Empowering Thai University Students to Cope with English Texts Using Outlines and Summaries

Usuma Chuenchompoo

Thai university students still need help with reading. Generally, many students tend to read word by word or sentence by sentence; they do not pay attention to reading strategies such as reference, transition, text organization and so on, which would help enhance their comprehension. Many of them find it difficult to separate main ideas from supporting details, and cannot summarize and communicate what they have read either verbally or in writing. The author has tried to find ways to increase her students' reading ability, and found that an effective approach is to write a summary from an outline. Conducting an action research in a reading class, she found that this method improved the students' performance in their reading comprehension tests.

Keywords: Outlining, summarizing, reading comprehension

การช่วยนักศึกษาระดับมหาวิทยาลัยของไทยให้อ่านและเขียนภาษาอังกฤษได้ดีด้วยวิธีการเขียนเค้าโครงและการสรุปความจากเค้าโครง

นักศึกษาระดับมหาวิทยาลัยของไทยจำนวนมากยังคงมีปัญหาในการอ่าน กล่าวคือ ไม่สามารถจับใจความสำคัญได้ ไม่สามารถสรุปความจากสิ่งที่อ่านได้ ปัญหาคือ นักศึกษาเหล่านี้มักจะอ่าน ทีละคำ หรือทีละประโยค และไม่ให้ความสนใจกลยุทธ์ต่างๆที่ช่วยในการอ่าน เช่น การสังเกตคำอ้างอิง คำหรือวลีที่ผู้เขียนใช้เชื่อมโยงความคิด รูปแบบของงานเขียน ตลอดจนถึงการแยกใจความสำคัญออกจากรายละเอียด และการสรุปความ การถ่ายทอดความ ไม่ว่าจะเป็นการพูดหรือการเขียน ผู้เขียนได้พยายามหากลยุทธ์เพื่อช่วยให้นักศึกษาอ่านได้ดีขึ้น และสามารถนำเรื่องที่อ่านมาถ่ายทอดในลักษณะงานเขียนได้ ซึ่งวิธีการหนึ่งที่ค้นพบคือ การให้นักศึกษาอ่านและเขียนเค้าโครง (outline) และจากเค้าโครงให้เขียนเป็นย่อความ (summary) ผลจากการทำวิจัยเชิงปฏิบัติการกับนักศึกษาที่เรียนวิชาการอ่านห้องหนึ่งโดยเน้นการเขียนย่อความจากเค้าโครงดังกล่าว ผลปรากฏว่าคะแนนการอ่านของนักศึกษาเพิ่มมากขึ้น

คำสำคัญ: การเขียนเค้าโครง การเขียนย่อความ ความเข้าใจในการอ่าน

Introduction

The idea to do this action research started in an English class called 'EG 221: Reading for Information.' The purpose of this course is to help the students develop effective reading strategies for understanding informative texts such as articles in newspapers, magazines and textbooks (see details in Appendix 1). It is the first reading course designed for the 2nd year English majors of the English Department, Faculty of Liberal Arts, Thammasat University (TU), who have 6-9 years prior knowledge of English, plus two prerequisites they have to study in the freshman year, unless exempted. EG 221 is also a required course for other students in the Faculty of Liberal Arts, and

those from other faculties—the Faculty of Political Science, the Faculty of Science and Technology, and the Faculty of Commerce and Accountancy. It is offered every semester and available for all TU students, with a fixed number of 30 students per class. Thus, the total number of students taking this course reaches approximately 800-1,000 a semester and the students are of mixed abilities. As for the instructors, they are all qualified teachers of English with at least a master's degree in English language teaching.

The problem that led to this research project was that many students did not do well, getting only a C average, because they did not fully comprehend the texts they read and could not express their ideas in writing either. (In the achievement tests, the students had to answer open-ended questions, which were about 60-75% of the test.) The author found that the majority had problems with vocabulary, long complex sentence structures, and text organization. It seemed that when the students read, they concentrated only on vocabulary or short phrases, and paid no attention to the context, references, transitions, text organization, and other features of the text, which could help them understand the text better. In other words, they do not make use of reading strategies. Then comes the instructor's problem. How could the instructors empower the students to read more carefully and strategically, using reading strategies to improve their comprehension and increase their writing ability up to the level that they could express their ideas clearly in writing? In this regard, the author thought of writing a summary from an outline, which was controlled summary writing, in contrast to free writing.

