Knowledge and Self-Study from Students' Perspectives

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Abstract

The purpose of this qualitative study were 1) to investigate how the teacher-students of English Program in Savannakhet Teacher Training College perceive and develop their knowledge, 2) to find out how and why they carry out their self-study and 3) to discover how they prefer to be encouraged to carry out self-study in order to help them develop their knowledge. The samples of this study consists of 6 students in grade 3 of English Program (final year), 2 of whom were from the low-study performing capacity group(low-grade students), 2 of whom were from the fair-study performing capacity group(averaged-grade students)and 2 of whom were from the good-study performing capacity group(high-grade students). In each sampling group, 1 from grade 2 ; and 1 is from grade 3. The samples were selected through a purposive sampling method. The data is collected through interviews and discussion with the 6 sampling students and 1 teacher. The results point out that the samples create different views between general and school knowledge; they see general knowledge as something concrete, socially acquired and widely used in daily life, but see school knowledge as something specific in school, theoretical and learned from textbooks and teachers. The samples from the low-gradeand fair-grade groups have different insights from the good-grade students on how and why to carry out self-study, and self-study encouragement. The low-grade and fair-grade students carry out self-study to repeat learning things in the previous lessons they have learned and preparing for coming lessons, but the good-grade students carry out self-study for understanding deeper and more detail about things they have learned and creating new knowledge. The good-grade students need self-study encouragement by being given tasks that match or even a little bit higher than their levels, and given scores by teachers for completing the tasks, but the fair and low-grade students need self-study encouragement by being given easy tasks with clear instructions and assistant, and also prefer to be given scores for completing the tasks. At the same time, the fair and good-

grade students like to carry out self-study in the quiet place and without people talking with, while the low-grade students still need someone to talk with for their self-study.

Key words : knowledge, self-study/independent learning, encouragement, Savannakhet Teacher Training College.

