

The Result of Using Notebooks for Increasing Competency in the 21st Century of the Elementary Students in Thailand

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Abstract

Reading is a process essential for all aspects of development. It is an integral part so important in building up quality competency in the 21st century skills: the citizens as well as children who will become the nations in the future. These statistics were in line with the result of the reading survey of the Thais in 2008 which found that on average the Thai children read only 2-5 books a year, such a low figure comparing to other countries in South East Asia among which the Vietnamese was reported to read 60 books a year, Singaporean 45 books a year, and Malaysian 40 books a year (National Statistical Office Thailand, 2008). In 2011 the National Statistical Office Thailand surveyed the reading rate of the Thais by comparing to figure of 2008 and found out that the rate had been improving, especially among small children aged below 6 six years old whose reading rate had been increasing from 36.0 per cent to 53.5 per cent. Meanwhile the reading rate of those above six years old had also been improving from 66.3 to 68.6 per cent (National Statistical Office Thailand, 2011). That the students should be encouraged to read more eagerly is essential, and in this regards the school library bares the direct responsibility of advocating for positive quality to building up competency in the 21st century skills behavior and elevating students' capability in relevant areas. According to the aforementioned circumstances and problems, it is relevant to study the effects of reading notebook usage to build up competency in the 21st century skills of elementary school students. Elementary school students are in an age ready to learn with full potential in almost every aspect, both in the classroom and outside of the classroom. Providing a quality reading can ensure that students will be able to access sources of knowledge at their will, and that the students may likely be able to develop competency in the 21st century skills of self-directed learning continually with less, if not none, limit. The purposes of this research were: 1) to explore and compare the reading habit between two groups of grade 2 students that use and not use reading notebook evaluated by students, parents and teachers; 2) to compare reading habit in groups of grade 2 students that use and not use reading notebook; 3) to study the opinions problems and suggestions of students and parents to use the reading notebook. This research is experimental research. The research sample consisted of: 1) 78 grade 2 students from two classrooms were the sample by a probability. By simple random sampling from a population of seven classrooms, two classrooms of the random sampling units. The experimental conditions are given by the first class in the experimental group and control group classrooms, each with a group of 39 students of Chulalongkorn University Demonstration Elementary School in academic year 2014; 2) parents of a sample of students evaluated reading habit; 3) teacher evaluated reading habit. The research instruments were reading notebook, questionnaire, evaluated forms and behavioral observation study. Data is collected by questionnaire and interview and analyzes using frequency, percentage, means, standard deviations.

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Education is a process essential for all aspects of development. It is an integral part so important in building up quality people: the citizens as well as children who will become the nations in the future. The importance of education is acknowledged by His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej. He thinks that it is the process of human life development. His speech delivered to the award-winning teachers and students at Dusidalai Hall in Chitralada Villa Royal Residence on July, 27, 1981 demonstrated his idea on education, books and reading. An excerpt from the speech reads as following. 'Education is an important part developing people's knowledge, thought, behavior and virtue. If society and country delivers quality education to all its youth, this society and country will of course possess quality citizens, maintain its stability and enjoy its prosperity. In this regards, we see the significant of books. Libraries and librarians must be available to serve the people, but the crucial problem is that even though there are books available in all the closets, they may be meaningless when no one pick them up to read or when people cannot choose the right one to read. Hence it is the duty of a librarian to select and categorize the books in order to guide the reader to access the right book. It is, therefore, essential for a library to have a good librarian; that will benefit the people most when they are utilizing the library in this learning society' (Chareunrat, Ornsuda., Ed., 1999: 87).

The situation of the Thai Education since the enactment of the National Education Act of 1999 until now has still been problematic. Many researches show these problems. The follow up study of the Education reform efforts assessed external quality of 17,562 schools - 49.1 per cent of all the schools from around the country - showed that the quality of 'student-centered method of teaching' was at 39.2 per cent; while the quality of 'arrangement of activities which stimulated aspects of thinking in learners such as analysis, creative, problem-solving and decision making process' was at 13.5 per cent; whereas only 21.6 per cent of all the schools had 'teachers who could integrate results of the assessment to adjust quality of the existing schooling methods.'

The evaluation of the students revealed that academic achievement was still very low in every groups, especially an 'ability to think critically, synthetically, with discretion and creativity,' the quality of which was at 11.1 per cent; while the quality of skills in 'self-directed knowledge pursuing, appreciation in learning, and continuing self development' was at 26.5 per cent for all the schools. (Candy, P.C. 1991)

These statistics were in line with the result of the reading survey of the Thais in 2008 which found that on average the Thai children read only 2-5 books a year, such a low figure comparing to other countries in South East Asia among which the Vietnamese was reported to read 60 books a year, Singaporean 45 books a year, and Malaysian 40 books a year (National Statistical Office Thailand, 2008).

