

Applying Educational Psychology for Spiritual Teacher Development in Thailand

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ABSTRACT

The purposes of this research were 1) to study educational psychology for spiritual teacher development; 2) to develop an educational psychological curriculum of spiritual teachers training applying reflection process; and 3) to assess spiritual teacher development in Thailand using the educational psychological curriculum. Action research was used for research design following 4 phases of PAOR process. The target group was 120 teachers from office of the basic education commission who registered. Data were collected by using interview, observation and reflection note taking. Content analysis and analytic induction were used for data analysis. The research results were as follows: 1) Educational psychology for spiritual teacher development was the integration of reflection process and the threefold training to enhance the level of professional learning community. 2) The educational psychological curriculum of spiritual teachers training was developed into six steps. They were: knowing what to do - correcting and changing - learning from doing - leading to new understanding - acting from reflecting - thinking of innovation. 3) Spiritual teacher in Thailand was developed as a professional learning community through six steps consisted of (1) to know the role of spiritual teacher, (2) to adjust oneself followed by threefold training, (3) to learn how to be a best practice teacher, (4) to change a good attitude being spiritual teacher, (5) teaching with Buddhist integration into classroom, and (6) to create effective learning innovation.

Keywords: Professional Learning Community, Reflection Process, Spiritual Teacher, Teacher Training, Threefold Training

Introduction

Teacher training has become the most important aspect in order to develop student's learning. From year 2017 until 2019, Ministry of Education in Thailand has provided the budget for full time teacher to attend an effective curriculum that will be able to apply in classroom activities. There are more than one thousand courses have been approved and can train teachers in different skills. Spiritual Teacher training curriculum is one of the courses that has approved from Kurupatana. Kurupatana is the organization that works under the Ministry of Education and has responsibility of teacher training in Thailand. Spiritual teacher training program has been developed in order to train teacher by applying educational psychology into the workshop.

Educational psychology is an important aspect for professional teacher Kawtrakul (2001) who is the current educator in Thailand mentioned that teachers need to learn and practice teacher psychology in order to 1) know student characteristics, 2) help teacher to understand students' personality, 3) help teacher know about student differentiation, 4) help teacher to manage classroom environment appropriately to the student, and 5) to encourage teacher to consider about all variables that can effect to classroom activities and student's learning. Training following educational psychology concept can bring teachers to understand students on the aspects of student's nature, to prepare learning activities for the appropriate ability, encourage teacher to prepare classroom environment with collaborative learning, and help to make close relationship between teacher, students and parents, help the school administration to plan for support student's learning, and encourage student to be ready for living in the society.

In addition, appropriated learning activities for the development of student's achievement should be designed in variety and diversity, and it should cover 5 learning aspects which are 1) cognitive domain, 2) affective domain, 3) psycho-motor domain, 4) process skill, and 5) integration. These five aspects or skills of learning activities are usually used in general and worldwide (Khaemane, 2007; Editorial Department, 2011).

From the state of educational management showed that Thai teacher need additional development the innovation and teacher development is still on the process of development for the readiness and the equality of teacher development in ASEAN community (Pornsrima, 2013). For student development, it was also needed for enhancing their learning ability. Therefore, the spiritual teachers is an educational personnel who can train student having three skills which are cognitive domain, psychomotor domain and affective domain in order to be ready for the learner in the 21st century.

