

THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN INNOVATIVE MODEL FOR STORYTELLING TO ENHANCE LEARNERS' OCCUPATIONAL SKILLS AND LIFE LONG LEARNING IN KANCHANABURI PROVINCE, THAILAND

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ABSTRACT

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This research aimed to 1) search for local areas with their own capacities and identities potentially leading to the enhancement of learners' professional skill experiences and lifelong learning; 2) develop an innovative model of meaningful storytellers, interpretation, and community recreations; and 3) implement the developed model. There were 30 key informants. The participants were 330 teachers and school administrators from 10 schools. The research instruments employed during the implementation of the model included the pre-training and post-training test, the thinking design test, the creative thinking test, the learning habit test, the guideline on how to decode the lesson, and the guideline on how to reflect on the learning. The collected data was quantitatively and qualitatively analysed by SPSS and the technique of content analysis, respectively. The results of the study reveal that 1) Kanchanaburi qualified and passed the criteria for area selection as it had a number of tourist attractions where stories and community recreations could potentially be created; 2) the innovative model for meaningful storytellers and interpretation called "EDU-KANS Model" was developed; 3) after the implementation of the model (i.e. the training programme), the participants' scores of the pre-test and the post-test were significantly different at the 0.05 significance level ($p < 0.05$). Moreover, the participants were highly satisfied with the training programme.

Keywords: Storytellers; community recreations; occupational skills and life-long learning

1. INTRODUCTION

Thai Education is an important base for creation, development, and problem solving in society. The Education Innovation Act 2562 B.E. (2019) started the transformation of Thailand's education as it enforces education administration to serve local communities, and emphasizes area-based education with unitization of the area's strength. The transformation also focuses on administrative innovation, teaching and learning innovation, and policy innovation. It encourages stakeholders in areas to participate in education design and administration corresponding with the country's development trends and global changes.

In response to such enforcement, Kanchanaburi province was designated as the area that emphasizes enhancing professional skills, and providing bilingual education, with the aims to diminish inequality, accelerate output and productivity, expand education innovation output, and decentralize authority and freedom in establishing and developing cooperation among stakeholders (Education Innovation Act 2562 B.E., 2019; Ministry of Education Notification of Educational Standard Enforcement for Early Childhood Education, Basic Education, Special Education, 2018; Supervision, Monitoring and Evaluation for Educational Provision Group, 2019).

Enhancement of experiences and professional skills leading to life-long learning, thus, is practice-based learning where learners acquire professional skills through real work experience. This should be learned at an early age as it will construct a positive attitude toward careers and will additionally motivate children to learn to work toward their own life goals and sustain their capability to earn a living in their own local area (ThaiHealth Official, 2013).

Kanchanaburi, a province that is regularly visited by a number of tourists, is rich in interesting past stories. In addition to its prehistoric sites of civilization, which are well-known worldwide, there are also unspoiled natural tourist attractions (Kanchanaburi Provincial Office, 2020)

In terms of education, there are 531 schools with 182,033 students in Kanchanaburi (Kanchanaburi Provincial Office, 2020). Unfortunately, the learning achievement of students in Prathom 6 and Mathayom 6 has been relatively low according to the O-NET scores. Most students were not able to continue studying at higher levels and could not find a job or make a living despite a lot of career opportunities in the Kanchanaburi tourism industry. For these reasons, the innovative model of meaningful storytellers, interpretation, and recreation for their own community, which has been meticulously developed, is considered one of the educational tools for creating and enhancing learner's professional experience, and additionally fostering active learning by utilizing a community setting as a laboratory. Consequently, the learners will learn and become capable of pursuing their future careers enthusiastically because they can communicate and tell stories to tourists and people in the community, using skills learned outside the classroom.

The critical situation mentioned above has necessitated this research as it provided opportunities for enhancing experiences of meaningful storytellers, interpretation, and community recreations to students in Kanchanaburi. This was somehow aligned with Thai educational philosophy which centers on the learner's happiness, ability to earn a living, and foundation of occupational skills. More importantly, the research also demonstrates a new frontier guide innovation that results in creating local storytellers and sustainably generating income for people in the community.

