

ENHANCING TEACHING CAPABILITY THROUGH THAILAND'S TEACHER TV PROGRAM

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Abstract

This paper aims to present and discuss on the implementation of the Teacher Television (TV) Program, one of important strategic approaches in developing teaching capability of approximate 500,000 Thai teachers during 2010 - 2012. It is deemed as a highly impact teacher development innovation in the Thai educational context. The study reveals that the Program significantly assists the teachers to enhance their motivation in self-directed learning and to inspire their creativity in teaching design that leads to any classroom innovations. In this paper, an evolution of the Thai Teacher TV Program and its objectives are firstly introduced. Then, some crucial empirical data collected during the implementation period are presented for exhibiting the impact of the Program on the teachers. Last, key success factors, barriers, managerial recommendations, and a strategic framework for the policy makers in any other educational contexts are discussed and proposed.

Keywords: Teaching capability, Teacher development, Self-directed learning, Educational management, Educational policy

1. INTRODUCTION

Since the economic crisis in 1997, the Thai educational system has been reformed. The crisis teaches us to recognize that a stabilized economy must be based on a strong educational system which is not only to push the students to study but to pull them to interact in a lifelong learning environment. Therefore, a student-center concept has been applied as the core approach to develop the country's future human resources. Such a huge budget has been invested to improve and develop the facilities for enhancing Thailand's quality standards since then. However, the reform will never succeed without a human mechanism. As one of most important key success factors of the reform, the teachers are targeted as the first priority. The educational management structure and regulations concerning the teachers are also revised for properly managing and driving them to the new teaching paradigm and environment.

As mentioned earlier, one of mega projects is begun entitled "The Teacher Television (TV) Program". This project aims to enhance teaching capability of the Thai teachers through the most powerful communication channel in the country. Anyway, all stakeholders e.g. school administrator, student, and guardian are also included. It is a three-year project broadcasted during 2010 – 2012. The principal objectives are as follows:

- 1) To build a source of knowledge for encouraging self-directed learning of the teachers. The contents are news, information, and best teaching practices. Anyway, this knowledge source is not only offered to the teachers. The school administrators, educational policy makers, and other professionals interested in the field of education are also welcomed.
- 2) To develop the high quality TV programs for the Thai teachers. These programs are anticipated to encourage and facilitate lifelong learning of the teachers.
- 3) To disseminate the high quality TV programs to all stakeholders such as school administrator, educational policy makers, students, and teachers at all levels.
- 4) To build the Thai teacher network for enhancing and developing knowledge collaboration among the teachers in all levels. The outcome of this objective is to continuously develop a body of educational knowledge from the teachers, by the teachers, and for the teachers.

Strategically, the television network is considered as the most highly impact public mass media because it can disseminate all contents to the teachers in the whole country especially those who live in the remote areas. For the programs, the main content intends to present and illustrate some innovative ideas and best teaching practices through a documentary TV platform. This is not just only a push project that the government disseminates the contents to the teachers, at the same time, the teachers are also required to participate in some activities organized in specific areas for allowing them to practice and share their experiences. After the implementation of the Teacher TV Program for 3 years, there are many interesting points to discuss and propose for the future operation particularly some major impacts on teaching capability and classroom innovations created by the teachers.

2. OUTCOMES OF THE THAILAND’S TEACHER TV PROGRAM

In the implementation of the Teacher TV Program, Faculty of Education, Burapha University is officially assigned by the Ministry of Education to manage the operations, to collaborate with all partners and stakeholders, and to evaluate impacts and effectiveness of the Program. During 2010 – 2012, the empirical data are significantly revealed as follows.

2.1 The Teacher TV Program is a source of knowledge for encouraging self-directed learning of the teachers

During 2010 – 2012, the project produced 3,600 TV programs in 12 times. The production target of each time is 100 TV programs which focus on major substance learning groups in order to respond to the national education policy. All programs are also set to align with the development direction of the government. As shown in the Table 1, a number of programs were obviously increased since the second time.

