DEVELOPMENT OF A NON-FORMAL EDUCATIONAL MODEL TO ENHANCE COMPETENCIES OF TEACHERS AT COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTER

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Abstract: This research studies the development of a non-formal education model to improve competencies of teachers at community learning centers, where competencies can be categorized into learning management competency, student development competency and classroom management competency. The main objectives of this research are 1.) To analyze the problems and needs for improving competencies of teachers at the community learning centers. 2.) To develop the non-formal education model based on the concepts of Self-directed Learning and Accelerated Learning that are designed for improving the teachers" competencies. 3.) To study the results from applying the non-formal education model. 4.) To analyze factors that support and factors that obstruct the usage of a developed learning model.

The research also utilizes techniques from Descriptive Statistics, Content Analysis, Quasi-experimental designs Parameter and Non-Parameter statistical analysis. According to the Critical Event Model, the research is divided into 4 phases, as follows: Phase 1: Analyzing the problems and requirements in teachers" competencies development at community learning centers. This follows step 1 to step 4 in the Critical Event Model. Phase 2: Developing a non-formal education model based on Self-Directed Learning and Accelerated Learning for teachers" competencies development at community learning centers. This follows step 5 to step 7 in the Critical Event Model. Phase 3: Studying results from applying the non-formal education model. This follows step 8 in the Critical Event Model and refers to training of ACCELERATE model synthesized by the researcher. This phase includes 100 hours of training execution. Phase 4: Analyzing supporting and obstructing factors to the usage of a developed learning model.

Expected benefits are 1) The body of knowledge and information on the problems and requirements of teachers" competencies development at community learning centers. 2) A non-formal education model based on Self-Directed Learning and Accelerated Learning for teachers" competencies development at the community learning centers. 3) Concepts of developing a model for effective training to improve competencies of teachers at community learning centers. 4) A prototype of training program to improve competencies of the teachers to be able to organize non-formal and informal education for adult learners at community learning centers.

Background and Significance of the Issue

One of the most critical factors that lead Thailand to a non-competitive position is the inadequate competencies of people. It was found that productivity of Thai labor is lower than many other countries in Asia. Most of Thai labor has low education i.e. 60 percent of them only completed elementary education (Office of the Education Council, B.E. 2547). The lack of adequate education in Thai people is still a national critical issue, as shown in a research from the International Institution of Management Development (IMD) that Thailand is the 47th highest in education out of 55 countries (Kittisak Prohmrat, B.E. 2551).

The lack of adequate education of Thai people is increasingly critical and has been affecting national development for several years. All parties in Thailand from the government to private sectors and communities realize and have taken concrete actions to resolve it. Some of the obvious improvements are shown in the Compulsory Education Act B.E. 2545 that has extended compulsory education to 9 years. Further, the National Educational Program (B.E. 2545-2549) that realizes and intensively promotes continuous education; also the Royal Act on Promotion of Non-Formal Education B.E. 2551 that clearly indicates in article 5 that all people can obtain quality non-formal education. This provision on quality non-formal education accords with the Law of National Education stating, "people with or without basic education have their rights to obtain non-formal education appropriately, as per procedure and operation indicated in this Royal Act (the Ministry of Education, B.E. 2551)".

Non-formal education is becoming more important in developing the people. The Department of Non-Formal Education, the Ministry of Education, is one who plays significant roles in managing the non-formal education. The Department organizes the non-formal education in 3 categories: Ordinary Education, Vocational Education and Non-Formal Education for those who do not have opportunities in normal school systems. This allows students to learn, improve skills and attitudes, and therefore become able to live an appropriate quality of life and be an important part of the country's development (Chonlatit Iamsam-ang, B.E. 2551).

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The teachers in the Community Learning Center have played crucial roles in the Non-Formal Education system. They provide counseling services, conduct classes or run all types of learning activities. They work continuously over 8 hours a day, and over 5 days in a week (Office of the Non-Formal Education, Bangkok, B.E. 2552).

All of the teachers in the Community Learning Center have completed a minimum of a bachelor degree (Chonlatit Iamsam-ang and team, B.E. 2551). Less than 10% of them currently, however, have a degree in education. They attend at least two training courses a year, but the courses have yet to fulfill their needs. They indeed still require knowledge or training courses especially on education for adult or working learners and techniques to conduct classes for a group of over 80 adult learners (Hatairat Deeprasert, B.E. 2551).

Apart from the learners' background knowledge, degree of their intention, and models of the education, the other important success factors to non-formal education system is the teachers at the community learning centers. Reducing or correcting the problems of qualifications and skills of these teachers will certainly contribute in greater success of the non-formal education system.

