Using KWL-PLUS to Improve Reading Comprehension of Mattayom Suksa 4 at Huayjingwittaya School in Surin

จินตนา ทราจารวัตร, วุฒิ ลีนาม

ABSTRACT

The objectives of this research were 1) to study and compare English reading comprehension of Mattayom Suksa 4 students at Huayjingwittaya school in Surin before and after learning through KWL-PLUS strategy and 2) to investigate the opinion of the students towards the activities using KWL-PLUS strategy in developing reading comprehension. The subjects group, selected by means of the simple random sampling were 34 Mattayom Suksa 4 students at Huayjingwittaya school, Sriphathum district, Surin province in the first semester of the academic year 2014. The instruments were five lesson plans, an achievement test, which was a 30-item English reading comprehension test serving as pre-test and post-test, which yielded the reliability value at .85, and a questionnaire which had the reliability value of .75. The results of the research were as follows: 1) The reading achievement score on the post-test was significantly higher than the score on the pre-test at the level of .01. 2) The students’ opinion towards the KWL-PLUS strategy was found to be highly positive.

Keywords: Improving Reading Skill; Huayjingwittaya School
KWL-PLUS พบว่าการทำแบบทดสอบหลังเรียนนักเรียนได้คะแนนสูงกว่าก่อนเรียน อย่างมีนัยสำคัญทางสถิติที่ระดับ .01 2) เจตคติต่อการสอนภาษาอังกฤษเพื่อความเข้าใจโดยใช้กระบวนการแบบ KWL-PLUS พบว่านักเรียนมีเจตคติที่ดีขึ้น

คำสำคัญ : พัฒนาทักษะการฟัง; โรงเรียนมัธยมศึกษา

Introduction

Reading is an important skill for success in people’s lives because reading can help develop intelligence. The people who are good at reading skills will have more chances to be successful in their jobs. At present, most of activities in our life relate to reading, and English is a basic subject that all students need to learn. The curriculum contains English at every class level. English is used not only in the classroom, but also around the world. Students need to be able to read when they have an English reading test. Most university entrance tests contain a lot of reading tests. Reading skill is, therefore, the basic tool for learning. This agrees with the idea of Boonsiriwiboon, (1999:10) who claimed that reading is the most important aspect in basic education because our standing of global is tied to our ability to read. In reading the reader recognizes basic principles and finds the way to comprehend any given texts quickly and interpret them correctly (Senchoawani, 2001:2).

Reading is a difficulty skill for the students, because they are not interested in reading a long text or paragraph. Their scores on the reading tests were usually low. This study asserted that the causes were from the teachers, the students, and the methods of teaching English. The number of students in a class was also a factor. The individual difference in learning, and the fact that learning was typically presented in competitive terms also play an important role. Moreover, teachers lacked the knowledge to manage or improve their teaching methods. This resonates with the study of Sopa Saeng-emploi (2010 : 2) and Atchara Wimolkiet (2004 : 2), whose study showed that students were poor in their reading comprehension; and their achievement in English was generally found very low.

This reason corresponds with the survey of the Office of the National Education Commission on the English ability of Thai graduates, which found that it was at a substandard level. Reading ability in particular was found to be very low (Office of the Nation Education Commission, 2002:71-74). The reading ability of Thai students in secondary schools was found to be only at a medium level (Wongsothorn, 1986:49).

A study of students in Mattayomsuksa 4 revealed that reading comprehension was at a low level. This problem has been due to inappropriate teaching strategies. The strategy developed by Dr. Oga I Koroleva in 1986 was called KWL-PLUS (KWL-PLUS: K= Know, W= Want
to know, L= Learned and PLUS= Summarize reading by using mind mapping technique). KWL-PLUS strategy is a teaching method which includes four steps: firstly to guess what is to be read to check comprehension, to pose any questions about reading, and to use mind mapping to check reading comprehension reading problem.

To support such claims, Ritthapai (1994:54) who studied the effectiveness of English reading comprehension by using KWL-PLUS as compared with the teaching using translation strategy for Mattayomsuksa 3 students at Boonsriyanon school stated that students reading achievement by using KWL-PLUS was higher than by using translation method.

Carr & Ogle (1987: 631) developed the KWL-PLUS strategy for reading comprehension and used it with Grade 9 students. The results from their informal observations and talking with the students showed that they could transfer the KWL-PLUS strategy into other situations and improve their reading comprehension.

**Purposes of the Study**

1. To investigate the use of the “KWL-PLUS” strategy in teaching reading.
2. To determine whether this strategy will help students develop positive attitude to learn to read.

**Research Questions**

1. To what extend KWL-PLUS improve students’ reading ability?
2. What is the student’s opinion towards using the KWL-PLUS strategy in reading English classes?

