

THE EFFECT OF A NON-FORMAL EDUCATION PROCESS WITH CONTEMPLATIVE LEARNING APPROACH TO ENHANCE PURPOSES IN LIFE FOR THAI BACHELOR'S DEGREE STUDENTS

Arisa Sumamal, Wirathep Pathumcharoenwattana¹, Himaphan Raktaengam²
Chulalongkorn University, Thailand.
Mahidol University, Thailand.
E-mail: arisa.s@snru.ac.th¹

Received: March 23, 2021; **Revised:** April 5, 2021; **Accepted:** May 22, 2021

Abstract

The objective of this action research is to study the effects of a non-formal education process with contemplative learning approach to enhance purposes in life for Bachelor's Degree Students. The target group were first year undergraduate students from all faculties of Sakon Nakhon Rajabhat University. The sampling method was voluntary selection. The quotas were given to 6 faculties of Sakon Nakhon Rajabhat University; 4 for each faculty which became 24 students in total. The results of the study showed learning outcomes in 4 areas, namely 1) realizing their potential, 2) finding life goals that meet their needs, 3) practicing learning planning and design skills, and 4) being inspired from their action to follow their purpose. The result suggested that the learning process organizers should give students freedom to choose their own area of development, based on their interests and focus on connecting the learning experience with the student's internal growth.

Keywords: Contemplative Learning, Purpose in life, Non-Formal Education Process

Introduction

Undergraduate students can be considered as early adults (age 18-35), whose developmental task is to learn to adjust oneself to a new stage of life in many aspects, such as choosing a career, building relationships and finding one's own identity and ways of living (Havighurst, 1972). Therefore, promoting the development of students' purposes in life is essential for them to overcome challenges in life during this period. In addition, in the future, there will be unpredictable and complex changes in the world. Any jobs that once used to be believed to be stable will be substituted by artificial intelligence and technology. Some occupations might be relocated to foreign countries according to production bases with cheaper wages. Thus, people who will be able to survive

and to create valuable work must be especially skilled in that job, love what they do and develop their own skills continuously. That's why encouraging young people to explore their potential and choices, and develop purposes in life is an important mission of the people of this era (Robinson & Aronica, 2009).

Universities have a role not only in helping students not advance their academic knowledge, but also discover their own abilities, interests and what make their life make sense (Baik et al., 2019). Researches shows that having a purpose in life, or a sense that one is moving in a personally meaningful direction, plays an important role in youth psychological and physical well-being. It is critical to enduring academic motivation as young people are stressed out when they spend countless hours, days, and weeks on activities that they find meaningless. In contrast, students who have found purpose in their schoolwork usually gain so much satisfaction from their efforts that long hours fly by without much anxiety (Damon, Menon & Bronk, 2003). Besides, According to Seligman's (2002) theory of authentic happiness, having a sense of purpose, or a sense of belonging to or working toward something bigger than the self, represents the most enduring element of authentic happiness, which lasts longer than short life happiness from positive emotions and engagement.

A purpose in life is a stable and generalized intention that is at once meaningful to the self and at the same time leads to productive engagement with some aspect of the world beyond-the-self (Bronk, 2016). This definition emphasizes the important role of commitment, goal-directedness, and personal meaningfulness along with a focus on beyond-the-self concerns, and as such, it has been widely adopted among researchers studying purpose in western countries. However, little is known about how to help undergraduate students develop their purpose. Especially, enhancing students' purpose is not like teaching them how to set goal; what to do and when to accomplish, but it's rather about exploring their worldview, beliefs and values (Shin, 2013). Therefore, the researcher had developed and implemented a non-formal education process to enhance purposes in life of undergraduate student in Thailand, and this research aims to study the effect of its use. This non-formal education process was based on contemplative learning approach, which cultivate learners' calmness and awareness for first-person investigation in order to reconnect undergraduate students to what they find most meaningful with use of contemplative practice such as meditation, compassion practices, , deep listening, mindfulness, yoga, calligraphy etc. (Grace, 2011) Understanding the effect of this non-formal education process will be greatly useful for teachers to design their learning activities to enhance students' purpose in life more effectively.

Research Objectives

The objectives of this study was to study the effect of a non-formal education process with contemplative learning approach to enhance purposes in life for bachelor's degree students.