Research Objectives

1. To analyze the problems and needs in improve competencies of teachers at the community learning centers. These competencies include learning management competency, student development competency, and competency in class management.

2. To develop a non-formal education model based on the concepts of Self-directed Learning and Accelerated Learning, which are designed for improving teachers' competencies.

3. To study the results from applying the non-formal education model.

4. To analyze factors that support and factors that obstruct the usage of a developed learning model.

Research Definitions

Teacher at Community Learning Center is one who works at the Community Learning Center on a regular basis. He or she organizes the activities and support learning of the targeted participants in the community, builds the learning processes according to the course objectives and community's needs, manages the community's needs survey, gathers information of the community, and provides learning media and materials. He or she additionally co-operates with community network to promote and develop learning community through counseling, communication, demonstration, following up and concluding the activities.

The Non-Formal Education Model is a set of learning components with a definite group of targeted learners and objectives. Its pattern, content, method and length of learning or training time are flexible and varied to fit the targeted participants' needs and capabilities. It also defines, at standard levels of requirements, methods to evaluate learning results, in order for grading or certification.

Self-directed Learning is a learning process where the learner takes main responsibility over the learning activities. The learner defines course objectives, methods and achievements himself, with the support or assistance from teachers or co-learners.

Accelerated Learning is a learning process where learning methods and relevant components are organized in a flexible and enjoyable way. It emphasizes that participants learn things at their full capacities. It also incorporates well-researched memory techniques that direct participants to customize learning processes and manage knowledge for themselves.

Competency of the Teacher is the ability to combine knowledge, skills, motivation, attitudes and personal attributes together. As a result, the teacher efficiently performs the activities and achieves remarkable success.

Learning Management Competency is a competency of the teacher, which can be classified into 1.) The ability to develop and improve learning courses 2.) The ability to elaborate the contents or knowledge 3.) The ability to organize participant-focused learning processes 4.) The ability to use and to develop innovation and information technology to manage the learning processes 5.) The ability to measure and evaluate learning results.

Student development competency is a competency of the teacher, which can be classified into 1.) The ability to instill morals and ethics 2.) The ability to develop life skills, physical and mental health 3.) The ability to instill democratization 4.) The ability to instill the essence of being Thai 5.) The ability to organize learner's care and support system.

Classroom management competency is a competency of the teacher, which can be classified into 1.) The ability to manage the learning atmosphere 2.) The ability to gather information and documentation of class/ course 3.) The ability to direct and control the class.

Expected Benefits

1. The body of knowledge and information on the problems and requirements of teachers' competencies development at community learning centers that can be a critical input to develop required competencies of the teachers in executing their work. By fulfilling required competencies, the teachers can effectively organize learning activities in the community learning centers, which, as a result, bring great benefits to learning capabilities of the participants. This promotes long-life learning habit, as well as strengthens knowledge aspect in the country's population.

2. A non-formal education model based on Self-Directed Learning and Accelerated Learning for teachers' competencies development at the community learning centers. The model can be further developed to improve teachers at nation-wide community learning centers. It can

also be applied to improve development processes for other group of teachers or lecturers. Participants will accordingly develop continuous learning skills and proceed to their full capacity.

3. Concepts of model development for effective training to improve competencies of teachers at community learning centers, and bring it to model other aspects of training development. Successful implementation of it would bring Thailand to a country with advance learning capability.

4. A prototype of training program to improve competencies of the teachers to be able to organize non-formal and informal education for adult learners at community learning centers.

The Conceptual Framework

Research Procedures

This research is performed by utilizing techniques in Descriptive Statistics, Content Analysis, Quasi-experimental designs, Parameter and Non-Parameter statistical analysis. It is divided into 4 phases according to steps in the Critical Event Model, as follows:

Phase 1: Analyzing the problems and requirements in teacher's competencies development at community learning centers. This follows step 1 to step 4 in the Critical Event Model, which are 1) Identifying the Needs of the Organization, 2) Specifying Job Performance, 3) Identifying Learner Needs and 4) Determine Objective.

