

KINDERGARTEN EFL TEACHING AT ALTERNATIVE SCHOOLS IN THAILAND

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Abstract

This project studied EFL teaching at the kindergarten level in four alternative schools in Thailand that use different curriculums and teaching philosophies: Waldorf, Reggio Emilia, Buddhism, and Constructionism. The research was done by interviewing administrators using an open-ended questionnaire, and classroom observation. All the schools had a learner centered approach with some variations depending on their educational philosophies and all saw motivation of students as a main function and outcome of their curricula.

Introduction

This research studies EFL teaching at the, kindergarten level, in four alternative schools, which apply different learning theories and philosophies, to wit: Waldorf, Reggio Emilia, Buddhism, and Constructionism. While they are under the national education curriculum, their private school status allows them much latitude in organizing and structuring their content and teaching methods (Thamromdee (2006)). And in fact at the kindergarten level they have no set curriculum at all under national education guidelines. According to Chakpisuth (2005) these schools are based on learning innovations which allow individual differences, provide experimental learning and manage the environment in a way that promotes learning. Patoomcharoenwattana (2002) found that alternative schools promote educational technology and media to support learning throughout the learner's life cycle from a child-centered perspective.

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Tridhaksa School: Waldorf Curriculum

Tridhaksa Kindergarten School, one of approximately 1000 Steiner schools worldwide, aims to educate the students in holistic ways according to Steiner principles.

Waldorf education

Waldorf education was developed by Rudolf Steiner, Austrian philosopher; in 1919. It is based on a perception of human development, humanistic approach, and Steiner believed that education should educate the whole child: the heart and the hands, as well as the head. In other word, the child needs a physical, emotional, spiritual and intellectual balance and well-being. This approach supposedly also emphasizes imagination in learning, which includes creative and analytic thinking via art.

Tridhaksa School: Play and learn

Following Waldorf principles at this school student learn via ‘playing’. This school provides natural environment and activities for children such as painting, beeswax modeling, cooking, cleaning, planting rice, listening to stories, singing, circle games and outdoor play, guided by the kindergarten teacher who shows, rather than tells, the children how to do things. All subjects are introduced to the students in artistic ways and they are not encouraged to learn for tests or examinations, but learn out of their enthusiasm to know and participate according to school administrators. . Moreover, the school provides three languages teaching: Thai, English, and Chinese, integrated in activity and each language class: one class one hour per week for students in level 2 - 3. At present, Tridhaksa School has 12 Thai teachers and 68 students, 2 – 6 years old, which are divided into four classes: Pre-school, kindergarten level 1, level 2, and level 3. In each class there are a maximum of 20 students per two Thai teachers.

Maneerut Kindergarten School: Reggio Emilia

Maneerut Kindergarten School was established by Maneerut Wattanasombat in 1988 and is based on the educational principles of Reggio Emilia. According to the school’s principal, “The idea of this school have believe that child born with

everything 100 thing (such as; have 100 hands, have 100 idea, have 100 thinking, have 100 how to play and have 100 how to speck etc.) and children can do everything if they have been advised about how to do because this theory believe that children have great potential and everything that them have experience from learning by doing it help them interested and deep understanding (K. Wattanasombat, personal communication, September 18, 2011).

Maneerut Kindergarten School: Project-based learning

The school had adopted an innovative principles and concepts application Project Approach, Brain Based Learning, Multiple Intelligence, Integration, Whole Language etc. Moreover, this school finds computers RE not necessary for young children because children should learn from nature and everything around of them. In the first or second week of semester the teachers take students outside the classroom and introduce them to every place in their school. If a student sees something that interests them, that can be the start of a project. Or the teacher allows students to draw pictures or mould clay. And if some students know what they want to learn, they can name a project. So the teacher will form a group of student who are interested the same topic. Then the teacher set the scope of the project from student questions. Such as in “fish project”, the students in this project ask, “How can you cook?” ”Which organ of the fish is used for swimming?” And then the teacher let students compare between themselves and fish. In the next step the students will brainstorm and discuss in their group for find how we can get the answer. After that students find out the knowledge and practices their self-confident in a same time for example the teacher ask them to prepare a thing that relate with the topic of project for show and share... At the end of semester students together summary everything knowledge in their project for prepare exhibition. Next steps the parent will come to watched student’s exhibition. According to project-based learning, academic subject such as Thai, Math, Science, English, etc. were integrated in the project. Currently, this school has totally 350 students and has 40 teachers, have student since pre-kindergarten (about 1.8 - 3 years old) to kindergarten 3 (about 5 years old). In each class there are about 25-30 students.

