

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

The ability to read has been known for many years to be very important as a part of growth. There's more recently been a growing acceptance of believing that a country's progress (social and economic) depends on it's people being able to access printed words, which in many cases contain indispensable knowledge. (Bamberger, 1975, p. 3). If anyone wanted to doubt the interest in books, it clearly would have been overwhelmed by the response from Unesco's initiative in proclaiming 1972 International Book Year. Almost all of the Organization's Member States launched national programs based on the main themes of the year, one of which was the promotion of the habit of reading. Although it can be just as easy to teach a child or adult to recognize letters and words, these important skills can be lost after some time. Those who are new to reading can become easily discouraged if books were not part of their natural cultural environment and books which appeal to their specific taste are unable to be accessed. Teachers, parents, librarians, and many other people around the world play a significant role in encouraging children to be aware of the importance and benefit of reading.

An examination of reading habits from different nations have demonstrated that to those who are responsible for promoting those books, the place the books go and occupy is their first priority of importance (Meek and Margaret, 1982). All people in authority no matter how big or small, must be convinced of exactly how important it is to read books if they will ever have a chance at working towards an improvement of the situation. They must then be able to pass this conviction onto students learning to read in a way that is suited to their stage of development and education.

There are three related principles concerning reading. Most importantly, reading is to do with language. Secondly, written language is the most important to communicate. This is because writers can communicate facts, feelings, and opinions in many ways to potential readers, who in turn have their own interests and needs bringing them to read these kinds of materials. Thirdly, reading makes sense in context. These three principles can be useful for readers to improve their reading proficiency and

promote good reading habits. The aim throughout has been to consider ways for teachers and parents to show learners that reading is meaningful not just as the psychological process of getting some meaning from written texts, but as a social activity in the real world, and also be an enjoyable activity along the way (Bamberger, 1975, p.4).

To become strong readers, children must develop a real interest in reading (Dallman, Rouch, Chang & Deboer, 1960, p. 360). When parents and children read together, children have a chance to hear and learn how adults speak. Therefore, reading and talking together are activities that reinforce each other (Monson & McClenathan, 1979). Simply able to read is inadequate to modern life. Reading must be practiced and put in to use. (www.ifla.org/IV/ifla65/papers/091-114e.htm).

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The Thai government is trying to improve reading habits through a campaign. Thais read at least 12 lines per day (www.drflowery.blogspot.com). Reading behavior varies according to country and area (Bamburger, 1975, p. 10). In some western countries, surveys showed that 32-55 % of the population was reading a book at any given time. Similarly, borrowing and purchasing books has been measured at between about 6-20 % (*Lesen, Leihen und Kaufen von buchern*, 1970, p. 35). What does it mean that some people read more than others? How does reading behavior reflect social values? Factors include how much people are willing to pay to read, culture, opportunities provided by schools and libraries.

Children are most motivated to read for between ages 8 and 13. After that, many children are distracted by other interests, or are put off reading because they don't enjoy school. (Cleary, 1972, p. 312).

Meek (1982) also says that parents play an important role in encouraging children to read (p. 18). Bettelheim and Zelan (1982, p. 54) has shown that children are more likely to read if they see that their parents value reading. If children see that their parents enjoy reading and take it seriously, they want to learn what their parents know. Many parents do not know how to help their children with reading.

1.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1.3.1 To study reading habits and non- reading habits of year 5 students at Watbangtoei School.

1.3.2 To study concepts or methodologies of parents in terms of promoting reading habits and non-reading habits.

1.3.3 To study problems which are obstacles for promoting reading habits.

1.4 DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

Young readers mean children who have reading habits. They spend much time reading until the reading behavior becomes their reading habits. Although they have some difficulties in reading but they don't give up; on the other hand, they read every kind of reading material. They love to read every kind of books, not only textbooks. Moreover they have pleasure in reading. They think books can entertain them and significantly they love reading more than doing other activities.

Young non-readers mean children who do not love to read. They think that reading is a boring thing to do and reading causes them to have a headache. They spend much more time doing other activities than reading. Plus they don't realize the significance of reading.

Habit means an acquired pattern of behavior that often occurs automatically

Behavior refers to the actions or reactions of an object or organism, usually in relation to the environment. Behavior can be conscious or unconscious, overt or covert, and voluntary or involuntary.