Table 1: Number of Programs, Percentage, and Accumulative Number of Programs

| Year | Time | Number of Programs | Percent | Accumulative Number of Programs |
|------|------|--------------------|---------|---------------------------------|
| 2010 | 2 | 100 | 2.78 | 100 |
| 2010 | 3 | 250 | 6.94 | 350 |
| 2010 | 4 | 250 | 6.94 | 600 |
| 2011 | 5 | 350 | 9.72 | 950 |
| 2011 | 6 | 350 | 9.72 | 1300 |
| 2011 | 7 | 400 | 11.11 | 1700 |
| 2011 | 8 | 400 | 11.11 | 2100 |
| 2012 | 9 | 400 | 11.11 | 2500 |
| 2012 | 10 | 400 | 11.11 | 2900 |
| 2012 | 11 | 700 | 19.44 | 3600 |

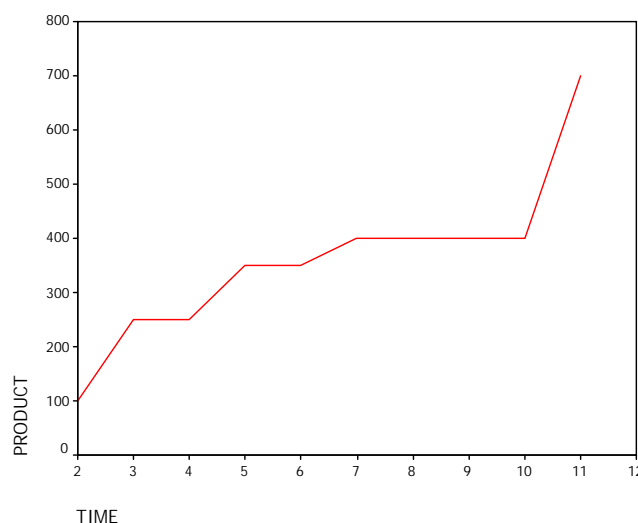


Figure 1. Number of programs produced within 11 times

In the number of 3,600 programs, substance learning groups were 1) Teaching and learning innovation; 2) Educational management innovation; and 3) Problem solving in specific situations. As shown in the Table 2, a number of TV programs produced in Thailand were significantly increased. According to the holistic learning concept, these programs aimed to create alternative learning and teaching materials based on the Thai socio-cultural contexts, while the imported programs were also broadcasted for encouraging the teachers to integrate their local practices and perspectives with the global ones effectively.

Table 2: Number of TV Programs in the Teaching and Learning Innovation Section

| Year | Times | Programs produced in Thailand | | Imported Programs | |
|-------|-------|-------------------------------|------------|-------------------|------------|
| | | Number | Percentage | Number | Percentage |
| 2010 | 2 | 7 | 1.42 | 54 | 4.61 |
| 2010 | 3 | 25 | 5.08 | 106 | 9.04 |
| 2010 | 4 | 33 | 6.71 | 136 | 11.60 |
| 2011 | 5 | 60 | 12.20 | 142 | 12.12 |
| 2011 | 6 | 60 | 12.20 | 150 | 12.80 |
| 2011 | 7 | 67 | 13.62 | 150 | 12.80 |
| 2011 | 8 | 127 | 25.81 | 128 | 10.92 |
| 2012 | 9 | 60 | 12.20 | 180 | 15.36 |
| 2012 | 10 | 60 | 12.20 | 180 | 15.36 |
| Total | | 492 | | 1172 | |

