Transforming Literacy Education : Experiential Learning Curriculum Design for Reading and Writing in Thai Private Schools within a Local Context

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Abstract

This study aimed to (1) synthesize curriculum design principles for reading and writing literacy based on experiential learning, using a case study of stakeholders in private schools within a local context, and (2) propose curriculum design guidelines to enhance Thai reading and writing competencies among early primary school students. The research adopted a qualitative approach grounded in Kolb's experiential learning theory and Suwimon Wongwanich's educational design framework. Participants included 79 individuals across seven stakeholder groups : 30 parents of students in Grades 1-3, 30 students (10 per grade), 4 Thai language teachers, 1 educational officer (coordinating program implementation and ensuring quality standards), and 4 curriculum designers. Data were analyzed to extract design principles categorized into five components : (1) arguments emphasizing experiential learning, technology integration, and positive psychology; (2) substantive emphasis focused on reading fluency, writing ability, and integrated literacy; (3) procedural emphasis based on Kolb's learning cycle, emotional support, and digital tools; (4) input such as teacher preparation and parental involvement; and (5) processes featuring real-world themes, reflection, and continuous feedback through Professional Learning Community. The proposed prototype curriculum comprises six key elements : arguments and needs, curriculum concepts, goals and vision, a modular structure (60 hours per year per grade), support systems, and curriculum attachments. It is designed to be context-sensitive and responsive to the challenges of private schools. Findings suggest that experiential learning with emotional and technological supports improves literacy education in under-resourced settings, contributing to Thailand's competency-based education reform.

Keywords: experiential learning, curriculum design, reading and writing, literacy competencies, private schools, primary education

Introduction

Literacy development in early primary education serves as a fundamental cornerstone of academic achievement and lifelong learning (Hayati, 2020; Hughes & Braun, 2019). In rural private schools within Kalasin Province, Thailand, students consistently face significant challenges in acquiring foundational reading and writing skills. These difficulties stem primarily from unengaging instructional materials, curricula that lack real-world contextualization, and persistently low student motivation (Akçay, 2016; Bao, 2024). Teachers in these educational settings encounter substantial obstacles due to limited professional development opportunities and minimal involvement of key stakeholders-including parents and community members-in curriculum planning processes (Abdalla Muhammed et al., 2022). Consequently, traditional top-down curriculum design approaches consistently fail to address students' authentic learning needs and local contextual realities.

The central problem lies in the fundamental disconnect between existing curricula and students' lived experiences. Current curricula lack appropriate contextualization for rural settings, provide limited experiential learning opportunities, and fail to integrate meaningful parental and community support systems (Nurhikmah et al., 2023). This systemic failure results in decreased student engagement, reduced motivation, and suboptimal achievement outcomes in reading and writing instruction. The absence of active learning strategies and reflective practices further constrains the development of critical literacy competencies, perpetuating poor educational outcomes despite sustained national efforts to improve literacy instruction (Li & Siriphan, 2023).

Kolb's experiential learning theory presents a promising theoretical framework for curriculum innovation. Its cyclical approach-encompassing concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation-has been proven to enhance student engagement and knowledge retention (Kolb & Kolb, 2022; Hayati, 2020; Hughes & Braun, 2019). Research consistently supports stakeholder-inclusive design approaches that actively involve teachers, students, parents, and community members in comprehensive curriculum development processes (Abdalla Muhammed et al., 2022; McKenney & Reeves, 2012).

However, a significant research gap exists in applying experiential learning principles specifically to early literacy curricula in rural Thai private schools. Most existing studies focus predominantly on urban educational contexts, leaving rural challenges inadequately explored and understood. Additionally, the integration of positive psychology frameworks, such as Suwimon Wongwanich's educational design framework, into literacy curriculum design remains severely limited in these settings (Wongwanich, 2020). While positive psychology demonstrates considerable potential for enhancing student motivation and emotional well-being, empirical

research examining its practical application in rural Thai literacy programs remains scarce and underdeveloped (Li & Siriphan, 2023; Nurhikmah et al., 2023; Nasongkhla et al., 2023; Nandee et al., 2024)

Addressing these critical research and practical gaps is essential for advancing literacy outcomes and ensuring the development of effective, sustainable curriculum reforms specifically tailored to rural Thai private school contexts.

