



DEVELOPMENT OF DISTANCE EDUCATION MODEL FOR EDUCATION FACULTY, RAJABHAT UNIVERSITIES

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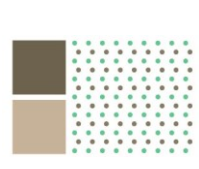
Abstract

The purposes of this research and development were 1) to examine existing situation and the way to develop distance education for the Faculty of Education, Rajabhat University 2) to develop the distance education model for the Faculty of Education, Rajabhat University 3) to try out and evaluate the distance education model for the faculty of education, Rajabhat University. The research was divided into 3 stages. Stage 1: identifying key elements of the distance education model. The identification consisted of distant education literatures and research review in addition with the survey research. Sample for the survey composed of 40 presidents, 40 vice-presidents in academic affairs, 40 deans of education faculties, 63 head of academic programs in education, 63 teachers and 840 students in the Faculties of Education, from Rajabhat Universities. Stage 2: developing the distance education model. The model was firstly constructed based on the elements found in the first stage and was improved following suggestions from qualified persons. Stage 3: an improved model was tried out and evaluated its effectiveness. Its features were then brought into seminar by inviting concerned participants to provide comments and suggestions. A survey to assess opinion of teachers in Faculty of Education on the quality of the model was finally conducted. Findings revealed that the distance education model for the Faculty of Education, Rajabhat University consisted of 7 elements, including administration and management, learning, teaching media, student, teacher, measurement and evaluation, and supportive services. In effective appraisal, learning achievement of students after learning the subject was higher than before learning. The satisfaction of the model was at a high level on all aspects including a high level of positive attitude of students on the subject. Behavior in applying the subject content into everyday usage was also high. Both of the seminar participants and teachers from the survey considered that the model was appropriate. An expansion of this distance education model to use for other subjects offering in other faculties of Rajabhat University was highly recommended.

Keywords: development of distance model for education, distance education, Rajabhat University, Faculty of Education

Introduction

Education is one important process of life. John Dewey points out that education is, the same as life, always changing (Sampanyuth, 1997). Human has to commit lifelong education and human resource development, thus, requires the enhancement of self-directed education. As Knowles explains, self-directed education is a crucial tool for lifelong education because it directs human into learning independent of external precondition (Knowles, 1975). In



Thailand, capability of life-long work and adjustment of graduates has been the focus of The Second 15-Year Long Range Plan on Higher Education, which is in effective until 2022 (CHE, 2007).

It is evident that distance education can play a vital role in promoting self-direct education and lifelong education. Sumalee Sungsri advocates that distance education can be applied for both formal school system and informal education approach, which its main target is adult learners (Sungsri, 1996). By selecting appropriate means, it can bring education to continuing outreach various groups of population. Distance education should therefore be adopted in higher education institutions for better equitable provision of education, especially Rajabhat Universities, which committed itself as the University for Local Development. Despite the considerable total number of 40 universities situated across the country, the Universities, the Faculty of Education responsible for teacher education in particular, still face with the limitation of resources and innovations for the development of effective distance education. This research seeks to provide the distance education model that the faculty can be adopted to overcome such limitations.

Methodology

This research and development was divided into 3 stages.

Stage 1: The objective of this stage was to identify elements of the distance education model for the faculty of education, Rajabhat University. The identification consisted of distant education literatures and research review in addition with the survey research, using a questionnaire and structured-interview schedule, conducted to obtain information on the existing situation and the elements for developing distance education for the Faculty of Education. Sample for the survey composed of 40 presidents, 40 vice-presidents in academic affairs, 40 deans of education faculties, 63 head of academic programs in education, 63 teachers and 840 students under the faculties of education, from Rajabhat Universities. Samples representing administrators were drawn by purposive sampling, whereas the rest was drawn by simple random sampling technique.

Stage 2: This stage develops the distance education model. The researcher firstly constructed the model from elements found in the first stage. The model was then undergone an improvement process following suggestions from 13 experts in the field of distance education and evaluation. Research instrument of this stage was the experts' evaluation sheets and content analysis scheme.

