

## The Use of Reading Strategies through Blogs to Develop Reading Comprehension of Grade 6 Students

\* *Janya Sattanakho*

\*\* *Asst. Prof. Dr. Thawascha Dechsubha*



**Keywords:** Reading Strategies/ Blogs/ Reading Comprehension

### Abstract

In this research, the effect of using reading strategies through blogs to develop English reading comprehension on grade 6 students was investigated, as well as, the students' opinion towards the use of reading strategies through blogs was examined. Samples were 14 grade 6 students studying at Ban Nonrae School, Nachauek District, under Maha Sarakham Primary Educational Service Area Office 2. The research tools were lesson plans using reading strategies through blogs activities, inventory, blogs, reading comprehension test, and students' opinion questionnaire. Data were analyzed to find out the means ( $\bar{X}$ ), standard deviation (S.D.), and t-test. The results indicated that mean scores for posttest after using reading strategies were higher than those for pre-test with statistically significant differences at .05 level, and were higher than the criterion set of 60 percent with statistically significant differences at .05 level as well. As for students' opinion towards the use of reading strategies through blogs, the students had positive opinion of all items. Conclusively, the use of reading strategies through blogs supported to develop English reading comprehension on grade 6 students, as well as, the students had positive opinion of using reading strategies through blogs.

### บทคัดย่อ

การวิจัยนี้ได้ศึกษาผลการใช้กลวิธีการอ่านผ่านบล็อกเพื่อพัฒนาความเข้าใจในการอ่านภาษาอังกฤษของนักเรียนชั้นประถมศึกษาปีที่ 6 และผลของความคิดเห็นในการใช้กลวิธีการอ่านผ่านบล็อก กลุ่มตัวอย่าง ได้แก่ นักเรียนชั้นประถมศึกษาปีที่ 6 โรงเรียนบ้านโนนแร่ สงขัด

\* *Master student in Teaching English as a Foreign Language,  
Nakhon Ratchasima Rajabhat University*

\*\* *Thesis advisor of Nakhon Ratchasima Rajabhat University*

สำนักงานเขตพื้นที่การศึกษาประถมศึกษามหาสารคาม เขต 2 จำนวน 14 คน ดำเนินการทดลองโดยใช้เครื่องมือในการวิจัยคือ แผนการจัดการเรียนรู้ที่จัดกิจกรรมการเรียนรู้โดยใช้กลวิธีการอ่านผ่านบล็อก แบบสอบถามระดับการใช้กลวิธีการอ่านผ่านบล็อก บล็อก แบบทดสอบวัดความเข้าใจในการอ่านภาษาอังกฤษของนักเรียน และแบบสอบถามความคิดเห็นในการใช้กลวิธีการอ่านผ่านบล็อก สถิติที่ใช้ในการวิเคราะห์ข้อมูล ได้แก่ ค่าเฉลี่ย ค่าส่วนเบี่ยงเบนมาตรฐาน และการทดสอบค่าที (t-test) ผลการศึกษาพบว่า คะแนนประเมินเทียบความเข้าใจในการอ่านภาษาอังกฤษของนักเรียนชั้นประถมศึกษาปีที่ 6 โดยการใช้กลวิธีการอ่านผ่านบล็อก หลังเรียนสูงกว่าก่อนเรียนอย่างมีนัยสำคัญทางสถิติที่ระดับ .05 และคะแนนความเข้าใจในการอ่านภาษาอังกฤษของนักเรียน หลังเรียนสูงกว่าเกณฑ์กำหนดร้อยละ 70 เมื่อกำหนดรับนัยสำคัญทางสถิติที่ระดับ .05 สำหรับผลการศึกษาความคิดเห็นในการใช้กลวิธีการอ่านผ่านบล็อกพบว่า นักเรียนเห็นด้วยกับการใช้กลวิธีการอ่านผ่านบล็อกเพื่อพัฒนาความเข้าใจในการอ่านภาษาอังกฤษ จึงสรุปได้ว่าการใช้กลวิธีการอ่านผ่านบล็อกเพื่อพัฒนาความเข้าใจในการอ่านภาษาอังกฤษของนักเรียนเพิ่มขึ้น และนักเรียนเห็นด้วยกับการใช้กลวิธีการอ่านผ่านบล็อกเพื่อพัฒนาความเข้าใจในการอ่าน