Literature Review

This literature review examines key themes relevant to curriculum design principles for improving reading and writing competencies in private schools, based on stakeholder perspectives and experiential learning theory. Experiential Learning Theory in Curriculum Design : Kolb's experiential learning theory provides a comprehensive framework for student engagement in education. Research demonstrates that experiential learning promotes deeper understanding through reflective processes and real-world applications (Jantjies et al., 2018; Staley & Eastcott, 1999). Jantjies et al. (2018) detail how digital technologies create immersive learning environments that foster experiential outcomes and enable students to acquire critical skills engagingly. Zhou et al. (2020) investigate how 3D display technologies enhance experiential learning through hands-on activities, suggesting that creative technological integration can fundamentally transform conventional teaching approaches. Stakeholders' Role in Curriculum Development : Including teachers, parents, and students in curriculum development is essential for customizing learning opportunities to meet specific community needs. Muhammad advocates for active parental involvement in educational settings to enhance overall curriculum development effectiveness (Abdalla Muhammed et al., 2022). Hall et al. (2020) emphasize collaborative curriculum design, highlighting the value of integrating various viewpoints to ensure curriculum initiatives successfully meet educators' and students' needs across diverse contexts. Technology Integration and Feedback in Education : Technology offers immediate feedback and supports individualized learning experiences. Research indicates that interactive learning environments and real-time progress tracking significantly improve educational outcomes through enhanced digital tool utilization (Furió et al., 2014; Zhou et al., 2020). Digital feedback tools enhance student engagement and learning efficacy across various educational settings (Abdalla Muhammed et al., 2022). Positive Psychology in Literacy Education : Incorporating positive psychology concepts, particularly Seligman's PERMA model, highlights education's emotional aspects. This approach aligns with research showing that secure and encouraging learning environments promote students' emotional well-being and intrinsic motivation (Bao, 2024). Studies demonstrate that learning experiences grounded in positive psychological principles enhance student performance on literacy tasks (Li & Siriphan, 2023). Creating Contextually Relevant Curricula : Curriculum content effectiveness increases when considering local contexts and student experiences. Akçay emphasizes

curriculum alignment with community needs and cultural diversity for meaningful learning experiences (Akçay, 2016; Nurhikmah et al., 2023). Contextually grounded curriculum development raises student engagement and improves literacy skills by making learning more relevant to students' everyday lives (Nurhikmah et al., 2023).

Research on experiential learning and curriculum design emphasizes integrating technology, engaging stakeholders, and promoting emotional well-being as critical elements in creating successful educational frameworks. This study demonstrates experiential learning's theoretical underpinnings while translating findings into practical curriculum design recommendations for early primary pupils in private Thai schools.

Objectives of the Study

1. To synthesize curriculum design principles for enhancing reading and writing competencies in early primary students at rural private schools, utilizing Kolb's experiential learning framework and input from key stakeholders.

2. To propose a prototype literacy curriculum tailored to the context of rural private schools, ensuring it is relevant, engaging, and pedagogically sound for sustainable and inclusive literacy education reform.