บทคัดย่อ

การวิจัยเชิงคุณภาพนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อ 1) เพื่อศึกษาวิธีการรับรู้และพัฒนาความรู้ของครูและนักเรียนหลักสูตรภาษาอังกฤษในวิทยาลัยครูสะหวันนะเขต 2) เพื่อหาวิธีการและเหตุผลในการศึกษาด้วยตนเอง และ 3) เพื่อการค้นหาความพึงพอใจได้รับการส่งเสริมให้ศึกษาด้วยตนเองเพื่อช่วยในการพัฒนาองค์ความรู้ของพวกเขา กลุ่มตัวอย่างประกอบด้วยนักเรียนชั้นประถมศึกษาปีที่ 3 ของหลักสูตรภาษาอังกฤษ (ปีสุดท้าย) จำนวน 6 คน มาจากนักเรียนที่มีความสามารถในการเรียนต่ำ (นักเรียนที่มีผลการเรียนต่ำ) จำนวน 2 คน นักเรียนที่มีความสามารถในการเรียนต่ำปานกลาง (นักเรียนที่มีผลการเรียนปานกลาง) จำนวน 2 คน และนักเรียนที่มีความสามารถในการเรียนดี (นักเรียนที่มีผลการเรียนสูง) จำนวน 2 คน ในแต่ละกลุ่มตัวอย่างจาก 1 จากชั้นประถมศึกษาปีที่ 2 และ 1 จากชั้นประถมศึกษาปีที่ 3 กลุ่มตัวอย่างถูกเลือกด้วยวิธีการสุ่มแบบเจาะจง เก็บข้อมูลโดยใช้การสัมภาษณ์และการอภิปรายกับนักเรียนกลุ่มตัวอย่างจำนวน 6 คนและครูจำนวน 1 คน ผลการวิจัยชี้ให้เห็นว่ากลุ่มตัวอย่างมีมุมมองระหว่างความรู้ทั่วไปและความรู้ที่โรงเรียนที่แตกต่างกัน; พวกเขามองความรู้ทั่วไปว่าเป็นสิ่งที่เป็นรูปธรรมที่ได้มาจากทางสังคมและนำมาใช้ในชีวิตประจำวันกันอย่างแพร่หลายแต่มองความรู้ที่โรงเรียนว่าเป็นสิ่งเฉพาะในโรงเรียน เกี่ยวกับทฤษฎีและเรียนรู้จากตำราและครูผู้สอนกลุ่มตัวอย่างจากกลุ่มที่มีเกรดต่ำและเกรดปานกลางมีความเข้าใจเชิงลึกเกี่ยวกับวิธีการและเหตุผลในการศึกษาด้วยตนเองและการส่งเสริมการศึกษาด้วยตนเองที่แตกต่างจากนักเรียนที่มีเกรดดี นักเรียนที่มีเกรดต่ำและเกรดปานกลางศึกษาด้วยตนเองเพื่อเรียนรู้ซ้ำๆ ในบทเรียนที่ได้เรียนมาและเตรียมความพร้อมสำหรับบทเรียนที่กำลังจะเรียน แต่นักเรียนมีเกรดดีศึกษาด้วยตนเองเพื่อความเข้าใจและรายละเอียดเกี่ยวกับสิ่งที่ได้เรียนมาที่มากขึ้นและสร้างองค์ความรู้ใหม่ขึ้นมา นักเรียนที่เกรดดีต้องการการส่งเสริมให้ศึกษาด้วยตนเองด้วยการได้รับมอบหมายงานที่เหมาะสมหรือมากกว่าระดับของพวกเขาเล็กน้อย และได้คะแนนจากครูเมื่องานสำเร็จ แต่นักเรียนที่มีเกรดต่ำและเกรดปานกลางต้องการงานที่ง่ายที่มีคำสั่งชัดเจนและมีผู้ช่วย และยังต้องการได้คะแนนจากงานที่สำเร็จแล้วอีกด้วย ในขณะเดียวกัน นักเรียนที่มีเกรดปานกลางและเกรดดีชอบศึกษาด้วยตนเองในสถานที่ที่เงียบและปราศจากผู้คนคุยกัน ในขณะที่นักเรียนที่มีเกรดต่ำยังคงต้องการคนที่จะพูดคุยด้วยในขณะศึกษาด้วยตนเอง

คำสำคัญ : องค์ความรู้ การศึกษาด้วยตัวเอง/การศึกษาอิสระ การสนับสนุน วิทยาลัยครูสะหวันนะเขต

1. Introduction

1.1. Background Information

I am a teacher in Savannakhet Teacher Training College. I am interested in doing a research on how teacher-students develop their knowledge and learn outside the classroom or self-study after learning with teachers in the class based on the policy of the Lao Ministry of Education and Sports that support students to develop their knowledge on their own and emphasis on self-study. The expectation of result should respond to the main research question is: "What is students' understanding of knowledge, and how does self-study play a role in helping students develop their knowledge?" The three focal points in this study are: students' perceptions of knowledge, their purpose for carrying out self-studies and how students can be encouraged to carry out self-studies.

1.2. Understanding Matters/Literature Reviews

It is important to extend ideas in the Lao teacher education development policy that supports students to develop their knowledge and carry out self-study, but at the same time many students still have a problem in developing their knowledge on their own and carrying out self-study. In order to understand the mentioned problem faced by students, I have reviewed some related studies concerning how students develop their knowledge and how they carry out self-study which could be examples to analyse the Lao context. The previous studies that relate to the Lao context consist of creating new knowledge, behaviour in learning, teacher education development, teaching process: structured and unstructured teaching context as follows:

Knowledge is something that can be gained from different parts of the society, not just from schools but also from life outside the school and from the social world in which people live. "The best way to learn a new idea was by means of normal communication with others" (Phillips, Jonas &Soltis, 2004, p. 50).

