The Use of WebQuests Focusing on Local Tourism to Promote English Reading Ability of Eleventh Graders

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Abstract

The purposes of this research were: (1) to explore students' satisfaction towards learning English through WebQuests focusing on local tourism; (2) to compare the pre-test and post-test mean score of student's English reading ability; and (3) to compare the post-test mean score of students' English reading ability with the criteria of   60 %. The samples used in this research were 40 students of Mathayomsuksa 5, who studied English reading with focusing on local tourism lessons on WebQuest in the second semester, academic year 2018 at Nikhom Phimai Suksa School Phimai district, Nakhon Ratchasima Province. The samples were selected by cluster random sampling. The instruments used in data collection were English reading ability test, lesson plans and a questionnaire. Statistics used in this study consisted of percentage, mean, standard deviation, and dependent t-test. The results of this research were as follows:

1) The students were satisfied with the use of WebQuest focusing on local tourism to promote English reading ability.

2) The post-test mean score of English reading ability of the students learning English through WebQuest was significantly higher than that of the pre-test mean score at the .01 level.

3) The post-test mean score of English reading ability of students was higher than the criteria of 60%. The study indicated that the students' English reading ability has been improved after learning through WebQuest.

Keywords: WebQuests, local tourism, English reading, communication

Introduction

Reading is a significant skill in learning. It is a process of understanding a written text as a piece of communication. Students usually read because they want to gain information about a specific subject. They read various texts such as textbooks, brochures, application forms, and stories. From a technical perspective, reading is an important skill to be successful in academic learning. Furthermore, reading is the most important method for learning language. It enables and helps the learners to understand what they have read and are able to apply the content to future learnings. According to the National Education Act of B.E. 2542 (1999) there are three objectives in an English course. One of them is the need to acquire skills involving communication strategies, thinking skills, technology skills and collaborative working skills and

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knowledge of seeking skills. Thus, the teacher needs to find integrated ways of using them effectively in the reading class.

In recent years, there has been tremendous interest in the activities on several webs for learning language since the computing power has expanded to go along with the availability of high-quality interactive educational tools (King, 2017). Moreover, using technology is an effective instructional method to infuse technology into the learners' particular using and they use it as a tool to collect, organize and analyze data. Thus, interactive learning with technology increases learners' participation and improves their attitude in the class (Young, 2008).

WebQuest has been designed by Bernie Dodge and Tom March in 1995 as an effort to implement the computer- based learning environment and integrate the world wide web into classrooms. It can be served to guide learners to resources and focus their work on the web. The learners can learn by themselves on the web, at home or everywhere they need. Thus, teachers shall integrate the use of WebQuest to help promote students to learn reading. At the same time, teachers shall think about ways to facilitate integration of the internet into their lesson in a variety of context. The contexts shall be organized similar to their daily lives for learning, especially the use WebQuest focusing on local tourism to promote English ability in their classroom. This method can be an appropriate innovation to improve studying English that is relevant to local tourism. Pongajarn (2017) described that local tourism was an important supporter of Thailand's economy. It has become a significant industry that increasingly generated economic benefits and created jobs. Ministry of Education (2008) identified that it was necessary to training local tourism in English to help them be able to give the information of interesting places about their indigenous area and help develop the economic crisis. At present, the local tourism information in English integrates learning elements into their reading skill development. Moreover, the one long term cause of the crisis is education. Education in the globalization age shall be the balance of integration between global knowledge and local knowledge. In addition, since 2001 the Ministry of Education has applied decentralization of education authority to local communities and educational institutions need to prepare relevant curriculum which meets the real local needs.

However, a major problem for students in Thailand is that they lack reading comprehension. Wutthisingchai and Stopps (2011) stated that students did not know an area of reading skills that they needed to improve and the teachers must be reserved as the most important person to support his or her students' reading comprehension. In addition, he emphasized that the reading materials were regarded as the most significant variable that influenced students' interest. Moveover, Alshumaimeri (2012) had argued that WebQuest was an interesting material that could be designed by a researcher and that the thematic WebQuest enabled to improve reading comprehension.

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The Internet is one of the most useful resources to develop reading abilities with a large amount of varied and easily accessible authentic materials. One of main reasons for using authentic materials in the classroom is the controlled language learning environment. The learner will encounter the real world and real language. There is no denying that the scene of education is changing quickly and significantly. Educators are trying to keep up with new developments which result in change. Nowadays, in the area of information, English teachers use computers and the internet more and more frequently to facilitate teaching and enhance the learning experience. The internet is blooming into a huge source of information which can be accessed freely and easily by both students and teachers. Moreover, one of the learners' key competences of the Thai Basic Education Core Curriculum is that the learners must have the ability to choose and apply different technologies; skill in application of technological process for development of oneself and society in regard to learning, communication, working and solving problem through constructive, appropriate and ethical means. (Ministry of Education, 2008)

The researchers believe that teaching English by using WebQuests that focus on local tourism in order to promote reading experiences can be used to enhance students' English ability. Thus, this study aims to examine students' satisfaction and the use of WebQuests that focus on local tourism to improve the English reading ability for the benefits of learning and teaching English.

