

Development of Thai Reading Skills of Primary Level Students by Using the Concept of School as Learning Community

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Abstract

This research aimed to develop an instructional package of Thai reading skills by using the concept of school as a learning community and efficiency of 80/80 and compare the Thai reading skills of students before and after using an instructional package of Thai reading skills by using the concept of school as a learning community. This research is experimental. The sample group was 30 students in grades 1 - 6, who had problems reading Thai, which was obtained from purposive sampling. The research tools consisted of activities learning to read Thai using the concept of school as an effective learning community according to the 80/80 criteria and a Thai reading skills test for primary school students. The experiment took 4 weeks, totaling 20 periods. Statistics used in data analysis were percentage, mean, standard deviation, and t-test for dependent samples. The research results found that; 1) The effectiveness of the Thai reading learning activity set by using the concept of school as a community Learning efficiency equals 80.06/81.72, higher than the standard criteria of 80/80, and 2) Comparison results of Thai reading skills of students before and after learning with an instructional package of Thai reading skills by using the concept of school as a learning community. The reading skills test results after studying were higher than before studying. Statistically significant at the .05.

Keywords: Thai reading skill, the concept of school as a learning community, instructional package

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Introduction

The Thai language is a national identity and a cultural heritage that fosters unity and strengthens the personality of Thai people, giving them a sense of “Thainess.” It serves as a tool for communication to build understanding and good relationships, enabling people to carry out activities, work, and live together peacefully in a democratic society. Moreover, it is a means for seeking knowledge and experience from various information sources, helping to develop analytical thinking, critical thinking, and creativity to keep pace with social changes and scientific and technological advancements, as well as to apply in career development for economic stability. Additionally, Thai is a medium that conveys the ancestors’ wisdom in culture, traditions, and aesthetics, making it a valuable heritage worthy of learning, preserving, and passing on to remain with the Thai nation forever (Ministry of Education, 2008: Online). The nature of the Thai language is skill-based; thus, the content of each skill cannot be separated by grade level, and it is necessary to have continuous skill-training processes. However, in terms of reading, it is necessary to teach language skills at every grade level, with each level having progressively more complex and difficult content, such as an increasing number of words, longer and more complex sentences, and longer reading passages (Ministry of Education, 2001).

Reading is an essential language skill in life and a cognitive process that enables individuals to interpret, comprehend, and construct accurate understanding of content. It also helps individuals grasp the main ideas and details based on their knowledge and personal experiences (Kaemkate, 2012). This skill affects many aspects of life, particularly in learning, where reading serves as a vital medium for accessing information and knowledge across all disciplines. In terms of language development, reading enhances vocabulary, sentence construction, and effective communication. Furthermore, reading contributes to the development of thinking skills by promoting analytical thinking, creative thinking, and interpretation. Reading is not merely a tool for learning but also helps individuals develop higher-order thinking skills and supports lifelong learning. Therefore, the development of reading skills should begin at the primary education level to establish a strong foundation for advanced learning in the future. Reading enables individuals to care for themselves, apply knowledge in their careers, and increase their capacity for self-development. Without good reading skills, readers will require more time to understand content and may fail to grasp the main ideas fully, which negatively impacts learning efficiency and daily life. Addressing this issue requires regular practice through daily reading activities. Promoting students’ reading ability is thus essential, as this skill supports comprehension, decision-making, problem-solving, and interpretation. Therefore, reading is a crucial skill that should be continuously supported and developed to build a strong foundation for learning and living in the future, both at the individual and societal levels.

The development of reading skills must be accompanied by books or stories related to children’s interests, as this supports reading ability and creates meaningful experiences. Engaging reading materials can stimulate students’ interest in reading at all ages. This approach can be integrated with the concept of the school as a learning community, which fosters the participation of teachers, students, parents, and community stakeholders. Learning activities that promote exchange within the organization provide students with new ways to support their learning, particularly in the context of developing reading skills. Teachers play a key role in creating opportunities for others, including fellow teachers, parents, community members, and other stakeholders, to participate as observers, which positively impacts students’ educational development. Education that emphasizes learning based on the concept

of the school as a learning community is grounded in a deep understanding of the importance of creating creative learning spaces and fostering enthusiasm for learning, beginning with assessing students' needs and interests. Additionally, implementing the idea of the school as a learning community is considered an important educational approach for creating diverse and engaging learning spaces. The learning context must therefore take into account activities that allow students to participate, focusing on collaborative learning environments in small groups to enable students to reach their full learning potential and extend it into diverse community-based learning spaces. Collaboration among teachers and parents, with the community as a key factor, helps create a learning environment that stimulates creativity and enhances students' reading skill development.

