



## The Use of Task-Based Learning on Dhamma to Develop Students' English Reading Comprehension at Mahapajapati Buddhist College (MBC)

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### Abstract

**Background and Aim:** As an international language, English is a major medium in both educational fields and the workforce, and the drive to practice English as a foreign language needs to be accelerated. For this study, An active teaching method used to improve and develop students' English reading comprehension proficiency was the use of task-based learning (TBL) which is driven by the need to design an end product. The objective of this study is (1) to investigate the effects of teaching English via task-based learning on Dhamma to develop students' English reading comprehension and (2) to study the student's satisfaction with the use of this method.

**Materials and Methods:** The samples of this study were 25 students in the first semester of the 2022 academic year at MBC, Pak Thong Chai District, Nakhon Ratchasima Province. They were selected by using cluster random sampling. The instruments consisted of 3 lesson plans, the English reading comprehension test to assess students' English reading comprehension skills, and a questionnaire to explore students' satisfaction after learning English reading comprehension via task-based learning. The statistics used were the mean score, standard deviation, and t-test for the dependent.

**Results:** The results of this study revealed that the post-test mean score of the English reading proficiency test of the students learning English reading comprehension through a task-based learning approach on Dhamma was significantly improved, and 2) the students had positive satisfaction towards learning the Pali language through task-based learning on Dhamma. In addition, task-based learning provided them with the opportunity to use real information sources, process information, and assess the information gained. They also agreed that the learning process of task-based learning promoted cooperation among group members and working in a group.

**Conclusion:** the MBC students stressed the importance of having reading cultural experiences which make them more engrossed when they read the different thing relevant texts.

**Keywords:** Task-Based Learning (TBL); Dhamma; English Reading Comprehension; Mahapajapati Buddhist College (MBC)

### Introduction

Nowadays, schools and universities have found out about the situation and problem and they tried to develop English instruction. In Thailand, students are not confident in using English in their daily life. It also happened to students at Mahapajapati Buddhist College (MBC). Although, MBC has enhanced English courses in which students have more opportunities to use English. In addition, students need to be skilled in English not only in general basic four skills but also in a specific skill such as English reading comprehension skill. According to the Basic Education Core Curriculum B.E. (2008), Students need to learn about the four skills which are: writing, reading, speaking, and listening. In teaching and learning a foreign language, students are required to have English abilities and skills to share data, information, knowledge, experience and concepts, and opinions about various matters via English for communication skills under the four skills of the English language.

As an international language, English is a major medium in both educational fields and the workforce, and the drive to practice English as a foreign language needs to be accelerated. For this study, An active teaching method used to improve and develop students' English reading comprehension proficiency was the use of task-based learning (TBL) which is driven by the need to design an end product. It can draw

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together MBC students of mixed abilities, skills, and designs opportunities for individuals to reflect their different skills and creativities (Fried-Booth. 2002: 6). During the learning process of task-based learning, MBC students need to be actively engaged in the information gathering, processing and presenting over a period of learning timeline (Alan and Stoller. 2005: 10-21) and the learning outcome is in skill, knowledge, experience, and language mastery. Also, Sudrung, J., (2004) concluded in her research that learning English through a task-based learning method improved students' English reading comprehension skills, and their satisfaction was rated at a high level.

In conclusion, this study incorporated the learning contents of Dhamma into English reading comprehension to investigate whether the effects of learning English could promote students' English reading proficiency at Mahapajapati Buddhist College (MBC) and what level of student satisfaction they had after the learning process of task-based learning (TBL) focusing on Dhamma in Buddhism.

## Objectives

1. To examine the effects of task-based learning on Dhamma to develop students' English reading comprehension at MBC.
2. To explore students' satisfaction with learning English through 6 steps of a task-based learning approach on Dhamma to develop students' English reading comprehension skills.

## Literature review

Dhamma and task-based learning have been defined by many researchers and scholars in many different ways. From this part, the principles of Dhamma in Buddhism and the Principle of Task-based learning are presented as follows:

### 1) Principle of Dhamma in Buddhism

According to Buddhism, Dhamma is considered a philosophy bestowed by Sithata Gotama to his subjects via Lord Buddha's teachings made on many occasions over the lifetime of Lord Buddha. Dhamma provides essential guidance on appropriate conduct covering numerous aspects of life (Piboolsravut, P., 2000). The principles of Dhamma in Buddhism can be integrated into the learning context for the benefit of society to respond to students' learning changes and also their impact. The principles of Dhamma from Pali Canon are presented in Figure 1 below.