Research Conceptual Framework

Regarding the study of "Effect of a Non-Formal Education Process with Contemplative Learning Approach to Enhance Purposes in Life for Bachelor's Degree Students," there were varying related conceptual and theoretical implications in adult education and non-formal education put together in this action research. The fundamental aspects were developed from Knowles' theory and approach of andragogy (1970), Bronk's noble youth purpose development (2012), the action research approaches from Kemmis & McTaggart (1990) as well as contemplative pedagogy from Barbezat & Pingree (2012), Grace (2011) and Nilchaigowit & Chantarasuk (2009).

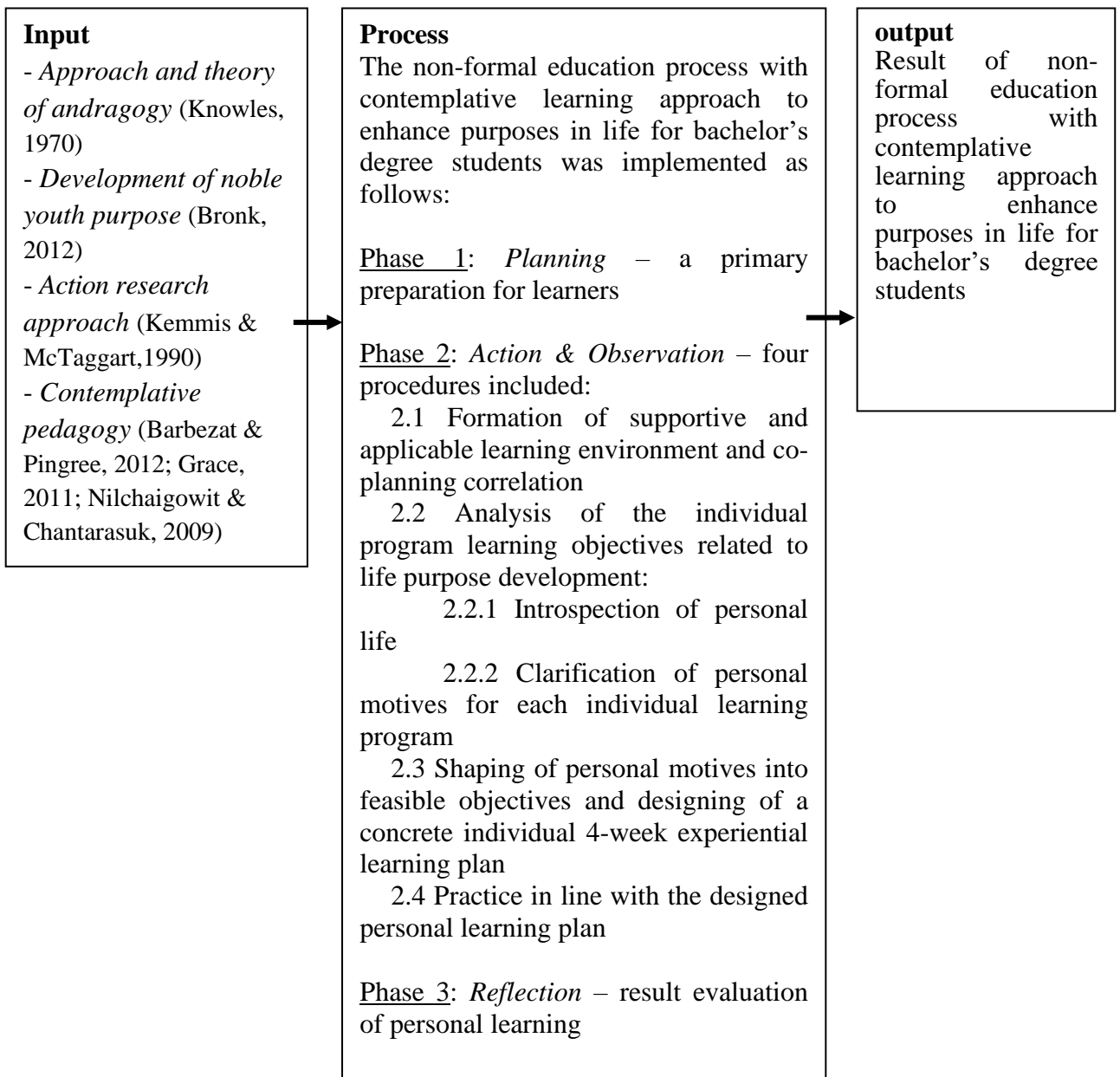


Diagram 1: Research Conceptual Framework

Research Methodology

Participants

The main target was bachelor's degree 1st year undergraduate students from all faculty at Sakon Nakhon Rajabhat University. As of the radical conversion from secondary educational lifestyle into university way of life, therefore, facilitative support of 'life purpose enhancement' in this stage is

extensively fundamental for these freshmen to set their precedent directions, to be capable of self-management and to feel their academic learning experiences more meaningful (Damon, 2009)

