

# CHAPTER 3

## Methodology

This chapter conveys an overview of research methodology. It contains a description of the procedures used in the study, including research design, selection and descriptions of the participants, setting, instruments used for data collection, data analysis and an overview of the study overall. The research based on quantitative and qualitative format explores the changes that occur when a new curriculum is introduced. Data collection and analysis will be discussed in detail.

### 3.1 Research type

Mixed methods research seems to be the correct research methodology path. It is not only important to document experiments and opinions, but to conduct interviews with teachers who face similar challenges in Thailand when teaching ESL and to understand how their teaching context and their situations have shaped their experience of teaching. Miles and Huberman (1994, p. 10) espouse certain advantages of utilizing a qualitative research design in educational environments. Firstly, qualitative studies concentrate on "...naturally occurring ordinary events in natural settings, so that we have a strong handle on what 'real life' is like." By accepting this statement as true, the method of this research and analysis is naturalistic in that, "the researcher does not attempt to manipulate the research setting." (Patton, 1990, p. 39). This research will attempt to appreciate naturally occurring events in naturally occurring states. Second, qualitative designs are vivid and holistic. They exhibit a strong potential for revealing multiple layers of complexity and such data leads to images that are vivid in context and have a ring of truth which, in turn, impacts the reader. Finally, the flexibility that qualitative self- reflection exploration as data collection tools allows the researcher to grasp what is actually occurring on a daily basis in his classroom.

### 3.2 Setting

This researcher has collected the data for research from information attained during the MA TESOL Program, Payap University, Chiang Mai, Thailand as well as from the institution where the author is currently working in Northern Thailand. This will be the third year that the author has taught at this location during his seven years of teaching ESL. It is his fifth year of teaching in Thailand. His current place of employment is the second oldest school in Northern Thailand which is a well regarded learning institution with both boys and girls in attendance. All of the students are from Thai families and Thai language is the mother tongue of all

participants. The general physical characteristics are as follows. The subject is a private school. The school enrolls between 6,500 and 7000 pupils per year, consisting of boys and girls as young as two years up to 20 years in age. The average age of a graduate is 19 years. The research will involve tracking a population of students between the age of four and five years in their second year of ESL. In 2012, there were 96 students enrolled in the 'Preschool Native Speaker Program' and there are four, full-time English language instructors in the Kindergarten sector.

### 3.3 Participants

The subjects of the study are 24 Kindergarten NP 2 students. Their ages are between four and five years. More than half of the children were involved in some form of K1 study at this school or other institution prior to joining the class in 2012. There are 13 boys and 11 girls involved. Classes are taught five days per week with each group of students coming to an NP class twice a day for two thirty minute sessions. I have tracked student progress with the new curriculum using various instruments including interviews, observations, formal and informal peer review and interviews with experts in the field, parent questionnaire and portfolio analysis.

### 3.4 Treatment instruments

#### 3.4.1 Curriculum development process

##### Reviewing stage

The study design allowed for both qualitative and quantitative analysis. Information was collected by using seven principal methods: 1) Initiating a pre-test and post-test to determine if objective two could be proven 2) observation of the teacher during the instructional process in classroom from qualified expert and an analysis of students learning, (3) A parent questionnaire (4) student portfolio analysis (5) analysis of teacher log and teacher journal( 6) Interview with Director of the program and (7) formative assessment of individuals and classes as a whole.

Lev Vygotsky, Jean Piaget, and Jerome Bruner have emphasized cognitive development as being intimately linked to the brain's construction of knowledge within a social context. Their work has been instrumental in providing a foundation for multiage grouping

- **Lev Vygotsky:** Vygotsky asserts that the most fruitful experience in a child's education is his or her collaboration with more skilled partners. Vygotsky explains that the more experienced partner provides help in the way of an intellectual scaffold, which allows the less experienced learner to accomplish more complex tasks than may be possible alone (Stone, 1995; McClellan, 1994). Within a multiage setting, many opportunities exist for interaction between children of different ages, experiences, and developmental levels.

- **Jean Piaget:** Piaget considers the most critical factor in a child's cognitive development to be interaction with peers. Interaction lends opportunities for the child to have cognitive conflict, which results in arguing or debating with peers. This type of interaction requires children to decenter, or consider another person's point of view. Piaget observes that children are most challenged in their thinking when they are with peers, because they all are on an equal footing and are freer to confront ideas than when interacting with adults. However, when children are too similar in their thinking, there may be little to debate about, resulting in fewer developmental gains (Stone, 1995; McClellan, 1994). The multiage setting maximizes a child's opportunity for cognitive conflict because it brings together children at a variety of developmental levels. For further information, refer to *Thinking about Piaget in relationship to the mixed-age classroom* (McClellan, 1993).
- **Jerome Bruner:** Bruner observes that the process of constructing knowledge of the world is not done in isolation but rather within a social context. The child is a social being and, through social life, acquires a framework for interpreting experiences (Bruner and Haste, 1987). Bruner (1966) also notes that "there is no unique sequence for all learners, and the optimum in any particular case will depend upon a variety of factors, including past learning, stage of development, nature of the material, and individual differences" (p. 49). Effective curriculum then must provide many opportunities and choices for children (Anderson and Pavan, 1993). Within the multiage setting, opportunities exist for children to make choices about their learning experiences. In addition, the variety of teaching methods used in the multiage classroom provides opportunities for children to construct knowledge in a multitude of ways.
- **Gardner:** Howard Gardner's Multiple Intelligence theory reminds teachers that there are many types of learners within any one class. Gardner's research indicates that teachers should aim to appeal to all the different learner types at some point during the course. It is particularly important to appeal to visual learners, as a very high proportion of learners have this type of intelligence. Flash cards can be bright and colorful and make a real impact on visual learners. Many of the activities outlined below will also appeal to kinesthetic learners.