Phase 2: Developing a non-formal education model based on Self-Directed Learning and Accelerated Learning for teachers' competencies development at community learning centers. This follows step 5 to step 7
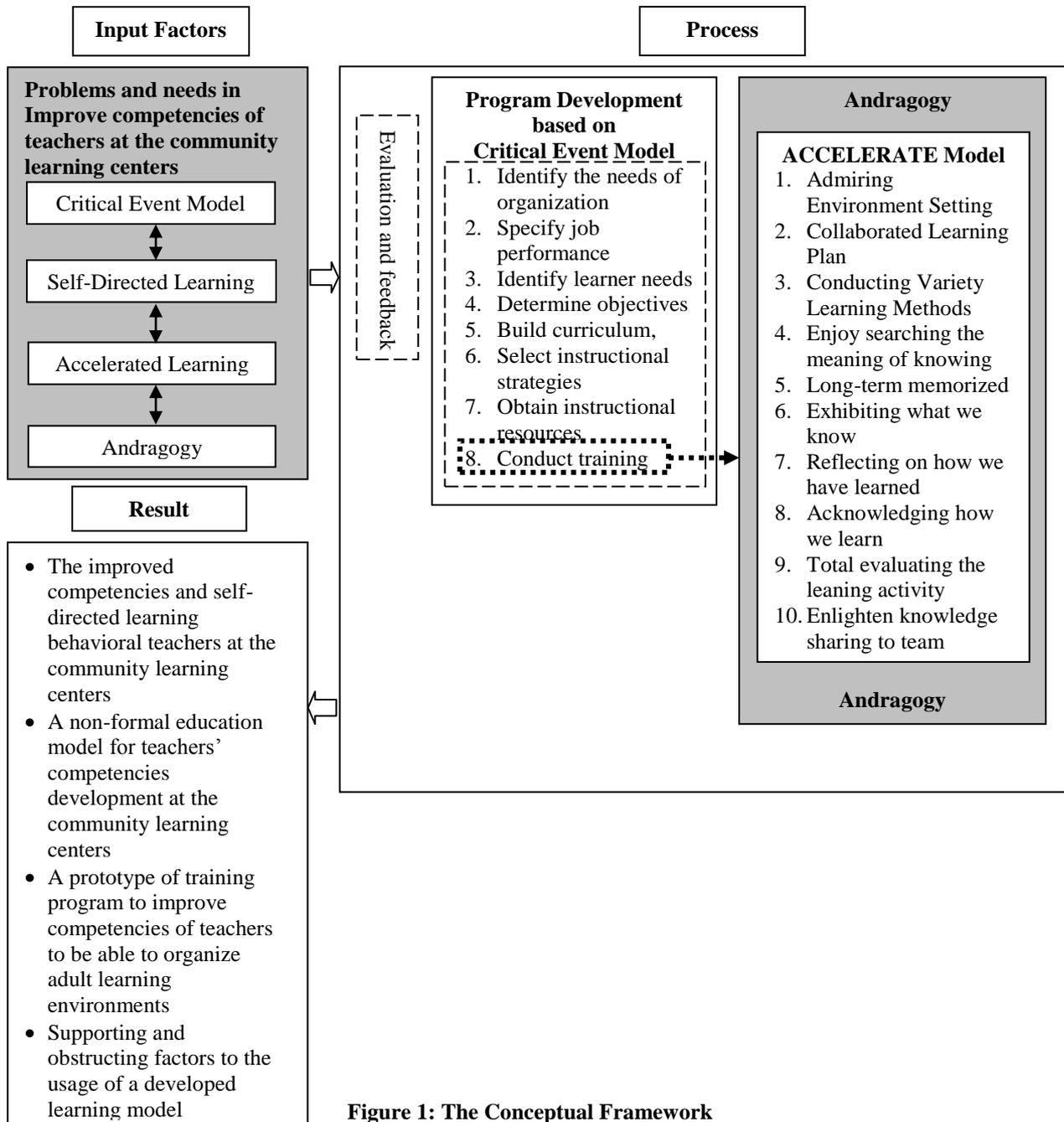

Figure 1: The Conceptual Framework

in the Critical Event Model, which are 5) Develop the Curriculum, 6) Select Instructional Strategies and 7) Obtain Instructional Resources.

Phase 3: Studying results from applying the non-formal education model. This follows step 8 in the Critical Event Model, which is 8.) Conduct Training. This connects to detailed steps of training program of ACCELERATE model synthesized by the researcher (refer to the conceptual framework to develop non-formal education model for teachers at community learning center). This phase includes 100 hours of training execution.

Phase 4: Analyzing supporting and obstructing factors to the usage of a developed learning model.

