The overall research question of this metasynthesis is: Is Freemen approach to adult education an effective alternative to the traditional approach?

This study is a meta-synthesis of literature and project reports on non-traditional adult education approaches particularly that of the Cooperative Education in Ilocos Norte (CEIN), a pilot project on the education and training of cooperatives in the province to determine the effectiveness of the Freirean approach. The study commenced with a review of adult education theories that established and identified the Freirean model of liberating education as the theoretical framework of this study. It also reviewed an existing education program, the Cooperative Education in Ilocos Norte project.

The Freirean education model is known by many names: the problem posing approach, psycho-social approach, the learner centered approach, the liberating education and participatory approach. Many teachers and trainers have adopted it consciously or unconsciously, at different degrees.

Education should aim for social change and the transformation of the oppressive environment. The traditional view of education is not anymore responsive to the needs of the poor and the disadvantaged. Freire considered traditional education which he called the banking concept as dehumanizing and oppressive because the teacher deposits knowledge to the learner. Thus, a paradigm shift is needed. This shift is a marked change in the aims of education (from intellectual development to self-improvement for social change), content of education (from predetermined lessons from an external expert to a learner-centered curriculum), and the role of the teacher and the learner (from the dichotomy of the all-knowing teacher and empty, know-nothing learner).
To Freire, education is intended for the transformation of the oppressive society. Dialogue is the primary vehicle to education. It employs problem-posing activities where the learner and the teacher are co-equals in the learning process.

Freire’s learning model encompasses many aspects of the other models. Andragogy as conceived by Knowles recognizes the adult as different from that of the child in terms of learning requirement. Freire agrees with him. Freire puts high respect and faith in the human being. The thinking of Rogers that adult learn more through their experiences as the subject matter instead of pre-determined lessons is similar to Freire’s. Linderman’s informal learning through the small group, non-authoritarian and non-conventional setting, is also upheld by Freire. The facilitative role of the teacher-learner relationship of the Freirean approach.

A review of the Freirean model of liberating education identified four important features. These are: 1) basic social research 2) conscientization 3) dialogue and 4) praxis.

The Freirean model is applicable in cooperatives education. The cooperative movement in Ilocos Norte is a manifestation of people’s efforts to contribute to economic and social development of the province. However, the have not made marked contribution to the socio-economic well-being of its members and to the society.

There are features of the Freirean approach that could be adopted to make possible an alternative approach to educate members of cooperatives that is tailor-fit to the conditions in the locality. These features a) being research based b) conscientizing c) dialogic and d. result to praxis had been integrated into the Cooperative Education in Ilocos Norte (CEIN).

CEIN is based on a series of investigatory studies, hence is research-based. With the use of carefully designed modules and media, CEIN appealed to the awareness and consciousness of the learners. The alternative methodologies departed from the usual lecture method. These alternative methods encouraged the learners speak out their minds and to interact. Not only in the learner groups, in the clusters, in the network meetings, and in facilitator’s for a. With these steps, CEIN education course brought the participants to action.

The cooperative education courses of CEIN led to changes in behavior of members, leaders, managers, facilitators and coordinators.