Current research indicates that the only limit to one's intelligence is what the individual believes is possible and how his or her behaviors either foster or limit his or her intelligence. Research also indicates that intelligence is not a static structure that can be measured and meaningfully quantified, but an open, dynamic system that can continue to develop throughout life.

## Improving Stage

*Approval by the director and the Parent Teacher Association and board member approval*

There are specific roles of the school Director regarding the approval of the new Active Learning Strategies curriculum. Assessment and instruction must be aligned in order to establish an effective assessment system that enhances practice and meets the learning needs of all children. Effective, qualified board members who have served the school as teachers and administrators in the past and additional school leaders build a shared vision that addresses the purposes for a new curriculum and how it should be implemented. A number of elements are important when designing and implementing an efficient assessment system (Jones, 2003). First, the individual learning goals need to be clearly defined and understood by the leaders, teachers/caregivers, paraprofessionals, and families.

Four essential questions need to be asked before final approval is granted: (Snow and Oh), 2011).

How to assess the new curriculum

1. What are we assessing?
2. Who are we assessing?
3. How are we assessing?

Once the board has made a final decision about approving the new curriculum, a stamp issued by the Ministry of Education will be placed on the final document.

### 3.4.2 Creation and development of an ALS syllabus

Regarding the development of an Active Learning Strategies based English language syllabus, certain aims and objectives have been established that assists in the evaluation process. Syllabus design will be used to better evaluate the student outcomes based on the guidelines set forth in the Creative Curriculum for Preschool (Dodge, Colker and Heroman, 2005) in its fifth edition.

Aims and objectives of the syllabus:

The aim of the new syllabus is to utilize a selection of workbooks (Letterland and Let's Go from Oxford Press), in combination with selected supplemental materials extracted from authentic, reliable internet resources.

A) Revised Proto Syllabus Aim I: Students will comprehend and produce basic English lexical and grammatical forms.

1. Students will have a reading vocabulary of over 300 common nouns and over 40 common verbs.
2. Students will understand and use present, past and future notions of time in a controlled manner.
3. Students will memorize and understand scripted dialogs pertaining to events common to their age.
4. Students will understand and produce most forms of prepositions, demonstrative pronouns, and count and non-count nouns.
5. Students will answer random but appropriate questions based on the content and context of the previous four objectives.

B) Revised Proto Syllabus Aim II: Students will build listening skills and pronunciation.

1. Students will have a listening vocabulary of over 300 common nouns and over 40 common verbs.
2. Students will listen to and produce present, past and future notions of time in a controlled manner.
3. Students will listen to and produce scripted dialogs pertaining to events common to their age.
4. Students will listen to and produce most forms of prepositions, demonstrative pronouns, and count and non-count nouns.

C) Revised Proto Syllabus Aim III: Students will employ creativity and critical thought using various tasks in English.

1. Students will discover and discuss the grammatical rules for present, past and future notions of time in a series of consciousness raising activities.
2. Students will tell stories by interpreting a series of pictures and connecting these pictures in a logical manner.
3. Students will interpret and discuss a role play and create and perform their own role play in an informal manner based on the model.

The newly created syllabus offers a clear approach and framework for instruction contained in the curricula. The following table shows additions and modifications to the original proto- syllabus that better reflect the aims and objectives of the Native Speaker program.

Based on the Creative curriculum for Preschool, ESL Standards for K1-12 and selected scholarly works, combined with some information from the old curriculum, a new set of objectives was created for K1, K2 and K3. The new objectives are listed in the following table. Additional material is also used in the new curriculum.

- Letterland workbook
- Let's Go workbook
- Oxford Reading Tree guided readers
- Selected worksheets from Internet education sites

Based on the objectives of a new, modern Active Learning Strategies curriculum, a new proto-syllabus was designed and lesson plans now include clear and measurable objectives.

After a newly created syllabus was reviewed and edited by the researcher and his colleagues, the researcher found that the format of the syllabus was not acceptable; there were some adjustments to make the product more culturally sensitive and practical for teaching in Thai schools. The amount of information has increased with more focus on measurable objectives results. Utilizing a well-planned syllabus enhances the teacher's ability to develop and support cognitive thinking, reasoning and problem solving skills in young learners. These are essential skills that are called into play far beyond the preschool curriculum and these aspects will have an impact far into the child's future.

An improved proto-syllabus design is found in section 3.4.3. The syllabus is used as a tool to evaluate student outcomes. The design and outcomes expectations are part of guidelines set forth in the Creative Curriculum for Preschool (Dodge, Colker and Heroman, 2005) fifth edition. Please note that all items seen in bold are the additions to the old curriculum.

