

Development of a Teacher Training Curriculum in Experiential Learning under Thai Royal Education Policy

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Abstract

This study aimed to develop a teacher-training curriculum on experiential learning aligned with the Thai Royal Education Policy. The research objectives were: 1) to assess teachers' training needs in experiential learning, 2) to develop the training curriculum based on the Thai Royal Education Policy framework, and 3) to evaluate teachers' satisfaction with the implemented curriculum. The curriculum was specifically designed to support vocational development among disadvantaged students in Rajaprajanugroh Schools in Thailand's southern border provinces. The population comprised 395 teachers from seven target schools, with a purposively sampled sample of 367 government teachers. Research instruments comprised: 1) a training needs assessment questionnaire (IOC = 1.00, α = .981), 2) a curriculum appropriateness evaluation form (IOC = 1.00), and 3) a satisfaction questionnaire (IOC = 0.80-1.00, α = .936). Data analysis employed descriptive statistics. Results revealed the highest level of training need in experiential learning. The developed curriculum received the highest appropriateness rating, and teacher satisfaction was also the highest. The findings indicate that the curriculum was perceived as appropriate and satisfactory by participating teachers and provides a practical framework for supporting experiential learning management aimed at vocational and life-skill development for disadvantaged students.

Keywords: teacher training, curriculum development, experiential learning, Thai Royal Education Policy

1. Introduction

Education serves as a fundamental mechanism for human resource development and national quality enhancement. The Royal Thai Government Gazette (2017) mandates that educational management must aim to develop learners into good citizens with discipline, life skills, and vocational capabilities, in accordance with their aptitudes (Royal Thai Government Gazette, 2017). Within the context of 21st-century social, economic, and technological transformations, the education system no longer focuses solely on academic achievement but also emphasizes the development of life skills, vocational capabilities, and lifelong learning skills. The National Economic and Social Development Plan highlights the development of human resources with employability potential and sustainable self-reliance, particularly for children and youth in educationally and socially disadvantaged contexts (Office of the National Economic and Social Development Council, 2017). Therefore, vocational skills development and appropriate learning opportunities are crucial to reducing educational inequality and creating stability in learners' lives.

The educational policy of His Majesty King Maha Vajiralongkorn Phra Vajiraklaochaoyuhua (Thai Royal Education Policy) reflects Thailand's approach to human resource development, focusing on cultivating learners with knowledge, morality, responsibility, and the ability to live and work appropriately in a rapidly changing society. This policy emphasizes the development of life skills, discipline, and vocational preparation for learners (Siripong, 2021), aligning with Kolb's (1984) Experiential Learning Theory, which posits that genuine learning occurs through practical experience, reflective thinking, and the continuous application of knowledge to problem-solving and self-development. This process promotes the knowledge, skills, and attributes necessary for life and work, representing essential components of 21st-century learner competencies.

The concept of experiential learning management is widely recognized as a crucial approach for connecting knowledge with real-world situations. Kolb (1984) explains that experiential learning involves learning processes through practice, reflective thinking, abstract conceptualization, and experimental action in real-life contexts. This enables learners to achieve meaningful learning and develop essential life and work skills. Similarly, Beard and Wilson (2013) suggest that experiential learning promotes analytical thinking, decision-making, and the effective integration of theoretical knowledge with practical application. Furthermore, Dick and Carey (2014) propose that effective learning design should be systematic, encompassing learner analysis, objective setting, activity design, and evaluation to ensure the holistic development of knowledge, skills, and attitudes.

The Office of the Education Council (2019) suggests that educational development for disadvantaged learners should focus on integrating life skills, vocational skills, and real-world learning to enable self-reliance and sustainable living. However, despite Thai educational policy emphasizing the importance of vocational skills and experiential learning, implementation gaps persist between policy and practice, particularly in the southern border provinces, which have diverse social and cultural contexts, including language, religion, ethnic groups, and community lifestyles. These areas include Pattani, Yala, and Narathiwat, where the majority population practices Islam and uses the local Malay language alongside Thai. Additionally, these communities maintain strong local cultural identities, requiring educational management and teacher development to comprehensively consider cultural diversity and learners' life contexts (Ngamchuensuan, 2018). Therefore, educational approaches in this region cannot employ a one-size-fits-all model but must demonstrate understanding of multicultural society and design learning activities appropriate to community contexts.