In each unit in the textbook used in this course, there was an outline activity in which the students were asked to write an outline of a paragraph, or 3-5 paragraphs, and produce a summary from that outline (see details in Appendix 1). If the students did not fully comprehend the text they read, they could not get a correct outline or a logical summary. If they got everything right, all supporting details would support or clarify the main idea. If any of the supporting details did not go well with the main idea, there must have been something wrong, and so the students had to go back to the text and reread it. This was meant to encourage the students to use reading strategies to increase reading proficiency and learn to monitor their comprehension by themselves. Three 'research' questions were posed then:

- Can teaching reading that emphasizes *outlining* and *summarizing* help improve reading comprehension?
- Can this controlled method of writing summaries help improve writing ability?
- Would the students be satisfied with this approach?

Literature review

Before starting, the author reviewed literature on teaching reading to confirm the idea of using writing to help reading and vice versa, and found that the approach was supported by many researchers and theorists, including Bean & Steenwyck (1984); Gordon & Braun (1982); Grabe (1991); Kirby (1986); Pearson & Fielding (1996); Shanahan (1984); Shanahan & Lomax (1986, 1988); Taylor & Beach (1984); Tierney & Pearson (1983); and Tierney & Shanahan (1991).

Shanahan & Lomax (1986), for example, found reading and writing connections, when examining 256 second and fifth graders, and offered the following conclusion:

> Reading influences writing *and* writing influences reading; theories of literacy development need to emphasize both of these characteristics similarly. These findings suggest that reading and writing should be taught in ways that maximize the possibility of using information drawn from both
> reading and writing. (p. 208)

Bean & Steenwyck's studies about summary writing (1984) with sixth graders and Taylor & Beach's (1984) with seventh graders showed that writing led to improved reading achievement, reading led to better writing performance, and combined instruction led to improvement in both reading and writing in the long run.

Many studies showed that reading and writing influenced each other, but they generally lacked the detail description necessary to allow such findings to be applied to instructional practice (Tierney & Shanahan 1991). Most importantly, little was known about this area in second language literacy. Grabe (1991 & 2009) also supported this idea, and suggested that reading and writing be taught together in advanced academic preparation, because many cognitive skills were mutually reinforcing, and the integration of literacy skills developed strategic approaches to academic tasks.

From the above literature review, it could be concluded that reading and writing, when taught together, could help increase the students' reading and writing abilities. The next step was to search for instructional strategies to enhance reading and writing relationships in order to achieve the desired effect. In regard to summary writing, Pearson & Fielding (1996) proposed that helping students learn how to summarize had a positive effect on their comprehension and recall of text. However, the strategies used varied, and all the research surveyed had been done with young English native speakers. Little had been done with L2 learners.

Among the summarization methodologies found were Day (1980)—which provided students with five summarization rules and promoted their independent monitoring of their own rule use; McNeil & Donant's experiment (1982)—in which students received a set of summarization rules with instruction on how to apply the rules to simple passages; the intuitive discovery approach, or 'getting the GIST procedure' (Cunningham, 1982)—in which students got continuing feedback about the quality of the summaries they made from short passages; and Rinehart, Stahl, & Erickson (1986)—which applied three of Day's rules and a general rule concerning main ideas and supporting details derived from Taylor (1982; Taylor & Beach, 1984), all of which produced favorable effects.

From these studies, Rinehart, Stahl, & Erickson's work was closest to the approach planned to be employed in this research project. However, similar to other studies, this research was done with young L1 learners (sixth-grade students), and so a question arose — Would it also work well with L2 university students?

Comprehension monitoring and summarizing are effective reading comprehension strategies under the umbrella of metacognition (Casanave, 1988; Grabe, 1991& 2009). Metacognitive knowledge is defined as knowledge about cognition and the self-regulation of cognition (Baker & Brown, 1984; Brown, Armbruster & Baker, 1986). Metacognitive strategies are behaviors undertaken by the learners to plan, arrange, and evaluate their own learning (Singhal, 2001). As related to reading, metacognitive strategies includes recognizing the more important information in the text; using context to sort out a misunderstanding segment; skimming portions of the text; previewing headings, pictures, and summaries; using search strategies for finding specific information; formulating questions about the information; using a dictionary; using word-formation and affix information to guess word meanings; taking notes; summarizing information; self-monitoring and correcting errors; and so on (Grabe, 1991; Singhal, 2001). Numerous studies have shown that good readers are more effective in using metacognitive strategies than less fluent readers (Singhal, 2001; Grabe, 2009).

