

# DEVELOPMENT OF NON-MAJOR ENGLISH CURRICULUM AT THAI NGUYEN UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, VIETNAM

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**Abstract:** *program development has been an issue of interest nowadays, along with the demand for education reform in Vietnam. Developing the subject program in the direction of developing learners' capacity successfully or not depends on many factors, including the leading role of teachers, the concerns of the school, society, and the efforts of the learners themselves. The article refers to the development of the English program at Thai Nguyen University of Education (TNUE)*

**Key words:** *program development, curriculum, potential, education, competence.*

# РАЗРАБОТКА НЕСПЕЦИАЛЬНЫХ ПРОГРАММ АНГЛИЙСКОГО ЯЗЫКА В ТХАЙ НГУЕНСКОМ ПЕДАГОГИЧЕСКОМ УНИВЕРСИТЕТЕ, ВЬЕТНАМ

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**Аннотация:** *в настоящее время разработка программы вызывает интерес, наряду с требованием реформы образования во Вьетнаме. Успешное или неуспешное развитие предметной программы в направлении развития способностей учащихся зависит от многих факторов, в том числе от ведущей роли учителей, интересов школы, общества и усилий самих учащихся. В статье говорится о развитии программы изучения английского языка в Тхай Нгуенском педагогическом университете.*

**Ключевые слова:** *разработка программы, учебный план, потенциал, образование, компетенция.*

## 1. Introduction

Developing a training program is a continuous process to improve the training program continuously, meeting the requirements of society. The training program must be dynamic, always supplemented, and perfected to meet the developmental level of socio-economic, scientific and technological, and social life... According to Alviar, Mary G. (2014) "Curriculum development is defined as planned, a purposeful, progressive, and systematic process to create positive improvements in the educational system." [1]

Developing training programs is the most important factor, contributing to improving the quality of training for universities in Vietnam in general and Thai Nguyen University of Education in particular. Circular 07/2015/TT-BGDĐT, dated April 16, 2015 of the Ministry of Education and Training of Vietnam stipulates at least every 2 years, higher education institutions must review, evaluate and supplement to constantly improve the training program including building new programs and improving existing programs. (Moet, 2015) [2].

The views on the development of training programs in each school vary depending on the development strategy and local conditions of each region. TNUE is a university of the regional University, the mission of the University is also linked and consistent with the socio-economic development strategy and state resources. The training at TNUE contributes to the development of human resources for the socio-economic development of the Northeast and the whole country of Vietnam in the context of international integration.

In order to implement the educational program in the specific socio-economic-cultural conditions of the region, the school's training program is approached in the direction of application, practical learning, and practice, combining specialized knowledge training with skill training. This means that the program bases the output standard on the input design. The objective of the training program is to comprehensively develop students in knowledge and skills (including hard and soft skills), ability to apply knowledge into practice. These objectives are elaborated in detail, specifically for each discipline, concretized through the system of subjects of the training program.

## 2. Developing English language programs at TNUE

In the context of educational innovation in Vietnam today, the development of the subject program at the school level is the process of teachers developing a subject teaching plan to implement that subject program to best suit the specific conditions of each school and meet the teaching requirements to develop the capacity of each class (Nguyen Vu Bich Hien, 2015) [3]. According to the capacity approach, when developing the subject program, the most interested issue is not the knowledge that learners need to know, but the capacity to act and effectively solve the tasks set out in real life (Nguyen Van Cuong, 2016) [4].

In order to form and develop the practical work capacity of learners, the curriculum must be designed in a way that approaches the capacity in accordance with the needs of learners, teachers, and the whole community. The subject program development process consists of 5 steps: 1) Assess learners' capacities and needs and learn the teaching conditions at school; 2) Develop subject program objectives; 3) Design the program; 4) Implement the program; 5) Evaluate and adjust the program (Nguyen Vu Bich Hien, 2015). Developing the subject program in the direction of developing learners' capacity requires relying on the general training program of the school and on the leading role of teachers, because only then can the most appropriate training methods be developed.

The development of the English curriculum at TNUE is based on the published output standards. The output standards are the specific objectives of the training program, regulations on the content of professional knowledge; practical skills, technology awareness and problem solving that learners can take after graduation and other specific requirements for each level and branch of training (Moet, 2010) [5]. In order to realize the goal of the National Foreign Language Project "Teaching and learning foreign languages in the Vietnamese national education system in the period of 2008-2020", now expanded to 2025, TNUE sets many specific goals. If before 2020, when graduating, the group of non-major foreign language students must meet the level 2/6 output standard according to the foreign language competence framework for Vietnam (A2-CEFR), from 2021 this standard is level 3/6 according to the foreign language competence framework for Vietnam (B1 – CEFR) (TNU. 2020).[6] They can use English to express and express their opinions and viewpoints, interact with people on familiar topics, participate in interviews in professional fields. The requirements for foreign language proficiency are to match the trend of Vietnam's international integration and also to improve the quality of human resources. "Using foreign languages ...in teaching and education" (Moet, 2018) [7] is one of the professional standards that general teachers need to achieve.

