CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study entitled "Engaging Mathayom Suksa 3 Students in Multiple Intelligences-Based Activities to Promote English Language Skills and Self-Directed Learning" was designed to (1) compare students' English language skills before and after engaging students in multiple intelligences-based activities, and to (2) explore the development of students' self-directed learning using multiple intelligences-based activities. The target group was a class composed of 48 Mathayom Suksa 3 students who enrolled in English 015 in the first semester of the academic year 2005 at Assumption College Lampang, Lampang, Thailand. The experimental instrument comprised of seven lesson plans was based on the multiple intelligences activities. The data collecting instruments consisted of pretests and posttests on listening, speaking, and writing skills. For scoring, rubrics were constructed for each skill. While for reading skill, multiple choice test was used. A reflection paper was written after students' accomplishment of each task to explore their self-directed learning. The experiment lasted for 35 periods and each period took 50 minutes.
The experiment was carried out for five periods a week. The researcher was assisted by five foreign teachers in the administration and scoring of the tests for each of the English language skill. The data obtained were analyzed using excel program to derive mean and standard deviations in order to draw conclusions of the study.

Summary of the Results

This study has drawn the following conclusions:

1. Students' reading skill improved the most followed by speaking skill then listening and writing skills.

2. Students' self-directed learning ability developed gradually due to the enjoyable, stimulating and interesting activities they were engaged in.

Discussions

The results of the study can be discussed in the succeeding scenarios:

1. Language skills

The results of the study indicated that there were apparent differences in the English language skills of Mathayom Suksa 3 students after engaging them in multiple intelligences-based activities. Speaking, listening, reading and writing skills of the students improved after engaging them in multiple intelligences-based activities as illustrated and presented in the foregoing tables and statistical analyses in chapter 4. The possible explanation for the improvement of each of the English language skills of the students involves motivating and interesting activities that kept students attuned and transfixed to the lessons they were learning and students' active involvement in their own learning. Students were given opportunities to show their abilities and express themselves in different ways as well as utilize their intelligences.

On the account of listening skill, students were able to practice listening in diverse ways, such as listening to the taped texts, instrumental music and songs, taped conversations, teacher's instructions and directions as well as listening to their friends expressing their ideas, opinions and suggestions during cooperative activities. At first, students found it hard to listen to a taped conversation, so strategies such as predicting, using pictures where they used their visual spatial intelligence, using questioning strategies and brainstorming where their logical intelligence is activated and note-taking where linguistic and kinesthetic intelligence were utilized were used to aid their listening. Consequently, as time went by their ears got accustomed to listening to English as they were constantly exposed to a variety of listening activities.

In the view of speaking skill, students were engaged in divergent activities such as expressing ideas and opinions, discussions, which prompted them to use their logical, interpersonal and kinesthetic intelligences; chanting and reading aloud practiced their pronunciation and diction where in their linguistic and kinesthetic intelligences were practiced; role-playing such as dialogues and skits, singing, oral presentations, which activated and utilized their linguistic, logical-mathematical, spatial-visual, kinesthetic, interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligences and other cooperative tasks given to them. In this way, they were engaged in interacting with each other. During the interactions or

role-playing activities with their partners or groups, they were able to familiarize themselves with the conversation model as well as the sentence structures and patterns and apply them in their actual practice such as role-playing and oral presentation. The role-playing activities practiced them to familiarize themselves with the lines of the dialogues and conversations, which resulted to students imbibing the structures and patterns of the conversations. During the discussions, students were able to formulate their own sentences to express their ideas and opinions. At first, students were hesitant to speak or even just to utter a sentence due to the lack of self-confidence and shyness to speak, but since they were required to present their tasks such as playing a skit, presenting the recipe of the food or menu they had chosen to cook and explaining the directions on how to cook them in lesson 2, presenting orally their task, thus they were given the opportunities and encouragement to speak. In addition, every participation and activity they were doing, they were observed using a checklist, so they were motivated to speak to get more points. With the constant exposure of the students to conversations, interactive and collaborative activities, and with their maximized use of their linguistic potentials aided by their other intelligences, their speaking skill improved.