Research Objectives

1. To explore students' satisfaction towards learning English through WebQuest focusing on local tourism.

2. To compare the pre-test and post-test mean scores of students' English reading ability

3. To compare the post-test mean scores of students' English reading ability with the criteria of 60 %.

Literature Survey

Reading is an understanding a written text by means of extracting the required information from it as efficiently as possible. For example, we apply different reading strategies when looking at a notice board to see if there is an advertisement for a particular type of flat or when carefully reading an article of special interest in a scientific journal. However, locating the relevant advertisement on the board and understanding the new information contained in the article demonstrates that the reading purpose in each case has been successfully fulfilled. In the first case, a competent reader will quickly reject the irrelevant information and find what he is looking for. In the second case, it is not enough to understand the gist of the text; more

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detailed comprehension is necessary. It is therefore essential to take the mentioned elements into consideration (Grellet, 1981) In addition, Lui (2010) found that reading was not only a unity of philosophical activity and psychological activity, but also a transformation of the in the reading materials and readers accomplishment. The reading noumenon is the connection and unity of the reading object and the reading subject; it relates to the reading nature, values of reading, reading process, reading pathology, and aesthetics in reading.

In conclusion, reading is the main base of scholars as an ability to interpret meaning from a reading passage. After interpreting the meaning, students are able to perform two levels of reading comprehension ability. First, they can remember information included in the text explicitly; this is called "the literal level." Secondly, they can combine details from previous passages to gain more comprehension about the text; this is called "the organization level." There are different kinds of reading which can be presented as follows:

(1) Extensive Reading, this enables the readers to expand their reading skill and shall be incorporated into the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) or English as a Second Language (ESL) program provided that the chosen texts are valid and classified. Extensive reading helps learners gain their independency through reading, either in class or at home. In addition, extensive reading is essential for practicing and applying reading skills and for developing all area of language skill. The vocabulary acquisition and writing ability can be related to quality of reading which students engage in the reading (Mikulecky and Jefffries, 2004). Students can improve their language proficiency more advanced with their reading skills, become more independent in their learning, gain cultural knowledge, and expand confidence and incentive to continue their own learning.

(2) Intensive Reading is a type of reading, learners read a page to find the meaning and to be familiar with the strategies of writing. Through this reading, students can get fundamental practice in performing these strategies based on a series of materials. Intensive reading is an activity in which students carefully read and examine an essay, short story or other reading materials assigned by the teacher. Many traditional reading classes use this approach almost exclusively, while intensive reading can play an important role in developing an appreciation of English language and literature (Mikulecky and Jeffries, 2004).

(3) Skimming, skimming is a type of reading in that the reader processes a text selectively in order to gain the main idea to locate particular information as efficiently as possible. Readers skim by glancing rapidly through a text to determine its gist. Skims enable them to understand the subject and focus of a text as well as its main idea, text organization, and some important details. The skimming is a more thorough method of rapid reading than surveying (Chalaysap, 2012). Thus, the reader may quickly look through the title, subtitle, graph, and topic sentences.

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(4) Scanning is used for reading as quickly as possible to understand a bit of information that reader knows is on a page. The reader can scan by looking rapidly through a text either to search for a specific piece of information (e.g., name, date) or to see whether the text is suitable for a given purpose (Chalaysap, 2012).

This study has shown that various reading approaches are able to help the teacher consider what kind of approaches to guide them in order to read effectively. There are a lot of strategies for reading comprehension. These strategies are explained in the following details:

(1) Activating and using background knowledge: For this strategy, readers activate their background knowledge and adapt it to help them comprehend what they are reading. Activating and using background knowledge refers to recalling experiences and knowledge of text before reading in order to link the new content to prior understanding. Furthermore, teachers shall encourage students to improve their statement of background knowledge by increasing their relevance and using the text feature to expand the conceptual riches of the statement (Gathrie, Wigfield and Perencevich, 2004). Thus, this strategy helps students to create a personal experience with their own concept for how written text works, word meanings and how text is organized. The students are constantly able to apply prior learning with new information.

