

## Contemporary Thai Primary Schools through the Years

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### ABSTRACT

*Amidst the various educational reforms implemented in Thai education system is a burning question of the current state of schools in the country. What has been accomplished and what is there to improve? This paper utilized a qualitative research design in exploring the current state of Thai primary schools in Thailand. Specifically, it employed critical discourse analysis to extract relevant data from pre-service teacher's coursebooks. Additionally, an informal interview was conducted to supplement and provide further information on the areas of school learning resources, daily routines, school activities, classroom rules, and new functions of teachers aside from teaching. Observations and responses were coded and grouped into themes. The results of the study showed some progress along learning resources; several changes in daily routines and school activities; a more comprehensive classroom policies that include social and cultural rules; and a multi-faceted functions of Thai teachers.*

**Keywords:** Pre-service teachers, School resources and daily routines, School activities, Classroom rules, Responsibilities of teachers, Thai primary schools

### INTRODUCTION

Over the last decades, Thailand's economy has grown prodigiously. It has been very competitive not just in Asia but in the world. In its 20-year national strategic framework (2017-2036), the country aims to advance from its current state as a 'developing' country to a 'developed' country (The Nation Thailand, 2017). At present, Thailand is one of the members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). As one of the pillars, it will ensure a thriving economy for its people through various means including capitalizing on the power of education to flourish its economy. It has relentlessly crafted and implemented various educational reforms to address national and local educational problems. These reforms had been undergoing since 1997 following the crisis that enervated Thailand's economy. While the situation was an outright political and economic dilemma, there was a unanimous understanding that the 'inadequate education system' in the country was a significant contributory factor (Zack 1997; The Nation 2001; Jungck & Kajornsinsin, 2003).