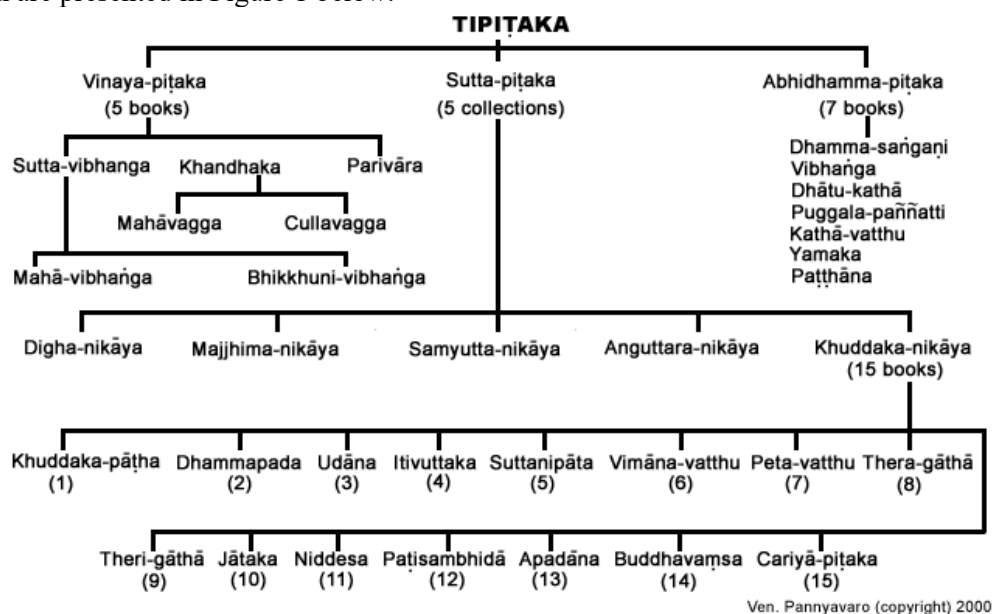


Figure 1 The Principle of Dhamma from Pali Canon

Source: Mahamakutarajavidyalaya. (1982)

[56]

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Figure 1 presents the three main elements and the conditions of Dhamma which are composed of moderation and adequate immunity. Apart from those three components, two other conditions are required to make the principles of Buddha's teachings: Vinaya-Pitaka, Sutta-Pitaka, and Abhidhamma-Pitaka.

## 2) The Principles of Task-Based Learning (TBL)

As Lightbrown and Spada (1999) stated, a communicative and task-based learning method involves goals that put the emphasis on the interaction and conversation with language use, not learning itself. A task-based learning method is an approach to language learning way that involves making a familiar learning task by applying the target language. Furthermore, TBL learning are very familiar work, the lecturers of English in a wide range of setting must be eager and obedient to what the learning curriculum leaders assign them about how they have to teach, and the publishers nearly everywhere describe their course textbooks as TBL lesson. TBL lesson caused Littlewood (2004) to state that the "TBL method has highly achieved something of the new orthodoxy" (p.319)

Additionally, TBL was first improved by N. Prabhu in Bangladore in India. Prabhu said that students may learn more effectively and their mindsets are based on the learning task, rather than on the English language they are applying (Prabhu, 1987; as cited in Littlewood, 2004). Nunan (2006) said that a learning task is a piece of learning content in the classroom activity involving students in an understanding, directing, producing, and interacting method in the target learning language, and the student's attention is based on motivating their grammatical knowledge to share meaning, and in which the learning objective is to share meaning rather than to manipulate form.

### The Stages of TBL

TBL is an alternative teaching and learning method for foreign language teachers. In a task-based learning lesson. The Learning activities are based on the completion of central task-based learning activities, and the language research is determined instantaneously as the students complete the learning activity of TBL. The learning stages of TBL are presented in Figure 2.

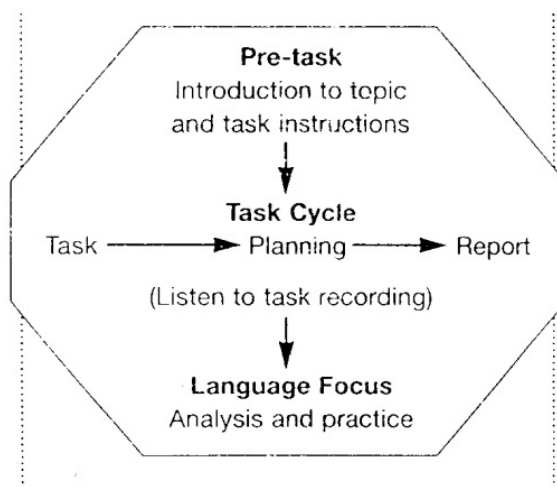


Figure 2 The learning stage of task-based learning (TBL) by Frost (2004)

According to Figure 2, the stages of task-based learning (TBL) consist of 4 phrases as follows:

#### 1) Pre-Task

The teacher begins the learning topic and provides the students learning directions on what they have to do at the TBL learning stage by assisting the students to recall the English language which may be helpful for the learning task. The pre-task stage is able to contain playing a recording of the student doing

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their learning task. TBL provides the students with a clear learning approach to what shall be expected from the stages of TBL learning. Ellis 2006) mentions that the first phase is pre-task and explains the various learning activities which both teachers and students can carry out before they begin the task-based learning approach. The learning objective of the pre-task phase is to prepare students to perform the learning task in ways that help support the acquisition.