## Introduction

Reading comprehension refers the level of the students' understanding of a text which the understanding comes from the interaction between the words that are written and how they catch knowledge outside the text. It is one necessary subskill that is defining importance. Reading comprehension skill depends on the knowledge of vocabulary, background knowledge, the ability to recognize words quickly and comfortably on the knowledge of letter-sound agreement and common spelling patterns, the mastership of phonics and word analysis skills, and the development of automatic recognition of many words (Pearson Education, 2010: 3). However, a skill that needs to be fostered over many years is reading with understanding and meaning although students learn the mechanics of reading in the early elementary grades (Roberts & Roberts, 2008: 125).

The cause of reading problems emanate from any sources. At first, the students may unable to read the words themselves. This has sometimes caused the mistake of whether it be word decoding, or sentence comprehension. Various problems can appear for the students at the comprehension level. Comprehending how the words join together in each sentence can be a trouble. Perhaps, the students may know each word and even each sentence, but

misunderstand the relationships between the sentences and the meaning of the text as a whole.

The poor students may face numerous problems in the way to comprehension. Teaching reading strategies is one of the most effective by helping students to overcome them. Reading processes or skills influenced by the strategies come to be more automatic with practice. Reading strategies supply the processes to deal with involved problems in more capable ways and, the strategies induce to skills that come to be automatic and fast with practice. The importance of reading strategies is coming to be more accepted. This mention is maybe best illustrated by the including a Reading Strategies strand in English Language Arts College Board Standards for College Success™ published in 2006 by the College Board College Board Standards. That this strand was utilized by the College Board emphasizes growing awareness that high proficiency students use reading strategies and these strategies are necessary, not only to successful comprehension, but to overcoming reading problems and coming to be a better reader and comprehended (McNamara *et al.*, 2007: 465-496).

Blogs, one of the Web 2.0 tools, are extensively used in US education. Blogging has changed the role of readers rather than an information resource. Readers are no more passive receivers of the information from the web but come to be creators of the content. As a forceful tool that improves communication, promote critical thinking, and supports collaborative learning, blogs have great ability in education. Instructors need to use education blogs in ways that assist content area in a technically teaching way (Hong, 2008: 33-38). Incidentally, in a socially mobile learning environment, it is no more adequate to utilize online learning and teaching technologies easily for the delivery of content to students. A digital literacy is adaptable and mobile technologies must be sought collaborative and creative purposes, including the critical assessment and evaluation of information. The educational potentials of blogs are new content development and management technologies that enable an interactive and intercreative assignment among students and between students and teachers (Duffy & Bruns, 2006: 31-38).

Based on the results of English exams of grade 6 students at Ban Nonrae School (2015), the students did not know how to read when they faced problems textbook material, such as word decoding, sentence comprehension level and ability to understand the text, they either easily gave up, and used

ineffective strategies. They did not monitor their reading comprehension. They often miss noticing if two lines in a text show contrary information. They couldn't use what they already know to make sense of what they read. Indeed they had never asked questions before, during, and after reading. In addition, they couldn't summarize what is important in what they have read.

In order to solve grade 6 students' reading comprehension problems as discussed above, the researcher would like to apply the use of reading strategies through blogs to develop grade 6 students reading comprehension. Blogs are tools to improve the students' English, in writing, reading, vocabulary, recording their learning experience, as well as learning strategies, including critical thinking (Ward, 2004: 1-16; Pinkman, 2005: 12-24). Blogs are effective convention for collaboration and discussion. Besides, blogs are powerful tools to enable scaffolded learning. Moreover blogs are accessible to teacher to upload interesting and interactive reading comprehension content, and promote student-teacher, student-student, and student-content and others audience's postings (Moon & Lim, 2013: 122-123).