Relevant Theories and Concepts

1 Teacher Competencies

The Civil Service Commission has defined the term "competency" as behavioral attributes, which result from knowledge, skills / abilities, and other attributes that people can utilize to achieve remarkable performance in the organization. In showing a competency, one must have knowledge, skill/ ability and other attributes (Civil Service Commission, B.E. 2550). Competency of teachers and educational personnel means the ability to combine knowledge, skills, motivation, attitude and personal attributes together. As a result, the teacher efficiently performs the activities and achieves a remarkable success (Chatcharin Chuanwan, B.E. 2552). The National Institute for Development of Teachers, Faculty Staff and Educational Personnel (B.E. 2553) has developed a tool to assess teacher competency, according to standard levels required for specific positions and professions. This comprises both Core Competency and Occupational Competency that covers Functional Competency and Specification Competency, which can be further categorized into several competencies. In order for teachers at community learning center to reduce the problems of learning management for adult learners, it is essential that the teachers be improved in the areas of Learning management competency, Student development competency and Classroom management competency.

2 Andragogy

Andragogy is mentioned most among various adult education theories. Knowles (1980) defined Andragogy as science and arts in helping adults to learn. Adults are inspired to learn subjects from the benefits of their knowledge and interests, focusing on subjects having immediate relevance to their work and/or personal lives. They are ready to learn and realize the importance of time. One who aims to succeed in organizing learning programs for adults needs to engage Andragogy principle? The training model should engage Andragogy principles to develop effective learning of teachers at the community-learning center.

3 Self-directed Learning

Self-directed Learning is a well-known concept for adult learning management. Knowles, et al (2005) said the individual had deep aspiration and took his own initiatives for learning activities. Brockett and Hiemstra (1993) said self-directed learning brought positive results from learning activities. It allowed participants to solve problems in their preferred ways. Griffin (1983) pointed out that self-directed learning was due to real life experience learning. Boud (1982) said that self-directed learning was a form of study where the learner plans his or her own activities (student-planned courses). In summary, self-directed learning allows learners to have their own freedoms to learn. Individuals aspire to learn what they are interested in, by setting their own objectives, selecting learning processes and source of information, and learning by him. The concept is best applied to training teachers at community learning center, as each teacher is assigned to several grades and courses, especially with wide variety of topics. If the teacher understands and applies self-directed learning for their learning and exploring new knowledge, this will reduce the issues and increase their capability in teaching preparation.

4 Accelerated Learning

Several theories have been developed, based on an understanding of human's recognizing, learning, memorizing and brain working mechanism, with aims to improve efficiency of learning and training with a big number of participants. Over these 40 years, Accelerated Learning has been a widely accepted theory. Rose and Nicholl (1970) said that accelerated learning was an exciting development and would revolutionize traditional teaching methods. Meier (2000) stated that accelerated learning was the most advanced teaching and learning method in use today. It is based on the brain and learning research. It utilizes various types of learning media, causes full participation from learners, supports all learning styles, initiates learning process, creates an enjoyable learning atmosphere, and emphasizes on output from real learning. Porter (2001) indicated that accelerated learning empower students to learn faster, more effectively and joyfully. IAL (2004) believe that accelerated learning create multiple opportunities for individuals to move beyond their limiting beliefs, by providing learning process and environment to stimulate the learners' hidden potential. Combining techniques from Accelerated Learning, Andragogy, and Self-directed Learning will result in an effective and efficient training model. The teacher will develop self-learning skills from Self-directed Learning, enjoy the learning atmosphere and fully utilize his capacity to learn subjects more effectively and efficiently through Accelerated Learning.

5 The Critical Event Model

Several techniques can be applied in the development of a training model for adult learners. Developments of training models for teachers at community learning center have characters of development for human resources in an organization. One of the well-known programs is the Critical Event Model (CEM) by Nadler (1982). It was developed from a series of events, which should occur in designing of training program of all operations in an organization. The researcher selected

Nadler's Critical Event Model as CEM aims at producing work products that truly fulfill requirements of the organization, and encompasses evaluation and feedback at each phase, which corresponds to nature of an adult learning program whereby learners' participation is required.

This research is to study the development of a non-formal education model, which aims to improve learning management competency, student development competency and classroom management competency for teachers at the community-learning center. It encompasses concepts and techniques in Self-directed Learning together with Accelerated Learning, while utilizes program development style under Nadler's Critical Event Model, and refers to Andragogy adult learning strategy.

The research is currently under phase 1. The researcher is designing 7 research instruments, i.e. 1) Questionnaires to study problems and requirements, 2) An interview list to study problems and requirements, 3) A questionnaire for evaluation and feedback to collect ideas and suggestions on the developed training model 4) A pretest to assess learning management competency, student development competency and classroom management competency . 5) A posttest to assess learning management competency, student development competency and classroom management competency. 6) An assessment of readiness to self-directed learning. 7) A questionnaire to analyze relevant factors, strengths and weaknesses of the developed training model.

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