

# Exploring Success Factors to Improve Preservice EFL Teacher Education Program in Thailand

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Received: November 30, 2024

Accepted: February 6, 2025

Online Published: April 17, 2025

doi:10.5430/wjel.v15n5p335

URL: <https://doi.org/10.5430/wjel.v15n5p335>

## Abstract

Since the Thai Ministry of Education has mandated English as a compulsory subject in schools, challenges remain in developing teachers' proficiency and teaching methodologies. This research explores the key success factors for enhancing preservice English as a Foreign Language teacher education program. Documentary research was employed by collecting data from the ERIC database, reviewing studies carried out between 2020 and 2024. The study emphasizes the importance of integrating digital literacy into the TPACK framework, introducing effective training programs, and revising the curriculum to give more importance to practical communication skills instead of traditional grammar-focused instruction. The findings show that enhancing preservice EFL teacher training necessitates a combination of technical abilities, reflective teaching approaches, and language practices.

**Keywords:** pre-service teacher, success factors, documentation

## 1. Introduction

The Ministry of Education (2008) placed English as a foreign language in the Basic Education Core Curriculum from the primary school level. It has been required to be taught and learned as a compulsory core subject for assisting communication, education, and business, which focuses on the four main strands including (1) language for communication, (2) language and culture, (3) language and relationship with other learning areas, and (4) language and relationship with community and the world. In 2014, the Ministry of Education adopted the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) and Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach to upgrade English language learning and teaching in Thailand to prepare for the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) formation in 2015 and economic competitiveness of the Thai labor force (Renandya et al., 1999; Franz & Teo, 2018). In 2015, the Ministry tested all civil servant English teachers in an online placement test aligned with CEFR, with 94% not achieving the target B2 proficiency level of English (Franz & Teo, 2018). The finding indicated that Thai EFL teachers had difficulties with their English proficiency. However, Franz & Teo (2018) described that English teachers reacted passively to curriculum change probably because the authorities hardly consulted teachers or sought their input in the initial implementation of this policy.

English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction is crucial to Thai students' language fluency and communication abilities. As the worldwide language of communication, commerce, and culture, English is crucial for Thai students pursuing academic success, job progress, and international engagement. Thus, developing skilled EFL instructors is crucial to student success and improving English education nationally. This mission centers on preservice EFL teacher education programs, which equip future teachers to traverse complicated educational contexts and give effective teaching. However, Thai preservice EFL teacher preparation programs confront ongoing issues. These include a lack of EFL-specific pedagogical training, inadequate hands-on teaching experience in varied classroom situations, and poor curricular integration of novel instructional techniques and digital resources.

Many programs prepare learners' changing requirements in a globalized, technology-driven environment. These gaps highlight the need to identify and apply important success elements to enhance Thai preservice teacher education. This research examines the key characteristics that improve Thai preservice EFL teacher education programs. This study examines existing processes to provide actionable initiatives, best practices, and reform opportunities. It hopes to help policymakers, educators, and institutions create better teacher education courses by providing important information. The ultimate objective is to equip preservice teachers with the skills needed to succeed in contemporary classrooms and inspire a generation of talented EFL educators who can improve English language education nationwide.

This study should greatly improve preservice EFL teacher education programs. These insights will help revolutionize Thai teacher education by linking theoretical and practical knowledge, integrating modern teaching methods, and boosting EFL technology. This research aims to explore success factors to improve preservice EFL teacher education programs in Thailand from ERIC Data Base

published between 2020 and 2024. This article discusses the theoretical framework, research methods, findings, and specific suggestions for enhancing preservice EFL teacher education programs in Thailand in the following areas. This effort intends to improve the literature and alter teacher education by ensuring that Thai EFL teaching meets worldwide standards and meets learners' changing requirements.

## 2. Methodology

### 2.1 Source of Data

Documentary research was employed. The success factors to improve preservice EFL teacher education program in Thailand, based on data from ERIC published between 2020 and 2024. The researchers used the following keywords, "Preservice" EFL teacher education in Thailand. The data scope was set as "Preservice EFL Teacher Education" published between 2020 and 2024 (Figure 1). A total of 40 articles were identified and 10 articles selected for study by applying the following criteria.

- The articles were full-text-available.
- The research studies were conducted in Thailand.
- The articles were published from 2020 to 2024.
- The articles included the following terminologies, EFL preservice teacher, preservice EFL teacher, Teacher Education Program in ELT, Preservice English Teacher, and English Teacher Education Program.