Conceptual Framework

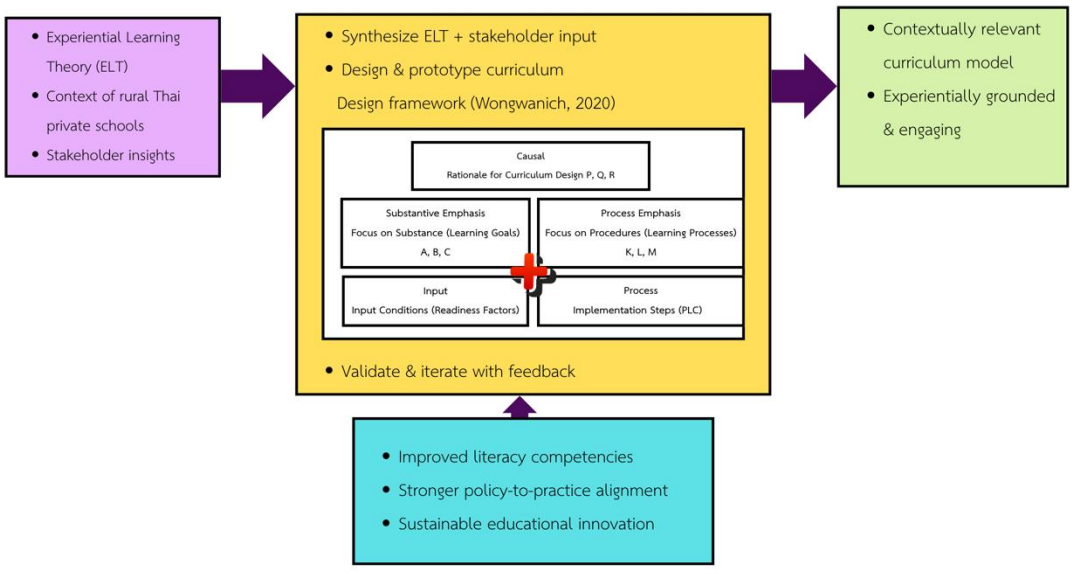

Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

Methodology

1. Research Design

This study employed a qualitative phenomenological approach to synthesize curriculum design principles based on experiential learning, focusing on stakeholders' lived experiences and perspectives in private schools (Errasti-Ibarrondo et al., 2018). The phenomenological method was selected for its strength in capturing participants' experiences, allowing nuanced understanding of how curriculum principles rooted in experiential learning are perceived and enacted by those directly involved in the educational process (Rietmeijer et al., 2021). The research targeted parents, students, teachers, educational experts, and curriculum designers for comprehensive stakeholder analysis (Abdalla Muhammed et al., 2022).

2. Participants

A total of 79 participants were purposively selected representing seven stakeholder groups : Parents (30) from Grades 1 - 3 students, Students (30) from Grades 1 - 3, Teachers (4) Thai language instructors, Educational Authorities (2) from Kalasin Provincial Education Office, School Administration (9) committee members, and Curriculum Designers (4) development experts (Abdalla Muhammed et al., 2022; Nurhikmah et al., 2023). This approach ensured rich, nuanced data aligned with study objectives. Ethical approval was obtained from Kalasin University Human Research Ethics Committee (Certification No. HS-KSU 049/2567), with informed consent, confidentiality, and secure data management protocols implemented.

3. Research Instruments

Instruments were designed to align with Kolb's experiential learning cycle-concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation-ensuring theoretically grounded and practically relevant curriculum design (Kolb & Kolb, 2022). The primary instrument was a focus group discussion form structured according to Suwimon Wongwanich's educational design framework (Wongwanich, 2020), exploring five curriculum components : arguments for design, learning goals, learning processes, input conditions, and implementation steps.

Data Collection The study employed a multi-phase qualitative data collection process within phenomenological design. Five sequential steps were conducted : Step 1 involved focus group discussions with each stakeholder group using structured phenomenological inquiry protocols. Step 2 conducted participatory design sessions with teachers, administrators, and parents for collaborative curriculum prototype construction. Step 3 refined the initial draft through consultation with curriculum design, educational technology, and Thai language experts. Step 4 held critique sessions with multidisciplinary expert panels evaluating alignment with experiential learning theory and cultural relevance. Step 5 conducted expert review by three independent specialists for pre-implementation validation.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using qualitative thematic analysis guided by Wongwanich's educational design framework (Wongwanich, 2020) and Kolb's experiential learning theory (Kolb & Kolb, 2022). The systematic five-phase process included : transcription and familiarization, initial coding aligned with five curriculum components, theme development through constant comparison across stakeholder groups, interpretation and theoretical integration with Kolb's experiential learning cycle, and synthesis of findings in narrative and visual formats (Errasti-Ibarrondo et al., 2018). Trustworthiness was ensured through peer debriefing, member checking, triangulation across multiple data sources, and maintaining detailed audit trails for transparency and reproducibility.

