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Effectiveness of outcome-based approach to design contents for training secondary school English teachers in Laos

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ABSTRACT

This research aimed at evaluating effectiveness of an outcome-based approach for redesigning contents (training tasks, instructions, and assessments) of a teacher training program. Research participants were three English secondary school teachers. The effectiveness was evaluated by assessing abilities of in-service teachers to use 15 student-centered teaching techniques to design activities to teach English, appropriateness of training contents and usefulness of abilities gained from the training. Therefore, the data were gathered by assessing trainees' abilities during and after training and interviewing them at the end of the training. The findings show that all of the in-service teachers have gained high abilities to use the 15 students centered teaching techniques for designing activities to teach English. The findings from interview show that the training contents are suitable for training the new teaching skills and they confident to use them. Therefore, high training achievement and very positive opinions found in this research confirm that outcome-based approach is effective to use for designing contents of training program.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Teacher professional development is important, because it is one way to upgrade the teaching and learning quality (Komba & Nkumbi, 2008), and it is worth to upgrade teachers' teaching techniques, since teachers can influence students' learning motivation (Daniels, 2011). They are the greatest assets and backbone of any education system (Rasmi, et.al, 2014), what teachers believe and what knowledge they have are two major factors that influence how they actually teach (Kauchak & Eggen, 1993), and to motivate students to learn, teaching techniques are important (Crookes et.al., 2013).

Therefore, Ministry of education has provided an in-service teacher training program for training 15 student-centered teaching techniques to secondary school teachers all over the country with the inquiry to improve quality of education in secondary school level. Before organizing the training, the training manual and training evaluations were created in the ministry of education. The manual contains 15 modules. Then training procedures and strategy to train as well as the knowledge in the training manual were trained to central key trainers who are responsible for training teachers in secondary schools around the country. Researcher is one of the central key trainers for helping in-service teacher to improve their instructional practices.

Here are some procedures to use when training: before training, one of the trainers presents purpose of training, importance of 15 teaching techniques and how they evaluate the training results. Next, secondary school teachers (trainees) are told to take pretests of 15 modules online. After that, trainees are divided into small group. Each group is responsible for studying some techniques in the training manual. Finally, each group presents the techniques that they have been assigned to do based on their understanding. After presenting each technique, trainees of other groups and trainers give comments and suggestions. At the end of the training, trainees are asked to do the posttests online again.

It is easy for trainers to train by assigning some techniques for each group of trainees to study and present, and then observe the results and give comments, however, it was observed that trainees only paid

attentions on studying the techniques that were assigned to do; they did not get deep insights and ability to use the other teaching techniques. Moreover, the given training manual is for training teachers of all subjects in secondary school level. Most of contents and examples are for training science teachers. Therefore, a new training manual for training English teachers as well as instructions/methods and evaluations were redesigned by using an outcome-based approach (OBA), which uses desired training outcomes as the guideline for designing the training contents. Then it was used for training English teachers who are teaching in the secondary schools.

2. RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

Main purpose of the research is to evaluate the effectiveness of using OBA for designing contents of an in-service teacher training program. The effectiveness is shown by abilities of trainees on using the 15 teaching teachings for designing activities to teach English, appropriateness of the training contents and confidence to use the techniques for teaching. Therefore, below statements are two sub-purposes:

(1) To evaluate abilities of trainees to use 15 teaching techniques for designing activities to teach English.

(2) To identify opinions of trainees toward the appropriateness of the training contents and confidence to use 15 training techniques.

3. METHOD

3.1 Design

This research used Research and Development design (R&D), which consisted of four phases: (1) establish the problem, (2) develop instrument to solve the problems and research instruments, (3) use the instruments in practice and collect the data and (4) analyze, summarize and present results of the research.

3.2 Research samples

The population of this research was three-service teachers, one woman who are teaching English at the Sathid secondary school. The three teachers are known as trainees who attend the training, practice using the new teaching techniques, present each technique with example, and give feedback and scores for other trainees. This means that they are observers, commentators and evaluators when they are not the presenter of the assignment.

3.3 Research instruments

Two types of research instruments were used to collect the data: tests (pre and posttests) and semi-structure interviews.

Tests: 15 teaching techniques were trained, so 15 pretest and 15 posttests were conducted. The pretests were done before and during the training. The tests assess two dimensions: (1) definition of the being trained teaching technique and (2) model of using the technique. Total score of each dimension is 10. Only trainer/researcher assessed the results of the tests. The posttests were done at the end of the training. The tests assess three dimensions: (1) definition of the being trained teaching technique, (2) model of using the technique and (3) trainees' abilities to use 15 teaching techniques for designing activities to teach English. Total score of each dimension is 10. Trainer/researcher and two trainees assessed the results of the tests.