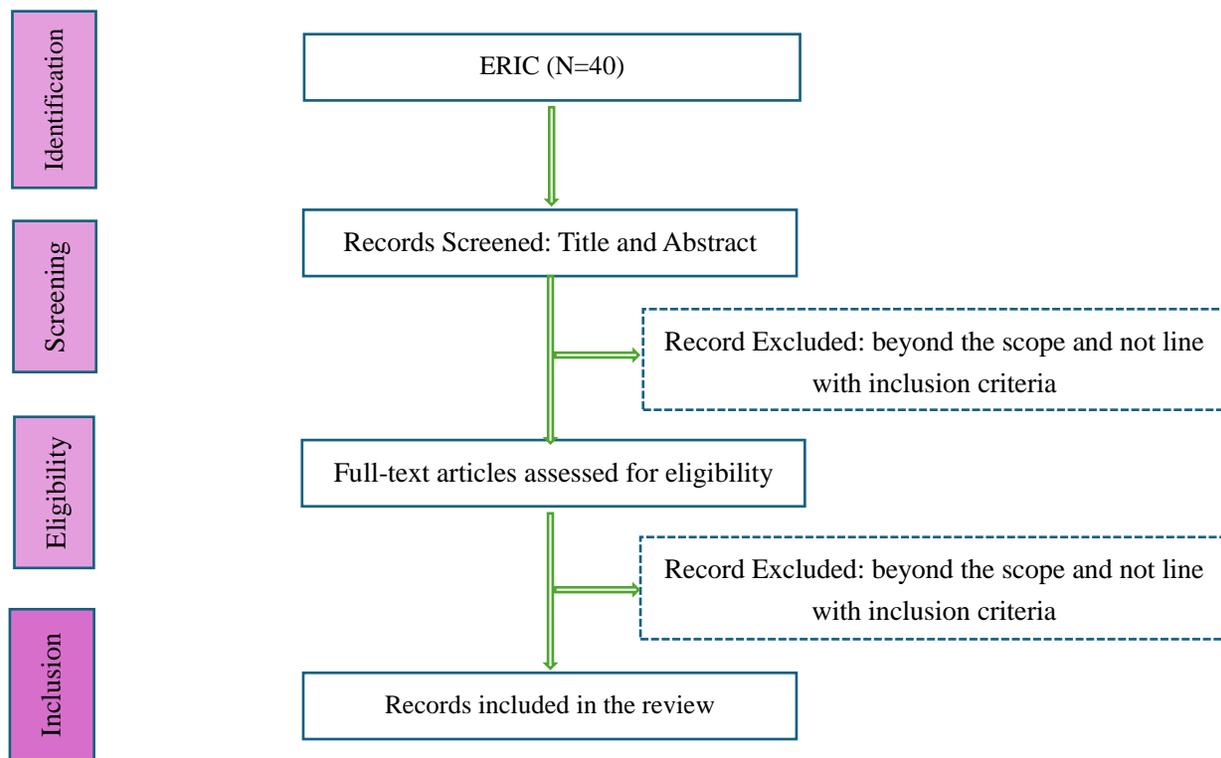


Figure 1. Procedure in document selection

### 2.2 Research Instrument

The instrument used for data collection in this research was a research data record, with the objective of surveying and recording the characteristics of research necessary for synthesizing the studies. It consists of 3 parts. Research content: This includes the researcher's name, publication year, research title, type of research, research issues, and educational theories. Research methodology: This includes the research framework, research design, and the population used in the study. Research results with key findings.

### 2.3 Data Analysis

The researcher evaluated the data from the research records collected by considering the accuracy and completeness of the recorded information. Then, the data were grouped and analyzed according to the predefined conceptual framework, including the publication year, research title, type of research, research problem, research design, educational theories, research framework, and instruments. The researcher interpreted the findings from the collected studies to identify relationships between the content and generate key findings. These findings were categorized based on the researched content, summarized into key points, and conclusions were drawn on the alignment and differences in the content.

**3. Results and Discussion**

Key insight of the key success factors for enhancing preservice English as a Foreign Language teacher education program. can be shown in Table 1. This table provides a concise overview of the themes and recommendations for enhancing preservice EFL teacher education programs, with a focus on digital literacy, reflective practice, and curriculum development.

