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The State of Teachers' Educational Data Use in Thailand

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Abstract

Teachers' educational data use is important as it helps students' learning development directionally. The objectives of this study were to study (1) educational data use existing in schools; (2) state of teachers' educational data use and (3) teachers' needs in educational data use. Samples consisted of 250 elementary school teachers in Thailand using sequential mixed method design. Data were analyzed using content analysis and descriptive statistics. It was found that there are 11 types of educational data use in Thai schools. The educational data existing in most schools was teachers' teaching data, followed by students' learning proficiency data and students' academic achievement data, respectively. Teachers also used such data to improve and develop students as much as possible, whereas physical or behavioral flaw and life skill data were rarely found and infrequently used. Data analysis was most needs by teachers to develop, followed by application of statistics in data analysis and interpretation of data analysis, respectively. Data collection for planning teaching and improving students and cooperation with colleague in data use were most needed by teachers to use data in teaching and improving learners, followed by application of data in setting strategies for teaching and improving student learning and interpretation of numerical or statement forms from evidence documents, respectively.

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1. Introduction

Data has been used, both domestically and internationally, in educational system for a long time. Foreign countries began giving importance to educational data when the United States issued “No Child Left Behind Act” (NCLB) in 2001 with the intention of data use consideration increase in every schools and educational service area (Massell, 2001). In the meantime, Thailand stipulates teachers to use data obtained from students’ learning assessment in academic curriculum. Therefore, data use is nothing new to the existing educational system.

New data occurs daily. Hence, there is pressure on educators to use more data. Therefore, effective data use requires more than numerical or statistical properties in order to ensure the meaningfulness and values for the teachers’ teaching improvement. However, previous studies showed that the data use was still low. For example, Hamilton and colleagues (2009) discovered that teachers collect large volumes of educational data but not systematically. Moreover, meaningful application toward students’ learning improvement is still deficient. Previous findings concluded that an important obstacle causing teachers to neglect data is usage incapacity (Greenberg & Walsh, 2012; Marsh et al., 2005).

The researcher realizes the aforementioned problem. Furthermore, few studies on educational data use have been conducted in Thailand. Therefore, the present research studied the state and the need of data use of teachers in Thailand to obtain beneficial findings in capacity development planning in educational data use correctly and properly.

2. Research Objectives

The objectives of this study were to study (1) educational data use existing in schools; (2) state of teachers’ educational data use and (3) teachers’ needs in educational data use.

3. Literature Review

3.1 Type of data

Mandinach (2012) defined educational data use that it involves systematic data collection, data analysis, data examination and data interpretation from diverse data for making decisions to improve performance and educational policies. From school system considerations, a large amount of data was found. Bernhardt (2004) categorized data into four following types: 1) Student Learning Performance - it is deemed the most important aspect in the education system; 2) Demographics - the use of this type of data aids the clarification of problems and requirements associated with students, e.g., gender, race, economic status etc.; 3) School Process – Most of the data sources are the qualities of various teaching programs in schools and 4) Perception – it is associated with community opinions towards schools. These data stimulate students’ interest towards community opinions and thinking.

3.2 Data Literacy

The effective use of currently available data demands that school principals, teachers and districts have knowledge and skills in the use of data. In other words, they need assessment literacy and data literacy in order to reach effective teaching decision-making (Love, 2004). According to literature review, neither terms differ with clarity. Assessment understanding is an essential component for decision-making through data use (Heritage & Yeagley, 2005; Herman & Gribbons, 2001). Data from assessments, collected from classrooms, schools or districts measuring academic proficiency is only a form of data that enters the decision-making processes in data literacy, since other forms of literacy obtained from assessments of other data sources are present, e.g., perception, motivation, processes and behaviors. Therefore, assessment literacy is considered as a process of data literacy (Mandinach & Gummer, 2013).

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