reading on a regular basis,
4. Reading different types of genre such as textbooks, fiction, national news, comedy books, entertainment books, documentary or variety of publications such as journal, newspaper, reference book, etc.

Distance learning of non-formal education students refers to learners whose learning process takes place outside recognized educational institutions and need to continue study but have no time and opportunity to

study in a normal school. The learning and teaching format is that learners will study by themselves using educational media or services provided such as textbook, printed material, audio cassette, video, VCD and internet, etc. In addition, learners must attend activities including measurement and evaluation according to date, time and other methods required by distance learning institutions. There are no restrictions on learning location this depends on the learner's convenience that can include home, work, library, or other learning institutes.

Expected Benefits

1. This research provides a program to promote activities for reading habits from different sources of learning in order to be a guideline for promoting reading habits.

2. This research provides a non-formal education program to promote reading habits of distance learning non-formal Education students. A theoretically correct structure affects the efficiency in development and continuous reading habits.

3. This research provides the guideline to develop non-formal education programs to promote reading habits for distance learning of non-formal education students. Those people who work with non-formal education students can use these guidelines for practical work.

4. This research enables organizations that are related to projects of non-formal education activities management to promote reading habits of distance learning of non-formal education students in order to gain knowledge and understanding in developing non-formal education activities management to promote reading habits to be a new alternative in the non-formal education development.

The Conceptual Framework

According to the study and research review related to non-formal education programs, self-directed learning and participatory learning, researchers synthesize the conceptual framework for research as follows: (see in next page)

Research Procedures

The development of non-formal education program based on self-direct learning and participatory learning is to promote reading habits of distance learning of non-formal education students. Researchers use quasi-experimental research and divide research procedure into 4 phases as follows:

Phase 1: To study, collect, analyze and synthesize basic information about the development of non-formal education program based on self-directed learning and participatory learning in order to promote reading habits. This study will be done through a prototype of the learning resources that promote reading habits as follows.

1. TK. Park,

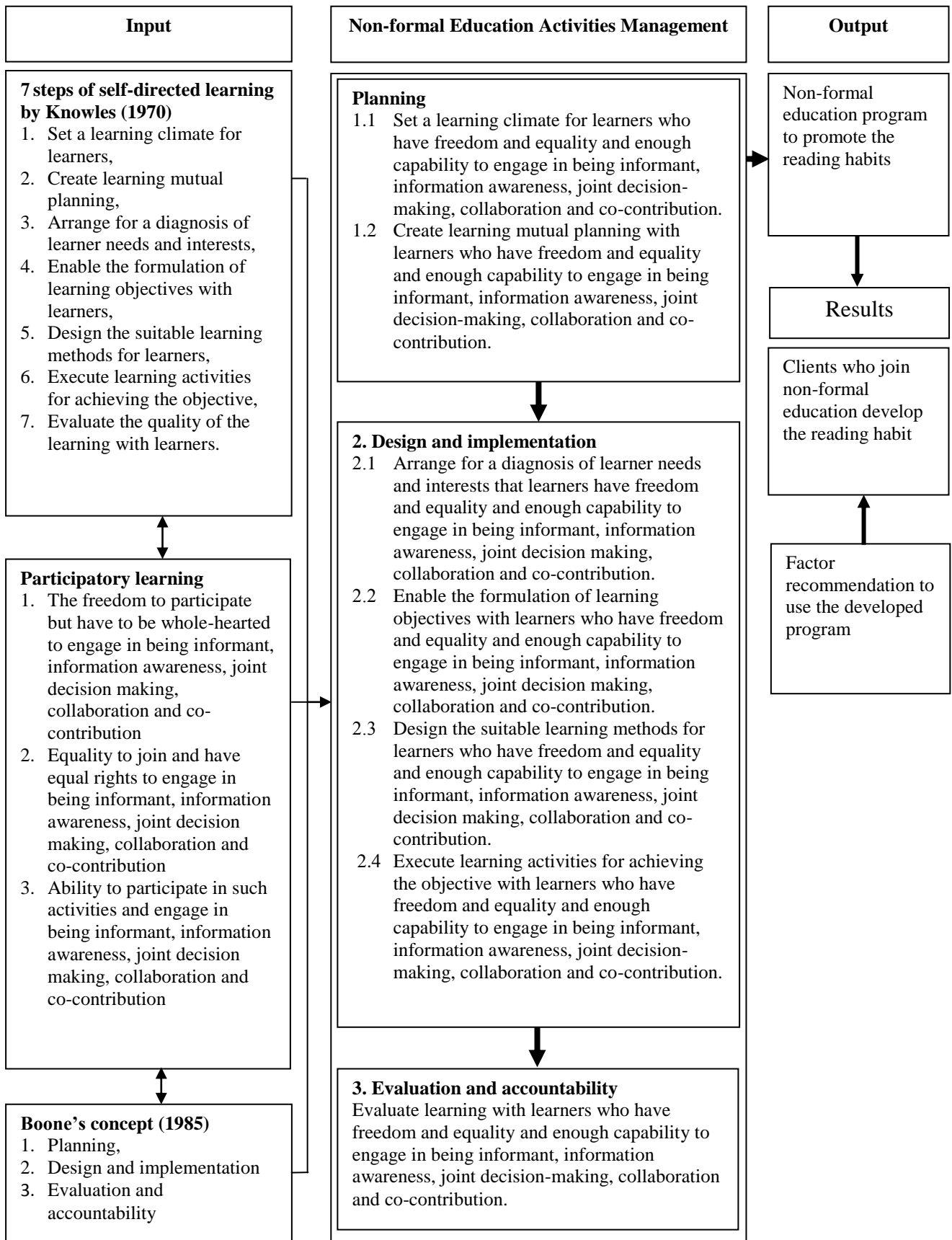


Figure 1: The Conceptual Framework for Research

(To develop a non-formal education program based on Self-directed learning and participatory learning approaches to enhance reading habits of distance learning of non-formal education students)