The Educational Research Division, Department of Curriculum and Instruction Development, Ministry of Education, evaluated the state of Thai language instruction in primary schools and found that students' Thai language achievement scores were at a relatively low level. The main problematic competencies included reading and writing skills, pronunciation of consonants and vowels, unclear consonant clusters, syllable segmentation, and incorrect use of Thai grammar. Syllable segmentation is particularly essential for beginning learners. If teachers do not teach syllable segmentation at the early stages, students will lack a foundation for word formation, which leads to confusion and difficulty in reading as they encounter more complex texts (Ministry of Education, 2003). This issue is reflected in the results of PISA assessments from 2012 to 2022, where Thai students' reading literacy scores steadily declined—441 points, 409 points, 393 points, and 379 points, respectively. This trend indicates a clear decrease in students' reading skills, partly due to the challenges in organizing learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. Moreover, the Thai education system shows a wide achievement gap between high-performing and low-performing students. This highlights that reading is crucial at all levels of education and across all sectors of society, especially reading comprehension, which should be explicitly developed among primary school students.

For these reasons, it highlights the importance and necessity of developing Thai reading skills among students in schools under the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration. This can be achieved through the use of learning activity packages that apply the concept of the school as a learning community. Such an approach can foster collaboration from all sectors and help expand and build upon knowledge, while employing strategies to develop schools into true learning communities aligned with their specific contexts. Ultimately, this can bring about improvements in the quality of education management in Thailand, enhance efforts to address educational quality issues, and strengthen school administration both in terms of management and academic development.

Research Objectives

1. To develop an instructional package of Thai reading skills by using the concept of school as a learning community to achieve an efficiency criterion of 80/80.
2. To compare the Thai reading skills of students before and after using an instructional package of Thai reading skills by using the concept of school as a learning community.

Research Methodology

Research Design

The experimental implementation of an instructional package of Thai reading skills which incorporates the Schools as Learning Communities concept, aims to develop Thai reading skills among primary school students in Bangkok Metropolitan schools. The study employs a one-group pretest-posttest Design, conducted over 4 weeks totaling 20 periods (5 periods per week).

Table 1

Research Design

Dependent Variables	Pre-test Assessment	Experimental Implementation	Post-test Assessment
Thai Language Reading Skills	T ₁ E	X	T ₂ E

E represents students participating in an instructional package of Thai reading skills by using the concept of school as a learning community.

T represents pre-test and post-test assessments

X represents the implementation of an instructional package of Thai reading skills by using the concept of school as a learning community.

Population and Sample

The population consists of 175,170 students in grades 1-6 from Bangkok Metropolitan Administration schools during the 2023 academic year, according to educational statistics reports.

The sample comprises 30 students from grades 1-6 in the 2024 academic year who demonstrate Thai reading difficulties, selected through purposive sampling.

Research Hypothesis

Primary school students who practice Thai reading skills using an instructional package of Thai reading skills by using the concept of school as a learning community will achieve higher post-test scores compared to pre-test scores, as analyzed using t-test for dependent samples.

Research Instruments

1. Instructional package of Thai reading skills by using the concept of school as a learning community, designed to meet an 80/80 efficiency criterion
2. Lesson plans for Thai reading instruction based on the Schools as Learning Communities concept
3. Thai reading skills assessment for primary school students

Instrument Development Process

The research instruments were developed through the following steps:

1. **Literature Review:** Review relevant research literature to define content conceptual framework and evaluation methodologies.
2. **Lesson Plan Development:**
 - Analyzed the Basic Education Core Curriculum 2008 (revised 2017)
 - Studied Thai language teacher manuals focusing on reading skills
 - Reviewed literature on the concept of Schools as Learning Communities
 - Created 18 lesson plans
 - Obtained advisor feedback and made necessary revisions
 - Submitted materials to three experts for evaluationThe lesson plans received an average expert evaluation score of 4.72 (SD = 0.30), indicating the highest level of appropriateness.
3. **Instructional Package of Thai Reading Skills Development:**
 - Studied appropriate activity formats for primary-level students
 - Incorporated participation from teachers, students, parents, and community members
 - Obtained expert validation and feedback
 - Achieved an average expert evaluation score of 4.53 (SD = 0.27)

Data Collection

The implementation spanned 4 weeks (20 periods, 5 periods per week), following these steps:

1. Administered pre-test to 73 students at Wat Intharawihan School
2. Selected 30 lowest-scoring students for the experiment
3. Implemented the learning package over 20 periods
4. Administered post-test for comparative analysis

Data Analysis

Analysis procedures included:

1. Quality analysis of lesson plans and learning activities using mean and standard deviation
2. Efficiency evaluation of the learning package using E1/E2 criteria
3. Comparison of pre-test and post-test achievement scores using dependent samples t-test

Research Results

The research on developing Thai reading skills among primary school students in Bangkok Metropolitan schools using the School as Learning Community concept yielded the following results:

1. The efficiency of the instructional package of Thai reading skills by using the concept of school as a learning community achieved an efficiency ratio of 80.06/81.72, exceeding the standard criterion of 80/80.

Table 2

Efficiency Analysis of an Instructional Package of Thai Reading Skills by Using the Concept of School as a Learning Community According to the 80/80 Criterion

Statistics	Scores from the instructional package (During Study)				Post-test Score (30)
	Set 1 (10)	Set 2 (10)	Set 3 (10)	Total (30)	
$\sum x$	218	243.5	259	720.5	735.5
\bar{X}	7.27	8.12	8.63	24.02	24.52
E_1/E_2	72.67	81.17	8.633	80.06	81.72
Efficiency	$E_1/E_2 = 80.06/81.72$				

- The comparison of students' Thai reading skills before and after using an instructional package of Thai reading skills by using the concept of school as learning community, showed significantly higher post-test scores at the .05 level of statistical significance.