Semi-structure interview: The interview was used for interviewing the trainees in group in order to find out their opinions on the appropriateness of the training contents and their confidence to use the 15 teaching techniques. The interview was conducted at the end of learning term. It takes about 30 minutes. While interviewing researcher took notes the important points related to the appropriateness of the training contents and their confidence to use the techniques.

3.4 Data collection

The data were collected along the training processes: Before starting the training, trainers presented purpose of training, training desired learning outcomes, training technique and strategy to assess. Before and during the training each technique, trainer assessed prior knowledge of the being trained teaching techniques, specifically its definition and model. Then at the end of training each teach technique, trainer gave a posttest that consists of definition, model for using the technique and use the model to design activities to teach. After doing each posttest, each trainee presented the done work. The trainer and two trainees observed, and then gave comments and scores.

3.5 Data analysis

The quantitative data was analyzed by using descriptive statistics such as: the mean and standard deviations. The qualitative data from the interview was summarized, grouped, ranked, transcribed, and presented.

4. RESULT

Based on the results of analyzing the quantitative and qualitative data, the results are presented based on the purposes of the research: abilities of trainees to use 15 teaching techniques for designing activities to teach

English and their opinions on appropriateness of training contents and confidence to use the 15 training techniques as shown in Table 1.

Table1 Teaching abilities in 15 teaching techniques

Module that contains teaching techniques	M	SD
M1 Experiential teaching technique	9.40	0.67
M2 Experiment-based teaching technique	9.44	0.60
M3 Discovery teaching technique	9.26	0.73
M4 Simulation teaching technique	9.45	0.60
M5 Role play teaching technique	9.52	0.65
M6 Gamified teaching technique	9.18	0.70
M7 LAOPDR teaching technique	9.52	0.58
M8 Inquiry-based teaching technique	9.56	0.58
M9 Problem solving teaching technique	9.41	0.67
M10 Project-based teaching technique	9.37	0.66
M11 Interactive teaching technique	9.56	0.59
M12 Brain storming teaching technique	9.41	0.67
M13 Buzz session teaching technique	9.37	0.61
M14 Think-Pair-Share teaching technique	9.59	0.58
M15 Question and Answer teaching technique	9.37	0.68
Average total	9.43	0.64

The table shows that the trainees obtain very high ability to use all 15 teaching techniques, since the mean of each technique is more that 9 out of 10. The trainees achieved the highest score in module 14: Think-Pair-Share teaching technique (M=9.59; SD=0.58) out of 10 scores. They achieved the lowest score in module 6: Gamified teaching technique, but the mean score is still high (M=9.18; SD=0.70) out of 10 scores.

A paired sample T-test was conducted to compare the scores of the pre-test and the post-test. The results showed that there was a significant difference in the scores of the pre-test (M=3.75, S.D.=2.48) and the post-test (M=9.44, S.D.=.21); t (29) = 12.35, P< .05 as presented in the Table 2.

Table 2 Pre-test and post-test scores

Comparison	Pre-test		Post-test		t	p
	$\bar{X}$	S.D.	$\bar{X}$	S.D.		
Competence of in-service teachers on using outcome-based approach	3.75	2.48	9.44	.21	12.35	.000

The findings showed that trainees significantly improved their ability to define the meaning and usage of 15 teaching techniques after the training, since the mean score of the post-test was considerably higher than the mean score of the pre-test (9.44 > 3.75). The low mean score of the pre-test proved that the trainees lacked knowledge to define and to describe the use of 15 teaching techniques but they learned greatly from the training.

The finding showed that trainees felt very satisfied with the contents of training. They said that the training contents were very organized and appropriate for training the 15 teaching techniques to teach English. Here are some statements that were summarized and gathered from interview:

One trainee A said "*I like the organization of the training manual. It is easy to follow, since it starts with the introduction of the manual, it purposes, following with training outcomes, training techniques and evaluation*"

One trainee B added that "*it is easy for me to assess my own ability to use 15 teaching techniques, since each module shows the desired outcomes in the first step. Moreover, I like it when assessments assess the abilities based on training outcomes of each module*"

One trainee C also commented that "*it is easy for us to learn, because the contents of each module are short. They are about only the definition, model and example of using the model. Having these tasks, we have the pictures of how to use the model well*"

All of them agreed that the training instructions and assessments were very effective. One statement shows "*it is good that the trainer gave us the chance to practice all of the desired skills in each module*" one added that "*and it a good idea that you gave us the chance for describing the definition, model and using the trained teaching technique*".

In terms of confidence, the finding showed that they all felt very confident to use all of the training technique. When the question was asked "to what degree do you feel confident to use these techniques?" the answers were:

Trainee A answered, "*for me, 95 percent", trainee B said, "I think I can use them 90 percent" and trainee C said, "I think I can use them all very well*".