Results

Objective 1: To synthesize curriculum design principles based on experiential learning from the perspectives of stakeholders in private schools.

This study synthesized curriculum design principles for literacy development in rural private schools using experiential learning and stakeholder input, following Suwimon Wongwanich's five-component framework (Bunsornchai et al, 2025). The implementation was facilitated through Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) to ensure collaborative curriculum development and continuous improvement. The curriculum addresses local challenges through relevant, collaborative learning using Kolb's experiential cycle, digital tools, and positive psychology. Implementation requires adequate resources, teacher training, and parental involvement, following structured steps from theme selection to continuous feedback (Bunsornchai et al, 2025). This approach offers a comprehensive, learner-centered framework tailored to private school communities.

These principles provide a comprehensive framework for curriculum design that is centered on the learner, driven by experience, and attuned to the needs of private school communities.

Table 1 Curriculum Design Principles

Component	Details	Key Elements
1. Arguments for Curriculum Design (Goal and Cause)	- Goal: Elevate reading (Y1) and writing (Y2) skills in early primary students. - Problems: lack of teaching materials, low student interest, and content not linked to real life. - Concepts: Kolb's experiential learning cycle, digital technology, positive psychology. Cause: -P: Experiential learning based on Kolb's cycle enhances students' literacy skills.	- Kolb's Cycle: Concrete Experience, Reflective Observation, Abstract Conceptualization, Active Experimentation. - Digital tools and stakeholder collaboration. - Positive psychology for motivation and emotional safety.

Component	Details	Key Elements
	-Q: Immediate feedback, access to digital tools, and collaboration among stakeholders improve student outcomes. -R: Positive psychology-based activities foster a sense of safety and motivation, supporting better reading and writing skills.	
2. Substantive Emphasis (Learning Goals)	- A: Fluency and accuracy in reading. - B: Ability to write clearly and with structure. - C: Integration of reading and writing to express knowledge and ideas. - Emphasis on foundational skills and real-life application.	- Reading fluency and accuracy. - Structured writing. - Integration for expression and understanding.
3. Procedural Emphasis (Learning Processes)	- K: Practice using all four stages of Kolb's cycle. - L: Use digital technology (apps, online journals) for learning and real-time feedback. - M: Positive psychology activities (goal-setting, gratitude, praise).	- Experiential learning. - Digital learning tools. - Positive psychology activities for engagement.
4. Input (Readiness Factors)	- Resources: Activity kits, storytelling cards, sentence-building games, digital journals. - Teacher development: Training in experiential and student-centered methods. - Parental involvement: Home reading kits, feedback apps.	- Educational resources. - Teacher professional development. - Parental support tools.
5. Processes	1. Theme selection: Relevant, real-world, or local topics. 2. Experiential activities: Hands-on, reflective learning. 3. Technology integration: Apps, voice recording, online platforms. 4. Emotional support: Positive psychology tools. 5. Monitoring and feedback: Developmental rubrics, formative assessment, PLC adjustments.	- Stepwise implementation. - Integration of technology and emotional support. - Ongoing assessment and adjustment.

The proposed prototype curriculum comprises six key elements : arguments and needs, curriculum concepts, goals and vision, a modular structure (60 hours per year per grade), and a Modular Curriculum Structure for Primary Grades 1-3.

Table 2 Modular Curriculum Structure for Primary Grades 1–3

Grade	Module	Hours	1. Arguments	2. Substantive Emphasis	3. Procedural Emphasis	4. Input	5. Processes
1	Reading Readiness and Fluency	20	Build foundational reading habits in early learners lacking exposure to print materials.	Recognize letters, sounds, and read simple words aloud.	Use phonics games, read-aloud sessions, Kolb's experiential cycle.	Storybooks, flashcards, recorded audio materials, trained teachers.	Daily guided reading, phonics games, reflection with feedback from teachers.