### 3.4.3 Preschool ALS proto-syllabus

Topic	Structure	Learning objectives	Specific skill set	Numbers	Activities	Evaluation	Time
1	<p>Hello</p> <p>Food and Nutrition</p> <p>5 Senses</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Learner will be able to recite alphabet.</li> <li>o The student will be able to identify alphabet order.</li> <li>o The student will listen carefully to stories and provide feedback.</li> </ul>	<p>Alphabet Revision</p> <p>Letter Recognition/Phonics Reading Comprehension</p>	<p>Revision 1-2</p> <p>Number words: one, two</p>	<p>Lesson 2: Days of the week TPR</p> <p>Lesson 3: Letter song TPR</p> <p>Lesson 4: Letter song TPR</p>	<p>Change Required</p> <p>Add Vocabulary</p>	<p>5 min</p> <p>10 min</p> <p>5 min</p>
2	<p>Our school</p> <p>The environment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o The student will be able to recite the alphabet.</li> <li>o The student will be able to name each letter of the alphabet when shown an image of a letter.</li> <li>o The student will identify letters in own name and some beginning sounds.</li> <li>o The student will be introduced to the alphabet.</li> <li>o The student will identify first letter of each word.</li> <li>o The student will begin to hear with purpose the different beginning sounds.</li> <li>o The student will begin to identify words and their beginning sounds.</li> <li>o The student will identify opposites.</li> <li>o The student will be able to find opposite concepts using picture cards.</li> <li>o The student will play "Bus Ride" by listening carefully to game rules and directions.</li> </ul>	<p>Letter Recognition</p> <p>Sound Segmenting</p> <p>Opposites</p> <p>Descriptive Words</p> <p>Listening and Sequencing</p> <p>vocabulary: classroom friend music play break bus teacher</p>	<p>Revision 3-5</p> <p>Number words: Three, four, five</p>	<p>Hokey Pokey</p> <p>Incorporate Gardner</p> <p>Multiple representation of content</p>	<p>Change Required</p> <p>Objectives Needed</p> <p>Begin formative assessment</p> <p>Begin Portfolio</p> <p>Add Vocabulary</p>	<p>5 min</p> <p>10 min</p>

Topic	Structure	Learning objectives	Specific skill set	Numbers	Activities	Evaluation	Time
3 My friends	Are you...? Yes, I am. No, I'm not.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify, match and recite the alphabet in lower case and transition to upper case.</li> <li>Demonstrate early letter formation, tracing textured letters with fingers.</li> <li>Formation of writing own letters independently on their dry erase boards or paper following teacher guidance.</li> <li>Understanding of simple and multi-step directions.</li> <li>Utilizing listening skills, the student will respond to simple directions and age relevant conversations.</li> <li>The learner will use understandable language to communicate information.</li> <li>The student will utilize expressive speech that is easily understood by others to communicate ideas</li> </ul>	<p>Diagraph 'sh'</p> <p>sheep shoes fish</p> <p>vocabulary: cold happy hot hungry sad thirsty tired</p>	<p>Revision 6-8</p> <p>Number words: six, seven, eight</p>	<p>Lesson 3: Letter song</p> <p>TPR Lesson 4: if you're happy...</p> <p>A Sailor Went to Sea</p> <p>TBM</p> <p>Gardner</p> <p>Kinesthetic Audio-lingual</p> <p>Linguistic</p>	<p>Changes Required</p> <p>Add Vocabulary</p> <p>Add Songs</p> <p>Continue with formative assessment</p>	<p>5 min</p> <p>10 Min</p> <p>5 min</p>
4 I can... Sports	I can...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The student will use visual discrimination to demonstrate knowledge of the alphabet.</li> <li>The student will recite letters of the alphabet.</li> <li>The student will identify letter sounds.</li> <li>The student will recognize own name and participate in various name activities and games.</li> <li>The student will listen attentively to a story and will be able to participate in post classroom discussion.</li> </ul>	<p>Diagraph 'th'</p> <p>Fluency/Reading Comprehension Alphabet Recognition (Part 1) Alphabet Recognition (Part 2) Alphabet Recognition (Part 3)</p>	<p>Revision 9-10</p> <p>Number words: nine, ten</p>	<p>Lesson 3: Letter song</p> <p>Lesson 4: I can jump... Number Rock Gardner</p>	<p>Changes needed</p> <p>Add additional Song</p> <p>Adjust vocabulary</p>	<p>5 min</p> <p>10 min</p>



Topic	Structure	Learning objectives	Specific skill set	Numbers	Activities	Evaluation	Time
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o The student will express ideas orally, using understandable and appropriate language.</li> <li>o The student will speak in complete sentences.</li> <li>o The student will work on developing fine motor skills by working with clay.</li> </ul>	Phonetic Awareness Letter Formation Reading Comprehension (Part 1) Reading Comprehension (Part 2) Oral Language and Self Expression  throw thumb bath  vocabulary: catch climb draw jump kick run sing throw		Student-centered instruction Complex, challenging learning environments and authentic tasks  TBM  Gardner  Kinesthetic Audio-lingual  Linguistic	Adjust objectives  Continue to collect portfolio material	5 min

