



# RHODE ISLAND COLLEGE

## **M.Ed. In TESL Program Country Informational Reports**

Produced by Graduate Students in the M.Ed. In TESL Program  
In the Feinstein School of Education and Human Development

Country: Thailand  
Author: Jacqueline Nelson

Program Contact Person: Nancy Cloud ([ncloud@ric.edu](mailto:ncloud@ric.edu))

# EDUCATION IN THAILAND

Jacqueline Nelson

TESL 539

Dr. Nancy Cloud



# THAILAND AT A GLANCE

- Thailand is located in South East Asia
- Myanmar (former Burma), Laos, Cambodia and Malaysia surround Thailand.
- Thailand is also surrounded by the Andaman Sea and the Gulf of Thailand
- Thailand is the 51<sup>st</sup> largest country in the world.

(CIA, 2011)



# POLITICS

- Thailand became a constitutional monarchy in 1932.
- Currently, the Chief of State is King PHUMIPHON Adunyadet who had been in this position since 1946.
- Thailand had been affected by frequent coup d'états throughout its history.
- The most recent coup occurred in 2006 when THASKIN Chinnawat was overthrown from his position as Prime Minister.
- After numerous demonstrations and protests between 2006-2011, the coup ended by a vote in which THASKIN's sister, YINGLAK Chinnawat, won the election and became the Prime Minister.

# ECONOMICS

- Unemployment is less than 1%, which is one of the lowest rates in the world.
- Thailand's economy expanded significantly in 2010, but flooding in 2011 caused extensive damage and a setback in economic growth.
- Currently, Thailand is putting billions of dollars into flood mitigation projects and infrastructure in hopes to strengthen the economy.

(CIA, 2011)



# LANGUAGES

- Thai is the primary language spoken in Thailand.
- English is the secondary language in Thailand, spoken mainly by the elite.
- Other ethnic and regional dialects are spoken throughout Thailand.

(CIA, 2011)

# DEMOGRAPHICS

## Ethnic Groups

<b>Thai</b>	<b>75%</b>
Chinese	14%
Other	11%

## Religions

<b>Buddhist (official)</b>	<b>94.6%</b>
Muslim	4.6%
Christian	.7%
Other	.1%



# LITERACY AND POVERTY RATES

- In Thailand, a person is considered literate if he or she is 15 years old and can read and write.
  - 93% of people in Thailand are literate.
  - 7.8% of people are below the poverty line according to a 2010 census.
  - The difference in poverty between Bangkok and more rural northern provinces is a concern for the education system in Thailand.
  - This discrepancy leads to differences in schooling for wealthy and poor provinces.
- (CIA, 2011)



# MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

- The Ministry of Education (MOE) is in charge of overseeing Thailand's education system.
- The current education system is based on the 10<sup>th</sup> National and Economic Plan and the National Education Act that was created in 1999 . This act assures equity, access and quality of education is the same for all Thai students.
- The MOE is divided into 5 offices

(Ministry, 2011)

Office	Description
Office of the Permanent Secretary	Compiles evidence and data that will help develop educational law.
Office of the Higher Education Commission	Develops policies, plans and standards for public and private higher education. Private sector involvement is important.
Office of the Basic Education Commission	Develops policies, curricula and standards for basic education.
Office of the Educational Council	Develops standards for integrating art, wisdom, culture and sports into all levels of schooling, and helps mobilize resources
Office of the Vocational Commission	Develops policies, plans and standards for public and private higher education. Promotes private sector collaboration.



# GOALS OF THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

1. Expand formal and nonformal education from 9-12 years for all Thai students.
2. Ensure that education is meeting the needs of the students and improving the quality of life.
3. Design quality assessment tools inside and outside of the individual schools.
4. Having schools and local communities make decisions for local schools
5. Encouraging private sector involvement in education
6. Using learner-centered pedagogies
7. Engaging everyone involved in education with a curriculum that is differentiated and flexible.
8. Mobilizing resources so equity is ensured to all areas of the country.