In the case of reading skill, the probable explanations for the improvement in the students' reading skill were based on the subsequent factors: First, reading skill increased due to their constant exposure to reading activities especially in finding information for each task. They also needed to share their tasks with their group, plan and organize how they were going to present their tasks therefore they needed to read a lot in order to accomplish their tasks. Take for instance, their task in lesson 3 where they had to choose a country and find out about the culture, customs, dos and don'ts and other details concerning the country. This takes a lot of reading and extracting important details to be used in their task. Second, in the oral presentation where they had to present, explain, and illustrate the process of change in their selected objects, students had to compile different information from different sources, read and collect details, organize the information, synthesize and summarize their information about the objects and present their task. In the preceding processes mentioned, students utilized their strengths which is their stronger intelligences to help them accomplish the tasks. All those processes entail a lot of reading, comprehending, analyzing, synthesizing, interpreting and evaluating skills that require higher level of thinking and the

use of incorporated intelligences to perform and accomplish their tasks, which as a result led to their enhanced reading skill scores. However, there were two students or equivalent to 4.17% of the class of 48 students did not pass the test or their scores were lower than their pretests. This could be due to the condition of the students at the moment of taking the test or they just did not pay much attention to the test.

Finally, the writing skill of the students had fairly improved. This can be contended that with the several writing tasks given to them, such as describing their neighborhood, the person who has influenced their life, describing events, etc. accompanied with illustrations and graphic organizers. These writing activities helped develop their writing skill. Nevertheless, 8 or 16.67% out of 48 students did not pass the test. This can be due to the difficult test questions or students' condition when they were taking the test.

Reckoning the process and events in implementing multiple intelligences-based activities, students were able to use their strengths which were shown during their presentations of the tasks. Most of the groups drew and illustrated their tasks to make their presentation clearer and interesting. In this way, they are using their spatial/visual intelligences to aid their linguistic intelligence. They used an incorporation of their stronger intelligences to help them in their learning. This affirms Gardner's belief that using multiple intelligences simply provides students with the experience he calls "many windows looking into one room". This complements results of other researches that in properly implementing multiple intelligences theory and teaching challenging contents to all students' intelligences and preferred learning styles, students will show increased independence, self esteem, self-confidence in ability to learn, responsibility and self-direction. Moreover, behavioral, attention and learning problems both at home and school are greatly reduced, cooperative skills have improved, increased ability to work multi-modally when doing school reports, media reports, etc. Furthermore, students demonstrate notable improvement in leadership skills which was shown in the better team working, academic achievement as shown in the results of their posttests, critical thinking, problem solving and retain information better, which are shown in their accounts of their task management stated in their reflection papers. The benefits of using multiple intelligences for students also include understanding of learning differences instead of learning disabilities.

The results of the study as reported in Chapter 4 described that the students' self-directed learning ability has been activated and developed through time. Students were able to monitor, evaluate and be responsible for their own learning. This correlates with Gardner's belief that multiple intelligences as a cognitive model seeks to describe how individuals use their intelligences to solve problems and fashion products. This also corresponds with the belief that meta-cognitive knowledge involves executive monitoring processes directed at the acquisition of information about thinking processes. Students were able to process information utilizing their meta-cognitive knowledge and experiences.

Students were utilizing their strengths to solve problems and accomplish their tasks. In utilizing students' strengths, which are their stronger intelligences, students at the same time were making use of their meta-cognitive abilities, their background knowledge about the subjects or tasks they have been working on. While working on their tasks, students are disposing and exploiting their background experiences and knowledge and then capitalize these strengths to solve problems and accomplish their tasks. Their individual capabilities are drawn up and these capabilities become vehicles that transport them into a more self-directed world. Likewise, students' weaker sides are awakened, developed, honed and eventually encompass or surpass the currently existing strengths. As Campbell, Campbell & Dickinson (2004) stated that self-directed learning is an outstanding example of intra-personal education since it is founded upon student choice and autonomy, students rather than the teacher are the central decision-maker, and self-motivation and self-discipline are the keys to success. With guidance from the teacher, students select and manage their own learning process, including the topic to be studied, the goals to pursue, the learning strategies to apply, and resources to utilize. They also have say about ways to demonstrate and assess their accomplishments.

This study acknowledges that our brain works in concert; therefore there is a need to furnish it with multiple interesting, meaningful, challenging and cognitive nourishing teaching-learning activities that will nurture students as a whole. These varied teaching-learning activities are interlinking, activating and galvanizing intelligences to work together that could lead to success in solving problems and accomplishment of a task. Hence, proper implementation of multiple intelligences-based activities could promote the success of the

students in learning the English language and their ability to take control of their own learning.

