

Balanced Literacy Approach-Based Learning Model Containing Thai Core Values for Basic Literacy Learning in Early Grades

Chuntikan Phoncai, Charoenwit Somprongtham*

Department of Curriculum and Instruction, Srinakharinwirot University, Bangkok 10110, Thailand

*Corresponding author: charoenwits@g.swu.ac.th

Received: 19/12/2022

Revised: 30/12/2022

Accepted: 06/01/2023

Abstract: This article presents the findings of research and the development of a learning model based on a balanced literacy approach for early elementary school students' basic literacy instruction. Research and development (R&D) research that has been implemented adopts the Borg and Gall version of the development model. The research has been carried out through a preliminary study stage carried out by applying a qualitative descriptive approach; developing prototype learning models, followed by validation of material and learning experts; the evaluation was carried out by testing the implementation of the model in class I, II, and III. Data collection techniques are questionnaires, observation, interviews. Data analysis with quantitative and qualitative descriptive. The developed learning model consists of 4 stages of learning activities, namely stage I exploring sources of information, stage II implementing a balanced strategy, stage III presenting information, and stage IV reflection. The results of the model validation developed from material experts show an average score of 3.6 (very good category) and an average score of learning expert validation of 3.6 (very good category). The results of the trial implementation of the model show that the average learning achievement in class I is 91 out of an average initial ability of 84. The results of the student response questionnaire to the implementation of the learning model in class I showed an average score of 3.3 (very good category), class II showed an average score of 3.7 (very good category), and class III showed an average score of 3.5 (very good category). Overall, pupils are highly engaged in learning since this learning gives a variety of inventive and diverse literacy exercises.

Keywords: *balanced literacy approach, Thai core values, literacy, elementary students*

INTRODUCTION

The development of science and technology today is very fast, fast, and unlimited, in a way, various forms of global information can be read or known with just a touch of a finger. The impact of these developments, some are positive and some are negative (Haleem et al., 2022; Verhoef et al., 2021). One of the positives is that people have been pampered with various conveniences in accessing various kinds of information to help solve various problems in all aspects of life. As for one of the negative impacts is the utilization of science and technology sophistication for things that harm other people, for example spreading hoax news, slander, misleading, pornography and so on (Nasaescu et al., 2018; Talwar et al.,

2020). Elementary school students, as part of society, are also able to use various types of gadgets to access the information they want to know (Hayes et al., 2022; Jackson et al., 2021; McDool et al., 2020). Completing various school assignments can be easily obtained by asking a search engine, although there is some information that cannot be accounted for. However, there are also some elementary school students who are victims of the sophistication of social media.

Several cases of deviations in values and morals by elementary school students have been sticking out in the news lately. From problems of manners, smoking, mass cheating, to how to get along with the opposite sex. Another picture of elementary school student delinquency has emerged in the news of bullying and harassment by elementary school students towards their friends. This news is very surprising and concerning as one illustration of the impact of the lack of mentoring and inculcation of character values, as well as the influence of various shows from various unlimited sources of information. (Alshammari et al., 2021; Birhan et al., 2021; Dore, 2022). Therefore, sufficient provision is needed for students to understand and utilize various sources of information in order to be able to use them, both for academic interests and for their character development. Apart from character maturity, one of the provisions to overcome the various impacts of these changes is to equip the younger generation with good basic literacy skills. Basic literacy skills as meant by Clay & Ferguson, are not just the ability to read and write mechanically, but in the sense of the ability to listen, speak, read, write, and count related to the analytical skills to calculate, perceive information, communicate, and describe information based on personal understanding and conclusion (Ding, 2012; Hadiananto et al., 2022; Murray, 2021)

Provision of basic literacy skills by integrating the contents of character values is very effective if given early. One of them is through learning in the early grades of elementary school, namely grades I, II, and III. This is important as a basis for continuing education at the next grade level. If the provision of basic literacy skills in the early grades is not provided properly, it will be very difficult for students to develop their knowledge.