Topic	Structure	Learning objectives	Specific skill set	Numbers	Activities	Evaluation	Time
5 My Home	There is... There are	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify, match and recite the alphabet in lower case and transition to upper case.</li> <li>Demonstrate early letter formation tracing textured letters with fingers.</li> <li>Formation of writing own letters independently on their dry erase boards or paper following teacher guidance.</li> <li>Understanding of simple and multi-step directions.</li> <li>Utilizing listening skills, the student will respond to simple directions and age relevant conversations.</li> <li>The learner will use understandable language to communicate in formation.</li> <li>The student will utilize expressive speech that is easily understood by others to communicate ideas</li> </ul>	diagraph 'ch'  chocolate beach kitchen  vocabulary: bed kitchen lamp chair table sofa	11-12	Lesson 3: Letter song  Lesson 4: Bean plant Bean plant grow, grow, grow  TPR  TBM Visual-Spatial Linguistic  Logical - Mathematical	Changes Needed  Adjust Objectives  Continue formative assessment  Visuals Add vocabulary	
6 My room in on under	Where is it? It's in/on/under	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Copy letters, words, along with own name to identify each.</li> <li>Understand what is said can be written and what is written can be read.</li> <li>The student will use emergent writing to express understanding of story read.</li> <li>Use drawings to express thoughts, feelings and ideas.</li> <li>The learner will use letters, drawings and words to communicate information.</li> </ul>	Phonological Awareness (Part 1) Phonological Awareness (Part 2) Phonological Awareness (Part 3) Phonological Awareness (Part 4) Reading (Part 1) Reading (Part 2) Writing (Part 1) Writing (Part 2)	13-14  thirteen fourteen	Lesson 3: Letter song  Lesson 4: Head, shoulders, knees and toes	Changes Needed  Adjust Vocabulary	

Topic	Structure	Learning objectives	Specific skill set	Numbers	Activities	Evaluation	Time
7	On holiday How many are there? There are ...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Learners trace over simple curved and straight line figures.</li> <li>o For the more developmentally advanced students, have them trace over letters in their own name or other familiar words.</li> <li>o Learners recite the alphabet, recognize letters and demonstrate beginning sounds.</li> <li>o Learners listen and share ideas about the story.</li> <li>o Retell a story by looking at the pictures.</li> <li>o Listen with increasing attention.</li> <li>o Show interest in books.</li> <li>o Tracing skill to practice developing penmanship.</li> <li>o Follow simple directions in order to complete the task.</li> <li>o The students will recognize their own name and trace or write</li> </ul>	<p>CVC with 'a'</p> <p>cat hat mat</p> <p>vocabulary bed blanket shelf pillow mat</p> <p>Reading Comprehension Writing Letter Recognition</p> <p>CVC with 'e'</p> <p>jet net wet</p> <p>vocabulary: beach crab sand sea horse shark danger jelly fish black brown purple white</p>	15-16 fifteen sixteen	<p>Lesson 3: Letter song</p> <p>Lesson 4: Ten little Indians Mr. Al Sings Shuffle</p>	No change	

Topic	Structure	Learning objectives	Specific skill set	Numbers	Activities	Evaluation	Time
8 Meal time	She's / He's got...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o The student will be able to recite the alphabet.</li> <li>o The student will be able to name each letter of the alphabet when shown an image of a letter.</li> <li>o The student will identify letters in own name and some beginning sounds.</li> <li>o The student will be introduced to the alphabet.</li> <li>o The student will identify first letter of each word.</li> <li>o The student will begin to hear with purpose the different beginning sounds.</li> <li>o The student will begin to identify words and their beginning sounds.</li> <li>o The student will identify opposites.</li> <li>o The student will be able to find opposite concepts using picture cards.</li> <li>o The student will examine various textured objects and be able to explain how each one feels using descriptive words and sorting them according to their properties.</li> <li>o The student will be able to follow simple directions.</li> <li>o The student will be able to look at pictures and tell a story in the correct sequence.</li> </ul>	Letter Recognition Sound Segmenting Opposites Descriptive Words Listening and Sequencing CVC with 'i' big dig fig vocabulary: pizza chicken pork shrimp crab fish French fry juice rice salad fruit	17-18 seventeen eighteen	Lesson 3: Letter song Lesson 4: Monday Chicken, Tuesday snack things	No change	

Topic	Structure	Learning objectives	Specific skill set	Numbers	Activities	Evaluation	Time
9 Circus fun Environments At the zoo	She/ He/ it can...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Learners recite the alphabet.</li> <li>o Focus is on the three R's: Recycle Reuse and Reduce regarding environmental studies.</li> <li>o Write and Identify lower or upper case interchangeably when prompted.</li> <li>o Able to read short words and basic sentences.</li> <li>o Focus on the letter "T" and be able to identify the sound in the word "Tree" and others.</li> <li>o Listen to stories and identify characters.</li> <li>o Utilizing listening skills learners will sing and repeat rhymes.</li> </ul>	Phonics Reading Comprehension Letter Formation Language Oral  CVC with 'o' hop mop top  vocabulary: bicycle yo-yo drum game fun happy clown tent outdoors	19-20  nineteen twenty	Lesson 3  Letter song  Lesson 4  Let's go to the circus	No Change	
10 Jobs Money, Shops and Jobs	Is she/ he...? Yes, she/he is. No, he/she isn't	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Effectively communicate examples of personal experience handling money.</li> <li>o The student will attentively listen to stories and be able to effectively answer basic questions to demonstrate story comprehension and describe how the story relates to his/her life experiences.</li> <li>o Identify letters in the alphabet and demonstrate beginning sound knowledge.</li> </ul>					