Table 1. key success factors for enhancing preservice English as a Foreign Language teacher education programs

Aspect	Details	References
Integrating Digital Literacy	<p>Framework: TPACK integrates Technological Knowledge (TK), Pedagogical Knowledge (PK), and Content Knowledge (CK) for technology-rich teaching.</p> <p>Key Factors: Teacher motivation, ICT equipment availability, and technology familiarity.</p> <p>Platforms: Facebook facilitates teacher-student interaction and skills development; tools like Zoom and Google Meet are essential.</p> <p>Challenges: ICT resource selection, expertise, pedagogical adjustments, infrastructure, and training.</p> <p>Professional Development: Continuous training is crucial for ICT integration.</p>	<p>Yuvita et al. (2023), Boonmoh &amp; Kulavichian (2023), Inpeng &amp; Nomnian (2020), Boonmoh &amp; Sanmuang (2024), Thanaittipath &amp; Boonmoh (2024)</p>
Reflective Practice	<p>Framework: Cirocki and Widodo’s (2019) reflective framework includes reflection-before, during, after, and beyond lessons.</p> <p>Purpose: Develop teaching practice and connect lessons to broader experiences.</p> <p>Instruction: Focus on communicative language teaching (CLT) methods like games, role play, and oral activities.</p> <p>Standards: Incorporate CEFR to align with global and Thai Ministry of Education standards.</p> <p>Challenges: Assess preservice teachers' exposure and adapt curriculum to meet real-world constraints.</p>	<p>Cirocki &amp; Imsa-Ard (2024), Oeamoum &amp; Sriwichai (2020), Phoolaikao &amp; Sukying (2021)</p>
Curriculum and Communication Skills	<p>Training Factors: Content, knowledge, activities, process, and trainer impact preservice teacher preparation.</p> <p>Focus: Prioritize speaking, listening, and real-life vocabulary over grammar and reading.</p> <p>Approach: Shift from grammar-based to learner-centered, integrated skills curriculum.</p> <p>CEFR Alignment: Train preservice teachers to use CEFR in all domains.</p> <p>Goals: Achieve Ministry of Education proficiency levels (A1, A2, B1) by Grade 6, 9, and 12, respectively.</p>	<p>Damnet (2021), Oeamoum &amp; Sriwichai (2020), Chumworatayee (2019)</p>

**3.1 Integrate Digital Literacy in Preservice EFL Teacher Education Program**

Preservice teachers must be competent to apply for ICT in the teaching process. The most common framework of ICT is TPACK, which helped them to understand technological knowledge (TK), pedagogical knowledge (PK), and content knowledge (CK) in developing and instructing technology-enhanced curricula (Yuvita et al., 2023). The other factors including teacher motivations, availability of ICT equipment, and familiarity with technological tools played a significant role in the integration of technology in the classroom; teacher training should include both technology and tangible material use (Boonmoh & Kulavichian, 2023). The TPACK framework links preservice teacher preparation with ICT integration (Nuangchalerm, 2020; Nithitakkharanon & Nuangchalerm, 2022; Nithitakkharanon et al., 2023). This method is crucial for equipping teachers to create and deliver technology-rich courses. The explanation might go into more detail on TPACK's effectiveness in EFL settings. Teacher motivation, ICT resources, and tool familiarity are crucial considerations.

The examination of Facebook's impact on teacher-student and societal exchanges is interesting. In addition to informal chat, the platform promotes online education and skill development.

Challenges including resource selection, ICT expertise, pedagogical adaptations, and infrastructure highlight the complexity of digital literacy integration. The study of Facebook use in a TEFL program based on the TPACK framework indicated that Facebook was a valuable tool for preservice EFL teachers to facilitate teacher-student interactions and sociocultural exchanges in TEFL lessons (Inpeng & Nomnian, 2020). This Facebook blended learning focused on promoting students’ skills development for online education, and positive feedback was received from them. To succeed, teachers need continuous professional development and access to educational technology. Boonmoh & Sanmuang (2024) identified the challenges of ICT teachers in integrating digital literacy and from these challenges, it could be implied that the selection of appropriate ICT resources, the sufficiency of in-depth ICT knowledge, pedagogical adjustments, sufficient training and support, enough infrastructure and time, are contributing to the success of digital literacy integration.

To elaborate, preservice teachers employed a more comprehensive range of pedagogical tools than in-service teachers to engage students

in the learning process, develop instructional materials, and assess student performance (Thanaittipath & Boonmoh, 2024). Zoom and Google Meet were mainly used for online learning (Boonmoh & Kulavichian, 2023). Preservice teachers need ICT competence to apply the TPACK framework, combining TK, PK, and CK. Teacher motivations, ICT availability, and technology familiarity are crucial for classroom integration. Facebook in TEFL programs enhances teacher-student interactions and skills development. Continuous professional development is essential for the successful integration of digital literacy.