Grade	Module	Hours	1. Arguments	2. Substantive Emphasis	3. Procedural Emphasis	4. Input	5. Processes
1	Writing Fundamentals	20	Support motor skills and letter formation for beginners.	Write letters, simple words, practice Thai script.	Tracing activities, writing journals, repeated writing practice.	Writing worksheets, pencil grip tools, sample letter guides.	Model letter writing, practice in stations, peer feedback.
1	Reading–Writing Integration through Stories	20	Connect reading and writing to storytelling in students' lives.	Read simple stories and compose related sentences.	Story mapping, drawing, sentence writing about story characters.	Big books, puppets, sentence frame cards.	Read aloud ⟶ story retell ⟶ draw and write ⟶ group sharing.
2	Reading for Understanding	20	Improve comprehension of longer texts and meaningful reading.	Understand main ideas and sequence in paragraphs.	Use guided questions, pair reading, Kolb reflection steps.	Picture books, sentence sequencing cards.	Pre-read, partner read, summarize, reflect through writing.
2	Expressive Writing	20	Encourage sentence development and detail expression.	Write descriptive and emotion-based content.	Use emotion cards, journal prompts, modeling writing.	Writing journals, prompt cards, graphic organizers.	Emotion prompt ⟶ write draft ⟶ peer edit ⟶ final write.
2	Integrated Literacy through Everyday Contexts	20	Link literacy to daily life situations (e.g., home, market).	Read and write about real-life topics.	Project-based activities, reflection logs.	Field trip photos, observation forms, real object labels.	Topic brainstorm ⟶ observe ⟶ read ⟶ write ⟶ share.
3	Reading to Learn	20	Prepare students to extract information and think critically.	Analyze texts, extract key ideas, make inferences.	Skimming, scanning, concept mapping.	Non-fiction books, highlighters, content maps.	**Steps** Preview ⟶ guided reading ⟶ map ideas ⟶ discuss ⟶ reflect
3	Writing to Communicate	20	Foster purposeful writing for audience and clarity.	Write narratives, instructions, and opinions.	Use writing frameworks, peer review.	Templates, rubrics, sample texts.	Plan ⟶ draft ⟶ revise ⟶ present.
3	Literacy in Action	20	Consolidate reading and writing through real-world projects.	Integrate literacy in problem-solving and presentation.	Project-based learning, group discussion, presentation.	Materials for projects, rubrics, digital tools.	Choose issue ⟶ research ⟶ read-write ⟶ present to class.

Expert Validation of the Draft Curriculum for Enhancing Thai Reading and Writing Competencies in Early Primary Education

The draft curriculum was reviewed by three educational experts using a structured validation checklist encompassing five key domains. The experts assessed the curriculum in terms of its relevance, theoretical foundation, structural coherence, and practical applicability in the context of private primary schools in Kalasin Province. The results are summarized as follows :

1. Arguments and Necessity for Curriculum Development : All experts agreed that the curriculum presents a clear rationale grounded in the contextual challenges of private schools, such as limited resources, student disengagement, and a lack of relevant instructional materials. The needs of stakeholders-students, teachers, parents, and community members-were thoroughly addressed, and the curriculum's foundation in experiential learning, technology integration, and positive psychology (P, Q, R framework) was deemed appropriate (Bunsornchai et al, 2025).

2. Conceptual Framework for Curriculum Design : The reviewers validated the integration of Kolb's experiential learning cycle, Seligman's PERMA model, and constructivist curriculum principles. These elements were seen as supporting both cognitive and emotional development in reading and writing. The inclusion of formative and summative assessment strategies, aligned with learning outcomes, was considered comprehensive.

3. Vision, Mission, and Curriculum Objectives : The curriculum's vision to promote joyful, meaningful, and experience-based literacy learning was judged to be well-aligned with 21st century educational goals. Experts noted that the goals were clearly articulated and achievable.