Voluntary Selection was applied to this research target recruitment. It opened for those students who were keen in taking part of the research learning activities. With a quota limit of 4 applicants from each faculty, there were 24 attendants in total recruited from 6 faculties at Sakon Nakhon Rajabhat University. The selection was based on 1) *Availability* in attending the sequential learning activities 2) *Interest and commitment* in self-growth, particularly in life purpose enhancement. To ensure the quality of attendants and research procedures, the number of targeted participants was slightly adjusted to suit the changing circumstance.

Location

The research was conducted at Sakon Nakhon Rajabhat University due to its encouraging policy in life skill reinforcement centered on personal uniqueness. This was just as well as subject to the University's identity for its graduate: "A moral citizen with a public mind and professional skills" (Sakon Nakhon Rachaphat University, 2015). Along with that, the regulation of its 2016 – 2019 student development plan also addressed on life skill enhancement projects to uplift the well-being of 2nd – 4th year students. (Office of the President of Sakon Nakhon Rachaphat University, 2016) . Therefore, the life purpose enhancement of 1st year students would lay a compliant groundwork that in sync with this regulation from the University's Division of Student Development. Once the freshmen could realize their life purpose at the beginning of their first year, they could as well bring the gained insights and experiences to further benefit from the University's following year learning activities in a greater extent.

Research Method

1) *Development of Process and Research Execution Plan* – The researcher firstly reviewed relevant concepts and theories and latterly developed a feasible process along with an execution plan. As the initial plan draft was concrete, consultation with honorable experts was proceeded accordingly for suggestions and improvements.

2) *Implementation* – the research execution plan was taken as follows:

Phase 1: Planning – This phase was a primary preparation of the learners. To set the voluntary selection in motion, the research learning activities were promoted through various channels, included noticeboards, social media, and referrals from lecturers in each faculty. Explanatory session of the program details was then arranged to clarify those who were interested. The recruited

students thereafter signed research participation consent forms and had pre-program interviews regarding their life purposes.

Phase 2: Action & Observation – This second phase, which focused on the practice of non-formal education process with contemplative learning approach to enhance purposes in life for bachelor’s degree students, comprised of 4 series of steps:

2.1 *Formation of supportive and applicable learning environment and co-planning correlation* – this first part involved activity sessions of ice-breaking, initial assessment and comprehension of life purpose, key concepts and instructions of learning contract facilitation, and role agreement between the researcher and the attended students.

2.2 *Analysis of learning motives related to life purpose enhancement* – this part consisted of:

2.2.1 *Introspection of personal life* – the learners were questioned to uncover and to reflect overall life experiences, key turning points in life, potential realization, personal values, needs, and desired self-growth areas that connect with desired social contributions.

2.2.2 *Clarification of personal motives for each individual learning contract* – the learners clarified and shaped their life purposes. In this stage, developed from previous introspection, the motives for their individual learning contract were closely examined to go align with the unfolding life purposes. Such that, they could begin thinking of what should be done to timely follow the purpose of their life.

2.3 *Shaping of personal motives into feasible objectives and designing of a concrete individual 4-week experiential learning plan* – this activity session was for the students to form their own “learning contract,” a self-development commitment to quest on necessary knowledge, skills, and relevant experiences that could lead to manifest their life purposes within 4 weeks trial.

2.4 *Practice in line with a designed personal learning plan* – the students followed their written learning contract together with keeping personal journal of all methods that they put into use as well as meaningful learning insights over the course. The researcher kept tracking along the 4 weeks and acted as a mentor who aided in any needed resources or coordination with any experts in the areas that the students wished to learn.

Phase 3: Reflection – This final stage was a result evaluation of personal learning. Through a verbal presentation and a written report, each student articulated their personal learning experiences and outcomes concerning the achievement of their learning contract. After completion of this reflective session, the researcher followed up collecting additional data via one-on-one interviews and focused group interviews. The interviews focused on the information regarding their realization, transformation as well as their life

purpose enhancement that appeared after conducted their individual learning contract.