Moreover, education management in the southern border provinces faces constraints regarding resources, cultural diversity, and teacher quality development. Despite efforts to promote teacher competencies in active learning management and numerous training programs, holistic professional development processes comprehensively covering knowledge, skills, and attributes remain inadequate. Additionally, systematic and continuous monitoring and evaluation systems are lacking. Research indicates that many teachers still struggle to design experiential learning activities that effectively develop learners' vocational skills and self-reliance (Chuenchoei, 2007). Disconnections persist among classroom learning, life skills development, and vocational preparedness, resulting in many learners being unable to apply their knowledge appropriately in real-world situations (Wisapanorn, 2009).

Previous studies conducted in schools under the Office of Special Education Administration have highlighted the importance of teacher development and context-responsive educational management for disadvantaged learners. Choktanaprasit et al. (2020) found that teacher professional development and collaborative learning processes contributed significantly to improving student learning outcomes in Rajaprajanugroh Schools. Similarly, Saiuseng and Maitreephun (2024) reported that schools serving disadvantaged students in the southern border provinces require educational approaches that integrate life skills, vocational competencies, and learner support systems responsive to local social and cultural conditions. These findings suggest that effective teacher development should not only strengthen pedagogical competencies but also enable teachers to design learning experiences that reflect the realities and needs of disadvantaged learners in multicultural communities.

Although research exists on experiential learning management, vocational skills development, and teacher competency development, knowledge gaps remain regarding the design of teacher training curricula that integrate experiential learning with vocational skills development in line with the Thai Royal Education Policy framework, particularly for disadvantaged learners in Rajaprajanugroh Schools in the southern border provinces. Furthermore, existing training curricula often insufficiently consider the multicultural contexts and local lifestyles of learners in these areas, resulting in teaching approaches that fail to respond effectively to learners' needs. Therefore, systematically enhancing teachers' competencies in experiential learning management is an urgent priority to enable them to design learning activities appropriate to community contexts and effectively support learners' vocational skills development.

This research aims to develop a teacher-training curriculum in experiential learning to promote vocational skills among disadvantaged learners in Rajaprajanugroh Schools in the southern border provinces, in line with the Thai Royal Education Policy and the national human resource development strategy. The study objectives are:

- 1.1 To assess teachers' training needs in experiential learning for vocational skills promotion
- 1.2 To develop a training curriculum for enhancing teacher competencies in experiential learning
- 1.3 To evaluate teachers' satisfaction with the developed training curriculum

This research is expected to generate sustainable teacher competency development and enhance the quality of

learning management. The findings are expected to provide a foundational framework for designing appropriate teacher-training curricula for Rajaprajanugroh Schools and multicultural contexts throughout Thailand.

2. Method

2.1 Research Design

This study employed a Research and Development (R&D) methodology to systematically develop and validate a teacher-training curriculum in experiential learning in line with the Thai Royal Education Policy. The research was specifically designed to enhance teacher competencies in experiential learning management for vocational skills development among disadvantaged students in Rajaprajanugroh Schools located in Thailand's southern border provinces.

The research process was structured into four sequential phases to ensure comprehensive curriculum development and validation:

Phase 1: Training Needs Assessment. This initial phase involved a survey of teachers' opinions regarding their training needs in experiential learning management within the framework of the Thai Royal Education Policy. A structured questionnaire was used to collect quantitative data from teachers in Rajaprajanugroh Schools. The findings from this phase were used as the basis for designing the teacher training curriculum.

Phase 2: Curriculum Development. Building on the needs assessment findings, this phase focused on the systematic design of the training curriculum aligned with the Thai Royal Education Policy. Key activities included defining learning objectives, structuring instructional modules, selecting pedagogical strategies, and developing training materials. The curriculum was designed to be culturally responsive, practical, and immediately applicable to classroom contexts, with an emphasis on hands-on experiential activities.

Phase 3: Curriculum Validation. The drafted curriculum underwent rigorous expert validation to ensure content validity, relevance, and feasibility. A panel of five specialists in curriculum development, experiential learning, vocational education, and multicultural education evaluated the curriculum components. Their expert feedback was incorporated to refine and enhance the curriculum quality before implementation.