Monitoring comprehension is commonly discussed as a major reading strategy that improves comprehension (Grabe, 2009). According to Grabe, almost any strategy that supports main-idea comprehension could be seen as a choice for monitoring comprehension. Making an outline is an activity that allows the students to check whether or not they fully comprehend what they have read. If they find something out of the realm of the writer's focus or illogical, they have to go back

to the text, read more carefully, and clarify misunderstanding, all of which are strategies used for comprehension monitoring (Grabe, 2009). Thus, outlining and summarizing could possibly help improve the students' comprehension, making them become fluent readers.

Research methodology

The research method would be action research. Having studied action research methodology, the author decided to follow the basic process: *planning, acting, observing, and reflecting* (Kemmis & McTaggart 1988).

Planning

The author thought about what she would have to do in class, and found that the following items were needed: a suitable text, a reading comprehension test, two questionnaires, and progress sheets.

A suitable text

The text that was being used consisted of 6 units, each of which contained quite a long text (about 1,000-1,300 words, taking about 7-9 hours to finish each unit), and presented reading strategies bit by bit throughout the text. In this research project, it would be more appropriate to review all the reading strategies the students had learned from the prerequisites, and give them shorter texts in the beginning (about 500-800 words, taking 4-6 hours to cover) prepared specially to help students learn how to write an outline and a summary. The author started by surveying commercial texts, but could not find any that suited the need stated above. Thus, a suitable text was prepared, and in late 2008 it was ready for use, with permission from the English Department. (Later on it became a textbook used for the EG 221 course, called *Pathways to Reading Comprehension*). It consisted of two parts. The first part was a review of all the reading strategies that the students had already learned from the prerequisites (i.e. prediction; text organization and transitions; skimming; scanning; dealing with new words; references; and inferences). Furthermore, it detailed how to write an outline and a summary with four articles (about 600-800 words) for practicing outlining and summarizing. The second part consisted of six longer texts (about 1,000-1,300 words) for practicing all the learned strategies.

A reading comprehension test

Together with the text, a test paper was also prepared to be used in the beginning (pretest) and at the end of the course (posttest), the interval of which was three months. The test consisted of a reading passage, which was an article from the *Time* magazine called *Stressed-out Kids* (Gorman,

2000), the length of which was 600 words. This test was used on six trials by three instructors (with 128 students) and improved before being used in this research. The test tasks included five multiple-choice questions, six open-ended questions, and a completion task on outlining, the same features as the test tasks on the examination papers for EG 221. The same form of test was used because it would test not only reading but also writing, the latter of which covered about 60-75% of the EG 221 examinations. In this way, the students' writing abilities could be compared, both pre-treatment (their proficiency) and post-treatment (their achievement). More importantly, writing was a crucial part in this action research since it was part of the problem mentioned earlier as to why the students did not earn good grades for this course.

Two questionnaires

Two questionnaires were written in Thai to avoid language problems. The first one was used after the students had learned how to write an outline and a summary from the outline for the first time (see Appendix 2). The purposes were 1) to see whether or not the students had prior knowledge or experience of outlining and summarizing; 2) to survey their attitudes towards outlining and summarizing; and 3) to encourage the students to think about advantages of these activities. The outcome would be useful for making lesson plans.

The second questionnaire, used at the end of the course, concerned the students' satisfaction about the course, self-evaluation, and recommendations. The students would have a chance to reflect on what they had learned. This would also be helpful for further planning (see Appendix 3).

Progress sheets

A progress sheet was designed to record the students' scores on outlining and summarizing, as well as notes on their problems or weak points such as sentence structures, vocabulary, transitions, etc. The purpose of this was to monitor their progress and assist them when and where needed.

Acting and observating

The research was conducted with a group of 17 second-year TU students in the second semester of 2008. The class started by discussing the course outline, in which the emphasis was on *outlining* and *summarizing*, and then the students were tested (using the *pretest* paper) before beginning the lesson to evaluate their reading proficiency.