In 2011 the National Statistical Office Thailand surveyed the reading rate of the Thais by comparing to figure of 2008 and found out that the rate had been improving, especially among small children aged below 6 six years old whose reading rate had been increasing from 36.0 per cent to 53.5 per cent. Meanwhile the reading rate of those above six years old had also been improving from 66.3 to 68.6 per cent (National Statistical Office Thailand, 2011).

That the students should be encouraged to read more eagerly is essential, and in this regards the school library bares the direct responsibility of advocating for positive quality to building up competency in the 21st century skills behavior and elevating students' capability in relevant areas.

Because of the deficiency in education quality, Thailand has continually improved the education system that the focus has now been placed on methods of learning. However, the rapid changes in technology and new body of knowledge have made it difficult for educators to construct a sound and complete curriculums and deliver them to the students effectively (Panich, W., 2012: 15).

It is more effective, thus, for educators to encourage the sense of 'appreciation in learning' in the students, especially the self-directed learning (SDL) (Hammond, M., Collins, R., 1991). This idea has been evolved in many countries and gained much attention. It is believed that those who are self-directed will have capability to learn more, possess higher intention, clearer goals, and more motivation in learning. They hence could utilize the knowledge gained in a more lasting way comparing to those who learn only on the classroom, the factor that makes self-directed learning an important skill in the promotion of life-long learning (Sinlarat, P., 2007: 1).

Teacher needs to reduce a role as instructor and meanwhile works more in designing the learning models and methods as well as facilitating learning process to the students in the classroom such as utilizing various teaching apparatuses, raising questions and problems to resolve, stimulating and motivating students to learn by researching and pursuing knowledge by themselves, and assigning group work for students to collect knowledge and data from various sources such as community library, temple, organization, nature environment and person. (Savard, Stewart 2007)

Office of the Basic Education of Thailand (2009: 2-4) has been supporting all schools to improve their libraries in an aim to make them learning places for both schools and local communities, and to enhance capability of the students to be knowledge people with good attitude to reading and continuing pursuit for new knowledge. To make library management successful with equivalent standard, the criterion of school library has been elaborated in 2009 to use in all the school under control of the Office of the Basic Education. The criterion composes of 4 sections including 1) policy 2) personnel 3) budget 4) property and supply 5) technology 6) schooling and 7) reading promotion activities.

According to the aforementioned circumstances and problems, it is relevant to study the result of using notebooks for increasing competency in the 21st century of the elementary students in Thailand. Element school students are in an age ready to learn with full potential in almost every aspect, both in the classroom and outside of the classroom. Building school library to be an effective learning place, hence, will address the key issues effectively. Providing a quality library can ensure that students will be able to access sources of knowledge at their will, and that the students may likely be able to develop skills of self-directed learning continually with less, if not none, limit.

Notwithstanding, the study aims to understand attitude of school educators and librarians at different levels on development of self-directed learning in elementary school library. The objectives are:

- 1) to explore and compare the reading habit between two groups of grade 2 students that use and not use reading notebook evaluated by students, parents and teachers;
- 2) to compare reading habit for increasing competency in the 21st century of the elementary students in Thailand in groups of grade 2 students that use and not use reading notebook;
- 3) to study the opinions problems and suggestions of students and parents to use the reading notebook for increasing competency in the 21st century of the elementary students in Thailand. This research is experimental research. The research sample consisted of:

A mixed methodology, qualitative and quantitative research approaches, is employed to understand the phenomenon. A qualitative research is engaged to confirm and disconfirmation the literature.

- 1) 78 grade 2 students from two classrooms were the sample by a probability. By simple random sampling from a population of seven classrooms, two classrooms of the random sampling units. The experimental conditions are given by the first class in the experimental group and control group classrooms, each with a group of 39 students of Chulalongkorn University Demonstration Elementary School in academic year 2014;
- 2) parents of a sample of students evaluated reading and habit for increasing competency in the 21st century of the elementary students in Thailand;
- 3) teacher evaluated reading habit for increasing competency in the 21st century of the elementary students in Thailand. The research instruments were reading notebook, questionnaire, evaluated forms and behavioral observation study. Data is collected by questionnaire and interview and analyzes using frequency, percentage, means, standard deviations.

SPSS will be used to analyze the qualitative data and present them in (specify how to present i.e. frequency, mean and median). Data from in-depth interview will be analyze by using (specify analyzing technique content analysis).

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