A Development of Mindfulness Enhancement Learning Model Based on Self-Realization

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Abstract

Discovering oneself is necessary for the initial self-development process which leads toward a happy and mindful living. Mindfulness is a thinking process that well facilitates our daily living. Being conscious to refrain from bad deeds and hold on to virtues is regarded as a way of mindfulness training. In learning process, the mindfulness as controller is applied on self-realization process. Thus, this paper proposed the composition of the study of mind, the theory of learning, and the application of IT to develop mindfulness enhancement model in daily life.

Self Realization as a Tool for Mindfulness Practice

Mindfulness means being constantly aware of what you are thinking, doing and the consequences of such thoughts and actions. Being occasionally mindful, if persistently exercised, could be a means of self-development. Practitioners who incorporate mindfulness in worldly living normally possess better systematic thinking process. They are able to concentrate when performing certain tasks, maintain moderate emotions and better control anger, stress or sorrow. Mindfulness can be practiced and, if exercised long enough, could facilitate the “realization of truth.” Countries with the highest Gross National Happiness score differentiate merit and demerit for children and allow them to grow up the way they are. This begins by asking children self-discovery questions to find out what they actually like while training them to neither harm others nor incline toward sinfulness. Thus, self-assessment is the best method since being happy or sorrowful can be realized by ourselves.

Because mindfulness is one of the important principles in Buddhism and assumes a role of a gate keeper to prevent wickedness, mindfulness is a core basic principle of self-development. Mindfulness training can be carried out in several ways. Human beings have the potential to achieve the highest meaning in life. This can be attained by utterly practicing self-discipline to fulfill mental and cognitive attributes together with observing a widely recognized and most common knowledge acquisition repertoire in natural learning system. Abhidhamma is a study that instructs a person to examine truths presented in Buddhist doctrine from self-practice. It is therefore based on scientific principles of experimentation and observation. Thus, practicing self-development requires the employment of developed wisdom to examine real life states to review and improve certain abilities. The analysis of daily phenomena forms a principle of “mind realizes emotion,” with mind meaning the perceiver and emotion meaning the perceived. Therefore, self-development learning must be practiced in parallel with mindfulness training. In turn, mindfulness training must significantly stress on “doing” in order to create perception of real life experience referred to as mindfulness, which has a primary meaning of being aware. Learners are responsibility to learn, examine and verify mental and life phenomena by developing appropriate states of mind for certain situations.

Mind and Emotion Study

Mind is mentioned in the Buddhism in the form of awareness or perception with a focus on mind training to achieve the state of balance. The study of the mind stressed by the Buddha is the same as that
of today’s psychologists: to study how a person can benefit the most from observing the mind. This approach particularly focuses on empirical aspect of the mind which are thoughts occurring in our minds and can be equally sensed by ourselves (สมภาร พรมทา, 1999). Mind study, thus, employs a thorough observation of thoughts and learning to attentively suppress, restrain or induce them toward meritorious and peaceful life. It can be concluded that sensible thoughts grows from the mind.

Emotion is an internal feeling that arouses a person to do or change within himself. It may be satisfactorily feeling, unsatisfactorily feeling or a mix. Emotion is not static: it is malleable and changeable all the time (same as the mind which is constantly pliable). In Psychology, it is regarded that human beings have another side of their life experience, meaning the mental and personal side of their emotions. Based on Behavioral Psychology, in days-to-days life, a normal person cannot perceive phenomena occurring at every moment, but he or she can rather perceive the overall emotional outcome of the incidents or situations they are facing ((Lopatovska I. and Arapakis L., 2011) In Biology, it is believed that habit, emotion and behavior derive from genetic predisposition (Beatty M.J. and McCroskey J.C. and Floyd K., 2009). This premise is used to explain that habits are predispositions of temperament which root in genetic-based neurological structure or brain activity. The brain is a factor behind mental process which also means that human’s thoughts, emotions, behaviors and experiences toward the surroundings depend on the brain which is determined by genetic codes.