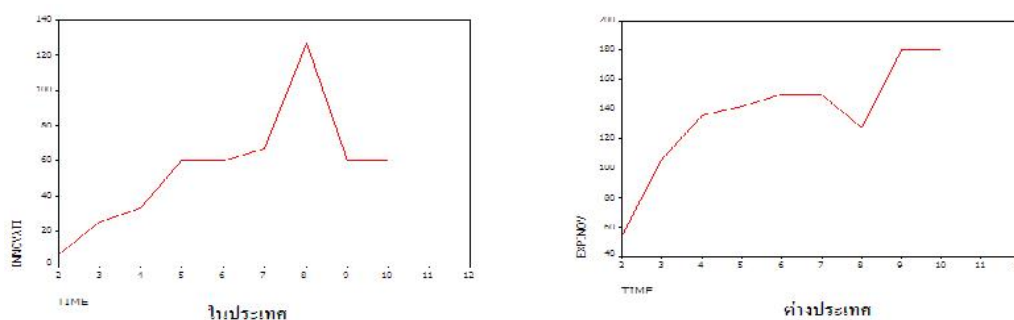


Figure 2. Comparison of Local-Produced (Left) and Imported Programs (Right)

As the educational administrator is another important stakeholder, the Thailand's Teacher TV Program also produced the programs emphasizing on the educational administration innovation. The main objective was to inspire creativity related to educational management on the school or educational administrators. As shown in Table 3, although, a number of imported programs were higher than a number of programs produced in Thailand. But the local-produced ones were constantly increased in order to encourage the school administrators to integrate their local management practices and experiences with the global ones effectively.

Table 3: Number of TV Programs in the Educational Administration Innovation Section

| Year | Times | Programs produced in Thailand | | Imported Programs | |
|-------|-------|-------------------------------|------------|-------------------|------------|
| | | Number | Percentage | Number | Percentage |
| 2010 | 2 | 2 | 1.41 | 17 | 3.69 |
| 2010 | 3 | 8 | 5.63 | 60 | 13.02 |
| 2010 | 4 | 14 | 9.86 | 42 | 9.11 |
| 2011 | 5 | 19 | 13.38 | 50 | 10.85 |
| 2011 | 6 | 20 | 14.08 | 50 | 10.85 |
| 2011 | 7 | 30 | 21.13 | 50 | 10.85 |
| 2011 | 8 | 9 | 6.34 | 72 | 15.62 |
| 2012 | 9 | 20 | 14.08 | 60 | 13.02 |
| 2012 | 10 | 20 | 14.08 | 60 | 13.02 |
| Total | | 142 | | 461 | |

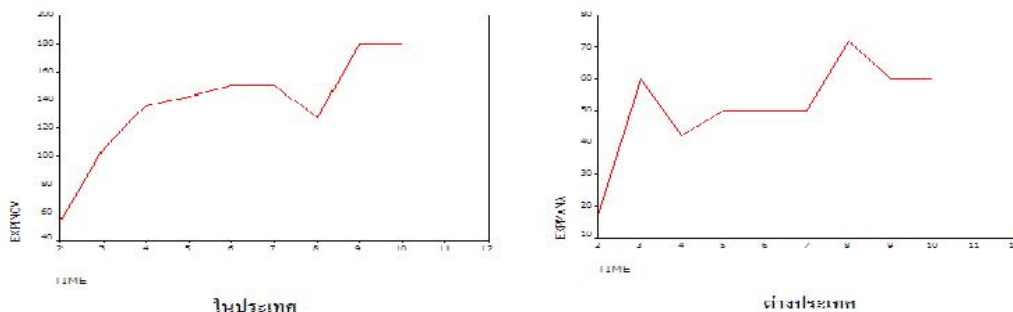


Figure 3. Comparison of Local-Produced (Left) and Imported Programs (Right)

After the 1997 crisis, it has obviously been accepted that the problem management skill is very important for the Thai people at all levels. Therefore, the problem solving in specific issues program was included in the production of the program. A combination of the local-produced programs and the imported ones were still used to inspire teacher’s critical thinking from both local and international perspectives.