Communities with good literacy skills are the basic capital for a country to carry out development in various fields towards the welfare of both individuals and society. Therefore, a literate society is very important in contributing to the progress of a country. This literacy ability includes responses, understanding, and daily life activities that are structured and applied through continuous learning activities. This ability involves gathering knowledge that directs a person to understand and use appropriate language according to social situations. Literacy ability has a definition that includes 1) the ability to understand information, both oral and written, 2) the ability to communicate what is known through speaking and writing, 3) the ability to speak clearly, precisely, and logically, 4) the ability to write fluently, communicate key or important ideas, and 5) have a purpose of communicating (Fikrat-Wevers et al., 2021; Mesa et al., 2020; Nichols et al., 2020).

Based on the problems above, this research will present research results that provide solutions to these problems, namely the development of a learning model based on a balanced literacy approach containing Thai character values for basic literacy learning for early elementary school students. This model is expected to be used as habituation and literacy learning that contains character values that are adapted to the development and characteristics of students in grades I, II and III of elementary schools. The content of character values in this learning model is intended for habituation to behave and behave well in everyday life. The character value content will appear in the material content and reading text as well as the steps for its application. These values will use sources from various problems that are very close to students' daily lives.

In this paper, basic literacy skills are more devoted to the ability to read and write as a provision for early elementary school students in perceiving various information, communicating, and describing information based on their own understanding and conclusions. The characteristics of the balanced literacy approach according to (Bitter & Corral, 2014; Center, 2020) are 1) literacy involves reading and

writing, 2) spoken language is integrated with reading and writing, 3) reading learning includes activities of phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension, 4) learning to write includes the process of writing, good quality of writing to communicate ideas effectively, and spelling, grammar, and punctuation to make ideas easier to read, 5) reading and writing are used as tools for learning content, 6) strategies and skills are taught explicitly and gradually, 7) students work together and talk with classmates, and 8) students are more motivated and actively involved when participating in learning activities.

METHOD

This paper is the result of research and development (R&D) research which adapted the development model version of (Borg & Gall, 1983; Gustiani, 2019). The research procedure that has been undertaken is first a preliminary study carried out by applying a qualitative descriptive approach. The activities carried out are literature studies, field studies regarding the relationship between core competencies, basic competencies, literacy materials (reading and writing materials) in the field (grades I, II, III elementary schools), as well as identification of character values and their suitability in literacy learning in the early grades. Second, the stage of developing a prototype learning model based on a balanced literacy approach containing character values in the early grades, continued to develop design tools for implementing the learning model, testing learning experts and material experts and then revising them. Third, the evaluation stage was carried out by testing the implementation of a learning model based on a balanced literacy approach for basic literacy learning for early elementary school students and in the end the final model was obtained.

The test subjects of this research were early grade elementary school students, namely grades I, II, and III at Prasartthongwitthaya Elementary School. Respondents involved teachers of grades I, II, III and students of grades I, II, III. The research subject for validation involved 1 material expert and 1 learning expert. Material experts validate the substance of literacy material, while learning experts validate the model syntax to be developed along with its implementation tools. The stages of the research trial process were carried out in grades I, II, III of Prasartthongwitthaya Elementary School. This research was carried out from April to October 2022. Collecting data in this study used various techniques, namely questionnaires, observation, interviews, and documentation studies according to the steps in the research activities. The data analysis technique used in this research is descriptive quantitative and qualitative analysis. The data analyzed included data on the feasibility of learning models developed by linguists and learning experts, as well as the responses given by early grade students as test subjects.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The activity of developing a learning model based on a balanced literacy approach contains character values to improve the basic literacy skills of early elementary school students, starting with the preliminary study stage, continuing with development studies, and ending with evaluation activities. The results of the three studies are described as follows. The activities in the preliminary study consisted of the first activity, namely the study of literature and content of reading and writing learning materials for grades I, II, III based on the Thai education curriculum. The second activity is a study of the suitability of character values in literacy learning. The final activity in the preliminary study is to factually describe learning and reading and writing abilities in early grades.