Darunsikkhalai School: Constructionism

Darunsikkhalai School for Innovative Learning (DSIL) at King Mongkut's University of Technology. This type of alternative education is the only one in Thailand that applies Seymour Papert's Constructionist Theory to the whole school's curriculum. It aims to support students to learn through exploring knowledge by themselves in the format of project-based learning.

Constructionism

What is constructionism? This theory is inspired by the constructivism of Jean Piaget who believes that individual learners construct mental models to understand the world around them. Constructionism was developed by Seymour Papert of the M.I.T. Media Lab (Massachusetts Institute of Technology). He studied the learning behavior of children over 20 years and concluded a theory of learning. He developed his ideas from constructivism which emphasized that the learners' learning process and knowledge can be constructed by themselves through learning by doing. He stated "children learn best when they are in the active roles of designer and constructor" (Papert, 1996). Moreover, learning can occur most effectively when people are active in making tangible objects in the real world. The learner must be engaged mentally as well as physically. Learning, constructing meaning and system of meaning are mental processes that occur in the mind. Papert also applied Information Technology (IT) to classrooms by using Logo language.

Darunsikkhalai School: Project-based learning

Following constructionism theory, the approach used in teaching and learning at DSIL is learning through Project-based learning class (PBL) which mainly focuses on developing of students' learning process and also integrating various academic topics (such as English, Math, Science and so on) or knowledge relating to project altogether. Furthermore, the students design and create their own projects by planning what they want to learn with their classmates and facilitators (teachers) before they learn from doing and experiencing. These projects are expensive and lead to high school costs and therefore most students at DSIL come from families that have high financial status with only 8 percent of students receiving a school's scholarship.

Teeranurak Kindergarten School: Project Approach

Following Buddhist theory, the approach used in teaching and learning at Teeranurak School is learning through *Project Approach* which mainly focuses on making learning fun. Moreover, the school was set the way to teaching to make their student learn by finding what they are interested in and what they want to know. A project that the student learn is the subject that they was ask that why the student have the real experience with that subject. The time that was spend for learn in every project is enough for fining the answer. After the student found the answer they will bring that knowledge to present by writing, painting, built a model, make a book, or in another channels in their own style to present to their friend or other one for show their achievement in project learning. Teaching by project is very flexible system but it has clearly process to teaching. All project that student interested to do will spend 50 – 70 minutes in every day. Some project spend 1 week, 3 weeks, 4 weeks or 3 months for learning to find the answer depend on subject of the project that student was choose and depend on an activity which them choose as a tool for find out the answer and present their learning result. There are three main processes for set the project learning activity; 1) Start project, 2) Project Development, 3) Conclusion. The first step, start project, is a review of prior knowledge that students have about the topic of the project, and then share it with other students. Moreover this step is a cause that makes student more interest in this project as well. The next step is project development student learn under the supervision of teacher working in groups according to the students interest. A knowledge that students learn in this step is a result presentation from the answer that they was find out on step 1. This step the student will present their answer by many ways such as build a model, art work, and role play. Moreover, the student will learn the fact of real experience from this process. In the conclusion step, teacher will prepare a situation that integrates the knowledge of the project to present to students in the project, student in other projects, parents and other people. K. Teeranurak stated about school' objective, "The first age that was spent the time in a school is preschool and elementary so, we want to see them happy to learn in everything around them. We want to see the kids can think by themselves, being a good one, and they can live with other people and have fun. We want to see the children feel the valued in them, want to see they feel that learning is a matter of good and fun,