By saying “mind realizes emotion”, human’s perception also consists of subcategories; starting from pure perception which is a perception that draws no causative effect upon a person’s cognition, for example, to see a lotus and perceive it simply as a lotus. The next step occurring in a worldly person is called “impure perception,” which is a perception that has causative effect upon a person’s cognition as well as positive and negative actions. In Buddhism, it is called “speculation.” For instance, the sight of the same lotus may inspire a musician to compose a song or remind those interested in religion to prepare flower offering for the monks. Speculation or dress up is divided into two parts: positive tendency (merit) and negative tendency (demerit) which corresponds with impure perception intuitively occurring at birth. The delicacy and complexity of a person’s perception vary from one another. The different details in a person’s life correlate with reactions to the circumstance and are expressed in their personalities (สมภาร พรมทา, 1999). With the development of scientific methods and instruments are used in several researches to seek rules that are applied to these phenomenons. The content of this approach involves both philosophy and science which yield conclusive knowledge that serve as practical guidelines. Therefore, science is a pragmatic philosophy used to develop and apply to technologies in order to facilitate human living (ระวี ภาวิไล, 2005).

**AI Application**

The development of computer system to possess humanlike behavior which is compared to the concept of cognitive learning in the sense that human thoughts are compared to data processing of computer system: perception, filing and retrieval, through computerized logical process to express human’s interactive ability.

*Expert System* is a form of AI employed in this research by simulating the capability of human experts to solve problems or make decisions (Jackson, 1998). In this paper, expert system is applied to diagnose the state of mind of users or learners each day, including select the proper feedback in term of specific teaching or doctrine to form positive thinking and mind. Once users or learners realize their state of mind, they also use this information to find the way to manage their own mind and trait in real life. This method is able to help enhance mindfulness at the same time.

**Teaching and Learning Theory: Cognitive Constructionism**

Constructionism Theory proposes that productive learning comes from a concrete creation of personal knowledge. Individually created knowledge is long-lasting and meaningful to the learner. It aims at “Learning to Learn” in order to learn within a context suitable for human development. It is the approach which integrates processes of each individual’s reaction to the world around them. Constructionism is, therefore, similar to the practice of Dhamma
Constructionism suggests that using technological tools is one of the appropriate approaches in making tangible objects out of the learner’s knowledge. Therefore, Constructionism stresses on the importance of instructional media which allow learners to construct their knowledge and learn from direct experience. An instruction that encourages students to build their own body of knowledge based on self-awareness focuses on developing the ability to think, do and solve problems by themselves. This teaching approach instills upon the learner a thinking method and knowledge finding process which helps control learning and memorizing process (Flavell J. H., 1979). Writing diary is one of the strategies that help construct and develop ways to control and regulate a person’s thoughts since writing is an intra-communication. Based on the literature review, it is found that diary allows the writer to reflect their learning and at the same time learn from what is written down (McIntosh M.E. and Draper R.J., 2001).

Diary Method has been used in research process to collect data in social science since 1920s (Tim M. and Nick C., 2007) to be self-report instruments used repeatedly to examine ongoing experiences, offer the opportunity to investigate social, psychological, and physiological processes, within everyday situations in which these processes unfold. (Niall B. and Angelina D. and Eshkol R., 2003). Benefit of data collection using diary is that they permit the examination of reported events and experiences in their natural, spontaneous context (Reis H.T., 1994). Diary Study Technology evolves from simple paper and pencil methods to get along with signaling devices and the emergence of electronic devices to increase the ease of providing reports and to integrate these reports with physiological and other collateral measures. From the literature review, writing diary will assist learners to control their cognitive process which covers action control, progress examination and evaluation (McIntosh E.M. and Draper J.R., 2001). Such thinking process is a strategy that creates and develops mental strategy which regulates and controls learning since learners normally conduct preliminary self-communication whether intentionally or unintentionally.

As the Buddha’s teaching approach, in order to make his teaching to be more understandable, he had demonstrated a scientific approach by asking his followers to self practice. For learning approach, there is the main difference on the origin of knowledge between Plato and Aristotle. Plato taught that intelligence is inborn and comes from within. Whereas Aristotle argued that intelligence is developed through interaction with environment. (Jumsai Na Ayudhya, 2003). However, Buddhists had been demonstrated that both are essential in obtaining knowledge. Learners need to interact with environment and then develop inner wisdom to analyze and synthesize things to be their own knowledge. By practicing this way, learners can discover and realize things by themselves and finally, create consciousness mind. In this paper, a learning process to enhance mindfulness is composed of three levels: body, sub-consciousness and consciousness.