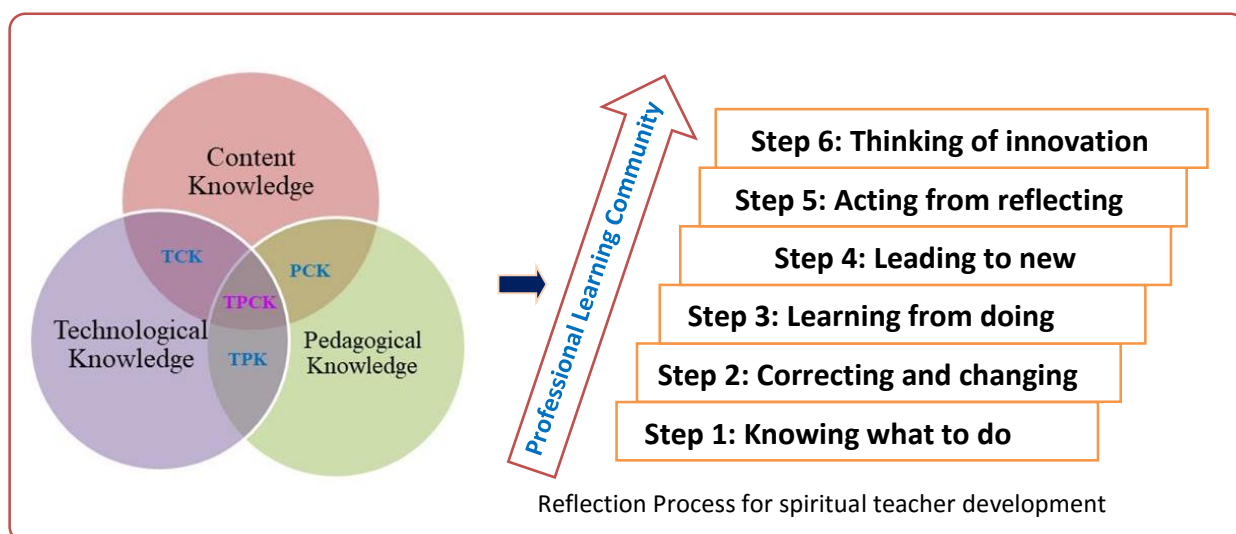
Reflection was used as a key measurement in order to develop in various professions. Reflection was a strategy to develop people or staff for learning new methods from their jobs. Moreover, reflection was the process to develop both personal and organizational level. Teacher

training course is also need relection for developing the ability of spiritual teacher. In recent year, reflection has become an important mechanism to push forward of self-development to gain high potential in the profession, and supported to be a collaborative learning community. (Gustafson & Bennett, 1999; Randle & Tilander, 2007; Epp, 2008; Fade, 2009). Reflection process on spiritaul teacher training can be divided into six steps which consisted of knowing what to do, correct unclear thing, learning from doing, change previous understanding, perform new methods of action, and action from reflection. (Klomkul, 2011). Therefore, this research article has 3 purposes were 1) to study educational psychology for spiritual teacher development; 2) to develop an educational psychological curriculum of spiritual teachers training applying reflection process; and 3) to assess spiritual teacher development in Thailand using the educational psychological curriculum.

Methods

Action research was used for research design following 4 phases of PAOR process (Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988). Research design has developed of each process as below detail: Planning (P) is the process of writing the curriculum based on three as aspects which are content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge and technological knowledge. There are six steps of reflection process are developed for the curriculum planning as shown in below figure.

Figure 1: Planning process of curriculum development



Action (A) is the process of doing workshop with teacher who registered and attended all activities that provided from curriculum.

Observation (O) is the process of studying the teacher's transformation before and after attending the workshop. Qualitative data will be collected in this process.

Reflection (R) is the process that will do after teachers have attended the workshop. Teachers take the activities that they have been trained in the curriculum to apply it in their classrooms, then write the reflection related to six steps of reflection process.