Phase 4: Implementation and Evaluation. The validated curriculum was implemented in school settings with participating teachers. This phase involved conducting training activities and evaluating the curriculum through teachers' satisfaction with it. The evaluation focused on the curriculum's relevance, appropriateness, usability, and practical applicability in supporting the management of experiential learning for vocational development.

2.2 Population and Sample

The research population consisted of 395 teachers from seven Rajaprajanugroh schools specifically established to support disadvantaged students in Thailand's southern border provinces:

- 2.2.1 Rajaprajanugroh 39 School (Narathiwat Province)
- 2.2.2 Rajaprajanugroh 40 School (Pattani Province)
- 2.2.3 Rajaprajanugroh 41 School (Yala Province)
- 2.2.4 Rajaprajanugroh 42 School (Satun Province)
- 2.2.5 Rajaprajanugroh 43 School (Songkhla Province)
- 2.2.6 Rajaprajanugroh 65 School (Phatthalung Province)
- 2.2.7 Rajaprajanugroh 66 School (Narathiwat Province)

Participants were selected through purposive sampling based on the following criteria:

1. Currently performing teaching duties in one of the specified schools
2. Directly involved in providing educational services to disadvantaged students
3. Voluntarily agreed to participate in the research

This sampling approach ensured that participants could offer pertinent perspectives on experiential learning management within the specific context of the southern border provinces.

2.3 Research Instruments and Validation

Three research instruments were developed and validated for data collection:

2.3.1 Training Needs Assessment Questionnaire

A 5-level Likert-scale questionnaire was developed, with an Item-Objective Congruence (IOC) value of 1.00 for

all items. The instrument was pilot-tested with 30 teachers and demonstrated high reliability with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .981.

2.3.2 Curriculum Appropriateness Evaluation Form

A comprehensive evaluation form was developed to assess the training curriculum's suitability. The curriculum comprised six components: 1) rationale and principles, 2) curriculum objectives, 3) structure and content, 4) activity guidelines, 5) media and learning resources, and 6) assessment methods. Expert validation confirmed the instrument's appropriateness with an IOC value of 1.00.

2.3.3 Satisfaction Questionnaire

A 5-level Likert scale satisfaction questionnaire was developed with IOC values ranging from 0.80 to 1.00. Pilot testing with 30 teachers demonstrated excellent reliability with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .936.

2.4 Implementation Procedures

The study employed a single-group design focusing on curriculum development and evaluation within authentic educational settings. All participating teachers received training through the developed curriculum, which emphasized:

- Experiential learning processes
- Reflective practice sessions
- Collaborative knowledge exchange
- Practical application for vocational skills development

Training activities included the following:

- Practical workshops and lectures
- Group activities and discussions
- Case study analyses
- Learning reflection sessions
- Experiential learning activity design

Curriculum implementation occurred in two phases:

1. Pilot Testing of the Curriculum: Conducted with 30 teachers from Rajaprajanugroh 19 School to identify limitations and assess appropriateness.
2. Field Study: Implemented with the actual sample group, incorporating refinements from the pilot phase

2.5 Data Collection Procedures

The research adhered to strict ethical guidelines and received approval from the Human Research Ethics Committee of Sirindhorn College of Public Health, Yala Province. Formal permission was obtained from Songkhla Rajabhat University and participating schools. Comprehensive briefings were conducted for all participants, explaining research objectives, procedures, benefits, and participant rights. Informed consent was obtained from all participants before data collection.

2.6 Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics were employed for data analysis, including:

- Frequency and percentage distributions for response patterns
- Mean and standard deviation calculations for rating scales

This analytical approach provided a comprehensive understanding of:

1. Specific training needs identified by teachers
2. Perceived appropriateness of the developed curriculum
3. Overall satisfaction levels with the training program

The analysis ensured systematic interpretation of data that accurately reflected participating teachers' perspectives and experiences within the framework of the Thai Royal Education Policy.