Another important aspect of the learning process is intuition. Einstein said that “intuition is not result from deliberate intention or program, but comes directly from the heart” (Hoffman and Dukas, 1973). In order to be able to use intuition in the learning process, and have been given to control the mind. The most popular method practicing among Buddhist is the “The Awareness of in-and-out breathing or Meditation” (Rahula, 1959).

The National Education Act of Thailand in Chapter 1, Section 6: General Provisions: Objectives and Principles states that “Education shall aim at the full development of the Thai people in all aspects: physical and mental health; intellect; knowledge; morality; integrity; and desirable way of life so that they are able to live in harmony with other people.” ((1999/2002)). That is mean to achieve human excellence having ethics and culture in leading their life to live in peace with the fellow human beings. By this objective, education theory of collaboration is needed today, called “educare”. “Educare involves the deep understanding of the knowledge that springs from within and imparting it to the
students.” Thus education is to help us become a good human being full of good character which is reflected in our words, behavior and conduct in our daily life. (Jumsai Na Ayudhya, 2003)

Learning Concept to Develop Mindfulness in Daily Life

![Diagram of Learning Concept to Develop Mindfulness](image)

**Figure 1: Learning Concept to Develop Mindfulness**

Human beings’ reception is stimulated through the process of interaction with the environment. A human interacts with the outside world and receives information through the five senses of body. If a learner is deficient in any five senses, then learning process cannot be fully accomplished. It is thus necessary to analyze the process of learning using the five senses. Figure 1 shows that physical body with the five sense organs which receive the stimuli from the environment. However, it does not mean that awareness will take place automatically. We also need to consider the functions of the conscious mind and subconscious mind in order to understand the learning process of mindfulness enhancement. The conscious mind is that we are aware of and thinking takes place in. Learner can make a decision at this step of conscious mind once they understand the information stimulated through the sensory organs.

To understand the working of the conscious mind, we have to understand a connection of the brain, the five senses and the conscious mind. For example, ears receive a sound, which then convert to nerve currents transmitted to the brain. Although the brain receives the signal from the sound, but the awareness may not take place if a learner is inattentive. In order to have awareness, the conscious mind must concentrate on the stimuli. Since the sound waves are just energy vibrations; to become meaningful there must be some kind of interpretation. For instance, a radio receiver, information in the form of sound wave is received. This vibration energy received has no meaning until the radio interpret into meaningful voice and transfer to speakers. Thus the most important question is how the learner is able to mindful interpreting the stimuli into something meaningful so that the learning process can take place properly. For example, insulting words in a foreign language cannot make someone angry if he could not understand. Once understand the meaning of those words, he will become angry and may swear in return. Regarding the decoding process, the same stimulus goes to several people, but they often learn differently. Listening to the same voice, some people may be joyful, some may feel sorrowful. Once the interpretation is reflected in states of mind, there will become the action that is assessed as merit or demerit in somehow. Thus decoding is done in different ways depending on each
person’s experience and background. The understanding of decoding process will help learners improve cognitive efficacy.

However, the present state of the art cannot sufficiently explain a wide variety of mind functions. The conscious mind was earlier described as that part of the mind where the awareness and understanding take place. But there is also an unconscious part of the mind, which we are not aware of. Because we not know what the unconscious mind is thinking or working, it becomes necessary to understand the unconscious part and make use of it in the learning and teaching process properly to develop an ordinary learner to become a gentleman perfectly.

The subconscious part deals with our memory as the storage of all our past experiences. Whatever has been received through the sensory organs, whatever we have felt emotionally, experienced, thought or done, and whatever has been our environment in our past, all are recorded in our subconscious mind and would later influence the life (Jumsai Na Ayudhya, 2003). The subconscious performs function similar to the memory in computer. A new program can be installed in the subconscious through various means such as seeing or performing something repeatedly. Behaviors and attitudes can be changed by the application of a new program installed in. (Peale, 1989).

Information received by the sensory organs will not be understood immediately by merely the conscious mind, but it need to search for similar data stored in the subconscious mind as well. If a similar pattern exists, then the conscious mind recognizes what has been received. It is now easy to understand and react. For example, some children, who react violently to a certain stimulus, whose parents often quarreled and fought each other, the subconscious mind recorded these events. When the baby has now grown up, one day someone started to use abusive language at her. Unconsciously, the stimulus awakes within her memory recorded long ago and she became angry and started to quarrel and fight back. These examples support the behavioral study that programming of aggressive behavior is accumulated throughout playing video games, watching violent movies in childhood.