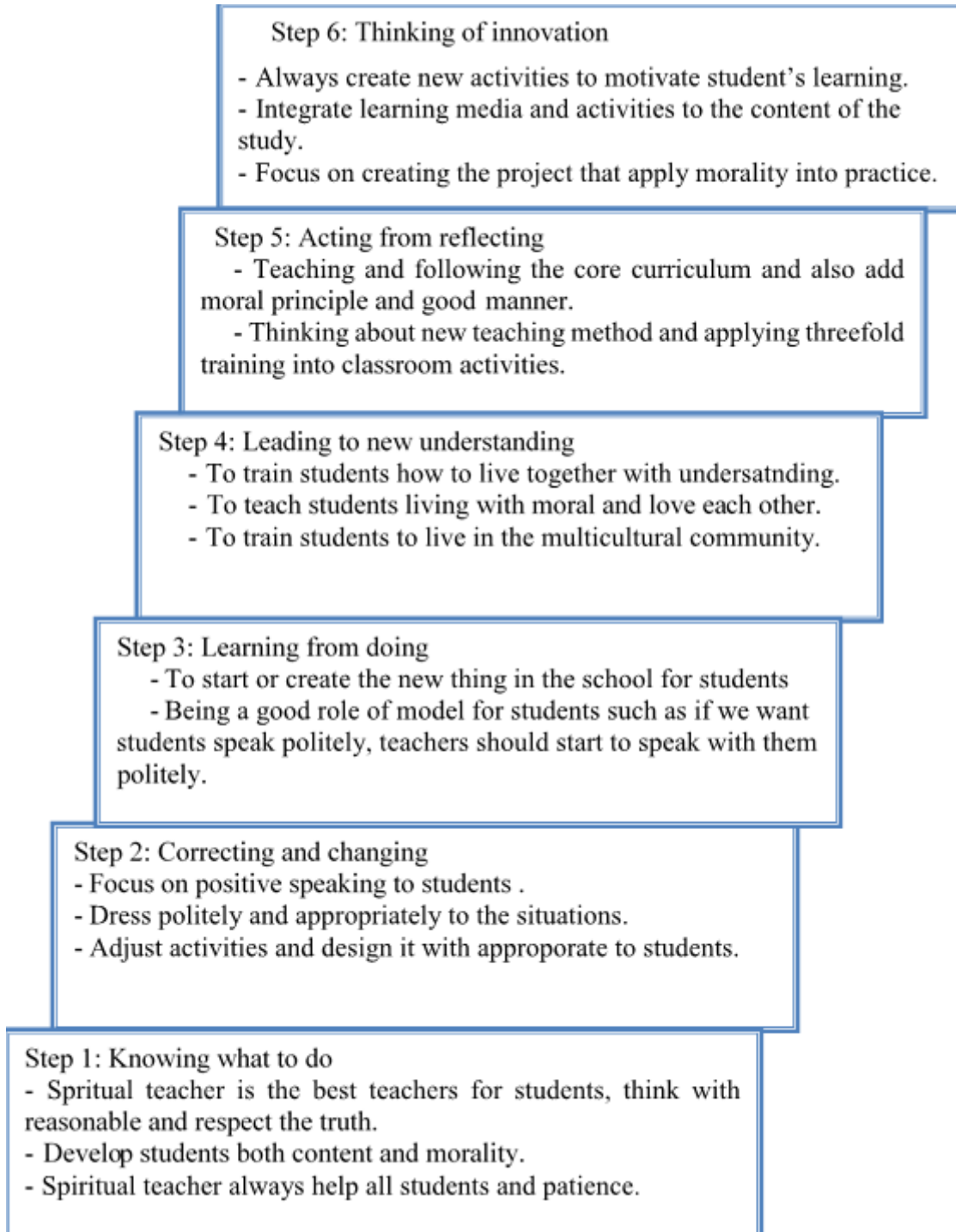
The target group was 120 teachers from office of the basic education commission who registered. Data were collected by using interview, observation and reflection by note taking. Content analysis and analytic induction were used for data analysis.

Results

The research results were as follows:

1. Educational psychology for spiritual teacher development was the integration of reflection process and the threefold training to enhance the level of professional learning community. The threefold training is the principle that schools in Thailand have applied in to classroom activities. Students are trained to do good action, having positive thinking and be able to think and solve problem with critical thinking. Teachers were trained to be able to teach students to fulfill with these aspects by using teaching technique with integration that can lead them to understand student's nature. In addition, teachers can prepare learning activities for the appropriate ability, to prepare classroom environment with collaborative learning which can encourage student to be ready for living in the society.
2. The educational psychological curriculum of spiritual teachers training was developed into six steps. They were: knowing what to do - correcting and changing - learning from doing - leading to new understanding - acting from reflecting - thinking of innovation. Results from the study were shown as below figure:

Figure 2: Six steps of educational psychological curriculum for spiritual teachers training



Source: Teacher reflection from the workshop in 2018

3. Spiritual teacher in Thailand was developed as a professional learning community through six steps consisted of (1) to know the role of spiritual teacher, (2) to adjust oneself followed by threefold training, (3) to learn how to be a best practice teacher, (4) to change a good attitude being spiritual teacher, (5) teaching with Buddhist integration into classroom, and (6) to create effective learning innovation. Results from some teacher's reflection were shown as below:

"The spirituality of teacher into students usually observes from daily activities within school such as showing students how to dress with appropriately on the special event relating to religious day. School always set moral camp for training students including teachers as well. Teachers ususally attend to the meeting and share knowledge based on classroom designing with content, pedagogy and moral. In addition, spiritual teachers should think insight and develop themselves before transfer to students, then the real result will occur with students who follow with discipline"

(Teacher A, Reflection: 11 September 2018)

"In teacher development, it should have philosophy for human development by covering physical development, mental development, wisdom development and social development. Religious principles can be applied especially the threefold training that focus on behavioral development, mental development and wisdom development. Teaching method and pedagogy are also important for transfer knowledge into students with different activities. Spiritual teachers should know how to integrate all sciences and techniques into the classroom in order to develop students to enhance the 21st Century skills."