The summary of research method is as follows:

Table 1: Research Method

Phase	Activity	Data Collection
<p><u>Phase 1: Planning</u> – a primary preparation for learners</p>	<p>Program promotion, student recruitment, program objectives and approach explanatory session, and pre-program interviews regarding life purpose.</p>	<p>In-dept interviews</p>
<p><u>Phase 2: Action & Observation</u></p> <p>2.1 Formation of supportive and applicable learning environment and co-planning correlation</p> <p>2.2 Analysis of program learning objectives related to life purpose development:</p> <p>2.2.1 Introspection</p>	<p>Workshop #1 Self-Discovery: Exploration of personal strength, hidden potential, needs, inspiration, and interest (12 hours)</p> <p>Activities included:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Opening and Ice-Breaking 2. Clarifying the Meaning of Life Purpose 3. Life Graph – contemplation of total consequential previous life experiences and pivotal turning points, underlying life resources, and deep listening skill practice 4. Wheel of Life – assessment of current life contentment from overall aspects of life 5. Leadership of Four Elements – learning of unique personal attributes and values 6. Personal Values – realization of own prioritized personal values and way of life that aligns with those owning values 	<p>Student learning trace records and researcher’s information field notes</p>

Phase	Activity	Data Collection
of personal life		
<p>2.2.2 Clarification of personal motives for each individual learning contract</p> <p>2.3 Shaping of personal motives into feasible objectives and designing of a concrete individual 4-week experiential learning plan</p>	<p>Workshop #2 Self-Planning: Formation of life purpose and development of student individual plans for personal 4-week experiential learning contract in relation to their life purposes (6 hours)</p> <p>Activities included:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Learning Reflection from Workshop #1 2. Five Years Prospect of Life 3. Learning Clarification – identifying determined learning areas and forming a committed “learning contract,” which comprised the topics of feasible objectives, methods, needed resources, key success factors, evaluation, and expected dates of achievement 	Student learning trace records and researcher’s information field notes
<p><u>Phase 3: Reflection</u> – Outcome evaluation of personal learning</p>	<p>Workshop #3 Outcomes Presentation: Student learning outcomes presentation and self-growth development plan after the end of 4-week learning contract (4 hours)</p>	Student verbal presentations and written journals
	Post-program data collection	In-dept interviews

Research Tools:

The applied research tools were:

- 1) *Pre-program and post-program in-dept interviews* were conducted to examine underlying information about life purpose of the students.

- 2) *Activity work sheets* and *reflection forms* were applied to keep track of students' overall daily learning experiences during the workshops.
- 3) *Student self-report forms* were introduced for students to record occurring comprehensions in line with personal learning contracts. The recorded subjects included their concrete action plans, outcomes, and personal reflections to journal their learning insights, emerging feelings as well as any observation or viewpoints about their personal transformation.
- 4) *Researcher's field notes* were to document all proceeded activities and relevant observations.

Ethical Consideration of Sample Group

The ethical consideration of this research protocol was undertaken on account of Chulalongkorn University Research Ethics Review Committee for Research Involving Human Research Participants. Following the research ethic approval, sample group meetings were arranged to introduce research stakeholders and to clarify research objectives, benefits for data contribution, data confidentiality, and absolute rights of withdrawal from research at any time. Shortly thereafter, the consent forms of research participation were signed. Correspondingly, data confidentiality was managed by data coding and person identification in which the researcher and limited assistants could only access. The research outcome presentation would be delivered by use of anonyms.

Data Analysis

Content analysis was performed on the data derived from researcher's fieldnotes, interviews, students' activity work sheets, reflection forms and self-report forms which allows the student participants reflected and wrote their inner experiences. The aim was to identify and describe the effectiveness of the non-formal education process on participants' inner growth and purposes in life (Lincharoen, 2012).