When constructing new knowledge, starting from what is already known and from personal experience is essential. "New learning is constructed over the functions of our own earlier learning. We make use of whatever knowledge and experience we already have in order to help us learn and understand new things" (Scrivener, 1994, p. 4).

Learning then takes place in many places, both inside and outside the classroom and should be regarded as a voluntary task or assignment that should meet

the learners' need. This is also an argument for teachers to be leading and guiding students in their learning process including their self-study. Lead teachers, on the other hand, avoid coercion completely. Instead, they make the intrinsic rewards of doing the work clear to their students, correlating any proposed assignments to the students' basic needs. Plus, they only use grades as temporary indicators of what has and hasn't been learned rather than a reward (http://www.funderstanding.com/control_theory.cfm, January, 2007).

The teaching process has a great impact on the way students create and develop their knowledge. How effectively the learner can create knowledge and use it in their daily life is dependent on the teacher's professional orientation. Depending on how strongly the lesson is structured the students will have more or less opportunities to share their experience in class. If strongly structured and framed the students will also have less chance to relate their experiences to their school knowledge (Palme, 2006).

The more we can complete or cope with the thing we do, the more we love to do it again, and on the contrary, those who usually fail to succeed with something might not try again. "People who are good at ping-pong(table tennis) and frequently win tend to play more often than those who lose every match. According to this behaviourist theory, we learn to act in acceptable ways by being praised when we do good things and by being withheld when we do not" (Phillips, Jonas &Soltis, 2004, p. 7).

Other authors point to the fact that learning both can take place outside the class-room and that it often is supported by someone near you. "Let's look outside the classroom for a moment. How do people learn things in everyday life? ...Maybe by sitting next to someone who can tell you what to do and give feedback on whether you're doing OK"(Scrivener, 1994, p. 2).

In fact, students tend to learn at best when they are in a quiet environment where they are not being interrupted by others, by radio or TV for example (http://www.fhi.org/training/en/modules/ARV/howtouseSS.htm(061222) &http://www.ucc.vt.edu/studysk/control.html(0701003).

The task or assignment for self-study should also be made simple enough to be understood by the students thus increasing their motivation and possibilities to complete them (McLaughlin, Arnold, p.44). Furthermore, it is supportive for the learning process to make the students aware of their own learning process and how

to go about it, procedures, material etc. It may be useful to help students become more aware about how they are learning, to reflect on this and to explore what procedure; materials techniques or approaches would help them learn more effectively (Scrivener, 1994, p. 3).

There is not only one way for people to learn but many, and people are clever finding different ways of learning. The teacher can make suggestions to the learners on how to learn, helping them to learn more about themselves, making them aware of their best way of learning. He can also help them find appropriate ways for processing information and how to learn by themselves. The learner who knows the best way for him to learn, in accordance with his own way of thinking and learning, will be able to make great progress. On the other hand, if the learner knows very little about his own learning process he will be less successful in his studies (http://www.funderstanding.com/learning-style.cfm, January 3, 2007).

2. Research Objectives

This research is made up of three objectives:

2.1. To investigate how the teacher students perceive and develop knowledge.

2.2. To find out how and why the teacher students of English program in Savannakhet Teacher Training College carry out self-study;

2.3. To discover how the teacher students are encouraged to carry out self-study in order to help them develop their knowledge.

3. Research Methodology

3.1. Samples

The samples were consisted of 6 students. All samples were in English Program studying in grade 3 (final year). The samples were selected from3 groups with different study-performing capacity: low-study performing capacity (low grade), fair-study performing capacity (fair grade) and good-study performing capacity (good grade) ; each group was represented by 2 samples. The samples were selected through a purposive method with the following reasons: 1) the researcher intends to compare perceptions of the 3 sampling groups on knowledge creation, how and why to carry

out self-study and self-study encouragement, 2) the samples in the final year have long and more experiences in learning more subjects than others so that they will be better in sharing information. One teacher from English Program who taught the class in which the samples studied was also invited to involve in discussion stage.