Table 4: Number of TV Programs in the Problem Solving Section

| Year | Times | Programs produced in Thailand | | Imported Programs | |
|-------|-------|-------------------------------|------------|-------------------|------------|
| | | Number | Percentage | Number | Percentage |
| 2010 | 2 | 1 | 0.71 | 19 | 4.38 |
| 2010 | 3 | 0 | 0.00 | 51 | 11.75 |
| 2010 | 4 | 8 | 5.67 | 36 | 8.29 |
| 2011 | 5 | 28 | 19.86 | 58 | 13.36 |
| 2011 | 6 | 20 | 14.18 | 50 | 11.52 |
| 2011 | 7 | 30 | 21.28 | 50 | 11.52 |
| 2011 | 8 | 14 | 9.93 | 50 | 11.52 |
| 2012 | 9 | 20 | 14.18 | 60 | 13.82 |
| 2012 | 10 | 20 | 14.18 | 60 | 13.82 |
| Total | | 141 | | 434 | |

2.2 The Teacher TV Program encourages teachers, school administrators, policy makers, and related people to learn and use knowledge together

As a source of knowledge in the field of education, the Teacher TV Program was a key channel providing news, information, and other knowledge on teaching technique, practice, and others to all stakeholders in the Thai educational community. A number of teachers, school administrators, policy makers, and related people constantly and significantly increased during the surveys as shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Number and Percentage of Members Participated in the Activities

| Type of Membership | 2010 | | 2011 | |
|------------------------|------------------------|---------|------------------------|---------|
| | 4 th Survey | Percent | 7 th Survey | Percent |
| School Teacher | 4191, | 71.42 | 27,407 | 48.90 |
| School Committee | 6 | 0.10 | 196 | 0.35 |
| School Support | 159 | 2.71 | | |
| Educational Supervisor | 14 | 0.24 | | |
| Academic/Researcher | 6 | 0.10 | 8,369 | 14.93 |
| Student/Guardian | 359 | 6.12 | 1,861 | 3.32 |
| General People | 1,133 | 19.31 | 18,216 | 32.50 |
| Total | 5,868 | | 56,049 | |

2.3 The Teacher TV Program produces high quality programs for the educational stakeholders

One key success indicator of the Teacher TV Program is to produce high quality programs length no more than 15 minutes. This is a strategic duration according to the production framework. The program believes that the 15-minute program is most appropriate. According to the surveys, it was obviously seen that the majority of members spent their time for the Programs about 5 – 14 minutes.

Table 6: Time Duration Spent by the Members within 1Month

| Time spent for watching the Teacher TV Program | School Administrator | | Teacher | | Student | | Guardian | |
|--|----------------------|-------|---------|-------|---------|-------|----------|-------|
| | 2011 | 2012 | 2011 | 2012 | 2011 | 2012 | 2011 | 2012 |
| 5-14 Mins | 39.81 | 54.74 | 30.38 | 31.66 | 48.62 | 47.64 | 18.56 | 17.27 |
| 15-29 Mins | 15.48 | 24.21 | 39.23 | 27.62 | 9.85 | 29.25 | 3.53 | 33.56 |
| 30-44 Mins | 4.13 | 2.77 | 2.95 | 10.03 | 10.23 | 9.31 | 2.81 | 11.14 |
| 45-59 Mins | 3.27 | 0.59 | 4.92 | 0.39 | 0.92 | 2.47 | 0.14 | 5.15 |
| More than 1 hours | 0.48 | 0 | 0.27 | 1.04 | 2.23 | 0 | 1.29 | 0.61 |

As shown in Table 7, the members of the Teacher TV Program indicated that they obtained some new teaching techniques, were inspired to develop themselves. In addition, the Program also assisted them to obtain some new solutions for current teaching problems as well as opportunities to exchange or share their opinions with other people.

Table 7: Percent of Benefit that the Members Obtained from the Teacher TV Program

| Year | Survey Period | Obtain new teaching techniques | Be inspired for self development | Have opportunities to exchange ideas with others | Obtain solutions for current teaching problems |
|------|---------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|--|--|
| 2010 | 2 | | | | |
| 2010 | 3 | | | | |
| 2010 | 4 | | | | |
| 2011 | 5 | | | | |
| 2011 | 6 | 87.60 | 77.20 | 54.10 | |
| 2011 | 7 | 89.20 | 75.80 | | 59.70 |
| 2011 | 8 | 90.30 | 76.90 | | 60.30 |
| 2012 | 9 | 91.30 | 78.10 | | 60.20 |

2.4 The Teacher TV Program creates a sphere of continuous teaching career development

The Teacher TV Program was very useful for all educational stakeholders, not only limit to the teachers. The school administrators and students also pointed out that the Program was very useful to their self-direct learning practices.

