

THE EFFECTS OF SELF-DIRECTED LEARNING ON THE ENGLISH READING COMPREHENSION ABILITY OF MBA STUDENTS

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Abstract

In this study, self-directed learning (SDL) refers to practices for English reading comprehension ability of individual students outside of a classroom for 7 consecutive weeks. The objectives were to investigate the effect of SDL on English reading comprehension ability and its effect size; and to explore how SDL improves English reading comprehension ability of the 33 MBA students of a private university in Bangkok, Thailand. This research project took the form of an embedded mixed methods design with a variant of the embedded experimental model. Quantitative data were collected by the reading part of TOEIC, and qualitative data by a Learning Summary and Evaluation Sheet, and by the teacher's reflections. The dependent samples t-test reveals that, on average, the English reading comprehension ability of the subject students before the SDL ($M = 12.30$, $SD = 2.76$), and that after the SDL project ($M = 13.33$, $SD = 3.30$) is significantly different ($p = 0.01$). This means that, on average, the English reading comprehension ability of the students in the post-test significantly increases from the pre-test. The effect size is 0.34, which means that its magnitude is "medium". SDL improves reading ability in terms of "increasing awareness of reading strategy use" (51.52%), "developing learning responsibility and effort" (21.21%), "providing freedom to learn" (21.21%), and "building self-confidence to read" (6.06%). Implications and applications are discussed, and recommendations are provided.

Key words: English, Graduate students, Reading comprehension, Self-directed learning

Introduction

In the 21st century, the English language has enormously broadened its crucial role in many fields that are inclusive of business. English is