

# ENHANCING AND ENRICHING STUDENT LEARNING STYLES AND PERFORMANCE THROUGH WHOLE BRAIN LITERACY AND APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY INTERVENTIONS: A CASE STUDY OF ETHICS CLASSES

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**Abstract:** *The main objective of this action research is to investigate the impact of Whole Brain Literacy (WBL) and Appreciative Inquiry (AI) as instruction and organization development interventions (IDI/ODIs) on students' learning styles and performance in Ethics classes at Assumption University (AU) in Bangkok, Thailand. On that basis, a new learning process model was developed to raise standards and the quality level at AU. Action research was conducted with two main variables; student learning styles, with the WBL/Kolb learning process model; and student performance, described on the WBL template. At the developmental stage, WBL and AI were used as OD tools for a positive change from within. Students with potential learned effectively and grew holistically. Two Ethics classes with IDI/ODIs formed the experimental group while three other classes served as the control group and were conducted in accordance with traditional teacher-centered method. Both qualitative and quantitative measurements were used for data triangulation. The research instruments consisted of a self-assessment questionnaire, and a set of pre- and post-tests. To obtain qualitative data, focus group interviews and direct observations were conducted. The results show that WBL and AI had a positive impact on three student learning styles (feeling, doing, and thinking styles) and all aspects of performance (academics, self-esteem, sense of responsibility and creativity). However, it was found that there was no significant difference on student watching learning style.*

**Keywords:** *Instruction and Organization Development, Brain-based Learning, Learning Style, Learning Process, Whole Brain Literacy, Appreciative Inquiry, Performance.*

## 1. Introduction

“Education for all and all for education” has been the famous National Education Act motto since 1999. In the fast-changing and ever more competitive world in which we live, this motto has been gaining relevance. The role of education in preparing the next generations for the challenges ahead cannot be overstated. Higher education is no exception.

This article focuses on one higher education institution in Thailand; Assumption University (AU), one of the leading institutions in the country. Now in its 42<sup>nd</sup> year of existence, AU has been keeping pace with the exponential time and strengthening its identity as a pioneering organization. It continues to be an open system and respond to the many driving forces that keep shaping it such as the 15-year plan on higher education (2008 – 2023) and the

national standard and quality assurance. Another such driving force is, the upcoming ASEAN Economic Community (AEC), which represents another challenge - and an opportunity - for all higher education institutions.

Since AU is playing a key role in Thailand's educational sector, changes are essential not only for sustainable growth, but also for stakeholders' satisfaction. The initial sense of change took place during class observation. The data collected as a part of AU quality assurance process, also revealed some interesting facts. The Research Institute of Assumption University (RIAU, 2010) indicated that the top three dissatisfactions of students in terms of instruction and lecturer were attractive teaching styles, student-center basis, and teaching efficiency.

In 2010, the General Education courses were modified under the Thai Qualifications Framework (TQF) for teaching and learning effectiveness. This was an opportunity to redesign programs and courses for higher

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