In the survey, the teachers used knowledge gained from the Program for managing their classes, while, the school administrators brought many educational management concepts to apply in their school and academic management practices.

Table 8: Percent of the Members Applying the Programs to Their Professional Development

| Important Benefits for Professional Development | January – March 2011 | | | April – June 2011 | | |
|---|----------------------|---------|----------------------|-------------------|---------|----------------------|
| | Teacher | Student | School Administrator | Teacher | Student | School Administrator |
| 1. Watch the Programs 1 time in every two weeks | 42.48 | 28.3 | 44.85 | 77.21 | 63.58 | 77.39 |
| 2. Apply the Programs for managing subject taught | 57.18 | | | 54.61 | 51.75 | |

| | | | | | | |
|---|-------|-------|-------|-------|------|-------|
| 3. Apply the Programs for managing classroom | 55.31 | 46.43 | | 63.01 | 51.3 | |
| 4. Apply the Programs for managing school's academic issues | | | 63.52 | | | 61.14 |
| 5. Apply the Program for learning and teaching in classroom | | 46.43 | | | | |

2.5 The Teacher TV Program covers all targets effectively

Apart from the television channel, the Teacher TV Program also communicates with the educational stakeholders through other channels. For the television channel, the programs broadcasted through two public TV channels which were 1) Thai PBS and 2) National Broadcasting of Thailand (NBT). Another TV channel was a satellite one named Education Television (ETV). The administrator clearly recognised the main limitations of TV. Therefore, the contents were disseminated through other medias which were DVD and website.

In the survey, it found that the educational administrators, teachers, and guardians mostly received the contents through Thai PBS, while, the students preferred to access through website and internet.

Table 9: Percent of the Members Accessed through the Channels

| Channel | School Administrator | | Teacher | | Student | | Guardian | |
|-----------------------|----------------------|-------|---------|-------|---------|-------|----------|-------|
| | 2011 | 2012 | 2011 | 2012 | 2011 | 2012 | 2011 | 2012 |
| Thai PBS Station | 64.77 | 60.28 | 57.51 | 50.47 | 43.13 | 41.6 | 42.01 | 36.85 |
| DVD | 28.77 | 34.59 | 29.46 | 28.23 | 14.81 | 16.08 | 5.67 | 8.7 |
| Website/Internet | 36.26 | 38.1 | 22.59 | 34.84 | 42.29 | 41.72 | 9.09 | 25.14 |
| ETV Satellite Station | 20.14 | 23.67 | 10.43 | 16.9 | 9.5 | 11.6 | 7.63 | 7.03 |
| NBT Station | 5.48 | 6.84 | 7.6 | 8.07 | 6.07 | 6.48 | 3.09 | 4.22 |
| Never access | 3.42 | 0 | 5.83 | 0 | 5.04 | 0 | 31.05 | 0 |
| Others | 1.57 | 7.4 | 0.36 | 6.33 | 2.06 | 14.53 | 0.47 | 29.9 |

3. IMPACTS ON THE THAI TEACHERS

Although, the Teacher TV Program is no longer operated but the Program creates many impacts on the Thai educational context. It illustrates that teachers actively participate in any situations that allow them to sharpen their teaching techniques and ideas. The Teacher TV Program is proved to be a great example of the push-and-pull strategy in the field of education. The policy makers should not just force the teachers to study but they should also motivate and integrate them to constructively contribute their resources to the learning environment. In the communication perspective, the Teacher TV Program does not use only the TV channel as its name. Other medias and communication channels are strategically employed to maximize teacher's potential and capability. As stated earlier, the empirical study reveals that a number of the members who subscribe to the Program were constantly increased. Furthermore, their teaching performance are also positively improved. The reasons behind these improvement are as follows:

1. The educational stakeholders are motivated to be a self-directed development. The Program allows them to analyse their strengths and weaknesses through the local-produced and imported TV programs.
2. The Thai teachers widely use a variety of classroom designs and activities learned from the Program.
3. The Thai teachers are able to creatively produce a number of innovations supporting their classes particularly teaching and learning materials based on substance learning groups.
4. The Thai teachers have positive attitude toward the teaching career. This impact leads to a productive classroom management.
5. The Thai teachers are more enthusiastic.

One important activity that encourage the higher participation level of the Thai teachers is some interactive activities. From rich and extensive experience, the Teacher TV Community Network (TTCN)

must be utilized as the major pull strategy. In a relationship-oriented society, social or career network is very important for self-directed learning. People would not like to learn or motivate themselves by themselves but they need the others to inspire them. The Teacher TV Program can only provide contents and best teaching and learning practices. The teachers will not be motivated if they have to study alone because they have no one to consult with. In order to eliminate this weak point and also leverage the learning curve, TTCN must be structured. In Thailand, Burapha University uses this strategy to increase a number of teachers participating in the Program. Positive experience of the Teacher TV users are passed to the target group through the word-of-mouth strategy. This method is also useful for increasing trust in the Program. Trust is another sensitive and important point for the policy makers. The Program must build trust in the teachers by exhibiting benefits of the Program on their current and future career advancement. In a case of TTCN, the coaching and mentoring concepts must also be applied. Some major higher education institutions should be assigned to be coaches and mentors for schools in upcountry especially those located in some remote areas. This approach is proved to be beneficial for the teachers because they are able to share their experience and what they perceive and learn from the Program with colleagues and experts in the field of education. In the Teacher TV Program, TTCN collaborates with major universities across the whole country and assigns them to work with the teachers closely. A tight relationship between the host universities and satellite schools encourage a number of positive impacts on teaching capability significantly.

Table 10: The Host Universities in the Teacher TV Community Network

| No. | Teacher TV Community Network | University |
|-----|------------------------------|---|
| 1 | Higher Northern Region | Chiang Mai University |
| 2 | Lower Northern Region | Naresuan University |
| 3 | Higher North Eastern Region | KhonKaen University |
| 4 | Lower North Eastern Region | UbonRatchathaniRajabhat University |
| 5 | Higher Central Region | PhraNakhon Si Ayutthaya Rajabhat University |
| 6 | Lower Central Region | Silpakorn University |
| 7 | Higher Southern Region | Nakhon Sri ThammarathRajabhat University |
| 8 | Lower Southern Region | Thaksin University |
| 9 | Eastern Region | Burapha University |
| 10 | Chachoengsao Province | RatchanakarinRajabhat University |

4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Teacher TV Program is one of strategic projects for enhancing teacher's capabilities of Ministry of Education. It is a powerful public communication channel that the teachers are able learn from the best teaching practices effectively. Although, it intends to provide the contents for the teachers but other stakeholders in the field of education are included such as school administrator, student, educational supervisor, and guardian. A successful implementation of the project must be integrated both local-produced TV programs and imported ones together. This method will sharpen teacher's ideas in classroom management, design, and innovation as well as to encourage their holistic perspective effectively. Furthermore, the policy makers are recommended to create some activities that are able to motivate and lead the teachers to a lifelong learning environment. It should not be just a regular TV program. In this regard, the Teacher TV Community Network should be applied for pulling the teachers to an interactive lifelong learning circumstance. However, a project manager should aware that it is difficult to solely manage the project. He or she should collaborate with some higher educational institutions in the regions to tightly work in the project as the center for the satellite schools. This proposed strategy will effectively retain all contents and learning impacts of the Teacher TV Program last forever in the world that knowledge is the most important for the prosperity of human being.