Results

The research findings were developed from data collection in all phases, which covered pre-program interviews; documentations over the course of the learning contract (researcher's field notes, all trace records from activity work sheets, workshop daily reflection forms, and student self-report forms according to personal learning contracts); and lastly, post-program in-dept interviews. After completion of the content analysis, the results of the study showed learning outcomes in the following 4 areas:

1. Realization of Personal Potential:

The conducted introspective activities throughout the process of life purpose enhancement had accommodated reflective spaces for the students to unfold their essential findings. To begin with, they reflected upon the previous life experiences of both positivity and negativity which issues and incidents affected their happiness, suffering as well as how they coped with the challenges. This helped them pinpointed their own viable resources, particularly the core competencies (both acquired knowledge and skills) and supportive relationships. Their gained insights proved that they could overcome difficulties and, at some length, inspired to further improving their well-beings. Some notable examples were mentioned below:

“With over 20 years of our life experience, we all had been through a lot of situations and issues. Some were full of happiness. Some were just painful failures. But, I believe, we do not need to get ourselves stuck in the past. We could make today life a better one. Just keep all the lessons as our own inner strengths and motivations.” (Boat, Interview, 12 January 2020).

Apart from this, students understood diverse human values, worldviews, and competencies. They learned that each person had a unique leadership, cleared self-doubts in their personal competences and helped them affirmed their positive attributes, as following insightful instances:

“In the past, I usually paid attention to people around me way too much and I tried my best to behave a certain way just to look okay for them. Since I was a noticeably quiet person, my parents usually worried about me living lonely behind all the scenes. Now I realize there's nothing right or wrong. We can just think of what best we could really do that will not trouble anyone. Whatever the outcomes would be, there are always new fruitful experiences that definitely fulfill our lives.” (Dew, Interview, 12 January 2020).

To put it briefly, self-realization of own potentials was found as the first practical ladder to self-awareness and self-acceptance. It brought the learners self-esteem and encouragement for their personal development.

2. Discovery of a Fulfilling Life Purpose

In accordance with self-realization of personal potential, the students were assigned to analyze and to determine their motives toward the 4-week personalized learning contract. The students chose to further concentrate on their new learning experiences based on their initial interests, needs, field of study, and comprehended competencies. As in the case of Ploy, who initially decided to study in Food Science & Technology at the Faculty of Science & Technology because of her parents' suggestions, even though she was not much interested in it. During this program, she saw her strength and happiness when she took care of others. Her learning contract, therefore, focused on the exploration of how she can help people in the profession of a nutritionist. She interviewed local

nutritionists about true values of this work. Ploy found inspiration and became ascertained that this profession would best fit for her, as her stated reflection:

“Nutritionist is not only to deliver foods. We spend time talking with patients about whether they can take the food and what they need. We give them comfort and help them become healthier. This style of work suits my personality to support people. Back then I was not thinking about this as much. I just did whatever it had to be done. After listening to those professional officers about their valuable career experiences and viewpoints, I wish to be like them. I want to do this kind of meaningful work much more.” (Ploy, Interview, 13 January 2020).

Another apparent case is from Belle whose parents had been working out of town since she was little. During her entrance examination, her parents moved back to Sakon Nakhon. They asked Belle to pursue her education in this neighborhood, but she preferred to study in the big city, which she believed could offer more prominent fortunes. That's why she often argued with her family, and felt regret. However, when it came to self-reflection of her true needs, she found that bringing happiness into her being and family was the definite answer. She came to know that if she had followed her original plan to shift her study to other places, it would have kept her away from her parents once again. For this reason, she began to embrace her current life and opened her heart to discover more about her chosen field of study. After her interview with dietitians, Belle grasped a clearer picture of its career advancement, which she believed it was not less promising than any other professions. This convinced and decisive realization relieved her doubts and worries as her following expression:

“Before the workshops, I was really terrible. I lived day by day. Everything was out of order; I had yet no close friend and found myself often quarreled with family. This program gave me spaces to talk myself out of this dilemma. I have started to feel positive and have seen brighter prospect of my life. No more suppressing feelings or deprivation to study here. And so, I have less heated arguments with my family as well.” (Belle, Interview, 13 January 2020).

Furthermore, clarifying a life purpose did not only center around the career path of the students, it also guided them to improve self-discipline. For example, Joe, a student of the Faculty of Industrial Technology, mentioned that there were regular sharing sessions of work-life experiences from his graduated seniors at the faculty, so he had no need to learn more about his future career. What was more of a problem was the well-balanced health condition. To lower the risk of keeping an eye on large machinery at such work, Joe chose his learning contract to boost his health discipline in daily exercise, as he cited below:

“I have seen many senior fellows have their health issues – mostly from drinking a lot of alcohol and deprived sleeping. As I know, there are some occasional urgencies at the factory. If we lost our control, the best for the factory company could offer maybe just only the injury compensation. But, you see, we could be disabled and could also lose our future. Safety is then the most concerning issue for me. So, I chose to look after myself by keeping my regular exercise and healthy lifestyle.” (Joe, Interview, 13 January 2020).