3.2. Research Instruments

The research instruments consist of the focal group discussion and interviewing formatted set. I have used interview as the instrument for data collection because I feel that when I talk to the samples directly I will get answers that are very close to what they actually think by talking and discussing with them. When I do not understand or when I want to learn more about something the samples are explaining I can come back to the point promptly, and it also gives me a chance to ask follow up or specific questions. Since I wanted the answers from the samples to be as representative as possible for their peers. I talked to the teachers who worked closely with them asking her to help me select the interviewees who have best qualification to represent their peers. During the interviews I used a tape recorder for documentation, and the information is analysed in descriptive method.

3.3. Data Collection

The following were stages of data collection:

3.3.1. Tool development method:

The interviewing set is designed with 3 heading questions of which consists 1) knowledge creation/development; 2) reason and how to carry out self-study; 3) self-study encouragement. Each heading question was developed with sub-related questions which can guide the interviewer to follow the same track for interviewing each sample. All samples were invited for interview with the same formatted interviewing guidance, after that the samples were invited for whole discussion together with the involving teacher.

3.3.2. Focal Discussion

Discussions were conducted in two phases: In phase 1, the researcher did both interview and short discussion with each sample during the interview. In phase 2, the researcher had a discussion with all samples and 1 teacher. In this phase, difference in what each sample group has explained when being interviewed were raised for discussion once more. And finally the involving teacher shared what she experienced in teaching and interacting with 3 groups of students in the class.

3.4. Data Analysis

The data analysis is done by means of descriptive method. Each sample's opinions and perceptions on knowledge creation, on how and why to carry out self-study and on self-study encouragement were discussed and compared among the samples from the low-grade group, fair-grade group and high-grade group. The comments and opinion from the involving teachers was taken into account in order to confirm how the samples' opinions and responses were right and match with the reality. Throughout the research I have found that the data received from interviews shows differences in perceiving knowledge creation, how and why to carry out self-study and self-study encouragement among the 3 sampling groups.

4. Research Results

The results were presented based on to the research objectives as follows:

4.1. Perspectives of students on knowledge creation

Table : General information of the samples

No	General information	Frequency (n=6)	Percentage (%)
1	Grade 3 (Final year)	6	100
2	Low-study performing capacity	2	33.33
3	Fair-study performing capacity	2	33.33
4	Good-study performing capacity	2	33.33

According the table, out of 6 respondents, the number of the final-year students (100%) was in Grade 3. The low-grade samples consist of 2 (33.33%), the fair-grade samples consist of 2 (33.33%), and the good-grade samples consist of 2 (33.33%) ; all three sampling groups have the same size in number.

As for the samples' perception on knowledge creation, it is understood as something that can be acquired from different parts of the society, both from the school and from the social community in which people live. However, there are different ways of understanding how knowledge is acquired and developed between good and weak students. One good-grade student said: "At school I enjoy learning many subjects with friends and teachers but after the class I learn from life experience, from society, by seeing how things are done and by hearing people talk about what happens around

them in everyday life, of course it is not about school at all".

However, one low-grade student lets me know that knowledge is something that is basically learned from the teacher, he stated : "I have to wait for the teacher to teach me because I don't know what and how to gain knowledge without the teacher ; I mean I learn things from the teacher. I usually talk with friends about something else when the teacher is absent. I think the teacher is the one to give knowledge; the student is a person who must learn from the teacher, I don't think I learn anything without the teacher".

The low-grade students tend to stress the importance of learning at school more than the high-graded ones. The good-grade students value what they have learned earlier more than the low graded students. The latter tend to rely more on the teacher for developing and gaining new knowledge, it seems. The good-grade students create and develop knowledge individually and socially but the low-grade students create and develop knowledge mostly based upon what is taught by the teachers.

