Meditation as Instructional Technology: A Literature Review

Sanghyeon Cheon

Abstract

What instructional technology ultimately aims at is to help learners to be engaged to learning contents for their learning. Meditation can be conceived of as an instructional technology in that it is a tool that can help learners become more attentive to their learning of instructional content. In general, meditation involves conscious attempt to train one’s attention. Large portion of empirical meditation studies support that meditation practice enhances people’s attention. But it is not still conclusive. Negative results have been also reported. One mediating factor between meditation practice and its effects is anxiety. Also, there seems to be other confounding variables. This review paper aims at identifying those factors having influence on effects of meditation. Two groups of relevant factors were identified: treatment factors and subject factors. Understanding on effects of influential factors in meditation practice will provide information to refine a meditation program to

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be helpful for learning.

Key words: Meditation, Instructional technology, Attention, Treatment factors, Subject factors.

I. Introduction

A. Meditation as instructional technology

It can be safely said that the key point in instructional technology is to engage learners in learning events. For this purpose, hardware technology, such as audio-visual media, electronic devices and computer software, is being utilized in the educational field. This type of educational technology is called technology in education. In contrast to technology in education, Ellington et al. (1993) explained the concept of technology of education. Technology of education is methodology to improve the overall efficiency of the teaching/learning process. Under the concept of technology of education, Heinrich (1982) introduced meditation as a new kind of instructional technology (1982, 333). Hanson and Gueulette (1988) also suggested a new direction of instructional technology by introducing various psychotechnology including meditation. Both of them view that meditation has potential to help the learning process. Since their discussion on meditation as educational technology, it is hard to find related studies in the field of educational technology. The current literature review aims to develop the previous discussion on the possibility of utilizing meditation as instructional technology. Among the various positive aspects of meditation, this paper views meditation as a potential technique to enhance learners’ attention.

Attention is the foremost important psychological factor in information processing and learning. In order for a student to learn effectively, learning content needs to be attended to. According to cognitive learning theory,