3. Results

3.1 Demographic Characteristics of Participants

A total of 367 teachers participated in the study. The participants represented various age groups, educational backgrounds, and teaching experiences, providing a broad perspective on experiential learning and teacher training needs. Detailed demographic information is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Participants

General Characteristics	Number of Persons	Percentage
Educational Level		
Bachelor's Degree	321	87.47%
Master's Degree	46	12.53%
Work Experience		
Less than 5 years	72	19.62%
5-10 years	232	63.22%
More than 11 years	63	17.16%
Total	367	100.00%

3.2 Training Needs Assessment Results

The analysis revealed that teachers had the highest training needs in experiential learning management for vocational development (Mean = 4.87, SD = 0.64). The strongest needs were related to experiential learning design and vocational learning activities. Detailed findings are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Training Needs for Competency Enhancement in Experiential Learning Management

Teachers' Needs	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Knowledge of experiential learning management	4.88	0.46	Highest
Understanding experiential learning procedures	4.89	0.45	Highest
Roles of teachers and learners in experiential learning	4.90	0.47	Highest
Designing experiential learning activities	4.91	0.44	Highest
Understanding Kolb's experiential learning cycle	4.87	0.42	Highest
Skills in designing experiential learning activities	4.89	0.43	Highest
Designing activities for vocational skill development	4.87	0.68	Highest
Organizing activities for vocational development	4.86	0.48	Highest
Designing activities for specific occupational groups	4.92	0.56	Highest
Measurement and evaluation of learning outcomes	4.85	0.71	Highest
Overall	4.87	0.64	Highest

3.3 Curriculum Appropriateness Evaluation

The expert evaluation indicated that the developed curriculum was appropriate at the highest level overall (Mean = 4.81, SD = 0.58). The results confirm the curriculum's relevance, coherence, and suitability for enhancing teachers' competencies in experiential learning management. Detailed results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Appropriateness Evaluation of the Training Curriculum

Curriculum Components	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Problem conditions and necessity	4.87	0.52	Highest
Curriculum objectives	4.64	0.54	Highest
Curriculum content	4.82	0.56	Highest
Training methodologies	4.69	0.55	Highest
Training materials and media	4.77	0.50	Highest
Evaluation methods	4.78	0.59	Highest
Overall	4.81	0.58	Highest

3.4 Teacher Satisfaction Assessment

Participating teachers expressed the highest level of satisfaction with the developed curriculum (Mean = 4.81, SD = 0.56). The findings suggest that the curriculum was perceived as relevant, useful, and applicable to

professional practice. Detailed results are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Teacher Satisfaction with Training Curriculum Components

Satisfaction Indicators	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Topic consistency with curriculum objectives	4.83	0.43	Highest
Objective alignment with training topics	4.84	0.42	Highest
Content presentation quality	4.48	0.44	High
Content modernity and relevance	4.70	0.41	Highest
Content relevance to participant needs	4.85	0.45	Highest
Content alignment with curriculum objectives	4.49	0.46	High
Academic accuracy of content	4.40	0.47	High
Content clarity and understandability	4.86	0.43	Highest
Overall	4.81	0.58	Highest

4. Discussion

The findings indicate that the developed teacher-training curriculum effectively addressed the identified training needs and was perceived as appropriate and satisfactory by participating teachers. The results revealed the highest-level training needs, curriculum appropriateness, and teacher satisfaction, indicating the program's strong alignment with both the Thai Royal Education Policy framework and the specific contextual requirements of multicultural educational environments in Thailand's southern border provinces.

These outcomes stem from the systematic curriculum development process that prioritized thorough needs assessment before design, ensuring that content, activities, and instructional approaches effectively addressed the unique challenges faced by teachers working with disadvantaged students in Rajapranugroh Schools. The consistently high evaluation scores across all dimensions confirm that the program comprehensively met teachers' expectations regarding content relevance, learning management processes, and practical applicability within authentic school contexts.

The research findings align strongly with Kolb's (1984) experiential learning theory, which posits that effective learning occurs through a cyclical process of Concrete Experience, Reflective Observation, Abstract Conceptualization, and Active Experimentation. The training program successfully implemented this theoretical framework by emphasizing hands-on practice, problem analysis, and activity design relevant to students' vocational backgrounds and community contexts. This approach enabled teachers to develop confidence and recognize the feasibility of applying experiential learning methodologies in their teaching practices, consistent with Dewey's (1938) philosophy of "Learning by Doing" and reflective practice.

