

The Development of Honesty, Discipline, and Engagement through English Language Learning among Primary 4 to Primary 6 Students, Primary Department, Demonstration School of Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University.

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Abstract

Character development has become an important focus in primary education, as academic learning alone may not fully prepare students for the social, emotional, and moral challenges of everyday life. This classroom action research explored how honesty, discipline, and engagement could be encouraged among Primary 4–6 students through English language lessons at the Demonstration School of Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University.

The study followed a classroom action research approach using cycles of planning, action, observation, and reflection. Various English learning activities were designed to include character development, such as group work, storytelling, role-play, reflective activities, and small projects. Data were gathered through classroom observations, student behavior records, learning notes, and the teacher's reflective journal. Simple descriptive statistics and thematic analysis were used to understand the changes observed in students' behavior.

The results showed gradual and positive improvements in students' honesty, discipline, and engagement. Students became more responsible in completing tasks, followed classroom routines more consistently, and participated more actively in English activities. These findings suggest that English classrooms can provide a meaningful and supportive environment for character development when teachers intentionally include character-building elements in their lessons.

Keywords: character development, honesty, discipline, engagement, primary education

1. Introduction

Character development is about helping students learn good values, behave responsibly, and develop positive attitudes toward learning. Many educational organizations, such as UNESCO, UNICEF, and the OECD, point out that education should not focus only on academic skills, but also on students' social skills, emotions, and sense of responsibility. Traits like honesty,

discipline, and engagement are considered important because they help students become responsible learners and members of society.

The primary school years are especially important for building character, as students begin to form habits and values that affect how they learn and behave. In Thailand, character development is an important part of education and is clearly stated in national education policies. The National Education Act emphasizes the balanced development of both knowledge and good character, with a strong focus on honesty, discipline, and responsibility.

English language classrooms provide many chances for students to practice these values through activities such as group work, communication, and reflection. However, character development in English lessons is often included only indirectly. For this reason, this study aimed to explore how honesty, discipline, and engagement could be more intentionally developed through carefully planned English language learning activities.

1.1. Research Objectives

The objectives of this study were:

1. To examine the levels of honesty, discipline, and engagement among Primary 4-6 students in English classrooms.
2. To develop and implement English learning activities that promote honesty, discipline, and engagement.
3. To investigate the effects of these activities on students' character development.

2. Literature Review

1. Honesty in Language Learning

- Moral development through language education: English language learning often integrates stories, role plays, and discussions that expose students to values such as honesty and integrity. Literature in ELT emphasizes that moral values can be embedded in communicative tasks and narratives.
- Critical literacies: Bacon (2017) argues that English teaching provides opportunities for students to reflect on fairness, truth, and justice, which can strengthen honesty as a personal and social value.
- Practical classroom strategies: Teachers who model honesty in feedback and encourage truthful self-expression in writing and speaking tasks help students internalize honesty as part of their learning identity.

2. Discipline in Language Learning

- Structured classroom environments: Research shows that discipline is closely linked to classroom management and teacher expectations. A well-organized English classroom fosters responsibility and self-regulation.

- Language learning routines: Repetition, structured activities, and clear rules in English lessons help students develop discipline. For example, consistent practice in vocabulary and grammar builds perseverance and attention to detail.
- Behavioral outcomes: Discipline in language learning is not only about compliance but also about cultivating habits of punctuality, preparation, and respect for peers during collaborative tasks.

3. Engagement in Language Learning

- Engagement as a predictor of success: Engagement is strongly correlated with positive educational outcomes in English learning. Studies highlight that both internal factors (motivation, emotions) and external factors (teacher support, classroom environment) drive engagement.
- Active learning methods: Interactive activities such as group discussions, role plays, and project-based learning increase student engagement in English classes.
- Technology integration: Digital tools and multimedia resources in English teaching have been shown to enhance engagement, especially among younger learners who respond well to interactive content.

4. Interconnection of Honesty, Discipline, and Engagement

- Holistic development: Honesty, discipline, and engagement are mutually reinforcing. For example:
 - Honest communication builds trust, which supports classroom discipline.
 - Discipline ensures students stay focused, which enhances engagement.
 - Engagement motivates students to participate actively, which requires honesty in expressing ideas.
- Language learning as a moral and social practice: English learning is not only about linguistic competence but also about shaping values and behaviors that prepare students for responsible citizenship.

3. Methodology

This short research was carried out at the Demonstration School of Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University. The participants were Primary 4 students who were taught and observed continuously as they progressed through Primary 5 and Primary 6.

The study focused on integrating character development into regular English lessons. Various learning activities were used, such as group work, storytelling, role-play, classroom responsibility routines, and simple reflective activities, all designed to encourage honesty, discipline, and engagement during learning.

Data were collected through classroom observation checklists, student behavior records, learning notes, and the teacher's reflective journal. The data were reviewed using simple descriptive statistics to observe changes in students' behavior, along with thematic analysis to better understand patterns found in the teacher's reflections. Information from different sources was compared to help ensure the findings were reliable and meaningful.

4. Results

At the beginning of the study, students showed different levels of honesty, discipline, and engagement. Some students were already responsible and actively took part in class activities, while others had difficulty following classroom rules, completing their work, or staying focused during lessons.

After the first short research cycle, clear improvements were seen in students' behavior. Many students became more honest in their work, followed classroom routines more consistently, and participated more during English lessons. After making adjustments and improvements in the second cycle, students showed even better results. They completed tasks more responsibly, showed better self-discipline, and became more engaged through active participation, group work, and sustained attention.

These results are in line with previous studies showing that character traits can be developed through well-planned classroom activities. By including character-focused strategies in English lessons, students were able to improve their honesty, discipline, and engagement while still enjoying meaningful language learning. The action research process also allowed the teacher to reflect on and improve teaching practices based on students' needs and real classroom situations.

Overall, the findings showed positive progress in all three character traits. English learning activities that encouraged cooperation, reflection, and responsibility helped support both students' language development and their character growth.

5. Conclusion

This study shows that honesty, discipline, and engagement can be developed through English lessons when character development is carefully included in everyday classroom activities. Using a classroom action research approach helped the teacher reflect on teaching practices and gradually improve lesson strategies based on students' responses.

The findings suggest that English classrooms can be a practical and meaningful place for holistic learning, where students develop both academic skills and positive character traits. Overall, this study provides classroom-based evidence that character education can be successfully integrated into primary English instruction.

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