## Objectives

1. To investigate the effect of using reading strategies through blogs on grade 6 students' reading comprehension.
2. To compare grade 6 students' reading comprehension score before and after the use of reading strategies through blogs.
3. To compare grade 6 students' reading comprehension score after the use of reading strategies through blogs with the criterion set of 60%.
4. To examine grade 6 students' opinion towards the use of reading strategies through blogs.

## Methodology

Population of this study comprised grade 6 students' who were studying Basic English course at Ban Nonrae School. Samples consisted of 14 grade 6 students who were selected by purposive sampling, studying Basic English course in the first semester, 2016 academic year at Ban Nonrae School.

The obtained data were calculated and analyzed by using SPSS. Analyzed means ( $\bar{X}$ ), and standard deviation (S.D.) of the obtained scores both from pre-test and posttest for reading comprehension test. Compared pre-test and posttest scores by using t-test for dependent samples. Compared posttest scores with the criterion set of 60% by using t-test for one sample. Analyzed means ( $\bar{X}$ ), and standard deviation (S.D.) of the obtained scores gained from the students' opinion questionnaire and then interpreted.

## Results

1. The first objective of this study was to investigate the effect of using reading strategies through blogs on grade 6 students' reading comprehension. To answer this idea, the findings of the students' scores from the pre-test and posttest on reading comprehension were used to meet this objective. The result shows that pre-test mean ( $\bar{X}$ ) was 18.79 (46.96%) with the standard deviation (S.D.) of 4.78. Posttest mean ( $\bar{X}$ ) was 26.07 (65.18%) with the standard deviation (S.D.) of 3.54. Mean score ( $\bar{X}$ ) of the students' progress was 7.29 (0.18%) with the standard deviation (S.D.) of 3.10. It indicated that grade 6 students' English reading comprehension had improved.

2. The second objective of this study was to compare grade 6 students' reading comprehension score before and after the use of reading strategies through blogs. To answer this idea, the findings of the students' scores from the pre-test and posttest on reading comprehension were used to meet this objective. The result shows that the scores of grade 6 students' reading comprehension on posttest were higher than those of pre-test scores with statistically significance at .05. It indicated that grade 6 students' English reading comprehension had improved after the use of reading strategies through blogs.

3. The third objective of this study was to compare grade 6 students' reading comprehension score after the use of reading strategies through blogs with the criterion set of 60%. To answer this idea, the findings of the students' scores from pre-test/posttest on reading comprehension were used to meet this objective. The result shows that the scores of grade 6 students' reading comprehension on posttest were higher than the criterion set of 60% with statistically significance at .05. It indicated that grade 6 students' English reading comprehension had improved after the use of reading strategies through blogs.

4. In order to address the fourth objective of this study, the questionnaire was used to examine grade 6 students' opinion towards the use of reading strategies through blogs. The result shows most students agree that they can use reading strategies before, while and after reading, as well as, the use of reading strategies through blogs is useful for practicing reading comprehension, and makes them feel confident of using strategies for reading comprehension ( $\bar{X} = 3.63$ , S.D. = 0.15).

The result from the total of thirteen statements of students' opinion towards the use of reading strategies through blogs to develop reading comprehension showed that students' agreement had a statistical rating of  $\bar{X} = 3.60$ , and S.D. = 0.04. This could be concluded from the total mean score that the students had positive thinking towards the use of reading strategies through blogs, in addition, the use of reading strategies through blogs could help them comprehend the reading passages and develop their reading comprehension.

### Discussions

1. Grade 6 students' reading comprehension after the use of reading strategies through blogs revealed that the average score was higher than those before. In this case, the use of reading strategies through blogs was an effective factor which could develop grade 6 students' reading comprehension. These may be explained that four students' strategies: question, monitor, clarify, and summarize, including students' literal comprehension and reorganization of the adapting of the Barrett taxonomy through blogs in fiction and non-fiction could encourage students' reading comprehension as Janice Becker Place (2012) had investigated that the students' worthwhile experience make them want to take part in a summer reading blog again. The study also found many examples of critical thinking.