A total of 243 grade II students, 2% of students cannot read and write, 19% of students still need guidance, and 80% of students are independent. According to some teachers, this is related to reading

according to the intonation. Furthermore, based on the figure above, there are still a total of 242 students in grade III, all of whom can read and write or 89% are already in the independent category, but there are still 10% of students who need guidance in reading and writing. According to the teacher, this is related to students' low understanding of the content of the reading. Based on the situation above, there are still grade II students who cannot read and write, and there are still grade III students who still need guidance in reading and writing. It can be concluded that students who cannot read and write, and it is assumed that it will be very difficult to complete their learning assignments, will still go to class. In the next class, with the condition that they cannot read and write, students are faced with learning tasks at a higher level, so it is likely that students will find it increasingly difficult to follow other lessons. Therefore it really needs extra creativity and guidance from the class teacher

The results of the preliminary study related to the above are that the majority of class I, II, and III teachers already understand the basic literacy skills needed by students in their class. The reading sources used by the teacher are story books that are interesting to children, both in terms of color, pictures and writing, literacy journals, story books, encyclopedias, collections of fairy tales/short stories, clippings about certain material, dictionaries, poetry collections, big books, pictures appropriate to the material to be taught, letter cards, number cards, word cards, simple reading books, writing/slogans, and bulletin boards. Some teachers have carried out evaluation activities on literacy activities that have been held, namely with portfolio assignments, rewriting or summarizing stories, making works of both poetry and short stories, from reading activities, children come forward one by one to memorize the assignments given. For children who have not memorized it, to read it again and memorize it, carry out oral tests, daily tests, as well as observation.

From the literacy activities that have been held, according to some teachers there are still deficiencies. Among them are the lack of diverse reading sources, the teacher's control over each student has not been optimal, students are not used to summarizing readings, reducing class hours, lack of equipment that causes students to be less interested, students prefer to be read to rather than reading alone, limited time and teams which helps literacy activities, some students are still behind the ability of their friends. Based on the results of the preliminary study, this study attempted to overcome the problem by developing a prototype of an effective literacy learning model to improve basic literacy skills of elementary school students. Based on the results of the identification of basic literacy skills and material content, the level of competency/basic literacy skills and the level of content of the main material used as the basis for developing a prototype model is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Basic literacy skills, key materials, and Thai core character values in the early grades.

Literacy Basic Skills	Key Material	Thai Core Character Values
Listening to speaking, reading writing, calculating, calculating, perceiving information, presenting information based on understanding	• Simple short text with correct spelling (capitals and punctuation, standard vocabulary, effective sentences)) from various sources of information in the form of pictures, writing, spoken words, simple slogans, and/or song lyrics, and environmental exploration • Expressions in polite language • Children's poetry/song lyrics, fairy tales • Numbers as a collection of objects • Numbers up to two digits and the place value of the number symbol with concrete objects in everyday life	Honest, discipline, responsibility, polite, caring, and confident

Based on theoretical studies, the results of preliminary studies, the ability to read Thai-language texts of elementary school students, as well as the results of discussions with teachers, a prototype design for a literacy learning model based on a balanced literacy approach was developed with character values in the form of learning steps. The initial design of the learning model which is equipped with a learning design is then validated by material experts and learning experts. Validation shows results in very good category. Suggestions submitted by experts have been accommodated by researchers as material for improvement. The results of the improvement of the learning model prototype are shown in Table 2

Table 2. Final design of learning model based on balanced literacy approach loaded with character values for early grades in elementary school.