In summary, the discovery of a fulfilling life purpose can vary from the engagement of career pursuit, assurance of personal and family wellbeing and contentment, or attentive acquiring of self-discipline or certain skills for more progressive and productive quality of life.

3. Mastery of Personal Learning Plan and Design

According to pre-program interviews, it was found that the students perceived their life purposes as something rather board and could appear in far distance of time. In the processing of life purpose enhancement, the students firstly identified their own motives of a specific personal improvement, which got along well with their purposes. Latterly, students wrote their own "4-week learning contract", including 1) learning objectives, which came from their motives, 2) design of learning experiences, which included exploring some additional resources from available media, in-dept interviews with experts or professionals in the desired areas, and their practices, and 3) criteria to evaluate success of learning.

Notably, in the case, Knot, a freshman of the Faculty of Management Sciences, had learned to reshape his paramount purpose into clearly solid goals. Before the workshop, he dreamt to be successful as a business in cutting-edge technologies. However, he had not yet gotten something off the ground, because he did not know where to start. Toward his precise 4-week self-improvement program, he decided to learn the topic of “The Path to Become a CEO” from online sources, books, and interviews. Thanks to those profound conversations with the professionals, Knot actualized that doing a prominent business must begin with the right entrepreneurial mindset and skill set. He then began to follow through with the reality as well as the essence that could help to survive in the business world. This turned his attention to saving up his capital for future business. Knot reflected on his learning and pointed out that:

“I had too many scatter goals before I joined this program. Surprisingly, now my perspective has seriously changed. Way back then, I was quite hesitant and kept changing my plan time after time. During the program, I learned to work out on my life plan and how to ponder my next move thoroughly. My life purpose is now in the right focus, my supporting goals are sharply defined, and I am confident about all the plans.” (Knot, Interview, 13 January 2020).

For another instance, Lert pictured himself as a home economics teacher. Since he was in love with craftworks and he used to assist his former teachers in home economics class for younger fellows at school, he chose his learning contract in the practice of painting. From his one month long of this practice, he realized that he needed to give more time to learn thoroughly about problem-solving as well as to keep polishing his craft skills to reach his dream, as he mentioned:

“I have learned that to become a capable teacher, we must equip with some strategic plans, knowing how the first step is and the next. And if there are any unexpected things happen, we can provide rooms for the student's adjustments. Just like I did choose to paint in the first week. It was not appealing as I expected. And I kept practicing and practicing until I finally had my perfect paintings, much more than the first time I did.” (Lert, Interview, 12 January 2020).

In essence, the students had cultivated their skills of planning and designing on their own self-guided development. There were constant practices of short-term goal setting that was practical, realistic, and was promptly to take initiatives. The students were gradually progressive over time, step by step, rather than jumping into the furthest edge of success. The learned skills of planning and designing were also put forth in other areas of life.

4. Inspiration from Implementation as Planned

Taking actions as planned was found as a crucial aspect of self-growth, especially in self-fulfillment and inspiration. It brought them first-hand learning experience to a greater range. Such an action-oriented learning process thereby shaped and settled the fundamental mentality, emotional state, and discernment of the learners. As in the case of Soda, she set her goal of being the owner of a Thai rice noodle shop in her neighborhood. During her learning contract, she explored more recipes through some media and decided to set her survey trip in various cities. She got in touch with several local shop owners. They kindly gave her genuine advice and inspired her by their strong passion, serviced mind, and managerial knowledge. The trip was such an eye-opening experience. Soda came back with full intention to finish her study. In the meantime, she intended to earn her financial investments from online retailing and to become more economical. Besides, she would keep practicing her cooking skills in all kinds of Thai rice noodle recipes. Her search experience was noted below:

“If I had not been to this kind of learning contract, I might have been wandering carelessly. But here I am, I have trained myself to observe and looked out for those rice noodle shops. I got to see how they displayed the shops, what the customers' favors were, and I had the nerve to talk and ask from someone I barely knew, just like those generous noodle shop owners and my

stayed hotel owner. I was also moved by how well they did look after us. Once I experienced this, now I have my strong drive to follow my own ideas and purpose.” (Soda, Interview, 11 January 2020).