### 3.2 Incorporate Reflective Practice in Preservice EFL Teacher Education Program

Reflective practice is another aspect to consider for improving the preservice EFL teacher education program. Teacher educators should be encouraged to integrate reflective practice activities into the program and to create useful and sustainable materials that promote different types of reflections. Cirocki & Imsa-ard (2024) has proposed the framework Cirocki and Widodo's (2019) which consists of reflection-before-lessons, reflection-during-lessons, reflection-after-lessons, and reflection-beyond-lessons in the hope to develop comprehensive understanding of teaching practice and create important connection between various parts of the teaching process and their wider experiences in school and out of school.

To incorporate reflective practice in preservice EFL teacher education, use Cirocki and Widodo's (2019) reflective framework to promote critical thinking and self-assessment. The proposal to use sustainable reflective materials is good; however, the discussion lacks examples of their appearance and use. Connecting instructional approaches to larger experiences. However, preservice teachers' exposure to these links should be assessed and addressed (Luo, 2021). Communicative language instruction emphasizes speaking, listening, and real-life vocabulary above conventional grammar and reading. Games, role plays, and conversations are well supported, but grammar-based instructors may reject. Enforcing and modifying the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) for preservice teacher preparation complies with worldwide norms. This helps meet Thai Ministry of Education competency standards. EFL curriculum objectives match Ministry requirements (e.g., A1, A2, B1 levels), proving relevance. There is an opportunity to question whether these criteria are possible in the existing Thai education system and to examine potential constraints.

### 3.3 Curriculum and Teaching to Engage Communication Skills

EFL Training played a significant role for preservice EFL teachers before their practicum as the findings showed positive change in their motivation and attitude for their teaching practice, in which the five factors to be considered for the training are training content, knowledge and experience, training activities, training process, and the trainer (Damnet, 2021). The curriculum should give the student teachers more opportunities to practice using English in speaking and listening, real life vocabulary, practice communication skills rather than grammar structures and reading. The teacher educators should embed their instruction with game, role play, oral presentation, and discussion (Oeamoum & Sriwichai, 2020). Moreover, CEFR should also be enforced and used in the curriculum to adapt it to pedagogical practices and be trained for preservice EFL teachers to understand how it can be used in all domains (Phoolaikao & Sukying, 2021). According to Chumworatayee (2019), the goal of the Ministry is to provide Thai English learners with Grade 6/A1, Grade 9/A2, and Grade 12/B1 proficiency level in English language skills; there had been a transition from traditional English teaching method which focused on the teacher, using textbooks, and emphasizing grammar, to Communicative Language Teaching with a curriculum that is learner-centered, content-based, and integrated skills (Charoensuk & Prasertsang, 2024). The new curriculum focuses on enhancing students' ability to utilize English for communication based on their needs, goals, interests, learning styles, and strategies (Renandya et al., 1999).

## 4. Conclusion

This study focused on success factors that can enhance preservice EFL teacher education programs in a Thai context. It included the integration of digital literacy in preservice EFL teacher education programs with the TPACK framework to improve teachers' access to digital tools and skills for successful classroom applications. Additionally, reflective practice before, during, and after lessons is also significant for prospective teachers to link the theory with practical teaching experiences. Furthermore, prioritizing communication skills rather than traditional grammar instructions in the program helps support the Ministry of Education's goal of improving English communication proficiency, which is aligned with the CEFR framework. Moreover, providing teaching training before their practicums can increase preservice teachers' motivation and readiness. To conclude, preservice EFL teacher education programs should focus on technological skills, reflection, hands-on language teaching, and ongoing professional development to better prepare quality teachers to meet educational objectives and improve students' English skills. The study requires more research to understand suitable ways for enhancing preservice EFL teacher training programs.

### Acknowledgments

This study is financially supported by Mahasarakham University, Thailand.

### Authors' contributions

*Chanty Bunmy*: research design, data collection and analysis, draft the manuscript, read and approved the manuscript

*Prasart Nuangchalerm*: idea planning, research design, data analysis, draft the manuscript, edit, revise and submit manuscript read and approved the manuscript

*Puntip Dejtrakulwongse*: draft the manuscript, read and approved the manuscript

All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

### **Funding**

This study is financially supported by Mahasarakham University, Thailand.

### **Competing interests**

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

### **Informed consent**

Obtained.

### **Ethics approval**

The Publication Ethics Committee of the Sciedu Press.

The journal's policies adhere to the Core Practices established by the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE).

### **Provenance and peer review**

Not commissioned; externally double-blind peer reviewed.

### **Data availability statement**

The data that support the findings of this study are available on request from the corresponding author. The data are not publicly available due to privacy or ethical restrictions.

### **Data sharing statement**

No additional data are available.

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