and they want to learn more in the future.” (K.Teeranurak, personal communication, September 18, 2011). Teeranurak School was established on 1983 to now. They have 80 students with 4 level of student; Preschool, Kindergarten level 1, level 2 and level 3. The schedule of this school are integrate project base in the morning part and activity base in the afternoon. They were integrating three part of innovation in their syllabus: Project, Literature, and Buddhism. Project: In every semester student will find out the subject that they most interested and the teacher will integrate the knowledge in that project after that followed the three main processes that was set for learning activity as above. Literature: The kids were interested by a tale so it has fun and were attracted in to the lesson. Teeranurak School used this story base as a main of any project. The school was integrating the knowledge in every scene of the tale for example if they learn about the three little pigs, the student will learn about an animal. Moreover they were integrating many important subjects into the story too such as Math, Explorer, experimentation, and language also. In every semester the student will learn one or two story that depends on the length of the story. Buddhism: In this part the student was learn about a general lifestyle that including with manner, Emotional Quotient, patience, kindness and discipline.

Analysis of Literature

Activity-Based Learning

All four alternative schools apply Activity-Based Learning (ABL), which is a type of learning that occurs through a constructivist point of view during English classes. ABL is also referred to as problem-based learning theory. Duch (1995) found the students use problems to challenge them for found solution and help them learn by hand on which is the same basic concept as constructionism, learning by doing. Danile (2003) said that the goal of Activity-Based Learning is for learners to construct mental models that allow for ‘higher-order’ performance, such as applied problem solving and transfer of information and skills. (p.2). Hein (1991, 21) found that Activity-Based Learning provides an avenue to integrate learning within the students’ knowledge and provides activities that give an educational experience rich with sensory experiences which means the learner constructs meaning using sensory input. This is an active process whereby the learner must engage with the world.

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)

CLT is an approach of second or foreign language teaching which is based on beliefs that learners will learn best if they participate in meaningful communication. It is also simply referred to as “communicative approach”. The communicative approach gives priority to the semantic content of language learning. Learners learn the grammatical form through meaning not the other way around. Thus, "learning activities are selected according to how well they engage the learner in meaningful and authentic language use rather than merely mechanical practice of language patterns." (Richards & Rogers, 1986: 72). The range of exercise types and activities compatible with a communicative approach is unlimited. Moreover, it is not assumed in this approach that the teacher is the center of all classroom activities. In other words, the communicative methodology is a learner-centered approach to language learning (Farrell & Jacobs, 2010). All four alternative school also applied the communicative approach in the English time that the students were involved to communicate with native English speaker teachers through communicative tasks or activities.

Research Methodology

Four alternative schools which applied different learning theory or philosophy were chosen and the researchers sent mail to ask for their permission to visit and observe the English classes and interview administrators. After getting the permission, the researchers observed and interviewed the manager of that school by using open-ended questionnaires. The first school we visited was Maneerut Kindergarten School which uses the approach of Reggio Emilia. The manager of this school that was interviewed is Miss Kesinee Wattanasombat who works as the principal and Miss Wimolmal Wattanasombat who works as the Manager of Maneerat School. The second school that researchers have a chance to visit is Teeranurak kindergarten school with Buddhism approach and Mr.Komkrib Teeranurak who works as the manager of this school was interviewed. The third school is Tridhaksa School which strongly in approach of Waldorf, the founder of this school is Ms.Rewadee Thanomphongphandh who works as a founder, administrator and English teacher also was interviewed. The last school is Darunsikkhalai School for Innovative Learning

which believes in Constructionism theory, Miss Paweena Jansook who works as kindergarten teacher in this School and Mr. Richard who is kindergarten project teacher and he teaches English in this project were also interviewed. The open-ended questionnaire was aimed at defining how each of the four schools teaches English and what the key elements of success are. Then the researchers observed the English class at each school. The questionnaire was started about a general information of school and how the school set up English activity, what are the tools that the school uses for integrate English, What are the teacher roles, How teacher evaluate their student, What is the weak point and the good point that they think. After that the data was collected, classified and analyzed, and then make best practices from each school by using table to explain it in this research.