This was an example that would serve as markers of critical thinking by the students in the blogs. In the second lesson "Valentine's Poem" a student used question strategy to create a question before reading text. She asked, "Why do we celebrate Valentine's Day?" This included choosing the question for reasoning and using unfamiliar vocabulary. Likewise, the same student answered, "It is a day of love." This included giving the reason for the question why, using summarizing her knowledge from the earlier lesson "Valentine's Day", and making

connections to personal experiences and to the larger world. The question and answer she created were not in the lesson directly.

2. According to the findings, the comparison of grade 6 students' reading comprehension before and after the use of reading strategies through blogs had indicated that scores of the students' reading comprehension on posttest were higher than those of pre-test with statistically significance at .05. The use of reading strategies through blogs supported the students to learn effectively as well as developed their reading comprehension. As Usa Noytim (2010) had revealed positive results that the students perceived Weblog as a tool for the improvement of their English, in terms of writing, reading, vocabulary, and recording their learning experience. They had positive attitudes towards Weblog using although some insignificant limitations. These findings recommended that learning motivation and opportunities for authorship and readership could be provided by Weblogs, as well as the improvement of writing and learning strategies, including critical thinking.

The results of the research indicate that students' reading comprehension is developed by the use of reading strategies through blogs. Using reading strategies through blogs are a powerful tool for English language learning especially reading comprehension. It enlarges student interest, motivation and confidence in reading. Students' consciousness of using reading strategies through blogs encouraged them to question, monitor, clarify, and summarize before, while, and after reading to comprehend text. They also used complex sentences, ideas, opinions expressions.

3. The scores of grade 6 students' reading comprehension after the use of reading strategies through blogs were higher than the criterion set of 60% with statistically significance at .05. One reason for this development was that the use of reading strategies through blogs served comprehension strategies. As Laura S. Pardo (2004: 272-281) suggests that the process of comprehension starts before we begin to read and proceeds even after the reading is finished. Pre-reading strategies like previewing the text and the many strategies to make meaning during reading itself moreover post-reading strategies like summarizing are used by good readers.

Reading strategies which students used before, while, and after reading to comprehend text through blogs consisted of four characteristics; question, monitor, clarify, and summarize. For a start, question was used in pre-reading, the

students made questions about the content and thought about how those questions would be answered. Question opens students mind to move further simply interesting unconnected information into the discovery of possibilities, the attraction of every other discovery, and the production of more questions. Next, while-reading, the students monitored to make sure they understood what they were reading. Then, when the students immediately noticed something in the sentence was confusing or not understood they were able to clarify. Monitor permits students to quickly address problem areas with clarify strategies to resolve problems in comprehension. Clarify is to use any previous knowledge available to try to make sense of the text being read. Last, in post-reading, the students summarized what was important in what they were reading. Summarize assists students to identify or generate main ideas, join the main or central ideas, get rid of unnecessary information, and recall what they read.

4. According to opinion, table 4 showed that grade 6 students' agreement towards the use of reading strategies through blogs to develop reading comprehension had a statistical rating of  $\bar{X} = 3.60$ , S.D. = 0.04. When it was considered each item separately, the students agreed with all items. These positive opinions could be explained that the students really enjoyed using reading strategies through blogs to develop reading comprehension. The results of the study similar to Casey Van Epps (2012) had reported a clear expansion was seen in the participants' ability to react to literature and learning as a social practice, and utilizing a blog during guided reading instruction, as well as an expansion in their motivation to work through a fiction novel. Besides, this purposeful learning activity affects student engagement, communication and collaboration with one another.

The evident from the research was that the use of reading strategies through blogs to develop reading comprehension appeared in enlarged motivation for the students implied. In the observation of students while working during guided reading instruction where they had the chance to use reading strategies through blogs to develop reading comprehension, the students resulted to be involved in their work and discussed and focused. Department of Education and Skills (2011), suggests that positive attitude and motivation are essential for improvement in literacy and numeracy as well as the learning experience for all learners in these areas is pleasant and comforting (Department of Education and Skills, 2011: 43).