In order to promote a gentleman, the mindfulness enhancement is an essential tool embedded in the learning process. In this way, mindfulness will become a controller of the emotions and behaviors that are constructed in the conscious mind. Mindfulness enhancement should be a model to create the desired characteristics in the learners. Mindfulness practice based on self-realization should also be an integral part of every moment of days-to-days living. Every moment of life is a good lesson to train mindfulness and has been automatically stored back to subconscious mind as extra information for the future use to become their traits. Memory, both short-term and long-term, is very important in the learning process to develop mindfulness. Long-term memory is activated when there is an association with current situation and experience. In real life, self-realization is not taught in the classroom. Thus, there is a variety of learning techniques and theories to be employed as used in the proposed model.

As mention, meditation or the art of concentration is able to help enhance mindfulness. However, another concrete method to be purposed in this by using education theory and information technology of Expert System is the self-learning diary. Formal education seems to have failed to satisfy the desire to learn about one true self, on the contrary, have forced the desire to learn about external or outside instead. However, people continue to learn through interaction with society and environment. They learn through making many mistakes in life resulting in suffering. They learn to live together in families and in society. Learning seems to be never ending and life long process. This is the beginning of the search for knowledge about the self or self-realization. Many educators will say that there are many practical applications in education that will help solve these problems. (Jumsai Na Ayudhya, 2003)

At the subconscious level, human being’s actions are based on memories that have been installed there. Stimuli received by the sensory organs will product and automatic response based on past experiences. At this stage, people are very emotional with no self-control, and plagued by emotions that arise from our subconscious in response to the certain stimuli. From our repeated experience in life, we learn from it and observe which response make us in peace and joy or suffering and sorrow. By the assumption that if learners fill the subconscious with mindfulness, they will respond to the environment with less demerit behaviors and more merit conducts. People should learn to mindfully interpret
received by sensory organs in a positive way. It is important to learn to discriminate between good and bad action. Learners should be involved in living with awareness to be self-control in daily life. This paper proposes the mindfulness enhancement model not only the development of self-realization at the conscious mind level, but also fulfills the subconscious mind with merit and peaceful memory that mutually come from the awakenings of conscious and subconscious mind. Once the ability to realize the self is improved, mindfulness will be enhanced in the process of self-development and finally speed up the transformation of the states of mind.

The conscience within the learners will start to teach and guide them to act in the right way, and to do only what is good to themselves and others. A new type of learning has started. Ultimately, knowledge and understanding are gained intuitively without having to use the conscious mind. In fact, the conscious mind needs to control merit and demerit states of mind completely to occur. It is the aim of the paper to attempt to transform ordinary learners into gentlemen or better merit people. Self realization will mean that learners will have the understanding of who they are, why they behave like that and what the purpose of their lives. Their lives will therefore becoming more meaningful and useful to themselves and to the others.

Once this deep connection among conscious mind, subconscious mind and mindfulness controller is established, then the behavior of the learners begins to improve. Their behavior will be gentle and full of good deeds. There will be consideration for others and social. Their actions will be rid of undesirables such as violence, anger and hatred, jealousy and other negative emotions. Then life has become meaningful and filled with wisdom, which are the ultimate goal of the Learning Concept to Develop Mindfulness.

A Brief Overview on the Proposed Learning Process

External stimuli are received through the five senses of human’s organs. The stimuli have to be interpreted into something meaningful for each person. This is done by retrieving data from the subconscious mind which contains past experiences and memory. The conscious mind then becomes process and transform the stimuli received, and mutually stored in the subconscious mind and reinforces the memory. In learning process, the mindfulness as controller is applied on self realization process. This requires composition of the study of mind and emotion, the theory of learning and teaching, and IT application. Thus mindfulness will assist individuals to attentively pass through this process with wisdom and will influence future interpretation of outside stimuli received. A very important part of the mindfulness enhancement is to realize the self, then accept to transform oneself into right conduct.

Whatever thought that come to our brain or our conscious mind should be examined by our mindful state before it is put into action or speech. It is to note that when the mind of the learner is controlled by mindful state, the conscious mind is encouraged towards the subconscious mind and in turn and thereby enhance the process of mindfulness through self realization which brings a merit transformation of the learner.

References