Students who are good at learning try to develop and gain knowledge both individually and socially based on old experiences they already have. While I was discussing with one good-grade student about earlier experiences as something that might help people to learn, he said: "I am taking an English course and when I was in lower and upper secondary school I used to have a tutor to teach me English. My previous experience of the English language helps me to learn much faster now".

At the same time a low-grade student shared another learning experience with me. She said: "I know I am a very slow person in the class, every day I need to study hard because I knew nothing about English before I started to study English here, but it is not only me; many of us who never learned English before are quite slow learners".

The interviewed students also tend to make a difference between their school knowledge and general knowledge. They see general knowledge as something independent from learning because they do not need to remember it. School knowledge, on the other hand, they regard as something stressful and difficult to learn. What the teacher teaches is about specific things in the textbook that they as students need to remember, it is abstract and necessary to remember for school tests. General knowledge, on the other hand, is seen as something concrete and broadly used outside

the school. One of the fair-grade sample explained: "In my personal opinion, school knowledge and general knowledge are different. I learn things from school and I must remember it but just for tests. I am not sure if I will have a chance to apply it in my life or not after I graduate from school. General knowledge is easy for me to learn, I just observe people do things and I don't need to recite it and I find it usable in my daily life".

4.2. Carrying out Self-Study

As for the samples' opinions about, there are different ideas about how to carry out self-study among the three sampling groups.

One reason that students choose to study on their own is related to the study environment. Students tend to be interrupted during learning in the class so they need to spend more time for self-study in quiet environment where they can concentrate on what they are doing or reading. In a quiet place the students can control their mind, pay attention to and understand their tasks. One good-grade sample described his favourite study environment in this way: "Every day, after the class, I look for a good place for studying. The place must be without the noise that may not interrupt me and I usually prefer to study on my bed at night because it is perfectly quiet".

Similarly another good-grade sample told me: "What I try to avoid doing while I am reading is not to sit with friends and have a conversation with them at the same time I am reading because it drives my mind away from what I expect to do about my reading".

Relying on the interviews it seems that successful learning is a key reason for students to become less interested in studying on their own. Those who could under-stand and complete the things that they were dealing with, assignments or readings in the books, tend to carry out self-study more often than the ones who do not. As one of low-grade sample shares: "Every time I can complete the homework or assignment it makes me more eager to do another one. Really, I seem to be successful about it, but if the homework is difficult I feel frustrated and don't want to do it at all". This is in line with the theories related to earlier, stating that the more we can complete or cope with what we are doing the more we will like to do it again. Consequently, those who fail to succeed will hardly try again.

Self-studying, we would expect, is studying independently of others. There is however a difference here, among three sampling groups. Students who are good at

learning tend to avoid conversation with friends during self-study time, while students who are low and fair at learning tend to carry out their self-studies only when they have friends who can help them. One low-grade student says: "For me, I want to have friends who are very good at learning and can tell or help me with assignment. I want to learn if there are people helping me".

The fair students thus may need someone to help them also when they are studying on their own as another fair-grade student states: "I can't sit and learn alone, I don't really know what happens to me when I start to read a book I don't know where I am and what I am doing, so I want people to accompany me for explaining what to do and telling if I am doing it correctly".

In general then self-study is seen as an important way for the students to create and gain new knowledge. But self-study seems to be of different character for the good and the fair-grade students; the good-grade students carry out self-study for preparing or following up lessons, thus getting a deeper understanding. They seem to be able to use their old knowledge as a base for creating new knowledge, doing self-studies for developmental and productive reasons. The students, who are low and fair at learning however, tend to carry out their self-study when they have some-one who can help them with what they are doing or reading. It is not easy for them to study on their own. These students may need to be helped with what to do and how to deal with the tasks they have at hand.