(2) Paraphrasing: Paraphrase is the repetition of something written by using the different words. It is often used in a simpler and shorter form that makes the original clearer. It is the process of restating the text in different words which it does not go beyond the information in the text, so it is not explanation of the text. It is often not recognized as an effective strategy. However, it is an important part of the explanation because many readers often paraphrase the sentence to begin an explanation. Paraphrasing is important for readers to make them better understand the explicit information contained in the words and sentences of a text. Thus, paraphrasing can help the readers improve the basic understanding of the text or text base (McNamara, 2009).

(3) Making inferences: Readers assess or draw conclusions from information in a text. In this strategy, writers do not always provide full information about a topic, place, personality, or happenings. Instead, they provide information that readers can use to read by making inferences that integrate information of the text with their previous knowledge. Through this process, readers use other skills to obtain meaning from a text. When they read, they work out what the writer's opinion on a topic is or what the author's feeling is. Readers will be able to notice the words, grammar, and style of writing the writer has used to refer to something. (Spratt, Pulvaerness and William, 2011).

(4) Predicting: In this strategy, readers are able to gain meaning from a text by making educated guesses. Successful readers apply forecasting to make their existing knowledge applicable to new information from a text to obtain meaning from what they read. Before

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reading, readers may apply what they know about a writer or content to forecast what a text will be about. The title of a text can operate memories of texts with the same content, permitting them to guess the content of a new text. During reading, successful readers can make predictions about what will occur next, or what opinions the writer will offer to support a discussion. Prediction is important because it activates schemata, that is, it calls into mind any experience and associated knowledge that readers already have about the topic of the text (Nuttall, 2005).

(5) Summarizing: Summarizing is a significant strategy that allows readers to remember text rapidly. In this strategy, readers can be aware of text structure, what is significant in a text, and how opinions are related to each other. Effective summarizing of explanatory text includes things like condensing the steps in a scientific process, the steps of development of an art movement, or the episodes that result in certain important historical happenings. In addition, summarizing is also crucial for getting the concept idea from what is written. It is a common task in school which is the process of producing a précis. Thus, students have to know how summarizing helps them identify and integrate the most important information in the text (Hempenstall, 2016).

(6) Visualizing: Visualization is very important when it is used for narrative texts. When readers read narrative texts, they can easily understand what is happening by visualizing the place, personalities or operation of a plan. It can also be used for the reading of expository texts. Readers can mentally picture a text to comprehend processes they face during reading. In addition, visualization is excellent for a person's second language because they build oral skills when they are involved in oral reading or performing, also, they serve as aids to memory as well. Asking students to create a visual representation of something they have seen or read is both an authentic way to check comprehension and a bridge to 14 writing (Lems, Miller and Soro, 2012). Moreover, visualization is an important aspect of speed reading. It can create a mental image of the text. When the reader creates this mental image, they can remember the text better and for longer periods of time which help them read faster (Armstrong, 2015).

(7) Comprehension monitoring: In this strategy, readers have the ability to know when they comprehend what they read. When readers realize that their comprehension has broken down, they do several things to get it back on track. They also use this strategy as retelling, paraphrasing, looking for alternative explanation, looking for a connection to their own experience, looking forward or backward in a text and checking the illustration. They can also recall their prior knowledge to see if a hint or meaning is hidden in something they already know (Lems, Miller and Soro 2010). The important point here is that successful readers can make good decisions about which strategies to apply and when to use them. A lot of students can gain from explicit instruction that teaches them to apply particular strategies for

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understanding a text. Another point is that particular comprehension strategies can be taught and learned and that readers' conscious use can help them enhance their comprehension. A WebQuest is an inquiry-oriented lesson format in which most or all the information that learners work with come from the web. This model was developed by Berne Dodge at San Diego State University in February 1995(Dodge, 1997). In addition, he recommended that a WebQuest included the following basic structure: introduction, task, process, evaluation and conclusion. In order to complete a WebQuest task, the student will search through links provided on the WebQuest. These links are relevant to the topic and thus become efficient and focused learning tools. In addition, WebQuests are most likely to be group activities and might be enhanced by wrapping motivational elements around basic structure by giving the learners a role to play (Dodge, 1997).

A WebQuest can be used in the lesson and is always fun for the students. It makes lessons awesome and can be used in a flipped classroom. It encourages the students to be more independent and learn individually. In addition, a WebQuest can be used as a classroom agenda that students have to look at every day. Teachers can put homework on it, or leave note for their parents (Renard, 2018). WebQuests are activities in which students can use as resources to learn about school topics. It is one rich support for technology and in which access to hardware is easy and levels of student understanding on technology use are high. The WebQuest activity also leads to superior learning to conventional instruction (Leite, 2006).