Topic	Structure	Learning objectives	Specific skill set	Numbers	Activities	Evaluation	Time
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Recognize words to express a thought in complete sentences.</li> <li>o Develop phonetic awareness by participating in rhyming activities.</li> <li>o Recognize that words are made of sounds and some words have the same beginning sounds.</li> <li>o Understand that a story has a particular sequence.</li> <li>o Follow teacher's explanation of story sequence, and demonstrate understanding by sequencing a three part story.</li> </ul>	Fluency/Reading Comprehension Alphabet Recognition (Part 1) Alphabet Recognition (Part 2) Alphabet Recognition (Part 3) Phonetic Awareness Letter Formation Reading Comprehension (Part 1) Reading Comprehension (Part 2) Oral Language and Self Expression CVC with 'u' vocabulary: doctor farmer fisherman taxi driver businessman policeman nurse builder	Numbers 11-20 Revision	Lesson 3: Letter song Lesson 4: How are you today? Lesson 5: Twenty horses on the farm	No change	

## 3.5 Data collecting instruments

### 3.5.1 Pre-test and post-test

A pre- test was conducted and administered to the target 24 students prior to the final post-test assessment in order to compare the data. The main purpose of formative evaluation was to assist the researcher in setting parameters and to provide information on English communication competence and efficacy. The researcher also needed a benchmark to identify each participants English proficiency level. The pre-test and post-test aimed to measure student's reading, writing, speaking, listening, participation and effort. These skills were considered to reflect English communication ability.

A battery of cognitive measures assessing reading, writing, listening and speaking, participation and effort from the *Woodcock-Johnson III Test of Achievement (WJ-III)* were individually administered to each study child by trained data collectors. All assessment measures are widely used, have been validated with diverse populations, and exhibit strong psychometric properties of validity and reliability (.80 - .97 reliability for 4-year olds in preschool) (Puma, 2013; Puma et al., 2010). The data collection process was monitored throughout the study to ensure continued reliability and accuracy.

Even though the assessment can be used on a wide variety of ages, its primary application is for the school-aged population (McGraw, 2001). The test-makers used three stages of sampling to make sure they obtained a representative sample. The three stages were: sampling of communities, sampling of schools, and sampling of subjects. The second stage was only used when sampling school-age subjects. In the sampling of communities, they sampled from the nine census divisions of the country. Communities were chosen based on geographic distribution, size of community, and SES characteristics. Schools were chosen to be sampled if they provided a representative sample of their community. Home schooled students and private schools were included as well. A quota-by-grade-level criterion was used to sample school subjects. Students were chosen at random from the schools to be tested (McGraw, 2001).

Using the current methodology and research that reflects authentic material, socially sensitive content and real expectations have lead to the formation of an assessment that is issued using three teachers who assess similar subject matter. The scores are averaged for the final result.

Samples of the pre-test and post- test can be found in Appendix J.

### 3.5.2 Parent questionnaire

Parent questionnaires were administered in Thai language to gather the parent's opinions towards three themes. Student ability, teacher ability and program effectiveness were recorded and analyzed. The questionnaire is based on a formative scale, which consists of statements that express either favorable or unfavorable attitudes toward the object of interest, (Cooper and Shindler, 2006). The evaluation addressed the following features; the kinds of activities children preferred, the level of the activities, how useful the content of the lessons were, whether the activities helped to facilitate their learning process, materials' evaluation and the students' reactions. The main focus of this evaluation was to bring together their opinions about the course and to use them as a tool to improve the new active learning curriculum.

The questionnaire purpose is to check the parent's opinions and reactions to the introduction of an Active Strategies curriculum "From the didactic point of view, the term method can be considered as a specific way of organizing teacher and learner activities, evolving the educational profile of learner and acting agreeable with the educational pedagogical aims" (Valadez, 2012)). It is a way, where the readers read written questions and the investigator gets back written answers.

The questionnaire is a means or a method to some type of goal. Valisova, (2010), states, "From a didactic point of view, the word method can be considered as a specific way of organization of teacher's and learner's activities, involving the educational profile of a learner and acting agreeable with the educational and pedagogical aims", (p. 189). It is a way where the participants read written questions and the investigator gets back written answers. In my parent questionnaire, I have chosen both open and closed ended questionnaire.



**Table 2 Parent questionnaire**

The following section details the parent’s reactions to questions concerning the curriculum which includes sending work home for students to complete with parental assistance.

**School Questionnaire for Parents:**

Dear parents and guardians,  
 I am close to completing a thesis about young learners and the ways they learn languages. This year we have introduced a new curriculum for our Anuban children. Please take a few minutes to fill out the questionnaire so we can get accurate feedback about your child’s progress.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Don't Know	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I am happy with my child's progress in school.					
I like my child to take home homework.					
We feel that the teacher is Qualified to teach English.					
We are happy with the topics taught to our children.					
The curriculum covers the Subjects we expect our children to learn.					
We are able to communicate with the teacher if there are any problems.					
The school consult me if my child needs extra help.					
School reports give me a good picture of how my child is doing.					
There are good arrangements for parent-teacher meetings.					
Management of students is good in the school.					
I am aware of the code of behavior/school rules.					