After a few weeks of practice on general reading strategies (e.g., recognizing transitions and relationships between ideas; dealing with unfamiliar words and expressions; recognizing references; skimming; and predicting), the work on outlining and summarizing was introduced. At this stage, the students learned how to identify main ideas and supporting details, all at a paragraph level. When they understood what they were expected to perform, the first questionnaire was given to survey their prior experience on outlining and summarizing and attitude towards these activities. This was meant to encourage them to think about the advantage of the activities. It turned out that 88.33% of the students had learned outlining and only 11.76% had done summary writing before, but it was free writing. As for advantages of doing outlining and summarizing, all the students said it would help enhance their comprehension. However, all of them anticipated two main problems: 1) More than 70% were concerned about vocabulary, comprehension, and how to identify the main ideas and supporting details. 2) 23.52% worried about how to express their ideas in writing. This provided useful information for further planning.

In teaching how to make an outline from an article, the author started with a very short article called "Is Going Nutty Good for You?" (see Appendix 4), and demonstrated the techniques for separating the main idea from the supporting details: using questions; and using text organization. From this article, the author did the following:

1) Showed the title of this article on the screen, and asked the students to guess what the topic was. In the first place, no one knew what it was. Without the context, they could not link the word *going nutty* with *nuts*, but after they were encouraged to think about the word *nutty*, especially its sound and spelling, some of them said, "It's about *nuts*."
2) Asked them to skim through the text to find out whether their answer was correct. Their answers were: Nuts; Benefits of nuts; A health benefit of nuts; and Nuts and diabetes.
3) Asked them, "What does the writer say about this topic?"
4) Told them to read the text carefully to find the answer.
   The answers were:
   A. Nuts are good for you.
   B. Nuts reduce the risk of diabetes.
   C. According to a study in the Journal of the American Medical Association, nuts in all forms, including peanut butter, reduce the risk of adult-onset diabetes. (Some of them copied the whole sentence.)

5) Held a class discussion in which the students gave their opinions about each choice. Upon reflection with some notes taken immediately after the class, a conversation between the instructor (I) and the students (S) can be produced as shown below:

I: Which one do you think is the best answer to the question in the title?

S: C

I: Why?

S: It gives more information.

I: Do you need all the information in C to answer this question? (Are nuts good for you?)

S: No.

I: OK. Tell me all the words in C that you think are needed for your answer.

S: nuts/nuts in all forms/reduce/diabetes/the risk of diabetes/adult…. What does 'adult-onset diabetes' mean?

I: A good question! Let's look at the word *diabetes* first. What part of speech is it? It's in the pattern…to reduce (v.)+ the risk (n.)+ of +(adult-onset) diabetes, right?

S: of+ noun. It's a noun. (This pattern had been discussed before.)

I: Right! The text is about *health*, right? So, what should it be? Nuts can reduce the risk of …..what?

S: A disease.

I: Yes. It's an illness or a medical condition dealing with sugar in the blood. What do you think it's called in Thai?

S: It's….(in Thai).

I: Right! As for *onset*, it means *the beginning of something.* OK. Now, we're going to put this idea into a sentence, using our own words. Think of the pattern: SVO. What is the subject?

S: Nuts/Nuts in all forms.

I: Nuts *in all forms* is ok. This means *in the particular way they exist or appear.* What about the verb? What can be used in place of *reduce*?

S: lower/ minimize

I: Very good. So, we've got…Nuts in all forms can lower/minimize the risk of diabetes. And what about *adult-onset*? …….

Adult-onset diabetes is a medical term, so you can't change it. If you find an

> expression you think is a medical/legal/technical/scientific term like this, check by using Google search. It's a useful tool. So' we've got: Nuts in all forms can lower the risk of adult-onset diabetes. This sentence answers the question why nuts are good for you. It's the main idea of this article. Now, you have to find the details to support this idea, and I'll show you how to do this……..

After the students got the main idea, the author asked them to reread the text more carefully to find out why nuts could minimize the risk of adult-onset diabetes. Most of the students found the answer in sentences 5-8, which showed an analysis and assumption that polyunsaturated fats, fiber, and magnesium in nuts may help maintain the levels of blood sugar. This was the major supporting detail. It presented the reason why nuts could lower the risk of adult-onset diabetes. The author then led the students to a discussion of text organization, and how to write an outline and a summary (see Appendix 4).