WebQuests can be designed to offer learners opportunities for multiple knowledge representation and multiple perspectives so that they can capture the real-world complexities to which the knowledge is applied. WebQuests offer many advantages associated with reading and learning on the internet. Shelton (2019) described that WebQuests were the webs which the students gained access to the Internet, there was pressure on teachers to help their students use this valuable resource as an effective study tool. Initially, WebQuests are mini-projects in which a large percentage of the input and material is supplied by the internet. WebQuests can be teacher-made or learner-made depending on the learning activity the teacher decides on. A WebQuest is in essence a mini project using authentic language and careful instructions, which as learners work through them, reach pre-set goals and work towards the production of original output, which is finally completed by a presentation of some kind. Participants will complete by means of investigating the web, while involved in a variety of skill enhancing activities.

All of the above conclusions from many researchers found that students learned by using WebQuest which was created by the teachers. Students were motivated to learn the authentic language, appreciated the collaborative learning, and engaged in meaningful and dynamic learning by working as a team to solve problems related to the real word.

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Furthermore, WebQuests facilitated effective learning by providing structured resources and enabled teachers to efficiently use computer resources.

Materials and Methods.

This research was quantitative study. The population in this study was 65 students of Mattayomsuksa 5 in the second semester of the academic year 2018 at Nikhom Phimai Suksa school under the supervision of the Secondary Educational Service Area Office 31.

The samples were 40 students who enrolled in the English subject in the second semester of the academic year 2018 at Nikhom Phimai Suksa School, Phimai District, which was one of the medium-sized schools under the supervision of the Secondary Educational Service Area Office 31, Nakhon Ratchasima.

Data were collected from 40 students, which were selected by random cluster sampling. Statistics used in this study consisted of percentage, mean and standard deviation, and dependent t-test. The researchers distributed the research questionnaire consisting of 10 questions to the targeted samples. The total samples completed and returned the questionnaire, which could be calculated as 100%.

Results of the Study

Part 1: The Students' Satisfaction towards Learning English Using Local Tourism Lesson through WebQuest

In order to address the first objective of the study, the questionnaire was used to explore students' satisfaction toward learning English using local tourism lessons through WebQuest. The results of the study showed that students' satisfaction towards learning English using WebQuest focusing on local tourism was at high level with mean value of 4.04 (S.D. = .60). In particular, students were very satisfied with the item the research felt that the WebQuests focusing on local tourism served researcher's need well with mean value of 4.50 (S.D. = .55), followed by the item the WebQuest lessons helped the researcher to promote the English reading ability with mean value of 4.45 (S.D. = .50), the item the researcher had the opportunity to share researcher's idea to researcher's classmates with mean value of 4.15 (S.D. = .62), the researcher applied modern technology more in learning English reading with mean value of 4.10 (S.D. = .54), the researcher had a chance to participate more on the materials with mean value of 4.10 (S.D. = .67), the researcher was satisfied with using WebQuest Instruction as a learning assisted tool with mean value of 4.05 (S.D. = .59), the researcher found that all topics could be useful for improving reading ability with mean value of 4.02 (S.D. = .65), online materials were very organized and easy to be used with mean value of 4.02 (S.D. = .61), the researcher found that WebQuest learning could be used easily with mean value of 3.57 (S.D. = .71), and the

researcher enjoyed activities in learning English through WebQuest lessons with mean value of 3.50 (S.D. = .50) respectively.

Part 2: The Comparison of Mean Scores between Pre-test and Post-test

The results of statistical analysis showed that the post-test mean score of English reading ability of the eleventh-grade students was significantly higher than the pre-test mean score at the 0.01 level with mean value of 27.13 (S.D. = 3.57) and 13.48 (S.D. = 3.54) respectively. This indicated that the students' English reading ability had improved after learning through the process of the use WebQuests focusing on local tourism to promote English reading ability (See table 1).

Table 1 The comparison of mean scores from the pre-test and post-test of English reading ability.

Mode of Assessment	N	Mean	S.D.	t	p
Pre-test	40	13.48	3.54	23.09	0.00
Post-test	40	27.13	3.57		

*P <.01

Part 3: The Comparison of Post-test Mean Score of Students' English Reading Ability with the Criteria of 60%

The results of statistical analysis showed that the post-test mean score of English reading ability of the eleventh-grade students was 67.83, which was higher than the criteria of 60% (See Table 2). It can be concluded that the eleventh-grade students' English reading ability was improved after learning English using local tourism lesson through WebQuests.