The Results from Interviewing and Class Observation

English Pedagogy at Tridhaksa School

This school provides English teaching in two sections which are main class and supplementary class. The main section was conducted by outsource, Fun Language International (Thailand) Ltd., which is a center for teaching English to young learners, 3 – 12 years old, in Thailand. The institute was established in 1997; now there are over 26,000 students annually. The administrator who is also English teacher at this school said that Tridhaksa School chose Fun language because it believes that ‘Children learn best when learning is fun’ which is one of core concept of teaching at the school (R. Thanomphongphadh, personal communication, September 20, 2011). The objectives of English teaching are to promote students enjoy learning English and build more confidence to communicate English. Furthermore, teachers develop students to use proper accent and pronunciation, and widen the range of vocabulary as well as teach the culture of the language. Fun language teaching teams come to teach at Tridhaksa School once a week one hour on Friday. Each teaching team consists of a native English teacher and a Thai teacher. All teachers are trained to teach Fun Language courses by experienced trainers and all teachers have English teaching certificate or degree. In each class, there are the students not over 20 people. The Fun Language method mainly focus on communicative language teaching: listening and speaking, with basic principle: the natural

learning is the same way when people learn their mother language. Therefore, the exact steps that they use to teach English at Fun Language are start with listening, then speaking, then reading and finally writing. Besides, there are supplementary English classes which teach by Thai teacher of the school. Thanomphongphadh stated that the supplementary class was set to review students the lesson that they had learned from Fun Language class. The teachers speak English with students and let them play or practice English via many activities such as sing a song, communicative tasks, vocabulary game, and so on (R. Thanomphongphadh, personal communication, September 20, 2011).

English teacher role

From the researchers' observation, the English teacher at Tridhaksa School had a close relationship with the students. The teacher built rapport with the students to make them feel comfortable and enjoy learning. This can motivate the kids to learn English more. The teacher does not play a controller role but the teacher is an organizer and a facilitator that give a chance to students to show their thought. In the organizer role, teacher organizes the English activities. The teacher has to know what students know already and what they should know individually, and then teacher should plan activities and find learning tools or materials which are appropriate for the students' level. In the facilitator role, teacher guides and encourages the students to speak proper English by being a role model, using proper accent and pronunciation, and builds their self-confidence by using positive rather than negative method such as appreciating their proper speaking. Besides, the teacher should provide learning atmosphere for them. One of the important roles is observation. The teacher has to observe students and assess them individually in order to promote their strength and also develop their weakness.

Learning Tools and materials

Thanomphongphadh mentioned that the school usually uses natural materials such as wood blocks, rocks, shells, cottons, clay, etc. All toys are made of natural materials which can develop their physical, soul, and creativity. Consequently, the children can concentrate on learning more than using an

electronic material such as computer game, etc. She believed that computer and TV can cause ADHD (Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder) in children (R. Thanomphongphadh, personal communication, September 20, 2011).

The school tries to provide natural learning tools as much as possible. For example, teacher sings an English song and show gestures rather than open the song from CD. The teacher also applies flashcards, pictures, story books, realia, etc. in English activities.

English class atmosphere

The English class at this school was set in a safety building, no sharp corner and natural environment. The teacher provided a warm and welcoming atmosphere to all students. Each classroom has bright and inviting color with good ventilation. It was decorated with small size furniture and students' work. There are learning corners for students to explore and has area that ready to accommodate the students while they move around and play.

English evaluation at Tridhaksa School

Thanomphongphadh said that this school does not have any English exam. The teacher mainly evaluated students from observation. In each English class has a least two teachers who are class teacher, always stay with the students, and English teacher, lead the activity. Both teachers need to write students' observation report after class by class teacher will be observer that keep track and takes note each student about holistic development such as what kid has learned, behavior, what kid has development, and what kid need to develop more, etc. English teacher will report how much student achieve the goal. She also claimed that all the students have positive attitude and enjoy learning English. Moreover, all students achieve the English goal and have obvious development. For instance, they can communicate daily life in English fluently with foreigner teachers (R. Thanomphongphadh, personal communication, September 12, 2011).

English Pedagogy at Maneerut Kindergarten School

In English subject students can learn in two ways the first way is integrate in project and second way was conducted by outsource, Fun Language

International (Thailand) Ltd., as same as Tridhaksa School. In pre-kindergarten and kindergarten 1 class would learn English 2 hours per week but in kindergarten 2-3 would learn English 4 hours per week. In each class has one native English teachers (leader) and one Thai teacher. The first step for develop English language skill of student is to build positive attitude to teacher. Because in the first time of English class have some students scare foreign teacher, the Thai teacher have do anything for help student have a good relationship with them, example sit nearly student.