Stages	Role Description	
	Teacher	Students
Stage I: Exploration of information sources	- Presenting simple text in the form of pictures, writing, speech, and creative exploration of the environment - Guiding students in exploring sources of information to build understanding - Guiding creative activities related to the information sources prepared	- Observing/listening/reading information from simple texts in the form of pictures, writing, speech, and creative exploration of the environment - Exploring various sources of information to build understanding creatively - Carry out creative activities related to the sources of information that have been presented
Stage II: Application of balanced literacy approach	- Applying reading and writing strategies according to needs (modeled/ shared/ interactive/ guided/ independent reading and writing) - Manage classes preventively and curatively - Guiding students to build understanding - Give students the opportunity to ask questions	- Follow the stages of reading and writing strategies that suit your needs diligently (modeled/ shared/ interactive/ guided/ independent reading and writing) - Students study according to the management set by the teacher - Students build understanding in various creative ways - Students to ask questions related to the material (elaboration)
Stage III: Presentation of information	- Provide individual and group creative assignments - Give the opportunity to ask questions - Guiding the completion of the task - Guiding the presentation of information	- Listen intently to individual and group creative assignments - Students ask and answer - Students complete assignments creatively - Students present information through creative work both orally and in writing
Stage IV: Reflection	- Guiding students to play a role in expressing opinions on friends' work - Guiding students in writing reflective journals (the first stage writes down what happened/what was seen/what was experienced/what was done; the second stage writes down what is good/not good. The benefits/not from the experience; the third stage writes down what should/should do)	- Students actively express opinions on friends' work - Students write reflective journals (the first stage writes down what happened/what was seen/what was experienced/what was done; the second stage writes down what is good/not good. Benefits/not from the experience; third writes down what should/should conducted)

Then a limited trial was carried out on a prototype model designed for basic literacy learning for early grade students. The trials were conducted at Prasartthongwitthaya Elementary School class I, II and class III. The type of research for this trial is descriptive research, namely implementing the developed learning model, then looking at the differences in learning outcomes before and after implementing the learning model. Testing through this descriptive research is a limitation in research because it cannot see the effectiveness of applying the model. The learning plan for the implementation of the model was prepared jointly between researchers, teachers and students. The trial implementation of the learning model shows the learning outcomes as shown in Figure 1.