After completing the journal I felt it would be useful to know some alternative opinions and impressions. I decided a questionnaire for the parents of my students would prove beneficial. I tried to compose this research tool in such a way so I might discover details concerning some of the desires and expectations of the parents. I wanted to find out if the parents were motivated and involved with their children's progress. What were their feelings about having their children taught a second language at such an early age?

I realize that the answers might not be completely reliable because many of the parents do not use English as part of their careers and livelihoods. I also wanted to avoid judgments and feelings. The questionnaire was duplicated in Thai language (see Appendix F) and it was anonymous. I first piloted the initial questionnaire in 2012, but felt the parents might need a bit more time to process information and to be aware of a curriculum change. The final version was easier to understand and easier to quantify using the Likert scale method.

Final results yield very positive opinions from parents concerning the program.

**Table 3** Parent questionnaire Mean rubric

Mean $\bar{x}$ scores	Quality
4.21 - 5.00	Strongly agree
3.41 - 4.20	Agree
2.61 - 3.40	Not decided
1.81 - 2.60	Disagree
1.00 - 1.80	Strongly disagree

This questionnaire elicited parent responses under three themes:

1. Student ability
2. Teacher ability
3. Stakeholder expectations

### **3.5.3 Portfolio assessment and analysis**

#### **Goals**

Teachers will have knowledge that clarifies the purpose of portfolio assessment. Knowledge of which goals are being targeted and the evidence of learning taking place will be numerically scored. Numerical results will follow the portfolio grading rubric.

#### **Collect data**

This step includes planning the data collection, marking each of the collected pieces of work, and then organizing the work into a coherent piece of assessment material.

#### **Examine data**

A thorough and reflective examination of all collected materials will determine the child's strengths and weaknesses. Using Gardner's Multiple Intelligences Theory will show that certain students excel in the arts and drawing while other score high in numbers and alphabet identification. All of the intelligences are averaged together to provide a final grade.

Teacher considerations:

1. Is my instructional practice working for all students?
2. What instructional changes are needed to allow children to achieve higher English communication goals?

#### **Revise and implement**

Make adaptations to the curriculum and syllabus in order to gain increased and measurable data.

#### **Conclusion**

Portfolio assessment and analysis is a system that identifies various levels of student success. Portfolios will reflect student achievement, areas of skill, areas that need improvement and offer an overall picture of student progress that creates highly intelligent and capable individuals. It will be the creative, innovative and divergent thinkers who will be able to face the complex challenges of the future.

**Table 4** Two paradigms of assessment

<b>Strategic Dimensions</b>	<b>Assessment for Improvement Paradigm</b>	<b>Assessment for Accountability Paradigm</b>
Intent	Formative (Improvement)	Summative (Judgment)
Stance	Internal	External
Predominant Ethos	Engagement	Compliance

  

<b>Application Choices</b>	<b>Assessment for Improvement Paradigm</b>	<b>Assessment for Accountability Paradigm</b>
Instrumentation	Multiple/Triangulation	Standardized
Nature of Evidence	Quantitative and Qualitative	Quantitative
Reference Points	Over Time, Comparative, Established Goal	Comparative or Fixed Standard
Communication of Results	Multiple Internal Channels and Media	Public Communication
Uses of Results	Multiple Feedback Loops	Reporting

Source: National Institute for Language Outcome Assessment (2000)

Assessment Portfolios are implemented somewhere along the continuum between the two paradigms exhibited in Table 6. The concept of ‘Opportunity Cost’ should be considered here (what do we give up when we emphasize accountability or improvement based on these two paradigms of assessment?). How can we create a balance along the continuum between these two approaches? Here are some preliminary ideas for addressing the balance issues:

### Strategies

- Acknowledge the importance of both portfolio as workspace (process) and showcase (product)
- Support student choice and voice in portfolios
- Facilitate reflection for deep learning
- Provide timely and effective feedback for improvement
- Encourage student use of multimedia in portfolios for visual communication and literacy.

## Kindergarten NP 2 Portfolio Formative Assessment



Student: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_ Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Evaluated By:

Teacher (Michael Underhill)

Assigned up to four marks for each point based on the following rating scale  
(4 being the highest):

4-excellent      3-very good      2-satisfactory      1-needs work

Motivation and involvement	1 2 3 4
Letterland workbook	1 2 3 4
Let's Go workbook	1 2 3 4
Alphabet	1 2 3 4
Numbers	1 2 3 4
Art	1 2 3 4

Rubric: Total Points 24

Total: \_\_\_\_\_

(out of 24)

**Figure 5** Kindergarten portfolio evaluation sheet

### 3.5.4 Self-reflective journal

Writing a teacher journal is a continuous process of keeping a written record of the teacher's thoughts, experiences and observations. It can also be kept in the form of an audio or electronic journal. A journal is "a teacher's inner dialogue expressed in writing to be a purposeful means of analysis and improvement of his pedagogical activities" (Švec, 2005, p. 80). (Baily, 1990 cited in Gebhard, 1992, p. 40) defines writing a journal as "a first person account of language learning or teaching experience, documented through regular candid entries...and the analyzed for recurring problems or salient events." This section offers different examples of written topics, the reasons for keeping the journal in its many forms and the audience for which it is intended.

The purpose of writing a journal depends on the individual needs of the teacher. The teacher will decide what to write about. Richards and Lockhard (1996, p. 7) state two purposes of keeping a journal: (1) events and ideas are recorded for the purpose of later reflection; (2) the process of writing a journal helps to trigger insights about teaching. Journaling is a way of collaborating with other teachers and exploring teacher issues (Richards and Farrell, 2005, p. 70).