(Teacher B, Reflection: 11 September 2018)

"Sharing knowledge activity is a good activity that help teachers to understand each other and to change idea and experience of teaching. This activity helps us to recall our teaching experiences including how to be a right teacher. This is a great opportunity for me to revise myself especially to have to chance of sharing with friends. Then, I can take what I have learned from others to apply in my classroom. Therefore, all activities that conducted in the workshop are very good and should extend the time of training and make it continually in order to have sustainable development for the teacher."

(Teacher C, Reflection: 11 September 2018)

"Faith and believe are the key point to initiate teacher to work with spirituality. Teachers believed principal and students believed teachers, the good people will return to the society. The most important thing is that to transfer belief and good action from one generation to the next generation. Spiritual teachers have also played important role to initiate students with moral and ethics. Teachers who motivated and encouraged students continually always showed their role with professional teachers. In addition, these teachers are called "Truly spiritual teachers" who we need it in the society."

eacher D, Reflection: 11 September 2018)

From the above reflection, results from teachers' opinion were very interesting. It can be summarized the main concept of spiritual teacher with self-development as below figure:

Figure 3: Reflection of Spiritual Teachers with Self-Development

Reflection of Spiritual Teachers with Self-Development

- The main target is to focus on spiritual teacher training in order to have holistic teacher development.
- Faith and believe are the key point to initiate teacher to work with spirituality.
- Spiritual teacher always motivate themselves to develop their attitudes for being a professional teacher.
- Teacher development should follow philosophy and psychology for human development. It should start from physical development, mental development, wisdom development and social development.
- If spiritual teacher starts from self-development, then result will truly transfer to students.

Discussion

The research finding showed that reflection process on spiritual teacher training was divided into six steps which consisted of knowing what to do - correcting and changing - learning from doing - leading to new understanding - acting from reflecting - thinking of innovation. This finding was related to the process of practice that was presented by Schon (Redmond, 2004). This reflection process also related to theory of practice that Argyris and Schon had been presented since 1974. This reflection process was considered to be used for develop people and organization to shift from normal working habit into an effective working habit in order to gain their professional development. It was the process of learning that correlate with transformative learning theory (Mezirow, 1996 cited in Taylor, 2018). Therefore, spiritual teacher development has applied reflection process to be the guideline for developing the workshop activity within the curriculum. Teachers will be trained for the transformation in order to adjust and change to be good attitude and spirituality including proud to be a teacher.

The discussion of spiritual teachers related to the results that spiritual teacher was developed as a professional learning community through six steps consisted of (1) to know the role of spiritual teacher, (2) to adjust oneself following by threefold training, (3) to learn how to be a best practice teacher, (4) to change a good attitude being spiritual teacher, (5) teaching with Buddhist integration

into classroom, and (6) to create effective learning innovation. In order to develop these six steps of reflection spiritual teacher should have good attitude to teaching job. This reason is related to the finding of the research called “Working with emotions in the classroom: future teachers’ attitudes and education” that conducted by Hernández-Amorós and Urrea-Solano (2017). Results showed that pre-service teachers have favourable attitudes towards dealing with emotions in the classroom. They also recognised the importance of teachers’ training in developing pupils’ emotional competence.

When teachers are trained to have spirituality, then it will lead to the community of social wisdom that have collaborative teaching and creating innovation for support student’s learning. Therefore, spiritual teachers are very important for educational development that related to the research of Laothong and Visethsuwanphum (2010) that proposed research on the component of spiritual teacher which consisted of responsibility to the duty, love and kindness, be patience, equality, and good role of model. These aspects are appeared in the spiritual teacher curriculum that have been developed and has been approved by Ministry of education in Thailand.

Conclusion

Spiritual teachers are the teachers who have developed themselves as a professional learning community through six steps consisted of (1) to know the role of spiritual teacher, (2) to adjust oneself following by threefold training, (3) to learn how to be a best practice teacher, (4) to change a good attitude being spiritual teacher, (5) teaching with Buddhist integration into classroom, and (6) to create effective learning innovation. These six steps have been developed under the curriculum of spiritual teacher training by applying educational psychology into the workshop. Full time teachers from office of the basic education commission have been registered and attended the workshop in the curriculum. Then, they reflect results after they have used in the classroom. They were also finding the opportunity to share their knowledge and technique with their colleague both inside and outside schools.

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