4. Curriculum Structure : Experts confirmed that the modular structure-comprising 12 learning units per year across Grades 1 to 3 was pedagogically sound and developmentally appropriate. The division into reading, writing, and integrated literacy modules ensures both skill development and interdisciplinary learning.

5. Support Systems : The inclusion of professional learning communities (PLCs), learning kits, digital tools, and family engagement mechanisms was praised for ensuring effective implementation. Experts recommended continued teacher training and parent involvement to sustain the curriculum's impact.

The draft curriculum was reviewed by five experts using a five-domain validation checklist. The findings are summarized table below.

Table 3 Expert Validation of the Draft Curriculum for Enhancing Thai Reading and Writing Competencies in Early Primary Education

Domain	Valid	Not Valid	Suggestions
1. Arguments and Necessity for Curriculum Development	Yes	–	Clearly addresses the local context of private schools in Kalasin Province, particularly issues of inequality and limited resources.
1.1 Context of the Educational Setting	Yes	–	Well-aligned with the realities of small rural schools facing instructional and material shortages.
1.2 Problems in the Previous Learning Management	Yes	–	Accurately highlights issues such as lack of instructional materials, student disengagement, and irrelevant content.
1.3 Needs of Students, Teachers, Parents, and Community	Yes	–	Incorporates perspectives from all key stakeholders through qualitative inquiry.
1.4 Appropriateness of the Learning Approach for Private Schools	Yes	–	Experiential learning, positive psychology, and digital learning integration are well-matched with learner needs.
2. Conceptual Framework of the Curriculum	Yes	–	Theoretical underpinnings are clearly presented and consistent with learning objectives.
2.1 Learning Design Concepts	Yes	–	Appropriately applies Kolb's learning cycle, the PERMA model, and PLC principles.
2.2 Assessment and Evaluation Principles	Yes	–	Combines formative and summative assessments with diverse tools including rubrics and portfolios.
3. Vision, Mission, and Objectives of the Curriculum	Yes	–	Aligns with learner-centered goals for reading fluency, writing ability, and integrated literacy.
4. Curriculum Structure	Yes	–	Modular design (60 hours/year, 3 modules per grade) is appropriate for early primary education.
4.1 Course Structure and Learning Units	Yes	–	Organized into reading, writing, and integrated modules to ensure progression across Grades 1–3.
5. Support Systems	Yes	–	Comprehensive support including digital platforms, learning kits, and assessment tools, with clear implementation strategies.

The draft curriculum is well-constructed, theoretically sound, and contextually appropriate. All five domains were validated by experts as suitable for implementation. Minor recommendations involved enhancing clarity in instructional examples and expanding support materials for differentiated instruction.

Objective 2: To propose curriculum design guidelines that enhance reading and writing competencies grounded in experiential learning theory and stakeholder insights.

To suggest guidelines for designing a curriculum that improves reading and writing skills based on experiential learning theory and input from stakeholders.

Based on the design principles outlined in Objective 1, the study developed a prototype curriculum to enhance the reading and writing skills of early primary school students in private schools in Thailand. The prototype curriculum is made up of six parts that work together :

1. Reason and Needs : This section illustrates how private schools in Kalasin Province fit into the broader educational context of Thailand. It addresses issues such as students' poor reading and writing skills, a shortage of teaching materials, and the need for a curriculum tailored to students' needs. The arguments is directly related to design assumptions P, Q, and R, which are experiential learning, technology, and positive psychology.

2. Ideas for Designing a Curriculum : The curriculum is based on Kolb's cycle of experiential learning : (1) concrete experience (hands-on activities), (2) reflective observation (thinking about experiences), (3) abstract conceptualization (forming ideas), and (4) active experimentation (testing new approaches). Learning with the help of technology Constructivist curriculum design based on Suwimon Wongwanich's framework (Wongwanich, 2020) consists of 1. Arguments for Curriculum Design (Goal and Cause) 2. Substantive Emphasis (Learning Goals) 3. Procedural Emphasis (Learning Processes) 4. Input Conditions (Readiness Factors) and 5. Implementation Steps.