2. Maruay Library,
3. Bangkok Public Library -Lumpini Park,
4. Bannungsosuansoy- Sathorn and
5. Rachamangkhalabhisek Library-Klai kangwon palace.

Interviews will be conducted to collect information and operation processes of these five learning resources. Data will then be analyzed to determine patterns of learning resources that promote reading habits.

Phase 2: Development of a non-formal education program based on self-directed learning and participatory learning approaches to enhance reading habits of distance learning of non-formal education students. This step is to utilize data from Phase 1 and apply adult learning theory, self-directed learning and participatory learning to implement according to process of developing non-formal education program following the concept of Boone (1985) as follows.

Step 1. Planning,

Step 2. Design and implementation are to be done by 3 experts, non-formal education, research and Thai language, who evaluate content validity, suitability and possibility. Researchers analyze data evaluated by experts, using index of consistency (IOC) and revise according to experts' recommendations in order to obtain a completed non-formal education program for experiment.

Phase 3: Experiment of a non-formal education program based on self-directed learning and participatory learning approaches to enhance reading habits of distance learning of non-formal education students following the concept of Boone (1985). This involves organizing learning activities of 30 hours self-directed learning, 30 hours of group reading for reading habit promotion and 40 hours of a non-formal education program. Total is 100 hours

Phase 4: To study the various factors and recommendations relevant to the experiment of a non - formal education program based on self-directed learning and participatory learning approaches to enhance reading habits. This will be done by conducting interviews, surveying students' opinion and discussing with the experimental group about the trial of non-formal education program in order to improve and revise the program according to the obtained results in order to be effective and suitable for further use.

Currently, research procedures are in phase 1. Researchers are designing 6 sets of research tools which are: 1) interview about reading habit promotion practice, 2) questionnaire for reading promotion, 3) reading skill, 4) content test of each chapter, 5) reading behavioral assessment, and 6) interview about experiment of non-formal education program.

Relevant Theories and Concepts

1. Development of a non-formal education program

Program refers to non-formal education activities that are collaborative between learners and organization

through a systematic procedure starting from diagnosis of needs, planning and implementation, learning activities and evaluation by using principles of program development of Edgar J. Boone (1992). There are 4 items regarding the development of programs which are: 1. Intention to change learners, 2. A person or an agent involved in making decision for development, 3. Collaboration among learners to involve in analysis and set suitable requirements, and 4. The development of systems and concepts containing 3 interactive sub-concepts which include; 1. Planning, 2. Design and Implementation, and 3. Evaluation and Accountability.

2. Self - directed learning

Self-directed learning is a teaching and learning model in which the learner is at the center with the teaching approach focusing on the learning needs of students. Students learn by self-reliance and student-centered learning (McBride, 1995). The self-directed learning is a characteristic of adults who have earnestness (Lindeman, 1962). Knowles (1975) outlined the basics of learning theory as follows:

- 1) Needs and interests to learn better with focused needs and interests,
- 2) Situations involving learners' life,
- 3) The most learning resources are the experience analysis,
- 4) Needs to have self - leadership and
- 5) Teaching and learning according to the differences between learners.

3. Participatory learning

Participatory learning is the learning activities focusing on learners who must engage in learning that requires group process, approaching problems by brainstorming and other techniques such as mind mapping, meta-plan, civil society forum, discussion, role-playing, etc. Students play a significant role in this learning as the center of learning and participate in the learning processes with teachers facilitating every step. Participatory learning is a learning derived by action and practices that are based on previous experiences to be transferred, exchanged, analyzed and synthesized by interaction between learners as well as learners and teachers to gain an extensive knowledge. Participatory learning will encourage non-formal education participants to play the roles and engage seriously to have a sense of unique ownership of such activities. It is also consistent with needs and interests of participants of non-formal education activities. This will lead to effective and sustainable development (Archanya Rattanaubon, 1999).

4. Enhance reading habits

Reading is very important in developing intelligence, perception, creativity, imagination and diagnosis of knowledge derived from reading in order to be wise in daily life. People who read more will gain more knowledge as the words of Sir Francis Bacon, a British philosopher, "Readings make the full man". Wyschogrod (2008) said that reading habits must start from the family as a model for the love of reading by reading books every

time, every place and having freedom to choose books as well as giving opportunity for readers to share their views and criticize their readings or books to be read. Individuals, who love to read as a habit, care for reading, read all the time, read all types of books and documents might be called "Bookworm" (Chaweewan Koohapinand, 1999). Building of reading habits make it possible to gain extensive knowledge, widen open vision, deep thinking, entertainment, relaxation, and making use of free time. A love of reading means people will aspire to progress and be a good citizen of their country.

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