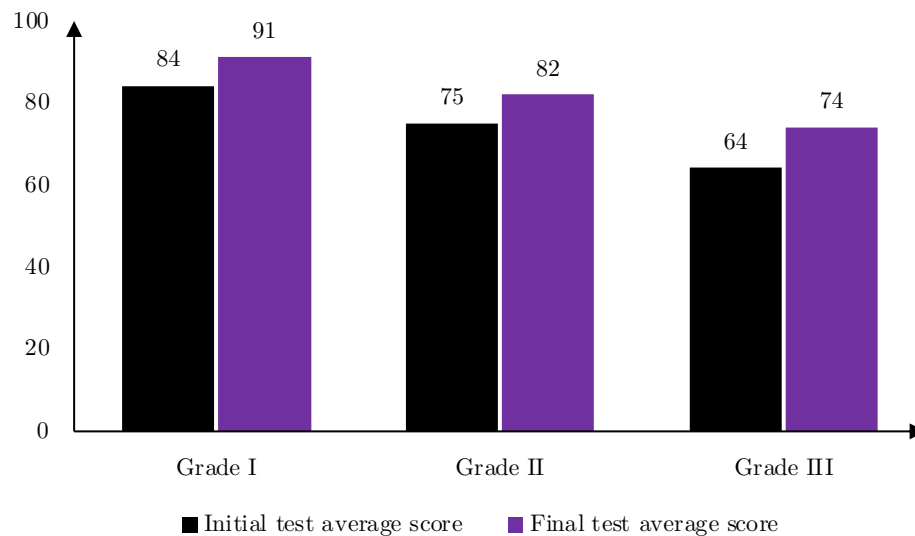


Figure 1. Learning achievement diagram based on model implementation trials

Based on the implementation of the implementation of the learning model steps that have been developed, students are asked to provide their responses. The results of the questionnaire responses of class I, II, and III showed the average score was in the very good category. In general, student participation is very high because learning is carried out in a variety of creative activities, as well as providing very broad opportunities for students to develop their literacy skills, namely listening, reading, writing, speaking, and arithmetic. The steps in the developed model are designed to maximize teacher guidance, variations in individual and group learning activities, and creative student work activities, both in stage I exploring sources of information, stage II applying a balanced strategy, stage III presenting information, and stage IV reflection. Creative activities designed in learning tools really help students to develop their basic literacy skills. This is in line with opinion of Guo et al. (2021), Hiver et al. (2021), Ji et al. (2022), and Zhang (2022) regarding language learning for children who argues that the principle of realizing learning for students, especially children, is to focus on emphasizing the here and now, activities must be designed to get their interest. directly, learning needs a variety of activities to maintain interest and attention, teachers need to be animated, lively and enthusiastic about the subject. Considering the state of the class where the teacher is the main character whose energy will greatly influence. When the teacher thinks what he is doing is too much, children need that exaggeration to keep their spirits high and alert, children have a lot of natural curiosity. Make sure the teacher steps on the curiosity and does as much as possible because it helps to maintain attention and focus.

In addition to the things above, the application of this learning model also uses various types of media and concrete learning resources, including picture reading books, school plans, videos, and so on. The use of media and learning resources is appropriate for learning in the early grades which are in

concrete operational development as Santrock (2009) argues that alternative teaching strategies are appropriate for concrete operational stages including encouraging students to discover concepts and principles by asking questions. relevant to the material being studied so that students can answer through their own thinking; involve students in operational tasks, such as addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, arrangement, and sorting using concrete material; plan activities that make students practice the concept of classification hierarchies; creating activities so that students can sort and reverse the order; always asking students to give reasons for the answers that have been given in solving problems; encourage students to work in groups and exchange ideas with each other; use tools and visual aids when teaching something complex

CONCLUSION

The learning model based on balanced literacy approach contains Thai character values to develop the basic literacy skills of early elementary school students. The learning model developed consists of 4 stages of learning activities, namely stage I exploring sources of information, stage II implementing a balanced strategy, stage III presenting information, and stage IV reflection. The results of developing this model based on the validation of material experts show an average score of 3.6 (very good category) and a mean score of learning expert validation of 3.6 (very good category). The results of the trial implementation of the model showed that the average learning outcomes in class I was 91 from the average initial ability of 84. The average learning outcomes in class II was 82 out of an average initial ability of 75, and in class III it showed an average learning result of 74 out of an average initial ability of 64. The results of the student response questionnaire to the implementation of the learning model in class I showed an average score of 3.3 (very good category), class II showed a mean score of 3.7 (very good category), and class III showed a mean score of 3.5 (very good category). In general, students are very active in participating in learning because this learning provides a variety of creative and varied literacy activities

REFERENCES

- Alshammari, F. F., Grande, R. A. N., & Berdida, D. J. E. (2021). The correlates of social determinants to ethico-moral values on professional development of Saudi nursing students. *Journal of Taibah University Medical Sciences*, 16(2), 240–246. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jtumed.2020.11.002>
- Birhan, W., Shiferaw, G., Amsalu, A., Tamiru, M., & Tiruye, H. (2021). Exploring the context of teaching character education to children in preprimary and primary schools. *Social Sciences & Humanities Open*, 4(1), 100171. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssaho.2021.100171>
- Bitter, G., & Corral, A. (2014). The Pedagogical Potential of Augmented Reality Apps. *International Journal of Engineering Science Invention*, 3(10), 13–17.
- Borg, W. R., & Gall, M. D. (1983). *Educational research: An introduction* (4th ed. Longman Inc.
- Center, Y. (2020). *Beginning Reading*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003115014>
- Ding, C. (2012). Studying children's early literacy development: Confirmatory multidimensional scaling growth modeling. *International Journal of Educational Research*, 53, 278–288. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijer.2012.04.002>
- Dore, R. A. (2022). The effect of character similarity on children's learning from fictional stories: The roles of race and gender. *Journal of Experimental Child Psychology*, 214, 105310. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jecp.2021.105310>