4.3. Encouragements
for Self-Study

Regarding the samples' opinion about encouragement for self-study, How students are encouraged to carry out self-studies is another important thing illustrated in my findings. There are some key motivational factors such as teachers giving assignments/homework, the characteristics of what is given, the kind of stimulation/feedback, i.e. by scores and compliments for doing good work, as mentioned above, and having a good environment for self-studying. The involving teacher states: "My way to get students to study at home is to give more homework to them then give score to the ones who complete it".

Encouraging students to learn independently by giving them assignments or homework then stimulate the students to study on their own. According to the interviewed students, every time the teachers give them assignments or homework

they have to complete it after class finding the answers by themselves, for example, by going to the library or reading relevant books. The assignment and homework given can be seen as a stimulus, which encourages students to respond by completing it. One from the fair-grade samples explained: "We have to go to the library to search for answers for our assignment that the teacher gives us. If we can't find the right answer we can't get some scores for that and it can affect our learning outcome".

Now then one way of encouraging students to do independent learning is by means of giving assignments to them. The research results indicate that the weak students are best encouraged by being given clear and easily understandable assignments. One low-grade student told me: "I prefer to do the simple homework that the teacher gives me because I can complete it and it is interesting to see myself successful in what I am assigned to do by the teacher".

However, this kind of encouragement will hardly be sufficient for the good students, they will find it boring and not challenging since their knowledge level might be higher than the level of the assignment. As stated by another interviewee, a good-grade student: "I think easy assignments do not help me to improve my knowledge properly. I know, they are easy to do and I don't have to spend much time with it. But I prefer to be given quite difficult homework that makes me have to think and to apply my own experience".

The students stressed that they have to do self-study in order to complete homework or assignment for getting good scores as reward from the teachers. Giving grades as reward to students for doing good work or completing assignment I found is another way for encouraging student to study by themselves. One sample shared: "Many of us love to complete the school work that has relation to my need and of course I should get score from the work, I love score so I must complete assignments before the teacher comes in because he will give scores to the student who completes the homework, but some teachers don't; just pushes students to do tasks".

In order to carry out effective self-studies, students need to have directions on how to work from the teacher. The students would not know what to do without instructions or advice from the teacher; they do not know what to focus, self-study techniques, what materials to use etc. As one sample told me: "We are all told to go to the library for reading, but many of us are not clear about the teacher's suggestion, we don't know what to do in the library, I sometime go to the library just for meeting people

and looking at the book on the bookshelf, so if possible I want the teacher to tell us the exact thing to do".

The importance of library

Sometimes the library is neither the ideal place for self-studies nor the quiet place where students can go study or read books for information to support their assignments. By observing students in the library, I saw that some students very attentively read their books and were busy with taking notes but at the same time many of them were just wandering around looking at books on the bookshelves or watching the pictures inside the books. During my observations I also saw some primary school pupils in groups wandering around inside the library to look at pictures and materials. They of course made a noise and disturbed the people reading in the library even there is a library rule.

As one sample said: "I am usually annoyed when I am reading in the library because there are different groups of people coming to the library; primary school students, lower and upper secondary school students, they make a lot of noise or even the teacher students". Yet, the same student said that they sometimes find the library less useful for their studies because the books they wanted were all borrowed and the ones at hand were not adequate. As she said: "Always, I can't find the book that I want to read for my lesson. Many of them contain very old information, they need an update".

Many students go to the library to search for information when they are given an assignment or homework. They may then know what to do and enthusiastically go to the library trying to find information. On the other hand, without an assignment given by the teacher students are rarely interested in going to the library because they do not make a plan of what to study by themselves. One interviewee told me: "There are too many books in the library; I don't know what books I should choose for reading or what I can do with the information after having read them. I need clear and exact questions and tasks from the teacher".

In sum, the use of the library for self-studies may produce a more effective learning outcome if the library can provide appropriate facilities, such as: service time, books relevant to the areas of study and a good environment for reading; preferably in combination with good advice and clear assignments given by the teachers.