Stage 3: In this final stage, the distance education model was tried out and evaluated its effectiveness. The "Health and Recreation for Quality of Life" subject was selected to teach by distant teaching. Samples for the teaching experiment were 32 second-year students majoring in primary education, who were drawn by simple random sampling method. Research instruments in this stage include 1) learning achievement examination, 2) distance education satisfactory test, 3) subject attitudinal test, and 4) applicability of subject matter into everyday usage assessment form. The model features was then brought into seminar by inviting 70 school administrators, teachers, students, and alumni graduated under the distance education program of Muban Chombueng Rajabhat University (MCRU) to share their views. Instrument for this activity was the seminar meeting minute. Finally, a survey using a questionnaire instrument to assess the opinion of 197 teachers under the faculty of education, MCRU, on the quality of the model was conducted.



Results

1. The elements of distance education for the faculty of education, Rajabhat University were administration and management, learning, teaching media, student, teacher, measurement and evaluation, and supportive services. Each element consisted of the following issues or activities.

Administration and management:

- planning of distance education program, including detail on benefit and break-even point of the program, and the plan must be reported to university administrators;
- clarifying of functions and responsibility of program staff especially for the following tasks, budgeting, staffing, supportive materials purchasing, document and media production;
- an assessment of the readiness of distance education program operation;
- preparation of course teaching plan by teachers;
- preparation of information to inform students systematically.

Distance education study process:

- setting up of teaching schedule and communication channels between teachers and students;
- preparation of teaching plan and determination of main and supplementary teaching media by teachers.

Teaching media:

Teaching media must be conveniently access by students e.g. provision of teaching materials, including reading materials, pictures and sound that easy to understand on website.

Student:

- specifying of student qualifications;
- provision of students' study codes;
- organizing of orientation session to inform students about self-direct and/or informal education concept, process of study, study plan, course specification, measurement and evaluation, and communication channels with teacher to receive information and submission of assignments.

Teacher:

- training of teachers how to prepare effective teaching plan;
- an assessment of readiness of teachers.

Measurement and evaluation:

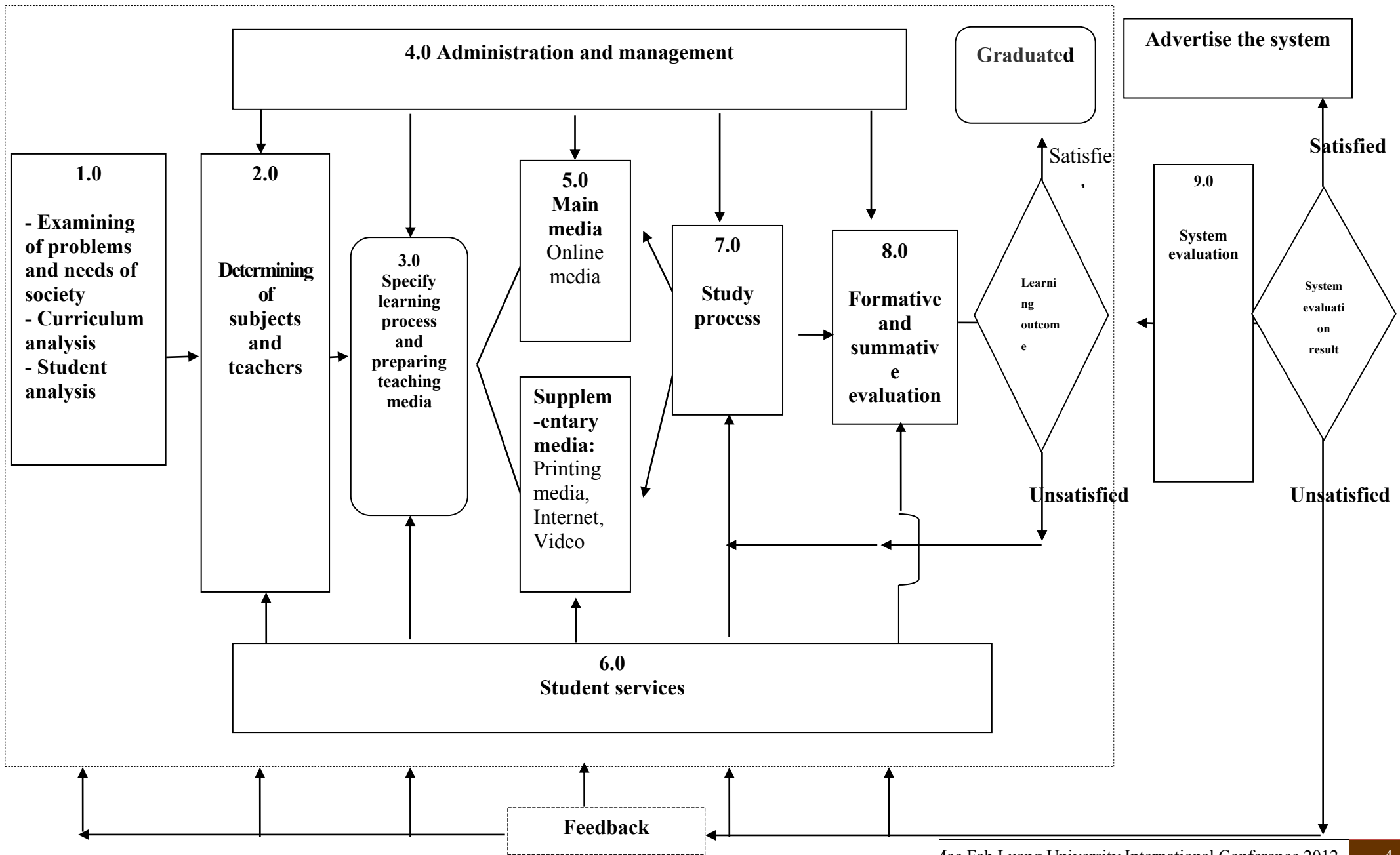
Measurement and evaluation must conform with objectives of the subject. In each course, teacher has to conduct pre and post test and evaluation of learning achievement must be both formative and summative evaluation.

Supportive services:

Supportive services include the establishment of computer center, library, IT experts who can provide consulting service online, and complimentary or extra teaching system.

2. Distance education model for the Faculty of Education, Rajabhat University, can be shown by the following diagram.

Distance education model for Faculty of Education, Rajabhat University



3. Effectiveness of the model

3.1 The model was effective after it had been tried out and evaluated.

- Learning achievement of students was at a good level.
- Satisfaction of the model was at a high level on all aspects of evaluation with some requests for an improvement in each aspect.
- Students had positive attitude on the distance education.
- Behavior in applying subject content into everyday usage among students was also high.

3.2 Most of seminar participants (78.2 %) agreed that the model was appropriate because it was process-oriented and not complicated, included complete elements, undergone try out process and reviewed by qualified persons. Most of teachers in the survey (83.2) accepted the model and supported that it could be used by any institution as a pilot project of distant education.

Discussion

As there were 7 elements of distant education model and each element contained a number of tasks or activities to perform, the followings were the activities that most of research participants viewed as essential for each element.

Administration and management: Planning and budgeting for the setting up distance education program.

Distance education study process: Study process of the model should base on the student-centered ideology and make it clear for implementation. Effective and sufficient communication channels must be established.

Teaching media: Teaching media must be easy to understand and suitable for self-direct study.

Student: Orientation session, supplementary teaching, and documents distribution system must be established and performed.

Teacher: Teacher must be able to write the documents and be able to select and produce appropriate teaching media.

Measurement and evaluation: Measurement and evaluation must cover content and objectives of the subject and must be done by multiple methods.

Supportive services: University must have well-equipped library and the fast distribution of documents and media system.

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