III. Research Methodology

A quantitative research method using a questionnaire was used to investigate the problem in question—Is it time SI was implemented at Prince of Songkla University?

Material

A questionnaire was constructed for data collection. The research instrument consisted of items asking questions in two major areas: the respondent's self-learning practice including their opinion about self-instruction, and questions related to the university self-access center (ESAC) itself.

As this research is survey in nature, however, the researcher considered that the subjects should not be asked about too much detail, especially about the ESAC. In addition, different from other studies in which the subjects were assigned to SI, none of the participants in this study were requested or assigned to undertake SI. Thus, it was crucial that questions asked be general enough.

Nonetheless, in order to obtain as much significant information as possible, the researcher included both close-ended and open-ended questions. The open-ended questions were aimed at capturing the respondents' opinion on other experiences concerning SI and any other information they had. It was also expected to get the respondents' opinions on what they wanted to be changed or improved.

Giving open-ended questions, the researcher believed that the respondents were provided sufficient floor to express their opinion or give further information they were not provided opportunity through close-ended questions.

Subjects

Participants of the present study were selectively assigned from all the eight faculties of Prince of Songkla University main campus. Initially subject selection was planned systematically—to include 20 percent of the total number of students in each faculty. However, it did not work out as it should have, and time was running out. Only about one-third of the distributed copies were returned. Thinking that the proportion of subjects from each faculty might not affect the result of the study (but too small number of informants will) the researcher later decided to assign just any student to answer the questionnaire simply to acquire as much data as possible. This time, target respondents were approach in person to answer the question.

Consequently, 563 students from five disciplinary groups responded to the questionnaire (as presented in table 1).

Table 1: Number of questionnaire respondents

Disciplinary group	Number of subjects
Health science	84
Management science	203
Sciences	144
Engineering	54
Agriculture	78
Total	563

The health science group consisted of students of the faculties of Medicine, Dentistry, Pharmacy, and Nursing. The agriculture group comprised students of the faculties of Natural Resources and Agro-industry. These faculties were comparatively smaller when compared to the rest, which have a greater number of students. Thus,

those small faculties were grouped together, whereas there was no need to group students of large faculties.

Considering the class they were in, a considerable difference was observed, as shown in table 2. Two faculties offered 5-year programs—Medicine and Dentistry. Generally, as mentioned earlier the number of these two faculties were significant smaller compared to others, fifth year students, in particular. Besides class work 5th years needed to undertake partitioning scheme. That led to a very small number of responses obtained from the particular group. Totally, only 3 students from the fifth-year group answered the questionnaire.

Table 2: Number of participating subjects according to discipline

Discipline / year	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	total
Health Science	41	17	6	17	3	84
Management Science	70	20	52	61	-	203
Sciences	42	15	47	40	-	144
Engineering	30	17	1	6	-	54
Agriculture	25	4	25	24	-	78
						563

As for the faculty of Engineering, the number of respondents was extremely small, while the number of those from the faculty of Management Science was otherwise. However, the underlined reasons of the phenomenon were not discovered. A speculation was because most students of the former were male while those of the latter were female. Male students were assumed to care less in giving information, whereas, female were more cooperative.