It can be argued that such a summary may be obtained from the three questions asked above: 1) *What is the topic?*; 2) *What does the writer say about this topic?*; and 3) *Why can nuts minimize the risk of adult-onset diabetes?* That might be true, but this strategy (using an outline to write a summary) helps the students become aware of text organization, and learn how to monitor their comprehension, which in the long run will make them become strategic readers, being able to separate the gist from details automatically, even with long complicated texts.

As stated earlier, if the students got an inaccurate main idea or supporting detail(s), they would get an illogical summary. The article entitled "Bamboo Cures Earthquakes" (see Appendix 5) was a good example of this. In this case, text organization really helped. Many students had problems with the first paragraph. Some talked about the Iranian earthquake; others thought about bamboo housing. The class had a long discussion why the latter idea was correct. (If the students put *the Iranian earthquake* in the outline, they would learn later when they wrote the summary that it would not go with the other two paragraphs, which described the prototype house, the testing, and the reason why bamboo was used.)

In addition to the practice of general reading strategies including outlining and summarizing presented in the text, extra work on outlining and summarizing was given every other week, and the students' progress was recorded on an Individual Progress Sheet. At the same time, they had to do

the reading project in groups. The author gave them advice from the start when they tried to find suitable articles to produce outlines and summaries, helped them get the gist or thesis of the text and the main idea of each paragraph, and worked closely with them on the outline. After that, they had to produce a summary from the outline by themselves. After 36 hours of instruction (about 3 months), they were given the posttest. The scores of the pretest and the posttest were recorded and then analyzed. Also, the scores and the written work from the outline part in the two tests (5 points), and the class work were analyzed.

Reflecting

In this part of the process, the first indicator of effectiveness that needed discussion was the findings from the pretest and posttest scores. The first question leading to this action research was: Can teaching reading that emphasizes outlining and summarizing help improve reading comprehension?

The pretest scores ranged from 30%-70%. The average score was 57.65%, which meant the majority of the students were somewhat capable of reading. The posttest scores ranged from 32% to 82%, the average of which was 70.82%. When the pretest and posttest scores were analyzed using T-test, there was a significant increase [$t = -3.931$, $p < .01$]. This meant teaching reading that emphasizes outlining and summarizing could enhance the students' reading capability.

However, since the number of population was only 17, the statistical analysis of data alone might not be reliable. The author, therefore, went back to the original test papers, and compared the outline items in the pretest with those in the posttest papers of each student. Some interesting points were found, as discussed below.

The content in the outline (see Appendix 6) was part of the main point of the article, in which Gorman, the writer, discussed why children and teens today seemed more anxious, and suggested what parents should do to help their kids cope with stress. After the pretest and posttest scores of this part were compared, it was found that 64.70 % of the students earned more marks in the posttest, getting 1-2 more points.

In addition to the item in the pretest and posttest mentioned above, another important evidence of success was the students' reading project. Three out of five groups (60% of the class)

had a considerable improvement. Their first draft outlines showed that they understood more than 70% of the texts.

Another point that indicated the students' reading achievement was the two tests (for the midterm and the final examinations) produced by the 14 instructors teaching this course that semester. The midterm and the final tests were more or less at the same level of difficulty as the pretest and posttest used in this research project. And the subjects in this study did well in both the midterm and the final examinations. The average scores of the pretest, the midterm and the final examinations, and the posttest (all after transferred to percentage) increased from 57.65%, 63.33 %, 66.92 %, to 70.82%, respectively.

The students' self-evaluation from the questionnaire completed in the last month of the course also confirmed the achievement. 12.5 % of the students said their reading ability had increased dramatically, and 50 % said it had improved a lot. From the results, 50% of the students who expressed their opinions about reading said they had gained more understanding of the text they read and were able to find the main points more quickly. Some said they had also learned to read in chunks and were able to separate a main clause from a subordinate clause, making them comprehend more. Other students said this approach made them visualize the outline of what they read, making them clearly understand the whole story and enjoy reading. 23.52% of the students said they had some improvements, but still had problems with vocabulary. As a whole, all the students said they were pleased with this instructional strategy.

As for writing, the question was: *Can this controlled method of writing summaries help improve writing ability?* Unlike reading, the progress of which could be achieved more quickly and seen more easily by means of comprehension check, the improvement in writing in this case could not be proved easily since the students tended to copy the answers from the texts, instead of paraphrasing. However, when going through all the students' writing tasks, the test papers and the class work, the author found that there was an indication of improvement, although it was not statistically significant.