(Ministry of Education, 2011)



Stage in education	Length of time	Description	
Precompulsory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2-3 years of schooling before grade 1</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Optional for children ages 3-7.</li> <li>• Can consist of 3 years of private kindergarten, 2 years of public kindergarten, or 1 year public preprimary programs.</li> </ul>	
Compulsory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 6 years of primary school (prathom)</li> <li>• 3 years of lower secondary (matthayom)</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;">Primary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 6-7 hour days</li> <li>• 5-6 ,40-50 minute periods per day</li> <li>• 40 weeks of school</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;">Lower Secondary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5 days per week</li> <li>• 7, 50 minutes periods per day</li> <li>• 40 weeks of school</li> <li>• 90 units of study in general subject areas must be completed.</li> </ul>
Postcompulsory  (Nguyen Tran & Ho, 2013)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3 years of upper secondary school</li> <li>• Lower than-degree level (diploma)</li> <li>• Degree level education</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lower than-degree (diploma) can be attained from a 2 year vocational college, or a colleges of dramatic and fine arts and physical education.</li> <li>• Degree level education is offered at universities and will take between 4-6 years for a student with a secondary diploma to complete.</li> </ul>	

# CURRICULUM

- The MOE provides schools with expensive learning materials such as reference materials and technology. Teachers are responsible for purchasing any additional instructional materials.

- Goals of curriculum:

- Literacy and math skills
- Instilling pride in being Thai
- Acquainting students with social changes (i.e. how technology affects daily life) and natural changes (why maintaining natural resources is important).
- Teaching good work habits
- Providing them with knowledge that can be applied to themselves, their communities and their families.

(Nguyen Tran & Ho, 2013)

- Graduation Requirements

- 90 units of secondary curriculum must be completed in the following areas:

- ✓ Thai

- ✓ Science

- ✓ Mathematics

- ✓ Art

- ✓ Health

- ✓ Physical education

- ✓ Social studies

- Other elective courses, foreign languages, vocational education courses, youth groups and independent activities are part of graduation requirements
- Students must also have 80% school attendance



# TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS

- Candidates must pass an entrance exam before being admitted to a teacher education program
- Teachers can earn a bachelor's of education degree from either a university or a teacher education college
- Once a bachelor's degree is obtained, teachers have to take an exam to obtain their teaching license.
- Teachers who have a five-year bachelor's degree and have completed in-service training can provide a letter stating their qualifications and will be excused from the exam.
- Teachers are required to have a postsecondary graduate degree.
- There is a shortage of primary and secondary teachers, particularly in the areas of math, science, foreign language and special needs.

(Nguyen Tran & Ho, 2013)



## VALUE OF EDUCATION

- The Thai people place a high value on education.
- The biggest issue in education in Thailand right now is equal access to education, especially in some of the more rural areas.
- In a World Bank survey from 2001, it was estimated that the average Thai household spent 16% of their expenses on primary education, and the poorest households spent 47% of their expenses on primary education.
- The MOE is working on programs to incorporate state-less children (non-Thai citizens) into Thai education systems and provide additional funding in rural schools.
- The future goal of Thai education is to provide affordable schooling to create a future of educational equality.

(Nguyen Tran & Ho, 2013)

## VIEWS ON ENGLISH

- In a study conducted in the *International Research Journal of Arts and Social Sciences*, Thai citizens were asked, “How do Thai adult learners perceive learning English language?”

This study found that it was common to learn that Thai learners are afraid or anxious when it comes to the time for participating in an English lesson, but they do feel that being able to have a conversation in English is important because tourism is a large market in Thailand.

The study finds that Thai people value learning the English language, but teachers of English in Thailand need to be encouraging and patient to make their students feel confident when trying to speak.