5. DISCUSSION

Main purpose of the research is to evaluate the effectiveness of using OBA for designing contents for training. The results show that OBA is effective for designing contents for training, because the training achieves positive results that trainees obtained very high abilities to use the 15 teaching techniques for designing activities to teach English (M=9.59; SD=0.58). Their abilities to describe the meaning of each technique and its teaching steps have been improved as it was shown in table two that the mean score of the posttests has been increased from 3.75 to 9.44. Moreover, the trainees satisfied about the training contents and they have confidence to use all of the 15 techniques.

It is not wondered that trainees had very high abilities on using 15 training teaching techniques for designing activities to teach because the contents were designed based on the desired training outcomes of the training program. Moreover, it is easy for trainees to pay attention on what need to learn and to achieve because each training module contains its desired outcomes and contents for practicing. Therefore, trainees can pay attention on practicing and achieve the desired outcome of each model easily.

And it is not strange that many users used desired learning outcome to design tasks in different areas such as: to design activities to teach in UBD lesson planning mode (Wiggings & McTighe, 2012), to building a learning program in the department, school or central educational level (Kember, 2005; Biggs & Tang, 2010), to design training policies and practices (Cedefop, 2009), to provide a common framework of reference and accountability to the AUN quality assessment process (AQRF, 2015), to reform the curriculum (Wilson, 1996 Jansen, 1998), since by using the outcomes as the guideline to design contents can obtain achievement in practice as in this research.

Moreover, it was confirmed that using desired learning outcome could help teachers to have clear ideas to design tasks to test (Burns, 1987; Spady, 1988; Hansen, 1989; Nyland, 1991; Pollock et.al., 1992; Marzano, 1994; Brown, 1997), could help students to upgrade their self-managed learning, critical thinking, problem solving, adaptability, communication skills, and interpersonal skills & group work (Kember, 2005; Nuangchalerm & El Islami, 2018) and could foster an atmosphere of learning (Lansari et.al., 2007).

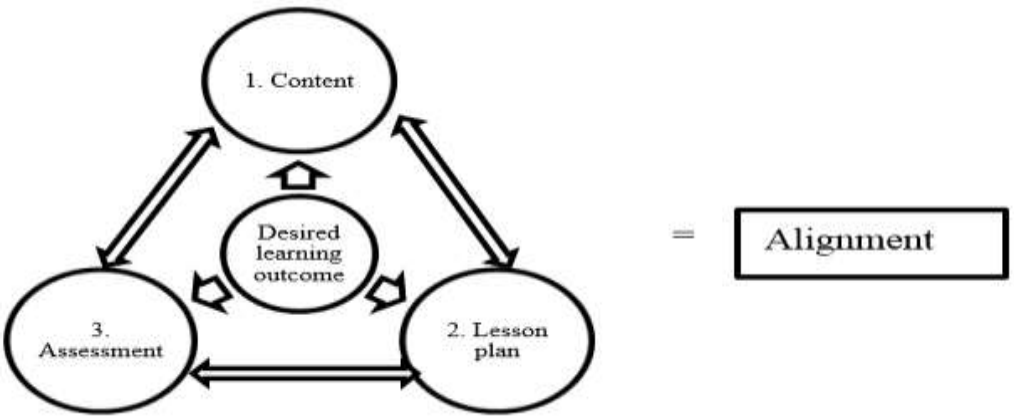

Figure 1 The outcome-based approach framework
(Adapted from the Outcome-based education framework of Spady, 1994)

When using outcome-based approach for training, the training outcome can show the real capacities of trainees, since the outcome in outcome-based approach is not defined by the knowledge but the skills or abilities (Spady, 1994). Trainees could achieve the ability to use 15 new training techniques to design activities to teach English when training activities in the program were designed by using outcome-based approach or desired learning outcomes of the program. The mean score of the posttest is 9.44 out of 10. Because of the success of using desired learning outcome to design activities to teach or to train, many the learning outcome. The findings in this research show that trainees achieve the desired outcomes of the training and they felt happy with the training activities (content of each module, training instructions, and assessments). Therefore, it can be assumed that outcome-based approach is effective for designing activities for training.

6. RECOMMENDATION

Although the research achieved the successful results, the number of samplings was small. The further study needs to include bigger samplings with different characteristics of the trainees who are from different schools or areas, for examples teachers who are teaching in the rural schools and in the town, or variety of degrees in order to confirm more effective results. The outcome-based approach can be used for designing activities for teaching and training other subjects; therefore, teachers or further researchers can use it to design contents and then can use similar research instruments or adapt them to conduct the similar research.

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