The first improvement was that the students appeared to gain more understanding of sentence structure. This could be seen from the main idea of the outline item in the posttest when compared with the pretest (see Appendix 6). 58.82 % of the students got the right answer in the posttest

(about a 35% increase from the pretest). These students were able to use their own words and write in chunks and sentences, as shown below:

- *How to deal with kids' anxiety*
- *How to help children reduce stress*
- *The way to protect children against stress*
- *The way to help the next generation cope with stress*
- *There are many ways to help the next generation deal with anxiety.*
- *There are many ways to help you cope with your children's anxieties.*

Another example of progress was that the students were more thoughtful and showed an attempt to express their ideas, though they still copied the answer from the text. The example of this came from the same source. In the pretest, half of the class copied the answer from the text: *Adults can still do plenty to help the next generation cope.* However, in the posttest about half of this group still copied the text, but added more information (see the underlined part): *Adults can (still) do plenty to help the next generation cope with stress/anxiety.* This kind of improvement could also be seen in many cases in their class work and the reading project.

There was also an improvement in vocabulary, some of which could be seen in the students' class work and the reading project. For example, they used words outside the texts such as *subject* and *divide* to summarize a paragraph: *The subjects who were at high risk of cardiovascular disease were divided into three groups.*

In addition, the students were aware of cohesive devices. This could be seen in their summaries in which they used expressions like moreover, however, therefore, this practice, such questions etc.

The most welcome improvement of all was the students' attitude. From the second questionnaire, more than half of the students said they understood English structures better and could write better sentences. Some said they could apply the knowledge from this course (both reading and writing) to other subjects.

Still, 23.52% said their writing ability had improved, but they could write only short sentences and could not express everything they wanted. This problem was discussed in the last

session of the course, and the students thought there were two reasons why their writing capability did not improve as much as reading: 1) Sentence structure was quite new to them, so it took time to understand and practice; and 2) Vocabulary needed to be acquired to help paraphrase or summarize.

Conclusion

As stated in the beginning, this action research has been specially designed to help college students improve their reading ability using outlines and summaries. Three questions are involved: *1) Can teaching reading that emphasizes outlining and summarizing help improve reading comprehension?; 2) Can this controlled method of writing summaries help improve writing ability?; and, 3) Would the students be satisfied with this approach?* The first question has been answered above. Both the statistical analysis of data and paper work analysis show great improvement in reading. Also, nearly 90% of the students were very pleased with this approach, and 60% thought their reading capability improved a lot, which corresponds with the statistics.

As for writing, it had been anticipated that the structures learned from the reading texts and all writing practices such as answering the questions after reading, paraphrasing, writing an outline and a summary, would help increase the students' writing capability. Unfortunately, it did not improve as much as reading. Two obstacles found from the study are the students' limited vocabulary and the limitation of time, 48 hours a semester.

However, the effects from this study cannot be generalized since the sample population is very small. What can be done for the next group of students is to address the problems that emerged in this study. The number of hours allocated per semester cannot be changed so the solution might be to encourage self-study, e.g. for writing, and the instructor has to prepare self-taught materials, accordingly. Other problems to be fixed in the next lesson plan are those concerning vocabulary, transition, and paraphrasing. The instructor can help enhance vocabulary by using mapping concepts (Grabe, 2009), or help them build vocabulary repertoire, for example. Also, transition and paraphrasing should be emphasized and practiced continually so that students can use them automatically when writing an outline and a summary.

The last point that should be mentioned here is that, as stated earlier, this group of students was quite capable of reading from the start. Thus, it is interesting to employ this approach to the less-capable or poor students.

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Appendix 1

EG 221: Reading for Information

Time allocation / semester: 48 hrs. (3 hours / week)

Course description: Study and practice of reading skills used in reading informative texts, outlining and summarizing, giving opinions about the texts through oral discussion or writing.

