

ABSTRACT

Rapid changes bring changes and challenges to students mainly in an aspect of education when opportunities are unequal and curriculum is not updated (Rushworth and Davis 2003a; Donnelly 2004; Rushworth and Davis 2003b; Laurie 2003). Most educational institutions at all levels fail to prepare graduates with necessary life skills for their future (Kelly 2003; Business Council of Australia 2006). In the 21st Century, life skills education especially in Higher Education System is very essential as this is the last stage of framing and teaching students before leaving from education system to their life reality. It is difficult to define particular skills that students may need due to different circumstances, lifestyles, value, culture, beliefs, and locations. Therefore, more skills they possess, more abilities they can cope with the challenges in life.

This research investigated the effect of organization development interventions (ODI) using three modalities namely: Whole Brain Literacy (WBL), Experiential Learning Theory (ELT), and Appreciative Inquiry (AI) in enhancing the 21st Century Life Skills of undergraduate students in Assumption University of Thailand. An action research was conducted in three phases; pre-ODI, ODI, and post-ODI where both quantitative and qualitative research methods were used to explore, assess and gather the data to enhance the life skills of students which included thinking skills, action-related skills, creativity skills, relationship skills, and self-management skills. The Design of the Action Research used two groups of 30 students each, the first group went through Organization Development Interventions (ODI) and the second group of 30 was the control group without the ODI. The findings reveal that OD interventions helped enhance the confidence level of life skills of the students involved in the study. As a recommendation, a new model on the process for enhancing the life skills of students called “Life Skills Enhancement Model for Students”: the Processes of Learning and Living on Purpose was developed.

The results show that OD interventions helped improve the 21st life skills of the students involved in the study particularly the five skill sets namely: thinking, action-related, creativity, relationship, and self-management skills. The overall improvement showed the higher confidence level of the 21st century life skills of the individual participant. Moreover, the students were able to define their life purpose/goals clearer, show better self-understanding, communicate positively, live on positive mindset, perform the holistic thinking, and reflect their experiences and knowledge in a learning process.

The researcher developed a model from the original conceptual framework after the interventions were implemented called “Life Skills Enhancement Model for Students”. Moreover, this research is useful and practical with those who work with children, youth, and students as well as Mental Health Treatment and Prevention, it helps to design techniques and activities to develop them in various setting and environment for creating more opportunities in learning, development, and exploring new knowledge, education, and experiences.

Keywords: Organization development interventions, whole brain literacy, appreciative inquiry, experiential learning theory, 21st century life skills.