**Significance of the Study**

This strategy provides an alternative method in teaching and learning English using KWL-PLUS. The strategy may help improve student skill on reading comprehension.

**Scope of the Study**

This study conducted on the students from the scope of the study includes the following factors: population/ subjects and research instruments.
Conceptual Framework

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent Variable</th>
<th>Dependent Variable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teaching of Reading Comprehension by Using the KWL-PLUS Reading Strategy</td>
<td>Improvement of Students’ reading comprehension</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Students’ opinion towards the KWL-PLUS reading Strategy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 1.1 Conceptual Frameworks**

As seen in figure 1, the independent variable is the teaching of reading comprehension using KWL-PLUS strategy as a means to promote students’ achievement and motivation in English reading. Dependent variables include the students’ improvement in reading proficiency and their opinion toward the English teaching strategy.

**Definition of Key Terms**

There are four key terms to be defined as follows:

1. **KWL-PLUS Strategy** means the teaching strategy for achievement reading. The KWL-PLUS stand for has a Know, Want to know, Learned and PLUS refer to the supplementary activities and as mind mapping.

2. **Reading Comprehension** means a process involving a reader interacting with the English text through reading in order to comprehend a text.

3. **Students** refer to Mattayom Suksa 4/1 students at Huayjingwittaya School under the jurisdiction of The Secondary Educational Service Area Office 33 in Surin, who take the 31201 English courses during the first semester of the 2014 academic year.

4. **The student’s opinion** refers to the opinion of students about KWL-PLUS strategy.

**Expected Outcome**

The KWL-PLUS strategy was expected to improve the students’ proficiency on English reading comprehension and their positive opinion towards the KWL-PLUS strategy.
Data Collection

The data were collected during the first semester of the 2014 academic year. First, the subjects took the pre-test in order that the investigator was able to know their reading abilities. Most of them had a low score on the pre-test on each topic. After that the researcher used the KWL-PLUS strategy according to the lesson plans. After they have finishing studying, the subjects took the post-test to identify students’ abilities on the reading comprehension. Finally the questionnaire was used to assess their opinion toward the KWL-PLUS reading comprehension strategy.

Data Analysis

1) Analysis of the Pre-and Post-test Scores

In order to find out whether there were any significant differences in the test scores between the pre-test and post-test of the 34 students, the t-test was utilized to compare the mean scores. The mean and the standard deviation were also utilized to analyze the collected data.

2) Analysis of the Questionnaire

The data obtained from the survey opinion questionnaire were tallied; frequency and mean were used to analyze the collected data.

Table 4.1 The results of achievement test scores obtained in the pre-test and the post-test.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reading Achievement</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>S.D</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>T</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-test</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>11.8</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>34.86</td>
<td>34.84 **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-test</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>21.8</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>64.36</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Significant level .01 *

Table 4.1 shows the results of achievement test scores obtained in the pre-test and the post-test with the mean of pre-test scores was 11.85 and the standard deviation was
1.96; the mean of the post-test was 21.88 and the standard deviation was 1.90. According to the comparison between the pre-test and the post-test scores, it was found that the difference between the pre-test and the post-test scores was at the level of .01. It means that after using the KWL-PLUS strategy, the subjects had better scores on the post – test, which means that they improved their English comprehension reading through this technique.

Students’ Opinion towards Using the KWL-PLUS Strategy

The Table 4.2 shows the results of the questionnaire analysis about the students’ opinion towards on English reading in the class after using the KWL-PLUS technique. It was found that the mean scores X of overall questionnaire was 4.49 meaning that the approach utilized was motivating and supporting their reading ability. The results show that the opinion towards each of the statements is positive.

Conclusion of the Study

The conclusion of the study, the results were as follows:

This study aimed to investigate the effectiveness of the use of the “KWL-PLUS” strategy with the students and to explore whether this strategy leads to positive opinion toward the “KWL-PLUS” strategy.

The populations of this research were 134 of Mattayom Suksa4 students at Huayjingwittaya School under the Secondary Educational Service Area 33 in Surin. The subjects consisted of 34 Mattayom Suksa 4/1 students at Huayjingwittaya School in the first semester of the 2014 academic year. The students were taking the E31201 English core course. A total of 34 students were selected. This study aimed to answer two research questions:

1. To what extend KWL-PLUS improve students’ reading ability?
2. What is the student’s opinion towards using the KWL-PLUS strategy in reading English classes?

The research instruments consisted of the following: 1) five “KWL-PLUS” lesson plans covering five different topics from “Weaving It together” Student Book 4. Each plan took two periods per week, 2) the reading achievement test consisting of 10 items in each topic and serving as the pre-test and post-test in reading comprehension, with of difficulty (p) indices between .20-.80, and discriminatory indices(r) was between 0.25-0.73, and the reliability of 85, 3) the questionnaire; with the Likert’s scale, consisting of 10 question items asking about the subjects’ opinion towards the KWL-PLUS reading strategy. Its reliability was .85.