Recommendations

With little research has been conducted on multiple intelligences-based activities on large classes, it is very important to plan multiple intelligences-based activities carefully in language teaching-learning especially with large classes. Language teachers should be to teach to all of the students in different ways. By doing this, we hope to reach each student and not just a section of a class. It will enable us to tap our students' different abilities, activate, utilize, nurture their strengths, improve their weaknesses and nurture their whole being, and consequently develop their self-directed learning ability necessary for their daily existence, lifelong learning, balanced personality, to be innovative, productive citizens requisite in the age of globalization and the rapidly changing world.

Though there were limitations on this study due to the large number of the target group, which is the reality in most Thai schools, teachers need to be very cautious in planning and implementing multiple intelligences-based activities. A teacher needs to study well the multiple intelligences application in language teaching and learning, and consider variety of activities and resources. A teacher who wished to apply multiple intelligences-based activities in the classroom needs to explore different ways and strategies and consult experts on multiple intelligences theory application.

1. Suggestions for classroom application:

1.1 First and foremost, the teacher should have a thorough knowledge of the multiple intelligences theory and application in the classroom as well as the nature and procedure on how to carry out multiple intelligences-based activities. He/She should consult experts on applying multiple intelligences-based activities on language learning. The teacher should decide which method of teaching multiple intelligences to be used that suit needs and nature of the students and in accordance with the course curriculum.

1.2 The teacher should examine his/her own intellectual profiles and teaching styles through a multiple intelligence inventory in order to determine his/her own strength and weaknesses. The teacher should be flexible and able to demonstrate or use resources, materials or ask for assistance from colleagues or other resource persons.

The teacher should have assistants to help him/her observe and monitor students' individual progress and development in order to yield desired results.

1.3 The teacher should survey students' intelligences to determine and understand their intellectual profiles, strengths and weaknesses as well as their preferences and styles in learning. Awareness of students' intelligences will help the teacher in planning suitable lessons, consider materials to be used that will utilize students' strengths, improve their weak sides and enhance their learning independence and sense of responsibility in taking account of their own learning. This will also enable the teacher to decide varied and suitable assessment activities that will allow students to show their abilities in decision-making, creating and problem-solving.

1.4 The teacher should plan cautiously the procedure and details of the lesson, such as setting clear objectives; anticipating problems to be encountered and prepare to be flexible and resilient in dealing them; selecting appropriate activities to be used considering intelligences to be tapped and explored that will subsequently promote students' self-directed learning; and designing varied assessment activities that utilize and tap students' intelligences. The lesson should cover at least four to five intelligences and should include at least a few intelligences for each learning activity. There is a wide range of suggested activities listed, but the teacher should see to it that the chosen activities suit the level of the students, and have connections in the lesson. Materials and teaching aids should activate and utilize the strengths of the students, awaken weak intelligences as well as explore students' existing and hidden abilities such as their linguistic, musical, interpersonal, physical abilities, etc., their abilities to make decisions, create something and solve problems.

1.5 The teacher should have ongoing observation and evaluation using appropriate assessment tools in order to monitor students' academic progress and self-directed learning development. Furthermore, learning and assessment activities should allow students to evaluate their own learning and search for answers to their questions and quest for further knowledge on their own. The teacher should keep individual records using anecdotal record or journal to keep track of the students' language skills and self-directed learning progress. The teacher should encourage slow learners to participate fully in the activities as there may be students who would not buy into multiple intelligences- based activities.

2. Suggestions for Further Research

2.1 Since this study was conducted with the English language skills in general, there is a need to study further the use of multiple intelligences-based activities which focuses on each of the English language skill like designing lesson plans and activities based on multiple intelligences that concentrate on one of the English language skills such as listening skill, speaking skill, reading skill or writing skill and/or a combination of the two skills. In doing this, we would be able to determine the efficacy of the application of multiple intelligence-based activities on each of the English language skill in a more definitive and conclusive way.

2.2 This study could be done with other levels using different ways on how multiple intelligences-based activities could be brought in a language class. Instead of using music, other ways related to music or rhythmic activities could also be incorporated. Other media in teaching multiple intelligences-based activities especially the use of multi-media and other resources could also be useful.

2.3 If this study has yielded positive results on the students, the study could be reversely directed to the teacher whether his/ her intelligences, his/her teaching styles and self-direction as a teacher has improved.