5. Discussion

5.1. Students have different views on school knowledge and general knowledge. General knowledge is understood by students as something concrete being about reality and does not have a relation to school knowledge. School knowledge then is seen by students as something specific for school, it is about theory or abstract things that they need to remember for tests to get scores. Consequently many students focus on learning only things from the textbooks rather than learning from other sources since they think that this is the best way to pass the school tests. If students understand school knowledge as something only used for the school and general knowledge as only used for life outside the school it will affect the learning process and students might have a problem applying school knowledge to their daily life. If schooling is carried out in such a way that students, particularly weak students from poor surroundings and social situations, start to believe that the most important source for knowledge is the teacher, they might develop a narrow view on knowledge. The consequence of this view on knowledge is that studying by yourself can seem very risky because you might learn the 'wrong' things. Therefore, students might avoid carrying out self-studies making them even weaker as learners. We might think of this as a 'vicious circle', those who would really need to study more by themselves avoid it. To the contrary, if the view on knowledge is that it is something that can be gained individually and socially, without the guidance of the teacher all the time, the students may want to study on their own, outside the class, in order to acquire and develop new knowledge thus making him/her become a better learner.

5.2. Good-grade students spend their time for self-study outside the classroom for developing knowledge that they already have, creating new knowledge from other sources rather than the teacher and the text-book, using their old knowledge as a base. As for the fair-grade and low-grade students, self-study is carried out in order to review old lesson and possibly prepare for the coming lesson by looking in the textbook, hoping to make them more able to understand the lesson when presented by the teacher in class. If students stick to this idea of why and how to do self-studies, it might give them little opportunity to use self-studies as a means to develop their own previous knowledge into new knowledge. The teaching and learning tradition in schools itself might contribute to the division between "good' and "low' grade

students by making some students stay convinced that school is the only place for them to receive knowledge.

5.3. Regarding the self-study encouragement, students have different ideas about encouraging them to carry out self-study. The good-grade students like to be encouraged to carry out self-study by being given homework or assignment that match or even higher than their level, whereas the fair and low-grade students prefer to be encouraged to do self-study by being given easily-understandable homework or assignment with clear instruction from the teacher and by having assistants. But, what all samples like to be encouraged for carrying out self-study in the same way is being given scores by the teacher for completing homework and assignments. When students need different level task/assignment for self-study, the teacher may work harder in order to give students the right level tasks. Otherwise, students will have problem in completing the tasks given. To contrary, students who prefer the easy task may make slow progress in studying performing. They will always stay behind other students.

6. Conclusion

The samples create different views between general and school knowledge; they see general knowledge as something concrete, socially acquired and widely used in daily life, but they see school knowledge as something specific in school, theoretical and learned from teachers.

Good-grade students carry out self-study for understanding more detail about things they have learned and creating new knowledge, but the low-grade and fair-grade students carry out self-study for revising things in the previous lessons they have learned and preparing for coming lessons.

Good-grade students need self-study encouragement by being given tasks that match or even higher than their levels, and receiving scores from teachers for completing the tasks, but the fair and low-grade students need self-study encourage-ment by being given easy tasks with clear instructions and assistant, and also prefer receiving scores for completing the tasks. At the same time, the fair and good-grade students like to carry out self-study in the quiet place and without people talking with, while the low-grade students still need someone for discussion.

7. Recommendation

To the teachers who are interested in helping students to carry out self-studies, I would therefore suggest should focus on how to bridge between general knowledge and school knowledge, helping students to understand and develop their school knowledge in the way so that it can be applied in their daily lives. If this cannot be done, students will find their school knowledge useless after they have left school, or even when still at school, since they may see no way of making use of their school knowledge in their future life. In order to promote self-studies, the teachers may also be aware of how students understand and create knowledge, the reasons they have for carrying out self-studies, how to encourage students to study by themselves in the way that work with them well. As for the low-grade students, the teacher may assign someone who can understand the lesson well to help them.

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