For another instance, Oui was keen on learning about coffee making. She had always been fond of tasting coffee at varying places, so she began to find out more about coffee making via YouTube channels. Afterward, she had reached a local drip coffeehouse owner who kindly offered her a coffee brewing try-out. This opened her worldview; a coffee machine was not the only one way to make coffee brewing as she knew. She reflected new finding as follows:

“Coffee making is such a sophisticated job. There are extensive details in each step. Start by selecting the fine coffee beans that we need to know the difference of where they are from. Roasting the coffee at the ideal temperature. Rhythmically dropping hot water into the filter-enclosed dripper added with the ground coffee beans. Every single step needs to be done with gentleness, delicacy, and calm. Otherwise, the flavor of the coffee will be spoiled without any appealing taste. I must thank the coffeehouse owner that clarified all the doubts I had. Now I become crystal clear and I am confident that I can do it well. ... When I brewed the coffee, my feeling inside just came straight out, that said: Yes, this suits me!” (Oui, Interview, 11 January 2020).

All in all, taking actions essentially led to learners’ motivation and inspiration. Over the course of the individual planned program based on their own interests, the learners had trained themselves to boldly putting on their thinking caps and taking actions accordingly. At the time they had started, they followed through and later unfolded the missing pieces that could further master themselves. Some had uncovered newfound know-how and reaffirmed their true passion and direction. Some had also encountered their inspiring experienced role models. This led to their motivation and inspiration for greater scale of self-improvement.

Discussion

Discussion

This research was conducted through an action research, which helped the authors to study the effect of a non-formal education process with contemplative learning approach to enhance purposes in life for bachelor’s degree in Thailand. Action research helped to identify the participants’ need and to connect the designed activities with real world practices. That is, the proposed program was developed, tested, and adapted using the target participants.

The findings showed that students' learning could be concluded in 4 main themes; 1) realization of personal potential, 2) discovery of a fulfilling life purpose, 3) mastery of personal learning plan and design, and 4) inspiration from implementation as planned. Firstly, students had self-realization of own potentials. It brought the learners self-esteem and encouragement for their

personal development. Then, they clarified their purpose in life which guided them to consider the quality of a desired life. They practiced self-directed learning skills upon the completion of 4-week self-development project, which they had made progression in knowledge, skills, and self-regards. This was consistent with Covey (1989), who said that self-awareness was about exploring one's yearning, potential and motivation, which led to accepting oneself at the present, moving forward to the future practically, and always opening one's heart for changes. The result that students felt their sense of purposes stronger after taking action with learning plan was consistent with Bronk's purpose theory (2012), which proposed that the more youth engaged and had commitment to what they found interesting, the more it gave sense of meaning to them naturally. Also, even though, not all students' purposes included making contribution to others or concerning beyond oneself at the beginning, but along the way they gained more experiences, they were inspired and could see more how they could help others. Besides, students were acquainted with self-planning, self-tracking, self-evaluation, and self-adjustment. This was the benefit of self-directed learning practice, which was a core concept of non-formal education. (Loeng, 2020)

The findings were also consistent with previous study of Schluckebier (2013), which indicated that university support system, exemplars and experiential learning were important factors that help university students develop purposes in life, and that purposes should be recognized as direction, not as destination. Therefore, once students started pursuing their purpose, they became conscious of capability to make their continual progress. About contemplative learning approach in this research, students practiced mindfulness, life-contemplation, self-reflection and deep listening, which was consistent with previous studies that these methods could help learners to see oneself unfolding through first-person investigation, so they were aware that they could control their lives with responsibility for self and others (Grace, 2011; Chongvisal & Boonyarit, 2018). Besides, one of the ground philosophies of contemplative education in Thailand was the belief that every human has truth, goodness and beauty in ones' heart, like a seed capable of growing under right conditions. (Nilchaikovit, T. & Juntharasuk, 2016) With this belief, the facilitators in this research acted like learners' friends, who respected their purposes, needs for learning and action plans, so that they could feel free from worries, be one's true self and find their learning relevant.