Table 2 The comparison of post-test mean score of students' English reading ability with the criteria of 60%

Mode of assessment	N	Criterion Score (60%)	Post-test	S.D	t	p
Post-test	40	67.83	27.13	3.57	23.09	.00

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Discussion

The findings were discussed based on the results of the research as described below.

1. According to the students' satisfaction towards learning English using local tourism through WebQuest, it revealed that WebQuest instruction could help students in many ways for instance, it helped them learn the words with their meaning, assist them to learn the lessons anywhere they wanted with the Internet, motivate them to learn by using technology, help them to harmonize with their group, and help them become part of the classroom. The student expressed their opinions that they obtained and knowledge about the WebQuest instruction and local tourism, and acquired reading skills. Furthermore, students enjoyed participating in class activities and learning using WebQuest without being afraid of mistakes. In addition, they were also pleased to work in groups. Students presentation skills in the classroom also improved. Thus, the effect of using WebQuests focusing local tourism promoted English reading ability was significant and useful to use in English lessons. The results of this study are relevant to the study of Renard (2018) which found that a WebQuest can satisfy students and students are funny to use it to support their study. It makes lessons awesome and encourages students to learn individually.

2. The comparison of the students' English reading ability before and after learning through WebQuests indicated that mean score of students English reading ability on post-test was significantly higher than the pre-test mean score. Learning activities following WebQuests emphasizes the reading English of students. In learning activities, the researchers had prepared the information from the WebQuests for the students to learn reading on the Web, whereas, an introduction was used to provide some background information for learning new texts. The tasks focused the students on what they were going to do. The process was broken out into described steps which the learners went through in order to accomplish the task. While there was information to support their task, there were also resources. Many of resources were embedded in the WebQuest document as anchors pointing to information on the world wide Web. Questioning and concluding were also used in the concluding steps of post-reading in order to recall what students have learned from reading the texts and how they have learned reading effectively. In addition, there was a group activity after reading for each lesson. The activity let students think and share their ideas with the group in order to better understand the reading text. Thus, learning reading with all steps of WebQuest instruction could be an interesting and useful material for the students to learn reading. Local tourism contexts related to student background knowledge so it was relevant with reading strategies which emphasized the importance of background knowledge in learning. The local tourism lessons were constructed using local tourism topics around the students' community; thus, it was highly possible that the student already have experienced and know about them well. In learning

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English using local tourism lessons through WebQuest instruction, the students were encouraged to use their background knowledge by asking questions. The results of this study are relevant to the study of Shelton (2019) which found that a WebQuest is designed to offer students opportunities to gain access to the internet and gain knowledge from the real world. A WebQuest provides opportunities for students to improve their reading skill through internet worldwide. WebQuests are mini-projects in which a large percentage of the input and material is supplied by the internet.

      3. This study revealed that the students' English reading ability post-test mean score was significantly higher than the criteria of 60%. This could be due to the following reasons: A problem affecting students was the inability to recognize words which was accepted as one of the most important processes contributing to reading ability. Thus, the researcher thought that interesting materials would be one of the ways to stimulate students to learn. Then the researcher found that the interesting materials could motivate them to learn reading and students would also pay more attention than usual. Most students had been taught and learned with the traditional teaching method, which could be boring. So, the teacher's role was very vital to provide support in learning for engagement and encourage cooperative learning in order to effectively further the learning process. The study of using WebQuest instruction included interesting online material. This could make students interested in the reading lessons and enhanced vital cooperation and collaboration among students.

Conclusions

      1. The students were satisfied with the use of WebQuest focusing on local tourism to promote English reading ability.

      2. The post-test mean score of English reading ability of the students learning English through WebQuest was significantly higher than that of the pre-test mean score at the .01 level.

      3. The post-test mean score of English reading ability of students was higher than the criteria of 60%. The results of the study supported the research hypotheses that the use of WebQuest focusing on local tourism improved students' reading ability and the students had positive response toward the learning English reading ability through WebQuest.

Recommendations

      1. This result of this study strongly suggested that integrating WebQuests into English language teaching could increase reading ability. Therefore, WebQuest should be used as a tool to support English reading ability of students.

      2. The learners' key competencies in Basic Education Core Curriculum B.E. 2551(A.D. 2008) was aimed at inculcating learners with technological application and communication

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capacity (Basic Education Core Curriculum B.E 2551, 2008, p 6-7). The WebQuest should be integrated to motivate students to learn the communication both inside and outside the classroom.

      3. Teachers should work and persuade parents at the core of their education. This should be done through the Parent Teacher Relationship (PTR) so that they would together assist the child to develop reading skills at home.

      4. Teachers should be dedicated in their work by practicing collaborative teaching and organizing online classroom seminars to update one another on current approaches.

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