Course outline:

- Predicting what the text to be read is about
- Identifying text organization
- Skimming and reading for main ideas
- Dealing with new words
- Recognizing references
- Drawing inferences
- Finding specific information
- Recognizing relationships between ideas
- Outlining
- Summarizing ideas
- Expressing opinions about the subjects discussed in the text

Text: *Reading for Information* by Pimonpun Rajatanun and an outside reading, which is changed every semester. The main text is comprised of six units, each of which consists of a long story, all authentic texts from such magazines as *The Time magazine*, *The Economist*, etc., the length of which is about 1,000-1,300 words, and exercises designed to teach the points mentioned in the course outline. The exercises in each unit start with text organization, in which the students have to write a sentence summarizing each or some paragraphs. Others include reading comprehension, and an outline and a summary of 1-5 paragraphs from the story, the approach of which is writing a summary from an outline.

Evaluation:

Midterm exam	60	points
Final exam	90	points
Class work	50	points
Total	200	points

Types of Exam Questions:

There are seen passages (including outside reading) and unseen passages, each of which consists of 5-10 multiple choice questions and 10-20 open-ended questions.

Types of Class work: This includes quizzes, project work, and class participation.

Appendix 2

<u>โปรดกาเครื่องหมาย x ในช่องว่าง และกรอกข้อความตามความเป็นจริง</u>

1. ท่านเคยฝึกทำ outline มาก่อนหรือไม่ _____ เคยทำ _____ ไม่เคยทำ

2. ท่านเคยฝึกทำ summary มาก่อนหรือไม่ _____ เคยทำ _____ ไม่เคยทำ

3. เคยทำ _____ outline หรือ/และ _____ summary ในวิชา _____
   ชั้น/ปี _____ ชื่อสถาบันการศึกษา _____
   โปรดระบุวิธีการโดยย่อ _____
   _____
   _____

4. ท่านคิดว่าการทำ outline / summary ตามที่ได้เรียนไป **<u>จะมีประโยชน์หรือไม่</u>** โปรดให้เหตุผล
   _____ มี เพราะ _____
   _____
   _____ไม่มี เพราะ _____
   _____

5. ท่านคิดว่า **<u>จะมีปัญหา</u>**ในการทำ outline / summary หรือไม่
   _____ มี ได้แก่ _____
   _____
   _____ ไม่มี

6. ความคิดเห็นอื่นๆ หรือ ข้อเสนอแนะ
   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____

Appendix 3

<u>โปรดกาเครื่องหมาย x ในช่องว่าง และกรอกข้อความตามความเป็นจริง</u>

	มากที่สุด	มาก	ปานกลาง	น้อย	น้อยที่สุด
1. ท่านมีความ***<u>พึงพอใจ</u>***กับการสอนโดยเน้นที่ outline และ summary มาก-น้อยเพียงใด	___	___	___	___	___
2.ท่านคิดว่าท่านมีความสามารถ***<u>ในการอ่าน</u>***เพิ่มขึ้นมาก-น้อยเพียงใด	___	___	___	___	___

โปรดให้เหตุผล _____

_____

3. ท่านคิดว่าท่านมีความสามารถ***<u>ในการเขียน</u>***เพิ่มขึ้นมาก-น้อยเพียงใด	___	___	___	___	___

โปรดให้เหตุผล _____

_____

4. เท่าที่ผ่านมา ท่าน**<u>มีปัญหา</u>**ในการทำ outline / summary หรือไม่

_____ มี ได้แก่ _____

_____

_____ ไม่มี

5. ความคิดเห็นอื่นๆ หรือ ข้อเสนอแนะเพื่อแก้ปัญหาในข้อ 4

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Appendix 4

Is Going Nutty Good for You?

They may be greasy and fattening, but nuts are also good for you.(1) According to a study in the *Journal of the American Medical Association,* nuts in all forms, including peanut butter, reduce the risk of adult-onset diabetes.(2) After analyzing the munching habits of more than 83,000 nurses for up to 16 years, researchers found that women who consumed 150 g. of nuts each week (about five handfuls) were 30% less likely to develop diabetes than women who rarely touched them.(3) Five tablespoons of peanut butter reduced the risk 20%.(4) What's the secret?(5) It's fat—but the good kind. (6) Nuts contain polyunsaturated fats that researchers suspect may help keep blood- sugar levels stable. (7) The high levels of fiber and magnesium in nuts may have a similar effect.(8) "Just about everything in nuts is healthy," says Frank Hu, the study's leader and a nutrition professor at the Harvard School of Public Health.(9) To get the most benefit, it's best to use nuts as a substitute for high-carb snack foods such as potato chips and pretzels.(10) But because nuts weigh in at an average of 5 calories per gram, you shouldn't go overboard.(11)

--By Janice M. Horowitz

(From ***Time*** ◆ December 23, 2002)

Outline

Is Going Nutty Good for You?