- Fikrat-Wevers, S., van Steensel, R., & Arends, L. (2021). Effects of Family Literacy Programs on the Emergent Literacy Skills of Children From Low-SES Families: A Meta-Analysis. *Review of Educational Research*, 91(4), 577–613. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654321998075>
- Guo, Q., Zhou, X. (Emily), & Gao, X. (Andy). (2021). Research on learning and teaching of languages other than English in System. *System*, 100, 102541. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2021.102541>
- Gustiani, S. (2019). Research and Development (R&D) Method As a Model Design in Educational Research and Its Alternatives. *Holistics Journal*, 11(2), 12–22. <https://jurnal.polsri.ac.id/index.php/holistic/article/view/1849>
- Hadianto, D., S. Damaianti, V., Mulyati, Y., & Sastromiharjo, A. (2022). Effectiveness of Literacy Teaching Design Integrating Local Culture Discourse and Activities to Enhance Reading Skills. *Cogent Education*, 9(1). <https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2021.2016040>
- Haleem, A., Javaid, M., Qadri, M. A., & Suman, R. (2022). Understanding the role of digital technologies in education: A review. *Sustainable Operations and Computers*, 3, 275–285. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.susoc.2022.05.004>
- Hayes, B., James, A., Barn, R., & Watling, D. (2022). Children’s risk and benefit behaviours on social networking sites. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 130, 107147. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2021.107147>
- Hiver, P., Al-Hoorie, A. H., Vitta, J. P., & Wu, J. (2021). Engagement in language learning: A systematic review of 20 years of research methods and definitions. *Language Teaching Research*, 136216882110012. <https://doi.org/10.1177/13621688211001289>
- Jackson, D. B., Testa, A., & Fox, B. (2021). Adverse Childhood Experiences and Digital Media Use Among U.S. Children. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, 60(4), 462–470. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.amepre.2020.09.018>
- Ji, H., Park, S., & Shin, H. W. (2022). Investigating the link between engagement, readiness, and satisfaction in a synchronous online second language learning environment. *System*, 105, 102720. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2022.102720>
- McDool, E., Powell, P., Roberts, J., & Taylor, K. (2020). The internet and children’s psychological wellbeing. *Journal of Health Economics*, 69, 102274. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhealeco.2019.102274>
- Mesa, C., Newbury, D. F., Nash, M., Clarke, P., Esposito, R., Elliott, L., De Barbieri, Z., Fernández, M. A., Villanueva, P., Hulme, C., & Snowling, M. J. (2020). The effects of reading and language intervention on literacy skills in children in a remote community: An exploratory randomized controlled trial. *International Journal of Educational Research*, 100, 101535. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijer.2020.101535>
- Murray, J. (2021). Literacy is inadequate: young children need literacies. *International Journal of Early Years Education*, 29(1), 1–5. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09669760.2021.1883816>
- Nasaescu, E., Marín-López, I., Llorent, V. J., Ortega-Ruiz, R., & Zych, I. (2018). Abuse of technology in adolescence and its relation to social and emotional competencies, emotions in online communication, and bullying. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 88, 114–120. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2018.06.036>
- Nichols, J. D., Kim, I., & Nichols, G. W. (2020). The effect of parent and community volunteerism on early literacy development. *Educational Review*, 72(4), 411–426. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00131911.2018.1530638>

- Talwar, S., Dhir, A., Singh, D., Virk, G. S., & Salo, J. (2020). Sharing of fake news on social media: Application of the honeycomb framework and the third-person effect hypothesis. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 57, 102197. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2020.102197>
- Verhoef, P. C., Broekhuizen, T., Bart, Y., Bhattacharya, A., Qi Dong, J., Fabian, N., & Haenlein, M. (2021). Digital transformation: A multidisciplinary reflection and research agenda. *Journal of Business Research*, 122, 889–901. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2019.09.022>
- Zhang, Z. (Victor). (2022). Learner engagement and language learning: a narrative inquiry of a successful language learner. *The Language Learning Journal*, 50(3), 378–392. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09571736.2020.1786712>