(Dueraman, 2013)



# GENDER IN EDUCATION

- Gender equality in education in Thailand became law in 1997 under Thailand's constitution of 1997.

(Nguyen Tran & Ho, 2013)

According to the Gender Parity Index (GPI) in 2005,

- Primary Schools were made up of:
  - Males 52%
  - Females 48%

According to the Gender Parity Index (GPI) in 2008,

- Secondary schools were made up of:
  - Males 48%
  - Females 52%

School life expectancy in formal primary to tertiary school,

- Males- 13 years old
- Females- 14 years old



# THAI IMMIGRATION IN THE UNITED STATES

- 9,962 Thai citizens obtained legal permanent residence in the United States in 2011.
- 5,299 Thai citizens became naturalized United States Citizens in 2011.
- 96,924 nonimmigrant Thai citizens entered the United States in 2011 for various documented reasons.
- According to the U.S. Census data from 2010, there was a population of 591 Thai people in Rhode Island. This is approximately a 56% increase in population from the previous census in 2000.

(Census, 2011)

(United States Department of Homeland Security, 2012)



# REFERENCES

## Articles

Dueraman, B. (2013). Focus on Thai learners of English: Their self reports about foreign language learning. *International Research Journal of Arts and Social Sciences*, Vol. 2 (7), 176-186. Retrieved September 22 from: <http://www.interestjournals.org/full-articles/focus-on-thai-learners-of-english-their-self-reports-about-foreign-language-learning.pdf?view=inline>

Ministry of education (2011). *The development of education: National report of Thailand*. Retrieved September 6, 2013 from: <http://www.bic.moe.go.th/th/images/stories/book/ed-eng-series/develop-ed-thailand-48ice.pdf>.

## Books

Nguyen Tran, C. & Ho, H (2013). *International education*. (Vol. 2, pp. 466-471). Armonk, New York: M.E. Sharpe, Inc.

United States Department of Homeland Security. (2012). *2011 Yearbook of immigration statistics*. Washington, D.C. s.

## Websites

Central Intelligence Agency. (2011). New York. *The CIA world factbook*. Retrieved September 6, 2013, from: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/th.html>.

UNESCO. (2011) Paris, France. *UIS Statistics in brief education (all levels) profile- Thailand*. Retrieved September 7, 2013, from: [http://stats.uis.unesco.org/unesco/TableViewer/document.aspx?ReportId=121&IF\\_Language=en&BR\\_Country=7640](http://stats.uis.unesco.org/unesco/TableViewer/document.aspx?ReportId=121&IF_Language=en&BR_Country=7640)



# REFERENCES

## **Blog**

Thai Association of Southern California. (2012, August 21). *Thai population in 2010 U.S. census data*. Retrieved from: [www.thaisocial.org/2011/09/15/thai-population-in-2010-us-census-data/](http://www.thaisocial.org/2011/09/15/thai-population-in-2010-us-census-data/).

## **Images**

Central Intelligence Agency [Web Photo]. (2011). *Map of Thailand* Retrieved September 8, 2013 from: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/docs/refmaps.html> (Image on slide 3).

*Meet the students*. [Web Photo]. (2011). Retrieved September 6, 2013 from: <http://www.learningthai.com/thaistudents/students.jpg> (slide 6).

Sarkis, S. *Bangkok school children jumping and smiling at the camera, Thailand*. [Web Photo]. Retrieved September 10, 2013 from: <http://samisarkis.photoshelter.com/image/I0000j8HBQAZ77mY> (slide 14).



M.Ed. in TESL Program  
Nancy Cloud, Director  
Educational Studies Department  
Rhode Island College, HBS 206 #5  
600 Mt. Pleasant Avenue  
Providence, RI 02908  
Phone (401) 456-8789  
Fax (401) 456-8284  
ncloud@ric.edu

The M.Ed. in TESL Program at Rhode Island College  
is Nationally Recognized by TESOL and NCATE



REACH  
INSPIRE  
CONNECT