The program's success can be attributed to activity designs that promoted continuous teacher engagement through practical implementation, reflective thinking, collaborative knowledge exchange, and context-based activity development. This process facilitated meaningful connections between theoretical knowledge and actual teaching experiences, enabling teachers to develop a concrete understanding of experiential learning management and effectively design appropriate learning activities for disadvantaged students. These findings support Thomas and Brown's (2011) perspective that 21st-century learning should create experiences connected to learners' real lives and social contexts, which is particularly crucial for vulnerable populations in constrained environments like Thailand's southern border provinces.

The highest-level appropriateness ratings reflect the curriculum's strong alignment across principles, content, activities, and assessment methods, achieved through the systematic design approach of Dick and Carey (2014). This methodology ensured that processes were interconnected, including needs analysis, objective setting, activity design, and evaluation, resulting in a clear and practically applicable curriculum. These findings are consistent with research by Sutiarij et al. (2018), which confirms that learning through direct experience promotes self-directed learning and enables learners to set goals and reflect on outcomes independently.

The findings are also consistent with studies conducted in schools under the Office of Special Education Administration. Choktanaprasit et al. (2020) demonstrated that systematic teacher development can enhance educational quality and learner outcomes in Rajapranugroh Schools. Likewise, Saiuseng and Maitreephun (2024) emphasized that educational management for disadvantaged students in the southern border provinces should address life skills, vocational competencies, and local contextual needs. The present study extends these findings by providing a structured teacher-training curriculum that integrates experiential learning with the Thai Royal Education Policy, thereby offering a practical mechanism to strengthen vocational development among

disadvantaged learners in multicultural educational settings.

The research also aligns with contemporary studies demonstrating that experiential learning connected to real-world contexts and local cultures effectively develops vocational and life skills, as well as cultural pride (Doramarn et al., 2020; Maprakob et al., 2024; Kaewmola & Onthani, 2023). McLeod's (2017) assertion that experiential learning is most effective through continuous engagement across all four stages of Kolb's cycle was validated by the program's structured implementation, which guided teachers through a sequence of practical activities, collaborative exchanges, and reflective thinking within the designated timeframe.

However, several limitations should be considered when interpreting these findings. First, the study was conducted exclusively with teachers from Rajaprajanugroh Schools in Thailand's southern border provinces. Therefore, the findings may not be directly generalizable to other educational settings with different social, cultural, and institutional characteristics. Second, the study relied primarily on self-reported questionnaire data, which may be subject to response bias and social desirability bias. Third, the evaluation focused on teachers' perceptions of training needs, curriculum appropriateness, and satisfaction with the developed curriculum rather than measuring actual changes in classroom practices or student learning outcomes. Finally, the study assessed outcomes during the implementation period and did not include long-term follow-up data to determine the sustainability of curriculum effects over time.

Future research should examine the long-term impact of the curriculum on teachers' instructional practices and students' vocational competencies through longitudinal studies. Further studies should also expand implementation to other educational contexts and learner groups to examine the curriculum's broader applicability. In addition, multiple sources of evidence, such as classroom observations, interviews, and student performance assessments, should be incorporated to provide a more comprehensive evaluation of curriculum effectiveness.

In conclusion, this research demonstrates that the teacher training curriculum in experiential learning under the Thai Royal Education Policy serves as a crucial mechanism for building teacher capacity in welfare schools. The curriculum provides a practical framework to support teachers in designing experiential learning activities intended to promote life skills, vocational skills, and self-reliance among disadvantaged students, aligning with human capital development strategies and the royal initiative on education, which aims to cultivate morally grounded, skilled learners capable of sustainable living with dignity.

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Author contributions

Assist. Prof. Dr. Kanokkorn Sirisuk was responsible for study design, curriculum development, data analysis, and drafting the manuscript. Assoc. Prof. Dr. Niran Chullasap contributed to research instrument development, data collection, curriculum validation, and manuscript revision. Both authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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Competing interests

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

Informed consent

Obtained.

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The Publication Ethics Committee of the Canadian Center of Science and Education.

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The data that support the findings of this study are available on request from the corresponding author. The data are not publicly available due to privacy or ethical restrictions.

Data sharing statement

No additional data are available.

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