The researchers therefore conducted the research on the development of an innovative model of meaningful storytellers, interpretation and community recreations based on the local identity in tourist areas in Kanchanaburi. It was also hoped to improve learners' learning achievement and life-long learning skills in the communities and enhance life experience and future occupational skills outside classrooms corresponding with local needs. This eventually led to realistic and tangible practices, security, wealth, and sustainability in the communities.

2. THE PURPOSES OF THIS STUDY

The research purposes were identified as follows:

1. To identify and select the areas apt for the development of the innovative model of meaningful storytellers, interpretation, and community recreations.
2. To develop the innovative model of meaningful storytellers, interpretation, community recreations, the training course, the tests and the course manual.
3. To implement the model through the training course for enhancing occupational skills.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

The Education Innovation Act 2562 B.E. (2019), which enforces education administration to serve local communities, started the transformation of Thailand's education by utilizing area-based integration, making use of its strength. The transformation focuses on administrative innovation, teaching and learning innovation as well as policy innovation, and encourages stakeholders in the area to participate in education design and administration corresponding with the country's development trends and global changes. Besides, there should be an emphasis on essential components, freedom, rules and regulations of the local areas (Supervision, Monitoring and Evaluation for Educational Provision Group, 2019).

Storytelling is a technique for creating storytellers by searching for local wisdom, identities, and practice. Interpretation, on the other hand, is the process of interpreters' perception of roles, and the process and the technique for creating WOW stories. Community recreations are activities that bring about one's logic by organising activities, adjusting environments, and initiating activities appropriate to individual local areas. Games are common learning activities designed for making learners enjoy and simultaneously gain knowledge. That is, the contents are embedded in the activities, and the players will learn those contents while playing the games.

4. METHODS

This research & development (R&D) uses both quantitative and qualitative methods in collecting the data in Kanchanaburi province. It consisted of 3 phases:

1) Phase 1: This was the phase of identifying and selecting the target areas, recruiting participants, and finding saturated data. The participants of the study included 30 community leaders, tourist guides, administrators of the innovation area, administrators of the Primary Educational Service Area, administrators of the Secondary Educational Service Area, administrators of schools, and teachers. The tools used in collecting the data were the guidelines for the in-depth interviews, group conversations, observations, document analysis, and content analysis.

2) Phase 2: In this phase, the training course for the storytellers, the pre- and post-tests, and the manual for organising innovative activities were developed and evaluated by 5 experts.

3) Phase 3: This was the implementation and assessment phase of the developed model through a training course, and the network forum of knowledge exchange and reflection. The 330 strong target participants of the training course included students, teachers, and people in the community; there were also 100 participants attending the network forum. The research instruments consisted of the pre-and post-tests, the thinking design test, the creative thinking test, the learning habit test, and the guideline for organising the network forum. The statistical tests were conducted for percentage, mean, standard deviation and dependent *t*-test.

5. RESEARCH FINDINGS

The findings from the study revealed the following:

1. Identifying and selecting the areas apt for the development of the innovative model of meaningful storytellers, interpretation, and community recreations.

A number of tourist attractions in Kanchanaburi were found. Given the selection criteria and the evaluation of the target area, 15 tourist attractions were initially identified and investigated in terms of preparation and willingness. There was also an on-site observation of local school's learning and teaching management methods, and cooperation with the school administrators and teachers. After that, the areas or schools were selected based on the three following criteria: 1) being located in or near the important tourist attractions, 2) distributively representing important tourist attractions, and 3) being a primary school or a secondary school. Consequently, 10 target schools were selected.

2. The development of the innovative model of meaningful storytellers, interpretation, community recreations. A training course for the implementation of the model, which aimed to enhance learners' occupational and life-long learning skills in Kanchanaburi.

After the model had meticulously and carefully been designed in accordance with R&D methodology, the model called the "EDU-KANS Model" was constructed. It consisted of 7 components: 1) Effort—E; 2) Driving Forces—D; 3) Universality—U; 4) Knowledge Inquiry for Experience—K; 5) Attraction—A; 6) Networking—N; and 7) Self-developing—S, as illustrated in Figure 1.