English teacher role

The English teacher at Maneerut Kindergarten School is a facilitator as same as Tridhaksa School. The teacher builds rapport with the students to make they feel comfortable and enjoy learning.

Learning Tools and materials

The teacher use flash card for and use their body for help teach phonic and vocabulary then let student repeat 2 or 3 time in a word. After that when student learn the word already the teacher apply the same world to do activity such as; give each flash card to each student so if cell name of flash card who have that flash card have to sit down.

English class atmosphere

In each classroom at this school there is no air conditioner, in classroom has a lot of window, the wind can blows all the time. From interview, Kate said that she wants children to be close to nature as possible and also to provide protection spread of germs from sick student to another student (Kate, personal communication, September 18, 2011). And then in room have various corner seem in every classroom such as, corner toy kitchen have stove, refrigerator, microwave oven, corner dressing have mirror and comb, and corner part time book reading. When children do not feel tired they be able to sit and read book if they feel good can come back to continue. The next corner is toy wooden blocks for develop small muscles of the children fingers. The last corner is different from other school is toilet because this school have bathroom inside classroom and one bathroom use two classrooms, and these bathroom use both

boys and girls without door the teacher can see all time. The environments in this school space are not wide but have many big trees it can help to be cool and pleasant. The classroom has 1 teacher and 1 assistant teacher. In around of classroom has a lot of students' work (pictures or artifacts form students) and more than the front of class had big mind map. It shows about what the student already to learn, the teacher has to record everything that students ask or suggested from their project and update in mind map. So this process will show the present know what their children doing. And the good point it help student see what they think or they offer is accepted to ensure the children and well.

English Evaluation at Maneerut Kindergarten School

These school evaluations by observer in the classroom for report behavior of students do activity and send observation report between school and the parent a time per week. Use qualitative type for evaluation in 3 parts then send progress report to the parent a time per semester. The 3 part is evaluated achievement, behavior and effort of student.

English Pedagogy at Darunsikkhalai School

The strategic approach of English teaching at DSIL focuses on three main steps. The academic provost mentioned that the first step of English teaching, the teachers should build the students' attitude to be positive or feeling enjoy to learn English especially at the Beginner level. The second step, the teachers should support the students to produce written or spoken English fluently or communicate as much as they can. At the same time the teachers provide the third step which is preparing them to produce accurately grammar sentences (T. Vicheanpant, personal communication, July 4, 2011). Teaching and learning English at DSIL is not only integrated in each project class, but also in every English class to support students more in practicing English skill. English classes are divided into three main groups which are beginner, lower intermediate and intermediate levels depending on each student's English skill individually. At present, the number of Thai students at DSIL is 95 with 44 teachers (called 'facilitators' at the school) which are comprised of 34 Thai native speaker teachers and 10 native English speaker teachers. The ratio of native English teachers and students is approximately 1:10, so in each English

classroom will have 1 native English teacher and 5-16 students. The English classes are 3 hours a week and integrated in project time about 12 – 15 hours.

English Pedagogy of Kindergarten

In the kindergarten level, English pedagogy is aimed at students who are new to project-based learning and assumed that there is no prior English knowledge. Academically, these classes focus mainly on English language acquisition and general use of English. In terms of learning skills, these classes focus on building students' confidence in using English and also on encouraging students' motivation to learn English. By the end of this level, students will be able to form simple questions and answers, recognize initial sounds and letters, read and recognize some basic vocabulary words, give simple descriptions, and express basic emotions and express basic needs. They will also be able to recognize all written letters and numbers 0-9. Additionally, they will be able to write all these letters and numbers. English is integrated in project-based learning totally and 70 percent of activity in the project was done in English language via various activities related with project topic such as sing a song, English vocabulary game, and so on. Currently, there are six students which are 4-5 years old, one native Thai teacher and one native English teacher who lead most activities.