## Recommendation

1. Based on the use of reading strategies through blogs to develop the reading comprehension instruction results, first strategy, question was used in pre-reading. Some students could not use question strategy validly with either contents or grammar. So, the teacher should narrow down the thought of students to focus on the topic and provide extra question practice for students. In addition to, the students should be reviewed grammar on generating questions and be supplied to practice asking questions in the class in manners.

In while-reading, second-third strategies, monitor-clarify were employed. A few students confused with using monitor strategies. They tried to keep the meaning of every word in the text. So, the teacher should draw the students to turn on heading, subheading, and title and train students to guess about the text and/or come across the ideas. Besides, the students should be reviewed vocabulary and be provided to practice using monitor strategies in the class in manners.

A small number of students used various clarify strategies to figure out the meaning of the text. They sometimes enjoyed in live chat with other students of English. They often read slowly to make sure they got what they read. As well as they often adjusted their reading speed by the text through blogs. So, the teacher should model on how to use clarify strategies to make sense of the text being read differently and equip vast various texts for students. Additionally, the students should practice using many clarify strategies.

Last, summarize was applied in post-reading. Some few students hardly summarized the text. They found out what was important in what they were reading but they barely put it into their own words. So, the teacher should support students to write more freely rather than accuracy work. That is the students should focus on meaning instead of forms, of course the writing is meaningful in summarize.

2. In case of outside the classroom, the students should be given an opportunity to apply the use of reading strategies; question, monitor, clarify, and summarize before, while, and after reading to comprehend text.

## Reference

Department of Education and Skills. (2011). **Literacy and numeracy for learning and life: The National strategy to improve literacy and numeracy among children and young people 2011-2020.** Dublin: Government.

Duffy, Peter and Bruns, Axel. (2006). "The use of blogs, wikis and RSS in education: A conversation of possibilities." In **Proceedings Online Learning and Teaching Conference 2006.** Pp. 31-38. Brisbane.

Hong, WANG. (2008). "Exploring educational use of blogs in U.S. education." In **US-China education review.** 5(10): 34-38.

McNamara, D. S. (2009). "The importance of teaching reading strategies," In **Perspectives on Language and Literacy.** 35(2): 34-40.

McNamara, D. S., ed. (2007). **Reading comprehension strategies: Theory, interventions, and technologies.** Mahwah, NJ : Erlbaum.

Moon, Dosik and Lim, Dong Kyun. (2013). "Using weblogs in foreign language classrooms: Possibilities and challenges." In **International Journal of Software Engineering and Its Applications.** 7(5): 121-128.

Pardo, Laura S. (2004, November). "What every teacher needs to know about comprehension." In **The Reading Teacher.** 58(3): 272-281.

Pearson Education. (2013). **National evaluation series.** [Online]. Accessed 2013, December. 9. from <http://gg.gg/4dbyb>.

Pinkman, Kathleen. (2005). "Using blogs in the foreign language classroom: encouraging learner independence." **The JALT CALL Journal.** 1(1): 12-24.

Place, Janice Becker. (2012). **Blogging about summer reading: The learning and engagement of high school students using interactive technology.** Ph.D. Dissertation. University of Rhode Island and Rhode Island College.

Roberts, J. C. and Roberts, K. A. (2008). "Deep reading, cost/benefit, and the construction of meaning: Enhancing reading comprehension and deep learning in Sociology courses." **Teaching Sociology,** 36(2): 125-140.

Usa Noytim. (2010). "Weblogs enhancing EFL students' English language learning." In **Procedia Social and Behavioral Sciences.** 2(2010): 1127-1132.

Van Epps, Casey. (2012). **Blogging as a strategy to support reading comprehension skills.** Master's Thesis. School of Education. St. John Fisher College.

Ward, Jason M. (2004). "Blog Assisted Language Learning (BALL): Push button publishing for the pupils." In **TEFL Web Journal.** 3(1): 1-16.