The progression of self-reflection is involved and complex; therefore some authors have tried to divide it into individual phases. Švec (2005, p. 79) refers to J. Smyth (1989) who describes the self - reflection process in the following way:

1. Descriptive phase (What happened? What was my reaction?)
2. Informative phase (What exactly was the situation about? In what context did the situation develop? What class was it?)
3. Contrastive phase (Why did the situation happen? Who caused it?)
4. Phase of situation solving reconstruction (How could I proceed now when I know about the situation? What approaches are available? What do I need for their practical realization?)

It is possible to say that all teachers pay some attention to self-reflection, even though most of them do it intuitively and occasionally which cannot be compared to a thorough, organized, and systematic way of self-reflection.

The researcher wants to stress the importance of analysis of the journal entries. By reworking or rethinking and interpreting their entries, teachers can gain powerful insights into their own classroom behavior and motivation. The entries in the journal can be read by the writer, other teachers and even supervisors. It can be a collaboration of two or more teachers interested in discovering the similar outcomes.

For this study, the researcher kept reflective journals for approximately 60 hours and the journal was analyzed under four themes:

1. Student behaviors
2. Students' motivation
3. Student assessment
4. Teacher problems and challenges

### Goals for journal writing

In order to avoid the difficulties and to make the journal writing experience a positive one, Richards and Farrell (2005, p. 75) offer the following suggestions:

- Set goals for journal writing.
- Decide who the audience will be for the journal.
- Be prepared to set aside time for journal writing.
- Review your journal entries regularly to see what you can learn from them.
- Evaluate your journal to see if it meets your goals and expectations.

Baily (1990) also suggests:

- Study the journal entries, looking for patterns and significant events.
- Interpret and discuss those factors with peers and stakeholders.

This methodology requires the researcher to talk about himself. Expressing choices, experiences and actions chosen during the course of research aims to make visible to the reader the constructed nature of research outcomes. Increasingly in qualitative research, outcomes and analysis are presented in ways that make it clear how researchers own experiences, positions and values have influenced the path of research, as well as the way they choose to do their study and the way they present their findings. Rather than attempting to manage the researcher's values through method or assumptions, the aim should be to acknowledge and embrace these values.

Keeping a self reflective journal is a means that facilitates reflexivity, where the researcher examines personal assumptions and goals and clarifies individual belief systems. The aim of this part of the research is to show the reader how the use of a reflective journal was used, combined with a notion of creating transparency in the research process. It conveys how keeping a reflective journal can have concrete effects on the research design leaving a research trail of varying methodologies and analysis. Goals, materials, problems with students and lessons were evaluated. Student participation and feedback showed areas needing changes.

Finally, the purpose of the journal was to discover what parts of the old curriculum were effective and how to improve the new curriculum overall. The purpose is to share my experiences with other users of reflective journals so that novice researchers like me might consistently engage in journaling and make it part of their research portfolio from the onset.

### 3.5.5 Peer observation

During the eighth week of instruction of the newly designed proto-syllabus, an observation was conducted by an expert on the field of TESOL. The purpose of having the expert evaluate the lesson was to get detailed and precise evidence about the diverse features in a classroom throughout the lesson. The feedback was used to improve the curriculum, adjust the syllabus and to impact the instruction itself. Student behavior and engagement were also documented. The scope of data which were collected was methods of instruction using active learning strategies. The co-teachers' behaviors, the behavior of students, teaching techniques and teaching materials were taken into consideration and the context and circumstances occurring in the classroom were also reviewed.

Observation of people engaged in the same profession is called peer observation. Richards (1998, p. 147) explains, "because of its evaluation element and logistical difficulties in arranging such activities within the context of a teacher's timetables, it presents a great potential for teacher reflection." Richards argues that such cooperation can be enriching for both sides. It is quite demanding for a teacher to collect information about his teaching independently. Observers are not meant to evaluate what they see, but the task is to collect useable written information.

Knowing both how to observe and how to be observed, aids in teacher growth. Observation generally means attending someone else's classes in an attempt to observe different features. Wajnryb (1992) views observation as "a multi-faceted tool for learning" and "a skill that can be learned and improved with practice." Such observations can be added to the inventory of teacher growth.

#### Observation guidelines:

##### Preparation and practice observation

For the initial peer observation by an expert in the field of TESOL, a pre-observation conference occurred. A copy of the Peer Observation Form may be found in Appendix K. The observer wanted to gain a sense of being in the researcher's classroom, and the instructor wants to become comfortable with having an observer in his classroom. Teachers involved in the NP Program will become accustomed to having observers in their classrooms. Additionally, all NP instructors are observed by the group coordinators at a minimum of once per term. Feedback on the observation is discussed soon after the observation is complete.

To understand the class context, the observer should ask the qualified observer questions such as:

What are the goals of today's class? What are the goals of the course?

1. Lesson plan
2. Curriculum outline
3. Class syllabus
4. Content of previous student feedback



What type of course is this? How does it fit into the student's overall curriculum?