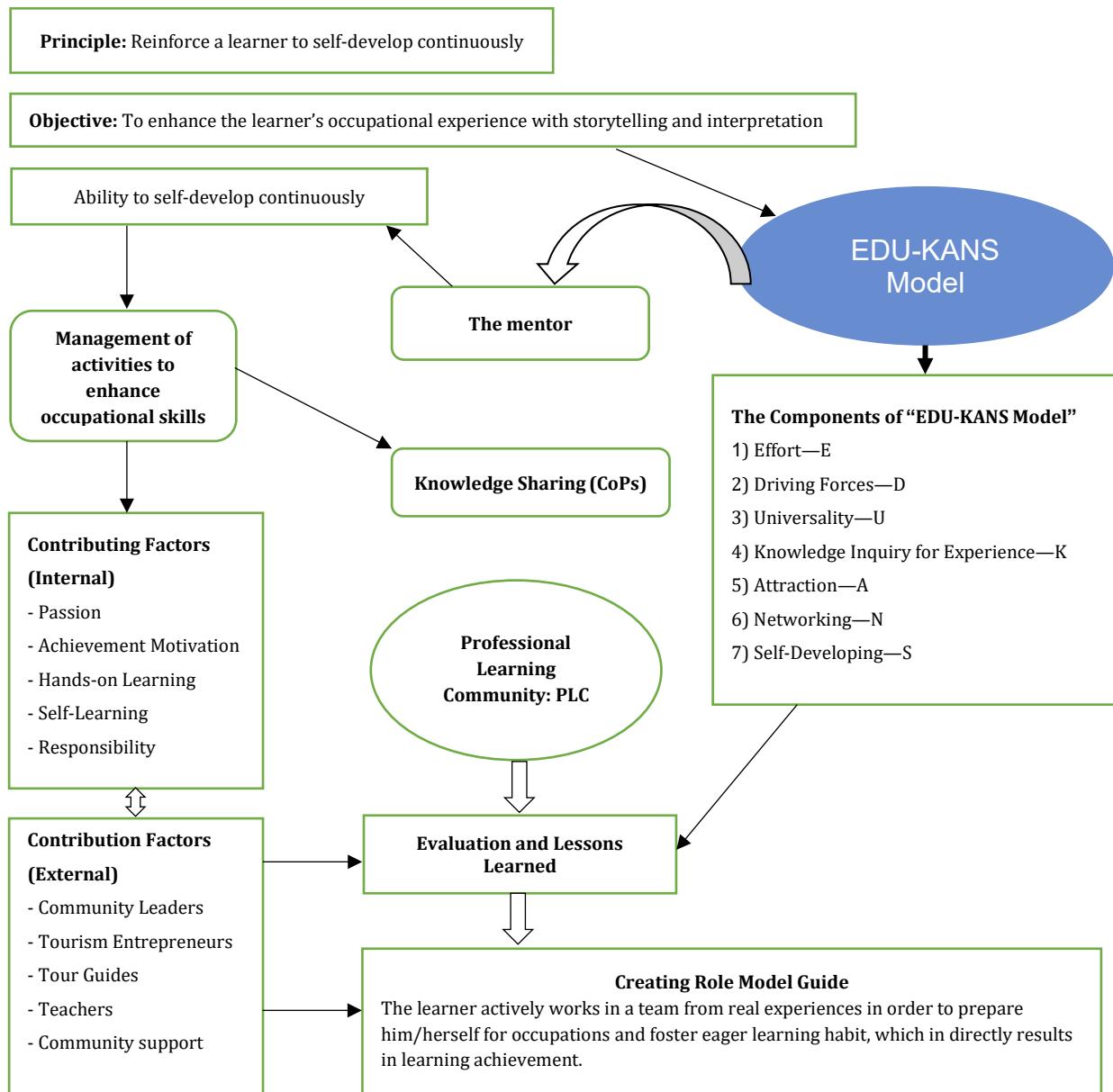


Figure 1: The Model of the Innovative Meaningful Storytellers, Interpretation, and Community Recreations

Figure 1 illustrates the conceptual “EDU-KANS Model”. In order to implement the model, an action plan was created in the form of a training course for enhancing occupational skills as well as initiating future careers. The details of the topics and the course activities were specified, and a respective manual was also developed. These were eventually attested by 5 experts, revealing relatively high appropriateness and feasibility of the training course.

The length of the training course was 12 hours in total, consisting of 6 hours of theoretical sessions and 6 hours of practice sessions. The model included activities for creating meaningful storytellers, interpretation, and community recreations.