3. Goals, Mission, and Vision : The curriculum aims to enhance learners' Thai literacy skills through enjoyable, experiential, and individualized learning experiences. Goals include reading fluency, writing ability, and integrated communication in real-life situations.

4. Structure of the Curriculum : There are three modules for each grade level (Grades 1 - 3) : a Reading Module (like phonics and understanding), a Writing Module (for example, going from a sentence to a paragraph), and an Integrated Module (like projects that involve reading and writing). Each grade level has 60 hours per year, which are split into 12 units of 5 hours each. Each module is one semester in length.

5. Support Systems : The curriculum includes story kits, games, and journals, all of which serve as learning tools. Professional learning communities (PLCs), workshops, and coaching for teachers Apps and home literacy guides to get parents involved Tools for monitoring and giving feedback, like checklists and dashboards

6. Curriculum Attachments Plans for learning every week Worksheets and tools for students to think about reading and writing assessment rubrics Teacher's guides and sample lessons Quality assurance checklists and feedback forms

Discussion

The curriculum designed to enhance Thai reading and writing competencies among early primary school students leverages experiential learning theory alongside elements of positive psychology and technological integration, yielding significant implications for literacy

education within the context of private schools. The findings suggest a holistic approach that is responsive to both theoretical frameworks and the specific needs of stakeholders involved in the educational process.

1. Alignment with Experiential Learning Theory (Kolb) : The foundation of the curriculum rests on Kolb's experiential learning theory, which emphasizes a cyclical learning process involving concrete experiences, reflection, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation (Kolb & Kolb, 2022). The research highlights that literacy acquisition should extend beyond rote memorization and instead involve meaningful engagement with the material, consistent with Kolb's assertion that active construction of knowledge enhances understanding (Desy et al., 2024). Studies such as those by Azevedo et al. (2019) have demonstrated that experiential learning not only fosters cognitive skills but also promotes emotional involvement, affirming that educational practices like storytelling and journaling significantly enrich students' literacy experiences by connecting learning with their own lives (Hayati, 2020). This approach aligns with the findings that experiential engagement fosters an immersive learning environment, positively impacting students' overall learning efficacy. In the context of rural private schools in Thailand, particularly in areas like Kalasin Province, students often lack exposure to diverse reading materials and real-life literacy practices. By embedding experiential learning in culturally familiar situations-such as local folktales, community festivals, and family narratives-the curriculum fosters a stronger connection between learning content and students' everyday lives.

2. Integration of Positive Psychology (Seligman) : Incorporating Seligman's PERMA framework within the literacy curriculum further reinforces the emotional and social dimensions of learning. By fostering an environment characterized by positive emotions, engagement, relationships, meaning, and achievement, as indicated by Santaló et al. (2019), the curriculum promotes resilience and intrinsic motivation among young learners. This aligns with the notion that emotional well-being is integral to academic success, emphasizing the necessity of embedding elements such as goal-setting and praise into everyday learning practices (Sasmoko et al., 2020). Such frameworks not only enhance the learning atmosphere but also ensure that emotional literacy becomes a foundational component of educational strategies, significantly improving literacy outcomes. In local Thai communities, especially those with strong familial and communal ties, emotional connectedness plays a key role in children's learning. The use of culturally resonant practices such as praise through traditional idioms or integrating local role models as reading heroes helps reinforce self-esteem and motivation in ways that are meaningful within the students' social environment.

3. Technology-Enhanced Learning and Accessibility : The integration of technology serves as a pivotal element of the curriculum, particularly in contexts where traditional resources are limited. Digital tools such as interactive e-books and voice-recording apps facilitate

personalized feedback and ongoing reflection (Azevedo et al., 2019). This aligns with Hattie's assertion that immediate formative feedback significantly improves learning outcomes (Wang, 2023), suggesting that when technology is effectively utilized, it can transform the learning process, making it more engaging and supportive of students' literacy development. Furthermore, the implementation of such tools is beneficial for immediate educational contexts and prepares students for a technology-oriented future, reinforcing lifelong learning skills (Hughes & Braun, 2019). In under-resourced schools across rural Thailand, where textbooks are scarce, and class sizes are large, integrating low-cost technology, such as voice-recording apps or offline digital storybooks, enables more personalized and accessible literacy instruction. Local teachers can also use these tools to capture students' oral storytelling traditions, preserving local wisdom while enhancing literacy skills.