Table 3

Comparison of Thai Reading Achievement Scores of Primary School Students in Bangkok Metropolitan Schools Using the School As Learning Community Concept Before and After Instruction (t-Test for Dependent Samples)

Test	N	\bar{X}	S.D.	t	Sig.
Pre-test	30	16.52	2.32	11.11*	0.00
Post-test	30	24.52	2.98		

*Statistically significant at .05 level

Discussion

The results from the study on the effectiveness of the instructional package of Thai reading skills which incorporates the Schools as Learning Communities concept revealed an efficiency of 80.06/81.72, which exceeded the set standard of 80/80. This outcome was due to the research team's development of the instructional package of Thai reading skills which incorporates the Schools as Learning Communities concept to promote student learning in accordance with the research objectives. Furthermore, the skill development package created by the researchers followed appropriate procedures and methods, offering a variety of activities suitable for the learners' age and interests. The package included a teacher's manual, lesson plans, learning activities, instructional materials, and assessment tools. Teachers acted as advisors providing guidance to help students follow the steps, achieve the learning objectives, and track their progress immediately upon completing the instructional package (Burasit, 2005; Good, 1973; Lertvattrakan, 2013; Moolkum & Moolkum, 2008; Pormwong, 2008; Thaipanich, 2008; Wongyai, 2002).

The acceptance of the efficiency assessment of the instructional package is defined as E1, which refers to the efficiency of the process, and E2, which refers to the efficiency of the outcome. The criterion for setting the E1/E2 value should consider the content type; for knowledge and memory-based content, the standard is typically set at 80/80. In this study, the researchers set the criterion at 80/80, following the efficiency assurance criteria proposed by Pongsawat (2003) and consistent with the study conducted by Paethong (2018), who investigated the development of Thai reading and writing skills using the instructional package entitled “Fun Reading, Joyful Writing” for Grade 1 students. The objective of that study was to improve students’ reading and word writing skills in Thai to meet the 80/80 efficiency standard, examine learning achievement before and after instruction, and assess students’ satisfaction after using the package. The study was conducted with 64 Grade 1 students at the Demonstration School of Chiang Mai Rajabhat University. The research tools included 12 lesson plans, 10 instructional package booklets of “Fun Reading, Joyful Writing,” an achievement test, and a student satisfaction questionnaire. Data were collected and analyzed using mean, standard deviation, and percentage. The pretest, which consisted of 30 multiple-choice and subjective questions, showed an average score of 16.30, accounting for 54.33% of the total score. Subsequently, the instructional package was implemented following all learning steps. After completing the activities, the students took a posttest to assess progress and learning outcomes, yielding an average score of 25.75 or 85.83% of the total score. Comparing the pretest and posttest scores, the average learning progress was 9.45 points, representing 31.50% improvement (Paethong, 2018; Pongsawat, 2003).

The results of the study comparing Thai reading skills of students before and after using the instructional package, which incorporates the Schools as Learning Communities concept, revealed that the posttest scores were significantly higher than the pretest scores at the .05 level. Specifically, the average pretest score was 16.52, while the posttest score was 24.52. This indicates positive outcomes from activities developed through the observation of problems, analysis, and improvement of teaching processes, such as adjusting the group size to enhance student participation. These processes help create sustainable learning and increase understanding, resulting in higher student achievement. These findings are consistent with the research conducted by Saijeen (2018), which found that an instructional package based on the Professional Learning Community concept for Grade 6 students was highly effective (82.50/81.33). The average pretest score in that study was 38.20, which increased to 81.33 after the intervention, showing a statistically significant difference at the .05 level. Furthermore, students reported the highest level of satisfaction with the instructional package, with an average score of 4.80. These research results confirm that instructional designs focused on addressing problems in the students’ context can effectively develop reading skills and enhance academic achievement (Saijeen, 2018).

Conclusion

The research demonstrates that the developed learning activity sets exceeded standard efficiency criteria, effectively promoting student learning through age-appropriate design, comprehensive teacher resources, and systematic evaluation methods. The implementation resulted in statistically significant improvement in Thai reading skills, with mean scores increasing from 16.52 to 24.52.

Policy Recommendations

1. Teachers should thoroughly study the learning activity sets and materials to adapt them systematically according to student context and objectives.
2. School administrators should increase support for learning resources and teaching materials to enhance classroom diversity and learning atmosphere.

Future Research Recommendations

1. Develop grade-specific reading skill enhancement activity sets that can be integrated into regular classroom instruction.
2. Expand the School as Learning Community concept to other subjects to improve school-wide collaboration effectiveness.

The new knowledge generated from this research provides a learning management approach that can be adapted across subjects and age groups, promoting learning through school collaboration, classroom management, positive relationships, and teaching methodologies suitable for the Thai education system.

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