3. The implementation of the model

There were 330 participants including students and teachers from 10 schools in Kanchanaburi, and the community leaders. The participants did the pre-test at the beginning of the training course and the post-test after completing the course. Certificates of attendance were granted to the participants. The results of the dependent *t*-tests were significant at the 0.05 level, and the post-test scores were significantly higher than that of the pre-test at the 0.05 level as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Comparison of the Scores of the 10 Schools that Participated in the Training Course

Test	n	Total scores	\bar{x}	SD	result	df	t	Sig
Pre-test	330	12	7.34	1.45	mid	329	6.489*	.000
Post-test	330	12	10.55	1.01	high			

* Level of significance at .05

The results of the network forum of knowledge exchange and reflection are shown in Figure 2.

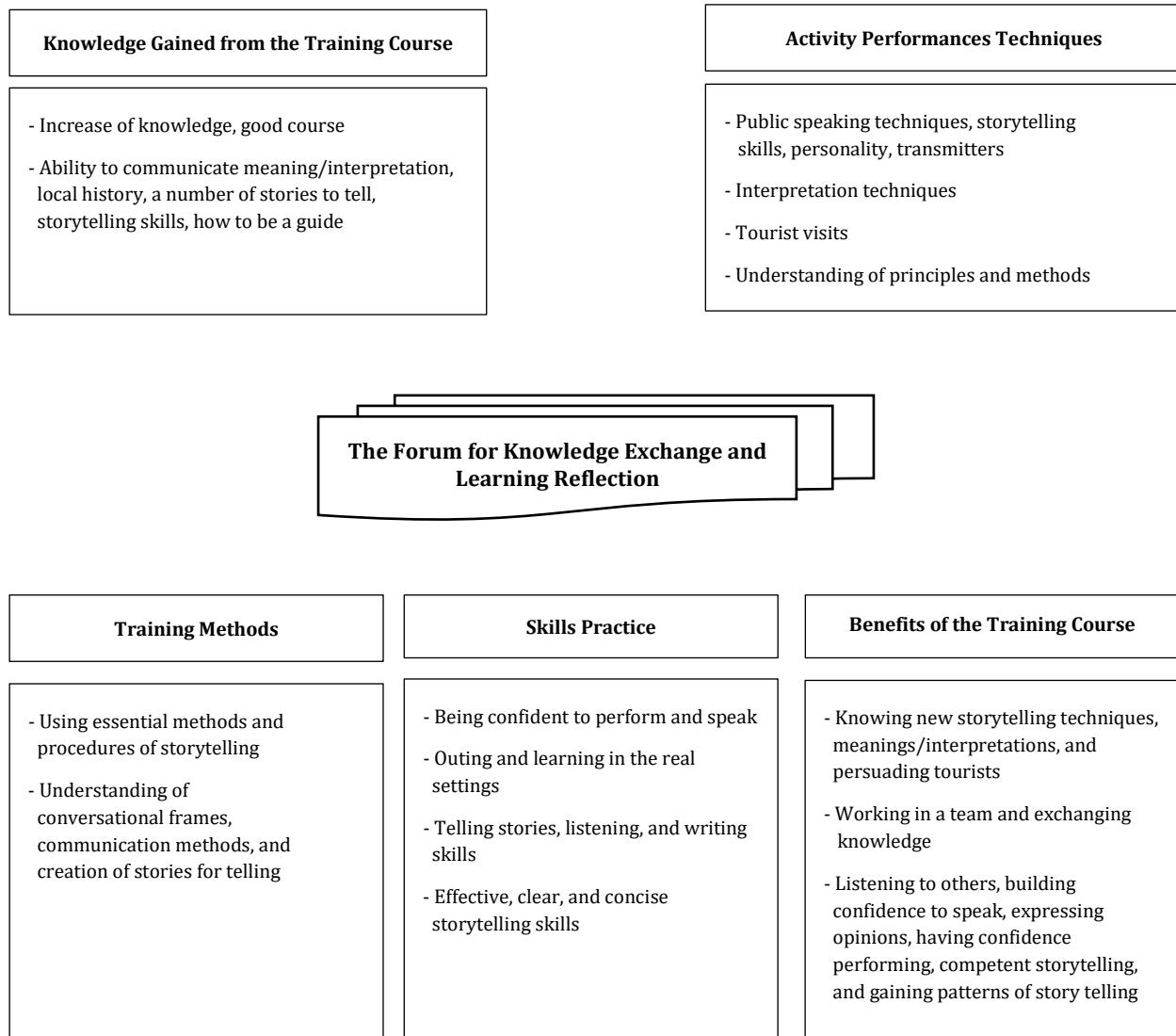


Figure 2: The Organization of the Forum for Knowledge Exchange and Learning Reflection

After the forum, the results of thinking design, creative thinking, and learning habit tests were generally at a high level.