Occurrence of behavior means that the behavior occurs because of human and environmental reactions which can be learned and changed by a learning process which has consequences, such as imitation, action. The continual actions become natural routine.

Reading means an interpretation from one person to another person by using language by means of communication that readers have to understand with the message and interpret it to thinking and bring the thinking to use favorably.

Significance of reading means reading is a necessity for life and important for studying and learning for careers. Reading is important for enhancing intelligence. Plus

reading can entertain readers. They have pleasure and joy when reading in their daily life. Reading is significant from young readers to elderly readers.

Methodologies and reading processes mean scanning, reading for concepts, reading for main ideas, reading details for studying, including reading for judgment and reading for analysis.

Factors affecting reading proficiency mean effective reading must consist of readers' intelligence levels, maturity, motivation, physical conditions, and characteristics, internal and external circumstances.

Factors influencing reading mean factors that affect reading, successful or not successful, concerning influence from family, friends, and school, mass media, and book business.

Advantages of reading mean reading has benefits. It helps people enhance their knowledge, develop thinking, develop professional quality, develop personality and/or is beneficial for the country development.

Reading categories mean reading aloud and not reading aloud. Reading can be divided from its content, such as textbooks, magazines, non-fiction, Buddha's teaching books, Newspapers, electronic media. Communication medium is another category, such as letters, telexes, faxes, note paper, advertisement, labels, and trademarks.

Reading problems mean when children do not like to read, do not have time to read, do not have money to buy printing media, and do not have people who help them to read. Plus they can not read. They are unhealthy or disabled. Moreover, they do not concentrate on reading. They have some problems from both family and school. They do not realize the importance of reading. In addition, the places for reading are not appropriate and the print used may not be suitable.

Characteristics of good readers mean good readers must read with speed, correctness, and understanding. Plus they must have readings interests and know how to read. And good readers must have firm concentration in reading.

Categories of books mean books which are not textbooks. There are other categories of interesting books, such as, fiction, non-fiction, classic literatures, fairy tales, science fiction, religious books and political or sociological books.

Cultivating reading habits mean the ways a family promotes children's reading habits and whether the family is a good reader example. Furthermore, the family realizes the importance of reading.

Good reading behaviors mean all readers' behaviors that show they love to read. They have been trained, encouraged, and persuaded since they were young. They regularly read and practice reading until the reading behaviors become natural and habitual.

Promoting reading habits from family means bringing different strategies to built, urge, and promote children to take interest in the family's books by having a way to educate which is instructing, talking, suggesting and taking young readers to bookstores or giving them financial support for buying books. Family can be a good example to promote reading by being readers, so that they can imitate from their family. Besides, family has to build reinforcement, such as giving praise, rewards, suggesting, and blaming in order that children have reading habits. Moreover the reading environment is another important factor to facilitate their reading satisfaction.

Family means a group of people who live in the same house, having interactions with one another, but having different roles, such as roles of husband and wife, parents and children, sisters and brothers, etc. Family loves and takes care of each other; in addition, they promote development of family's members.

Responsibility of family means giving birth, taking care, and nurturing, protecting family's members, including being a good example for the family's members.

1.5 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

1.5.1 Scope of the study in terms of content covers habits of reading lovers and non-reading lovers, reading attitudes, reasons that young readers like to read and non young readers do not like to read, strategies that parents use for promoting children who love to read and do not love to read; in addition, parents' problems which obstruct children's reading habits.

1.5.2 Scope of the study in terms of target groups. The target group of this case study is primary students in year five, parents of students who love reading, and parents of students who do not love reading.

1.5.3 Scope of the study in terms of area. In this case study the area of the case study was Watbangteoi School, Beungkum District, Bangkok.

1.5.4 Scope of the study in terms of time. The case study was researched from November to February 2009.

1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

1.6.1 To know reading behaviors of year five students who love to read books and students who do not love to read books and to know the reading habits, attitudes, and suggestions of the students.

1.6.2 To know parents' strategies for promoting reading behaviors of year five students who love to read and do not love to read, in order to know the strategy differences of the two groups of parents.

1.6.3 To know problems that can obstruct parents promoting their children's behaviors.

1.6.4 In this case study the investigated knowledge and information can be useful for people who are interested, such as teachers, parents, and students.