At TNUE, the English program with 10 credits (3 modules) has been adjusted and developed in the direction of approaching foreign language competence for students. Based on the framework program of the Ministry of Education and Training, the English language program for non-major students is built with a ratio of theoretical knowledge, practice, discussion, and balanced and reasonable exercises. On the basis of the detailed curriculum of the modules, the teachers in charge of teaching the course are partly responsible for developing the lecture outline of that module and approved by the faculty before putting it into use. The structure of the modules is designed in detail, suitable for practice in the direction of reducing the duration of theoretical teaching, increasing the duration of assignments, practice, and discussion, group study, self-study of students.

*Table 1. Detailed periods of English 1-2-3 module.*

Classification	Periods 1 and 2		Period 3	
	In class	Self-study	In class	Self-study
Theory	25	50	30	60
Exercise	10	5	20	10
Practice	20	10	30	15
Discussion	10	5	10	5

With the design of such a subject program, the role of teachers in guiding students to self-study will greatly increase, at the same time students must be active and active in learning to meet the requirements of the subject through regular tests and periodic examinations. The development of training programs allows teachers to adjust, supplement and update new regulations and new knowledge in order to make the program advanced and modern; allow teachers to choose methods and forms of teaching organization suitable to the actual conditions of the school and catch up with the trend of the times.

The Faculty of Foreign Languages of TNUE has conducted the development of the non-major English program at the school level, however, the implementation still has limitations, for example, although students entering TNUE come from the mountainous provinces of the Northeast of Vietnam with uneven English proficiency. Many students are only A1 according to the foreign language competence framework for Vietnam, even if they are lower than A1, but the assessment of learners' capacity and needs of the program development process at TNUE is not carried out regularly. Learners' competencies are only determined by the teacher during the lessons.

The subject program is designed for all students, leading to uneven program implementation, depending on the self-regulation of each teacher in the teaching process to suit the goals of the program. The evaluation of the program to make adjustments at the end of each semester or academic year is also not given full attention. This is probably a huge limitation that teachers and faculty and university administrators need to pay attention to. The assessment of the current situation of English program development will provide managers and teachers with full information on the aspects that have been done as well as the limitations to improve the effectiveness of English program development in universities.

### **3. Some suggestions to improve the effectiveness of subject program development**

- Regularly review the content of the subject program, learning materials (textbooks, textbooks) being used to remove old, outdated information and supplement and update new information in accordance with the educational goals of the subject.

- Rearrange the system of subject knowledge to be more logical, ensure the ability to integrate interdisciplinary knowledge in the teaching process according to the topics or educational activities, experiential activities; develop a teaching plan, redistribute the new curriculum of the subject to suit the students and the actual conditions of the university.

- Develop training programs to comply with practical needs. In order to narrow the gap between human resource training and social labor needs as well as improve its reputation, schools, faculties, departments and individual teachers need to renovate the content of the training program, develop the content of the module to ensure compliance with the requirements of the labor market and promote the innovation of teaching methods in the direction of approaching learners' capacity such as redesigning the curriculum so that the actual time and practice of students increase to create conditions for students to know and master the job. To do this, the university needs to create an organic bond between supply and demand, between departments in the school and with each other and with society. The school should consider students as customers, listen to the voice of labor market demand to train human resources to do jobs, satisfy employers, meet social needs.

- Develop training programs in the direction of approaching the common standards of higher education in the world. Universities need to study, consult and learn from the experience of the world's leading universities to carry out innovation on the basis of retaining the characteristics of higher education in the country. Currently, university rankings are a global trend, so when developing training programs, domestic universities need to refer to the evaluation criteria of a number of THE, QS, ARWU rankings,... in order to step by step prepare all the conditions to participate in the ranking assessment.

- The university needs to invest in facilities for teaching and learning because the training program in the direction of competence requires teachers and students to actively explore, study documents, update textbooks, foreign references, and a variety of search sources.

- Teachers need to be creative and flexible and diversify teaching methods in order to supplement knowledge, change the learning atmosphere, and create excitement for students in receiving knowledge to meet the labor quality requirements of society.

- Improve students' ability to self-study. To effectively develop the program in the direction of approaching learners' capacity requires the "cooperation" of learners with teachers. Students themselves must identify learning objectives and tasks; it is necessary to abandon the habit of inertia, the habit of receiving one-way knowledge and instead be active and active in acquiring knowledge, self-discipline in learning and research.

#### **4. Conclusion**

The world, society, and the level of science and technology are constantly moving and developing. To meet that development requirement, the training of universities, including TNUE, must catch up and integrate with the general trend. The development of training programs in universities must be considered as regular and continuous activities. This activity should be maintained and further promoted in the future for the purpose of improving the quality of training, building and developing universities in general and TNUE in particular.

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