

Public Abstract

First Name:Theera

Middle Name:

Last Name:Haruthaithanasan

Adviser's First Name:Peggy

Adviser's Last Name:Placier

Co-Adviser's First Name:Motoko

Co-Adviser's Last Name:Akiba

Graduation Term:SP 2010

Department:Educational Leadership & Policy Analysis

Degree:PhD

Title:THE EFFECTS OF EXPERIENCES WITH CONSTRUCTIVIST INSTRUCTION ON ATTITUDES TOWARD DEMOCRACY AMONG THAI COLLEGE STUDENTS

The limited democratic practices and values in Thai society deprive its people of critical thinking skills and active participation in shared-decision making for sustaining individual and social development. Particularly, there appears to be the lack of direct instruction in democracy and democratic practices in schools. However, constructivist (also known as "student-centered") instruction embraces the philosophy of democracy with regard to emphasizing active learning and critical discussion among students for knowledge sharing and construction. As a result, the hypothesis is that constructivist learning practices might be an effective indirect way to learn, practice, and value democracy. The hypothesis was confirmed by the statistical analysis result, using the survey data of 717 freshman college students sampled from one public university in Bangkok, Thailand. The statistical result indicated that Thai students' prior experiences with constructivist instruction were positively correlated with their attitudes toward democracy. This study recommended that the educational policy focused on constructivist instruction should be strongly promoted in order to not only enhance students' learning but also their democratic practices and values.