Conclusion

the effects of a non-formal education process with contemplative learning approach to enhance purposes in life for Bachelor's Degree Students. The target group were first year undergraduate students from all faculties of Sakon Nakhon

Rajabhat University. The sampling method was voluntary selection. The quotas were given to 6 faculties of Sakon Nakhon Rajabhat University; 4 for each faculty which became 24 students in total. The results of the study showed learning outcomes in 4 areas, namely 1) realizing their potential, 2) finding life goals that meet their needs, 3) practicing learning planning and design skills, and 4) being inspired from their action to follow their purpose.

1. For further research, it is recommended that those interested in enhancing learner's purpose in life can replicate the process of this research in developing university students, and study whether it can affect changes in individual's outcomes, such as academic adjustment, well-being, or flourishing. Moreover, in this research, the authors used several methods for collecting the evidence of students' learning. However, further research can implement other methods for evaluation of changes in behaviors with regards to purpose in life, for example quantitative measurement.

2. For policy recommendations, involved institutions (university, faculty, and program) should support student development by providing trainings, applying the non-formal education process with contemplative learning approach to enhance purposes in life for bachelor's degree students. Including life purpose enhancement into an institute's policy can be a way of encouraging the students to recognize their own and others values, having a good relationship among peers, and having good ethics, especially being responsible. Moreover, there should be policy to support and promote a facilitator training program in life purpose enhancement for teachers, leaders, managers, and those who work in higher education.

References

- Baik, C., Larcombe, W., & Brooker, A. (2019). How universities can enhance student mental wellbeing: the student perspective. *Higher Education Research and Development*, 38(4), 674–687.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/07294360.2019.1576596>
- Barbezat, D. & Pingree, A. (2012). Contemplative Pedagogy: The Special Role of Teaching and Learning Centers. In James E. Groccia and Laura Cruz (Eds.), *To Improve the Academy*, 31, 177-191. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Bronk, K. C. (2012). *A grounded theory of the development of noble youth purpose*. *Journal of Adolescent Research*, 27(1), 78-109. doi:10.1177/0743558411412958
- Bronk, K.C. (2016). *Purpose in life: A critical component of optimal youth development*. Place of publication not identified: SPRINGER. doi:10.1007/978-94-007-7491-9
- Chongvisal, R., & Boonyarit, I. (2018). An action research approach towards development of spirituality among Thai University Students. *Journal of Behavioral Science*, 13(2), 19–37.
- Covey, S. R. (1989). *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Damon, W., Menon, J., & Bronk, K.C. (2003). The development of purpose during adolescence. *Applied Developmental Science*, 7(3), 119-128
- Damon, W. (2009). The why question: Teachers can instill a sense of purpose. *Education Next*, 9(3), 84.
- Grace, F. (2011). Learning as a Path, Not a Goal: Contemplative Pedagogy – Its Principles and Practices. *Teaching Theology & Religion*. 14(2): 99-124
- Havighurst, R. J. (1972). *Developmental tasks and education (3rd ed)*. Longman, New York; London.
- Lincharoen, A. (2012). Techniques for qualitative data analysis. *Journal of Education Mahasarakam University*, 17(1): 17-29.
- Loeng, S. (2020). Self-directed learning: A core concept in adult education. *Education Research International*. Retrieved January 2, 2021, from <https://www.hindawi.com/journals/edri/2020/3816132/>
- Kemmis, S. & McTaggart, R. (1990). *The Action Research Planner*. Geelong:Deakin University Press.
- Knowles, M.S. (1970). *The Modern Practice of Adult Education : Andragogy vs. Pedagogy*. New York: Association Press.
- Robinson, K. & Aronica, L. (2009). *The Element: How Finding Your Passion Changes Everything*. Penguin books.
- Sakon Nakhon Rachaphat University. (2015) . *Philosophies, Visions and Missions*. Retrieved from <https://snru.ac.th/about/>

- Shin, J. Y. (2013). *Improving first-year intervention strategies at universities by focusing on meaning and purpose in life*. Colorado State University. Retrieved from <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED560398>
- Seligman, M.E.P. (2002). *Authentic happiness: Using the new positive psychology to realize your potential for lasting fulfillment*. New York, NY: Free Press.
- Office of the President of Sakon Nakhon Rachaphat University. (2016). *Student Development Strategic Plan 2016-2019*. Retrieved from <http://sdd.snru.ac.th>
- Nilchaikovit, T. & Juntrasook, A. (2016). *The arts of transformative learning facilitation: A contemplative approach (2nd Ed.)*. Leadership for the Future Project: Nakorn Pathom.