Main idea: Nuts in all forms can lower the risk of adult-onset diabetes.
Supporting detail(s): Polyunsaturated fats, fiber, and magnesium in nuts may help maintain the levels of blood sugar.

Summary

Nuts in all forms can lower the risk of adult-onset diabetes. This might be because polyunsaturated fats, fiber, and magnesium in nuts help maintain the levels of blood sugar.

Appendix 5

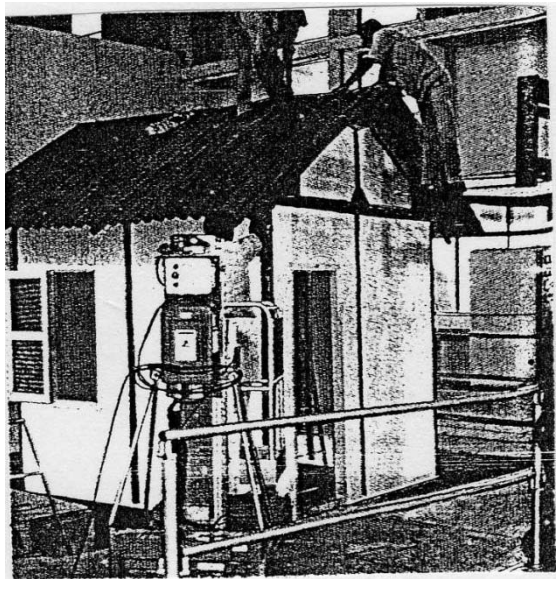
Bamboo Cures Earthquakes

Last December's earthquake in the Iranian city of Bam took a huge death toll—roughly 40,000 people—largely because of the collapse of thousands of mud-brick buildings. If a group of researchers in India are successful, the next earthquake might not be as devastating.

British and Indian engineers are developing earthquake-proof housing using a cheap, ubiquitous material: bamboo. (1)

They designed a prototype house built around waterproofed bamboo sheet roofing and bamboo-reinforced concrete walls. To test the structure, the engineers, sponsored by the U.K. Department of International Development, took it to the Earthquake Engineering and Vibration Research Centre in Bangalore (bottom-right), which has a state-of-the-art earthquake simulator. The researchers shook the house with five consecutive 30-second pulses, equivalent to 7.8 on the Richter scale. The simulation was more than 10 times as violent as the Bam earthquake, yet the house emerged unscathed. "We didn't even crack the paint," says engineer Paul Follett, of Britain's Timber Research and Development Association. (2)

By some estimates, more than a billion people already live in bamboo structures. The innovation lies in developing ways to exploit bamboo's resilience. Easily prefabricated, fire resistant, and far lighter than steel, bamboo-based structures could be assembled in three weeks and last 50 years. At five dollars a square foot, they would cost roughly half as much as brick-and-block construction. Follett says the project will follow an "open source" model: "Whatever is developed is freely available for the common good." (3) *–Matthew Power*



(From ***Discover*** ◆ August 2004)

Appendix 6

The Outline Part of the Test

Stressed-out Kids

From paragraphs 4 to 10, complete the following outline. (4 points)

(There are many) ways to help (your) kids cope with stress.
Main idea: _____ (1)

Supporting details:

A. Developing a better appreciation of the limits of individualism and strengthening social ties.

Limiting the amount of violence your kids will face.
B. _____ (1)

C. Not sharing your worries with your children.

Keeping reasonable expectations for your kids.
D. _____ (1)

Doing regular exercise to reduce your own anxieties, and give your kids a good model.
E. _____ (1)

Biodata
Usuma Chuenchompoo is an assistant professor at the Department of English, Faculty of Liberal Arts, Thammasat University. She obtained an MS in Technological and Adult Education from the University of Tennessee, U.S.A., and a Diploma in Teaching English Overseas from Leeds University, U.K. Her research interests include reading strategies, and reading and writing relationships. She has been teaching reading and writing for more than 17 years and has written two books: *Pathways to Reading Comprehension* (2007), and *Writing through Reading* (2010).