English teacher role

This school believes that an effective teacher creates a learning atmosphere which is cognitively and affectively expanding; a learning atmosphere which enables the learner to become a more adequate and knowledgeable person. From researchers' observation, The English teacher at DSIL usually builds rapport with the students to make they feel comfortable and enjoy learning as same as other three alternative school above. The teacher does not play a controller role but the teacher is a facilitator that supports the students to learn and encourage them to participate in the class. The teacher also organizes the variety English activities with appropriate for the students in this level. Besides, teacher serves proper learning tools or materials to support their learning process. The teacher encourages the students to speak proper English by being a role model, using proper accent and pronunciation, and builds their

self-confidence by using positive rather than negative method such as appreciating their proper speaking. One of the important roles is observation. The teacher has to observe students and assess them individually in order to promote their strength and also develop their weakness.

Learning Tools and materials

DSIL applied learning technology to develop the students' learning process such as computer program and English game. One of computer program is Scratch which is developed by the Lifelong Kindergarten Group at the MIT Media Lab. It is a programming language that the students can easily create their own interactive storied, animations, games, music, and art. The teacher applied this program to integrate English language in kindergarten students, while also learning to think creatively, reason systematically, and work collaboratively. Furthermore, teacher used English materials such as flashcards, pictures, story books, realia, puppet, puzzles, etc.

English class atmosphere

The kindergarten classroom at this school was painted with bright color; decorated with small size furniture and students' artwork. There are learning corners for students to explore and has area that ready to accommodate the students while they move around and play. There are bathroom and toilets beside the classroom. The teacher also provided a warm and welcoming atmosphere to all students.

English Evaluation of Kindergarten at DSIL

There are two methods at DSIL used to evaluate how much students have learned in this level. Teachers can design flexibly by themselves. The information below is what DSIL teachers concern about students' evaluation.

Students' observation report

The report is ongoing student's assessment records which are recorded by teachers in the classroom about how much English they have learned or which point they need to improve more and also how the students process information; collaborate with other students as well as a general observation on students'

learning styles, behavior and attitudes. Observation is the major way the teachers use for evaluating holistic aspects of each student.

Portfolios

A portfolio is a collection of an individual student's work such as worksheets, exercises, and artwork and so on that teacher can evaluate their knowledge, skills and abilities in a variety of different ways. The teacher will help each student to collect and organize all their works.

English Pedagogy at Teeranurak Kindergarten School

Teeranurak used an intensive English program named "My first English Adventure" (MFEA) from Israel. Then the school hired a native English speaker to teach English. The school has recently focused on English teaching in these three years. MFEA provides eight lessons in each course. In the lesson one to four the teacher will introduce some vocabularies as an activity and then the teacher tells a story from lessons five to eight. The student will understand because they know all vocabulary in this tale. The school used My First English Adventure is a story based program designed for teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL) to young learners in their first years of learning English which was designed by *Dr. Yael Bejarano* from Israel. This program is a joint effort between Thai Ministry of Education and The Embassy of Israel that want to apply innovative teaching and students learning English as a lively process. MFEA was learning as a story base that have vocabulary's chain, grammar, and the story that relate and suitable for kids. We believe that childhood is the age that is easy to absorb sound in a new language is a natural way it makes a kid to learn the new language by accurate and have good attitudes in English. MFEA is a program of English language that was built on a basis of learning theory and the theory of language. It can apply in many activities that can develop student's potential and capabilities of the English language. This program focused on the child to absorb sound in the English language in a natural way of listening and interact with stories and songs. This program have singing as an activity, gestures that correspond to the music and song are consistent with the story. Another part that more interesting in this program is it have "Pre While Post" process for prepare student to know the vocabulary and context after that is the part of a fun activity that makes student

understand and enjoyable with the story. The final part is summary the story. The school was also teaching phonics. In kindergarten level 1 they will learn the single sound of A-Z and some easy pronunciation as an introduce themselves to know the English language. In the second level the teacher start to teach phonics in more difficult word which this level the student start learning the word that have to blending in two sound and a double sound. In the third level, the teacher started to teach a word that more difficult than second level which must to merge two sound in a word. Now a day this school has 80 students and 10 teachers including with a one native English speaker so the ratio for this school is 1: 80 for English teacher and 1: 8 for a teacher.

