

Abstract

Thai higher education is seriously facing challenges from the globalization stream. A prevalent fact is university students' environment is unfit for learning. For example, there are family problems, easily accessible debauchery places and popularity of modern technology. These distract students from learning in class. Moreover, it has been found that teachers usually emphasize lecture-based teaching. Thus, students are further removed from learning process. This research aims to find out how we can manage higher education and into what form we should put it to be rid of these besetting challenges and develop an effective form of education.

This study is a field work research which aims to develop the form of learning management for higher education by applying the concept of 'Brain-Based Learning' to social science education in three universities: Ubon Ratchathani university, Thammasat university (Lampang center) and Silpakorn university, experimenting in 7 courses of these 3 institutions, taught between the 1st semester of the academic year 2005 to the 1st semester of the academic year 2006.

The concept of 'Brain-Based Learning' indicates that the human brain has the natural potential for learning. Physical factors have little to do with intelligence. Instead, efficient learning is the consequence of directing the learning process to be in alignment with the nature of the brain. For example, the educating atmosphere should be challenging to learning. The focus should be on learning from practice. Students should be stimulated to think rather than learn by rote. The power relation between teachers and students should be reformed in the way that teachers take the role of advisors instead of knowledge spoon-feeders. The style of education should be aligned with the learning nature of the brain, and the learning purpose should be channeled to multiple intelligence rather than attempting to induce students to have intelligence in only one aspect.

According to the research result, learners who had gone through the learning procedure to which the 'Brain-Based Learning' concept was applied had the tendency to develop themselves to be enthusiastic learners. Learners had new points of view towards the style of learning in which one is the knowledge builder. Learners had obtained the learning skills that make it possible for them to pursue further knowledge and they had obtained higher emotional quotient, because the part of the brain that is responsible for emotions is the significant motivator for the learning and

memorizing process. The teachers found out that there had been changes in points of view and redirection of education management, which led to education improvement in courses that can stimulate learners to build their own knowledge rather than the teachers being the knowledge feeders.

A suggestion for this research is if the improvement of higher education is truly expected, the paradigm of education management needs to be reformed, the present curriculum quality elevated, the educating process improved with learner center policy, the teachers' attitude adjusted in the way that they allow students to be enthusiastic learners. There are five principles to the basic recommendation of the research team: (1) For the learning objectives, the educating style should not be rigidly fixed to the content of the courses or curriculum. (2) Design the education and smart media. (3) Be concerned about the knowledge that students already has. Design the learning that correspond so higher thinking can be further developed. (4) Be concerned about factors that promote learning, especially reforming the relationship between students and teachers, the latter being also the learners, instead of only conveying knowledge. (5) Be concerned about factors that cause limitation to learning. The learners' background may not be ready for building thinking process. The quality of the instruments may be poor, and there may be other distractions that may divert the students' attention from studying.

However, in the long run, the 'Brain-Based Learning' concept should be applied in the entire Thai education system, from pre-college education. The network of teachers and learners who are interested in this concept should be built so that they can discuss and share ideas. The learning instrument development process should be generated and the learning resources among universities should be managed. These should lead to laying the academic foundation that can develop students to become efficient and contribute their knowledge to benefit society.