The data collected was analyzed by using mean and standard deviation, and t-test for the comparison of the scores on the achievement test used as the pre-test and post-test.
results for students’ reading comprehension ability by using KWL-PLUS strategy were as follows:

1. After using KWL-PLUS strategy to improve the students’ reading comprehension ability, it was found that it could help the students improve their reading comprehension. The score on the post-test was higher than that of the pre-test at the significant level of .01.

2. The students’ opinion toward using the KWL-PLUS strategy for reading comprehension was found to be positive.

Discussion

The results found in this study can provide the answers to the research questions. The following is the discussion for the first research question. “To what extend KWL-PLUS improve students’ reading ability?”

According to the result shown in Table 4.1, that the results of achievement test scores obtained from the pre-test and the post-test by used the KWL-PLUS strategy taught in English classes (E 32101) was 11.85 with the standard deviation of 1.96, and 21.88 with the standard deviation of 1.90 respectively. According to the comparison between the pre-test and the post-test scores, it was found that the difference between the pre-test and post-test scores was significant at the level of .01. It means that after using the KWL-PLUS strategy, the students had better scores on the post-test. The results of KWL-PLUS shows an improvement on students’ reading ability, which corresponds to the study by Keitthichai Yanaranșri (1997: 42) who studied an English reading comprehension and speaking ability by using KWL-PLUS with Mattayom Suksa 5 students. The results show that students who were purposely selected had higher scores than students who were taught by method general teaching. In addition, this research had similar results to the study by Supannee Soottharin (2004:31-47) who studied Reading Comprehension and Summarizing of Writing’s Ability in English by using KWL-PLUS strategy on Mattayom Suksa 3 students at MengraiMaharat Wittayakom School. The subjects of this study were 40 students studying in Mattayom Suksa3 in the first semester of the academic year 2003. It was found that the achievement test score was significantly higher than the pre-test score. The outcomes of this study show that at first the students read in English without confidence. They took a lot of pauses. They needed more helps from their peers to respond. After they had learned, practiced through the process of KWL-PLUS, they could read with more confidence. The students could read sentences without pause. It could be said that the KWL-PLUS developed their reading ability. The students gained more opportunities to practice reading with their partners more and more. They could still remember what they had learned and practiced to interact with their peers. This was in consonance with the study of Supannee
Soottharin (2004:31-47) who studied Reading Comprehension and Summarize of Writing’s Ability in English by using KWL-PLUS strategy of MattayomSuksa 3 students at MengraiMaharat Wittayakom School. This research used 40 students who were studying in Mattayom Suksa3 in the first semester of the academic year 2003. The researcher used lesson plans with KWL-PLUS, and the achievement test showed that after they using this strategy with students, they had better reading comprehension than before at the significant level of 21.40.

The following is the discussion on the answer to the second questions: what is the student’s opinion towards using the KWL-PLUS strategy in reading English class? According to the result, it showed that the mean scores X of all questions from items 1-10 was 4.20. It was found that the item number 4 received the highest mean score at 4.79. On the other hand, the item number 1 had the lowest mean score, which was 4.21. Overall, subjects agreed that this technique helped their reading ability. The results show that the opinion toward each statement was positive. This indicated that the students had more understanding about objectives of reading comprehension than they did in the past and they had success in reading comprehension. In addition, the KWL-PLUS strategy helped the students develop reading comprehension, enabled them to get the main ideas and develop appropriate reading skill. Moreover, the KWL-PLUS strategy motivates students to read and enabled them to read faster.

It could be concluded that KWL-PLUS improve students’ reading ability, and helped learn by this method to improved their reading skill, promote their learning behaviors, and develop positive attitude towards reading.

Suggestions

The following suggestions may be useful for English teachers interested in KWL-PLUS in order to improve their students’ reading ability:

1. Try to find easy ways by choosing technology or tools to motivate students. Because of this, English class will not be boring. The students like to learn and practice easy lessons. The activity in each lesson may be different, so the teacher should showed to practice.

2. The teacher should let the students practice in different situations by themselves. Interruption by the teacher may not happen every time when the students make mistakes. In addition, the positive attitudes in the process of teaching will lead them to achieve the goals regarding language learning.

Recommendations for further studies

Further studies need to be carried out on the following suggested topics:

1. KWL-PLUS program may be used to develop learners in other language skills.
2. The contents constructed should vary to serve students’ needs.

3. The KWL-PLUS should be adapted to develop students’ writing and listening skills in the aspect of accuracy in grammar and comprehension.

4. This KWL-PLUS can be an appropriate teaching model for teaching weak students, because it would help develop their confidence

References