5. Lecture / activity / seminar / laboratory / other
6. Required / general education / elective / personal interest
7. Developmental / lower division / upper division / graduate
8. Role in degree program (critical / introductory)
9. Length of session / lecture / activities / # of times per week
10. Recent changes in program / course / student outcomes

What knowledge, skills, and attitudes does the instructor expect from students?

11. as a result of the course
12. as a result of the session / lecture

What is the student make-up of the instructor's class?

13. Number of students / grade levels / backgrounds / other

### Identification

The identification section of peer observation is designed to aid participants comprehend the instructional goals associated with a particular course, session, and instructor. Setting the instructional goals will later allow both parties to establish the explicit teaching elements for feedback to the instructor. As an instructor, giving the observer an opportunity to appreciate the context of the course, so that the observer can spot the areas where the observer feels the instructor needs require help. Goals include the learner behaviors (what the learners will be able to perform as a result of the class instruction) and the teacher strategies (what the teacher will do to assist and guarantee student learning).

### The Observation

The actual observation is the primary element of the system designed to improve teaching. Both observer and teacher will have discussed what specific behaviors the instructor wants the observer to look for during the class session. The observer is in the unique position to gather more and richer information on the class than the instructor can. Keep in mind that for the instructor to make effective teaching-related decisions the observer's data collection must:

1. Be specific
2. Be descriptive
3. Document real evidence
4. Relate to goals set by the instructor

## Post- Observation Dialogue

A post-observation dialogue is intended to allow the instructor and observer to evaluate the observation in regards to goals set by the instructor for that day's lesson. Dialogue should focus on helping the faculty member to recognize the events that transpired during the observed class session. This dialogue should take place as close to the time of the observation as possible. In order for the instructor to make effective changes to teaching, peer feedback should be:

1. Specific
2. Focused
3. Action oriented
4. Accurate
5. Honest
6. Positive

In this study, peer observation was used to improve teaching and learning processes based on an ALS syllabus. The target K2 class was observed by a TOEFL professional whose job is to score the essay section of online exams for foreign students. The organization is TOEFL International. The observer observed the researcher during morning hours when the students are most active and attentive. The observation took place close to the middle of the new ALS curriculum implementation.

### 3.5.6 Interview with Director

Interviews are methods based on direct questioning. They rely on immediate contact between an investigator and an informant. "The method of an interview represents verbal communication in the form of questions and answers from two or more people..." (Manek and Svec, p. 69). The success of this method is for the interviewer to know the age and intelligence level of those being interviewed. I chose an individual interview from the founder of the Native Speaker Program and the initiator for the development of a new curriculum. This particular interview was done on a personal level in an attempt to gain candid answers from a person who is usually guarded about sharing information that regards the school. During the interview, I took notes and reviewed some written literature that had been published in the past. The results were a positive addition to research methodology. This administrative head offered answers and suggestions from a Thai perspective with knowledge of information gleaned from her Thai counterparts. Also data from administrative officials and other experts will be gathered. Stake (2010) states that the purpose of interviews as applied to qualitative research is (p. 95):

- To obtain unique information held by the person interviewed.
- To collect a numerical unit of information held by the person interviewed.
- To find out about things that the researchers were unable to observe themselves.
- These and other queries will be further discussed in Chapter 4.

This interview, based on specific open-ended questions, was arranged by the researcher prior to the interview. The director was provided the questions in advance. The director was a bit skeptical at first about granting the interview, however, when we started the interview, she got rather excited about answering certain questions. Others she chose not to comment upon. The interview lasted for about 25 minutes and was conducted in English. The qualitative data were reviewed, synthesized and analyzed by analytic induction.

Here it should be noted that the director was not extremely excited to be interviewed. She sees the NP Program as a result of her efforts over the past ten year's involvement with the program. She is hesitant to share this program because this is a unique opportunity for the school to attract incoming students.

Questions:

1. Please tell me a bit about yourself.
2. How long has the NP Program been in existence?
3. What obstacles did you face at the beginning?
4. What is the future of the program?
5. Do you have any suggestions for those who will carry on your legacy?

### *The Interview*

Inside her large office, I had the chance to interview the founder and current director of the Native Speaker Program. We discussed everything from cooking to pets, living in Thailand and of course, the NP program. This was our conversation.

When I asked her about the NP program, and its humble beginnings, she said with a sigh, "It started in the school year 2004. The vision was not my own, but that of the previous director before me. Her vision was that by learning the English language, students would have a better life. Also, she thought that the best approach to learning English was through the use of Native Speakers of English.

When I asked what it was like, she responded, "It was like being thrown into a lake that was just above my head. There were just three of us at the time running the program with the assistance of eight foreigners. We started with eight, then there were 18 and now there are thirty-one." She smiles, "I guess I learned how to swim."

What has changed? "The number of students enrolled in the program has expanded and the quality and care of the NP staff including the Thai side has grown in quality and care. The teachers, the personnel, the technology, the curriculum and even the rooms...everything has improved"

What is so popular about the program? “It provides the opportunity for the Thai students to be exposed to English language. Besides the language, it also helps them to get to know the culture and customs and even just the native speakers themselves. I expect the number of students enrolled in the NP program to continue to rise.

Since I am reporting on the new curriculum, I asked her about the new and improved Native Speaker curriculum. “The NP Program has changed and grown. We have walked forward together and we will need to continue walking forward together to meet the challenges of life and that of being a member of the ASEAN community”

PAYAP UNIVERSITY