6. DISCUSSION

The study of the development of the innovative model of meaningful storytellers, interpretation, and community recreations found the "EDU-KANS Model", and it was validated by 5 experts. The model consists of 7 components: 1) Effort—E; 2) Driving Forces—D; 3) Universality—U; 4) Knowledge Inquiry for Experience—K; 5) Attraction—A; 6) Networking—N; and 7) Self-developing—S. Components 1–5 correspond with the outcomes of the study by Sangraksa et al. (2016), which created the model of slow-life tourist behaviour of

senior tourists in the western region of Thailand. That is, the essence of tourism consists of attractions with a perfect combination of a variety of views, landscapes, beaches, mountains, and historical sites, which are capable of serving a variety of tourism activities. Phetchaburi province is an example where there are unique arts (e.g. stucco arts), cultures, history, historical sites (e.g. 3 Royal Palaces and 3 rivers), beaches, mountains (e.g. Kaeng Krachan), and Buddhist temples. Tourists can choose to enjoy various activities and visit a variety of attractions. Components 6–7 correspond with the outcomes of the research by Yoocharoen (2010), who studied the development of the teacher professional with empowerment model within Tratsaipittayakhom School. It was found that the development of the model started from constructing awareness, and understanding of self-development. In addition, inspiration can be created through stories (Havanon, 2009; Giddens, 1991, p. 96). Storytelling should consist of 6 necessary skills: 1) interpersonal relationship-building skills; 2) interview skills; 3) listening skills; 4) observation skills; 5) note-taking skills; and 6) site visit skills (Rapsirichareon, 2009). The 'WOW' experience is therefore a surprise for tourists. This experience includes an amazing welcome, hosting, and amusing travel program which impresses the tourists.

According to the learning reflection results in the forum, it was found that the target groups mutually learned in teams, communicated with team members, and also used the communities as laboratories. Although the participants were worried at the beginning of the course, they were more confident after continuous practice. In addition, most participants conducted storytelling and meaningful interpreter activities, and participated in community recreations in their free time on their own, just to prepare themselves for their future careers as well as learning achievement.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE RESEARCH RESULTS

The recommendations from the study were as follows:

1. Based on the research results, it was found that the learners were active when learning at real tourist attractions. They also planned and worked as a team, and continuously gained hands-on experience. For this reason, school administrators and teachers should arrange activities which provide opportunities for learners to practice in real situations or settings and enhance learners' experience with active learning philosophy—e.g. project-based, problem-based and research-based—so that the learners can practice and solve problems themselves.
2. According to the research results, the innovative model of meaningful storytellers, interpretation, and community recreations could enhance occupational skills. Therefore, school administrators and teachers should emphasize life skills so that the learners can choose the career that is the most suitable and possible for them in the future.
3. It was also found that the innovative model of meaningful storytellers, interpretation, and community recreations could make the participants more active and increase awareness of occupations. Thus, school administrators and teachers should focus on enhancing learners' enthusiasm and awareness of occupational skills. Besides, the school administrators and teachers should prepare the learners for change that may occur in their future life so that they are able to adapt to a new society, and love their hometowns.

8. RECOMMENDATION FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The recommendations for further studies are as follows:

1. The results of the research on the development of the innovative model of meaningful storytellers, interpretation, and community recreations should be expanded to various educational institutions at all levels of the educational innovation areas and all over the Kanchanaburi province.
2. The development of meaningful storytellers, interpretation, and community recreations should be driven among the quadruple bodies including public and private educational institutions, communities, and relevant organizations.
3. There should be research on other appropriate occupational skills and the promotion of occupational skills for meaningful storytellers, interpretation, and community recreations.

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