English teacher role

The role of a teacher in this school is to encourage them to be interested in the story. For example, a student was ask their teacher about the Braille which is the character that was used for a blind and they confuse about how was it work, how to made it. So, the student was challenged to think about it. Someone said it was made by a cardboard and use a pin to punch it out for mark a character as a “A”, ”B”, ”C”, someone said it was made by the paper that were in the middle of tissue because it so strong more than a cardboard and use a pin for make a hole as a character like the first one. Then many ideas were shown after they were challenged. Finally, the teacher challenged them again to make Braille by their system and bring it to the school of the blind. The blind student cannot read it because the character was made like a book that other people read. So, they were learning about the Braille that not like as another character but it was special. However, in English they were integrating a vocabulary about the Braille and the blind. Moreover, Thai teachers stay with the student all the time and they will translate difficult words.

Learning tools and materials

School	DSIL	Maneerut	Teeranurak	Tridhaksa
Learning Philosophy	Constructionism	Reggio Emilia	Buddhism	Waldorf
English Approach	Communicative, Project-based and Activity-based	Communicative and Activity-based	Story-based, Communicative	Communicative and Activity-based
Class Atmosphere	Warm, safety, learning corner, Decorated with Student work	Warm, safety, learning corner, Decorated with Student work	Warm, safety, learning corner, Decorated with Student work	Warm, safety, learning corner, Decorated with Student work
Learning Tools	Computer program, Scratch, Flashcards, books, etc.	Flashcards, books, etc.	My First English Adventure, The Tale, Music, Puppetry, Book, video, toys,	Natural materials, Flashcards, etc.
Teacher Role/ Student Role	Facilitator, learner-centered	Facilitator, learner-centered	Facilitator, learner-centered	Facilitator, learner-centered
English Evaluation	Observation report, Portfolio	Observation report, Portfolio	Observation report, Portfolio	Observation report
Strength	Students have motivation, and enjoy learning	Students have motivation, and enjoy learning	Students have motivation, and enjoy learning	Students have motivation, and enjoy learning
Future Development	Improving more accuracy	Developing English teaching vocabulary	Integrating more English language into project	Improving Thai teacher English

Table 1. Comparison of four alternative school English teaching elements

The tale is the main tool of this school because they use story base for teaching. Moreover, they use music, book, puppetry, and video and science experiment as a tool for find out the answer of their subject. The manager of this school said to us that” At first, the native English speaker teacher used to opened music from computer and in one day the computer was broken and they cannot open from computer anymore so they have to sing by themselves. From this cause they found something amazing is the student can learn from the teacher's voice is better than the sound from your computer. Moreover, the school has a toy store that have a lot of toys inside and the teacher can borrow anytime that they want.

English class atmosphere

In every classroom of this school was decorated with student's work. The school has a swimming pool and a soil home that was built on the playground which student can fun and close to the nature. In the classroom have a book corner that student can read.

English evaluation of Teeranurak School

Because kindergartens do not have a set curriculum from the Ministry of Education for support so they cannot evaluate student by gave some grade but they can evaluate them by observe their development and their behavior the teacher was evaluating their student development in every six weeks. The content that used for evaluate the student is the qualitative development of each student and in every semester the teacher must to done a portfolio of their student. In addition, they can evaluate them from the number of student who can pass into a popular school and evaluate them from the manner, the patience, EQ, their motivation and their skill development. Moreover, the learning in this school is two semesters per academic year and four month and half per semester. In every semester they will have a school break for a one week after school was opened 2 months which this period was set for teacher meeting. The objective of this meeting is to evaluate student how much they achieve the goal.

Conclusion

This study found that the key element of effective English teaching was that English teachers should motivate students to have positive attitude in learning. All case study schools used various approaches focused on the learners role and the communicative approach was used in all four schools, to some degree, to provide student fluency and self-confident to use English. All four alternative schools based on believe that all learners are different: they learn in different ways and have different strengths. Alternative school's teachers look after the students as individuals rather than force them to learn in the single way as a traditional school. Furthermore, alternative schools aim to develop the student's holistic aspects which are elements of human being potential such as intellectual, morality, learning skills, and so on. On the other hands, many traditional schools focus only on academic knowledge which teachers prepare

for the students to pass an exam. However it should be admitted that at kindergarten level even traditional schools allow children a great deal of playtime and so the differences between traditional schools at this level is not as great as we would expect to find with older age groups.

Limitations

One concern about this study is that majority of the interviewees are administrators of the school, leading to some bias in their replies.

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