

**A case study of the effectiveness of pictures to guide young learners in writing stories in the
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Thesis (M.A.(ELT))--Assumption University, 2008**

Abstract

For middle school students in Thailand, writing activities have often been restricted to grammar-oriented exercises. Creative writing that engages students in using the target language communicatively has been neglected. Students at this level of proficiency, if provided with effective and stimulating writing instruction, are able to compose fascinating stories.

The purpose of this study is to explore the effectiveness of pictures in prompting middle school students' narrative writing. The subjects in this study are thirty-five Year Seven and Eight students from two classes at Traill International School, Bangkok. The data consisted of the six narrative writing assignments of these students, which were analyzed to find out whether more effective stories were developed from picture prompts than from topic (verbal) prompts. Data collection was preceded by a pilot study to try out the design. As a result of the pilot study, some details of the course design were revised, although the overall procedure remained the same. questionnaires were used to survey the students' motivation for and enjoyment of writing before and after the writing project.

The findings are summarized as follows: First, picture aids facilitate students' organizational skills for story writing. Second, pictorial presentation evoked linguistic resources in the students' minds that helped to enrich their story content. Third, pictorial images stimulated students' imaginations and added creativity to their stories.

Furthermore, writing improvements through the writing project in general and the pictorial instruction in particular also led to the students' positive attitudes toward writing and stronger motivation, as well. The study findings thus provide evidence of the importance of using visual aids to teach writing to middle school students.