4. Participatory Curriculum Design and Local Relevance : The participatory design approach, as outlined by Wiyani et al. (2023), emphasizes inclusive stakeholder involvement, ensuring that the curriculum reflects the specific needs and cultural contexts of students. By actively engaging teachers, parents, and school leaders in the curriculum development process, the resultant learning materials are more likely to resonate with students and promote better learning outcomes, as supported by McKenney and Reeves (Hughes & Braun, 2019). This participatory model addresses local educational inequalities and recognizes the importance of culturally relevant pedagogy in enhancing students' engagement and commitment to learning (Saliao & Cajandig, 2025; Wiyani et al., 2023). In this study, the curriculum was co-developed with input from local teachers, parents, and school leaders in Kalasin Province. These stakeholders contributed culturally relevant examples, such as using village market settings for reading comprehension or community elders' stories for writing prompts, grounding the curriculum in the learners' environment and fostering both cognitive and cultural engagement.

5. Implications for Literacy Education in Small Schools : The research findings reveal that a curriculum grounded in experiential learning, characterized by emotional support and technological integration, has the potential to significantly improve literacy outcomes-particularly in resource-limited settings. As Thailand's literacy rates among primary school students fluctuate, this curriculum contributes to the Ministry of Education's initiatives for competency-based reform, which encourages schools to design context-sensitive education that fosters comprehensive literacy skills (Malasari & Kurniawati, 2019). Such an approach reflects a growing recognition of the need for educational innovations that not only improve individual literacy but also prepare students to thrive in a global learning environment. These findings are particularly salient for small private schools in rural Thailand, which often operate with limited funding, multi-grade classrooms, and a reliance on community support. A curriculum model that is grounded in

experiential learning, supported by technology, and embedded within local contexts offers a sustainable pathway to improving literacy outcomes while preserving local identity.

In summary, this research advocates for the development of a literacy curriculum that synthesizes experiential learning, positive psychological principles, participatory design, and Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), ultimately leading to a practical framework for fostering reading and writing skills. The findings have significant implications for educators and policymakers, reinforcing the importance of instruction that is meaningful, responsive, and adaptable to the diverse contexts of learners, thereby equipping them to navigate the complexities of literacy with confidence and competence.

Conclusion

This study synthesized curriculum design principles for Thai literacy based on experiential learning, using insights from diverse stakeholders in private schools in Kalasin Province. The research identified five key components for effective curriculum design : clear arguments rooted in experience and positive psychology, focused learning goals in reading and writing, instructional processes using Kolb's learning cycle and technology, readiness factors like resources and teacher preparation, and structured implementation with ongoing feedback. A prototype curriculum was developed, featuring a modular structure, support systems, and practical tools for teachers. The findings highlight that an experiential, emotionally supportive, and technology-integrated curriculum can effectively promote literacy in small, under-resourced schools and serve as a flexible model for broader educational reform.

Limitations

This study has several limitations. The qualitative approach is based on subjective stakeholder experiences from a limited sample, which may not represent all private schools in Thailand. The findings are specific to Kalasin Province and may not be generalizable elsewhere. Data collection relied on self-reports, which may introduce bias. Additionally, the study did not include classroom observations or quantitative literacy assessments.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and limitations, future research should broaden the sample to include more diverse schools, use mixed methods with both qualitative and quantitative data, and consider longitudinal designs to assess long-term effects. Training for teachers and leaders in experiential learning is recommended, along with greater stakeholder involvement in curriculum development. Finally, the proposed curriculum should be piloted and evaluated in various contexts before wider adoption.

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