



teacher plus foundation

Position Information Sheet

Project Officer - Trainer

Teacher Plus Foundation

Teacher Plus Foundation promotes teaching and learning methods which develop the thinking and analytical skills of non-urban students.

Education in urban Thailand has improved a lot over the last two decades, but non-urban schools lag far behind. This gap is widening as fewer and fewer qualified teachers are willing to work upcountry. While many groups are helping by providing key 'hardware' (school buildings, equipment, materials, etc), Teacher Plus Foundation aims to improve the essential 'software' of education - the teachers.

The objectives of Teacher Plus Foundation are to:

- Support the professional development of non-urban teachers
- Promote teaching and learning methods which develop the thinking and analytical skills of non-urban students
- Give non-urban students educational opportunities equal to urban students
- Encourage schools to provide training for students in areas such as agriculture, health services and environmental science in order to help develop local communities
- Emphasise ethical issues so that students will become responsible adults in society.

The Rayong Project

TPF has had a Project Leader – Trainer stationed in Rayong since November 2005, primarily at Ban Chamkho school, near Khao Chamao National Park.

During this time, he has worked with language teachers at Ban Chamkho and other schools to develop learner-centred activities and resources that are tailored to rural Thai government school environments.

Much of this resource has been created from the ground up, rather than importing, or trying to adapt, materials designed for European or North American ESL environments. Nevertheless, the project is based on well-founded, well-researched language education principals. Three pillars that have been particularly important are Team English, Synthetic Phonics and Lexical Approach.

Team English is an organizational and motivational framework, incorporating principles of cooperative learning. It was originally created by Assoc. Prof. Maggie MacDonald from Wright State University, and was first piloted here in Thailand.

By remaining with the same team over a period of several months, student team-mates develop loyalty to each other. This motivates every member to succeed and to see that the other members succeed as well.

The system has been further developed in the Rayong Project, and now provides a foundation for much of what we do.

Synthetic Phonics comes from the concept of 'synthesising', which means 'putting together' or 'blending'. What is synthesised/put together/blended in reading are the sounds prompted by the letters on the page. (rrf.org.uk, newsletter 54)

Phonics programs designed for native-speaking children are aimed mostly at teaching them to read, although they may also help with spelling.

We have found that phonics has a much greater range of uses for non-native speaking students and teachers. As well as teaching reading and spelling, phonics provides a framework for teaching phonology (i.e. the sound system of English) as it applies to both pronunciation and listening.

The **Lexical Approach**, which was developed by Michael Lewis, is a refinement of the Communicative Approach of language teaching. It stresses the following points:

- Lexis is the basis of language.
- Language consists of grammaticalised lexis, not lexicalised grammar.
- The grammar/vocabulary dichotomy is invalid; much language consists of multi-word 'chunks'.
- A central element of language teaching is raising students' awareness of, and developing their ability to 'chunk' language successfully.
- Although structural patterns are known as useful, lexical and metaphorical patterning are accorded appropriate status.
- The central metaphor of language is holistic - an organism; not atomistic - a machine.
- Grammar as a receptive skill, involving the perception of similarity and difference, is prioritised.
- Receptive skills, particularly listening, are given enhanced status.
- The Present-Practise-Produce paradigm is rejected, in favour of a paradigm based on the Observe-Hypothesise-Experiment cycle.

(from Michael Lewis - THE LEXICAL APPROACH – LTP 1993)

Position Description

This is an exciting opportunity at the cutting edge of TPF's work to develop Thai teachers of English in rural government schools. Although flexibility is key to success in a small, pioneering project such as ours, duties will certainly include the following:

- team teaching with Thai teachers to mentor them in conducting activities
- helping to develop and refine activities for use by Thai teachers
- helping to develop learning materials
- helping to build a community of teachers who can offer mutual support in the transition from teacher-centred to learner-centred methods
- contributing to a blog, to keep donors and other interested people informed of our work
- evaluating teachers and schools to target those most worthy of further support

We have identified about 12 schools in Rayong Education Zone 2 that have good potential for development. Initially the job will involve working with teachers in several of those schools. Over time, we may decide to focus our support on just one or two schools, depending on how readily teachers apply what we have to offer.

Essential Selection Criteria

- Native English Speaker
- Bachelor Degree

Desirable Qualities

- Enthusiastic and self-motivated
- Flexible, open to new ideas
- Attention to detail
- Good analytical skills
- Good interpersonal skills
- Good organisational skills
- Creative
- Teaching experience – especially that which relates to our project as described above
- Ability in Thai Language (many rural teachers have very low levels of English themselves)
- CELTA or equivalent
- IT skills
- Own transport

Please note that the above list is exactly as the title suggests: a non-exclusive list of “desirable qualities”. We do not expect applicants to meet all the above (though we would of course be delighted if you do!) You may also have qualities not listed that are relevant to the position. The “essential selection criteria”, however, are also just that – essential.

Terms and Conditions

- Starting salary of 25,000 – 30,000 Baht per month depending on qualifications and experience
- 3 month trial period, followed by an initial 9 month contract
- Further contracts available if both parties are satisfied after 12 months
- Work permit provided by the foundation
- Transport costs to schools outside of “base school” provided
- Responsibility of employee to obtain a Non-immigrant Class B visa so that the work permit application can proceed
- Report to: Rayong Project Leader
- 15 days per year paid annual leave, normally to be taken during term breaks