#### 2) Task

The students complete their learning tasks in pairs and teams by applying the learning language resources as the teacher monitors and offers support. Task includes a learning lesson that is very essentially conversational in nature of messages, and it also includes opportunities for students to manage risks. Another learning process in this phase includes the express learning achievement and effective scaffolding for the student's learning efforts for their good communication.

#### 3) Planning

Students set up an oral and written presentation to describe the classroom and what happened during their learning task. They then learn what they are going to report to their teams. Meanwhile, the teacher is very open for the students to ask for recommendations to clear up any English language questions they may have after learning through TBL lessons.

#### 4) Report

Then, the students present orally in front of the class about their learning task. The teacher has the order of when a student reports their learning task and may provide the student with some quick feedback on their learning content. In this phase, the teacher may also play the role of a facilitator who makes a recording of others doing the same learning task for the students to compare

To sum up, the TBL method has made a significant learning process and has remained a potentially fertile method for many teachers and students who are ESL/EFL despite the fact that some researchers and scholars still have questions about the effectiveness of the TBL method.

### Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of the study is illustrated in Figure 1.

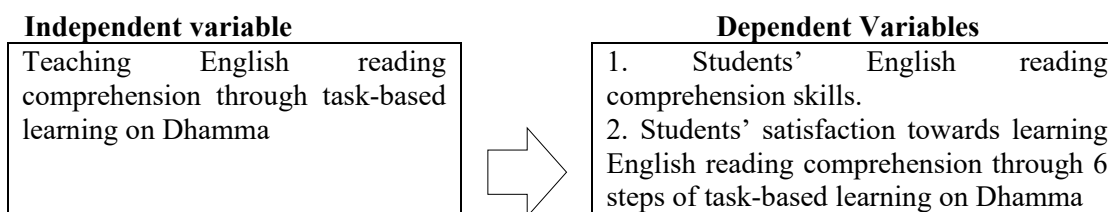


Figure 3 Conceptual framework of the study

### Methodology

**1. Population and Sample.** The population of this study comprised 60 students who enrolled in the faculty of humanities in English for communication program at Mahapajapati Buddhist College, Pak Thong Chai District, Nakhon Ratchasima Province, during the first semester of the academic year 2022. However, the sample was the 25 third-year students at Mahapajapati Buddhist College (MBC) enrolling in the first semester of the academic year 2022. The sample was selected through the cluster random sampling method.

**2. Research Instruments:** The research instruments used in this study were 6 lesson plans which covered a period of 6 weeks of 18 hours. The TBL lesson plans were composed of 2 sections: Dhamma and English reading comprehension through TBL lessons. The 2 sections, the learning goals, and learning objectives were constructed as presented in Table 1 below.

[58]

Citation:



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Table 1 The learning steps, goals, and objectives through 6 steps of TBL lesson plans.

Sections	6 steps of the TBL lesson	Learning Goals	Students' Learning Objectives
Section 1: Dhamma (3 hrs.)	Step 1: schema building	Identifying prior knowledge and definition of Dhamma	To explain the principle of Dhamma and the importance of learning Dhamma
Section 2: English reading comprehension through TBL lessons. (3 hrs.)	Step 2: Controlled practice.	Identifying and analyzing the effect	To explain the effects of Dhamma in English reading comprehension practice
	Step 3: Authentic Reading Comprehension Practice	Identifying the learning process of TBBL activities	To discuss the learning process of task-based learning, its benefits, and its procedures
	Step 4: Focus on linguistic elements	Agreeing on the learning content and scope of TBL	To discuss the outline of task-based learning, learning objectives, and final products of the TBL lesson
	Step 5: Provide freer practice	Writing the learning results of the study	To summarize the information gathered to support the findings.
	Step: 6 Introduce the pedagogical task	Presentation of TBL end products reflects their satisfaction towards targeted language	To present their products, to provide and receive feedback, and to evaluate their ending task.

**The instrument for data collection:** English reading comprehension test consisted of 100 items of multiple-choice questions with four alternatives and the total score was 60. The test was used to evaluate the students' English reading comprehension test before and after learning English reading comprehension through 6 steps of the task-based learning method. And The questionnaire consisted of 12 questions. The sample was asked to answer questions rating their satisfaction after learning via task-based learning and after the total learning English reading comprehension of 18 hours.

## Results

1. The English reading comprehension of 25 students of the samples were tested and scored by using the English reading comprehension pre-test and post-test. A comparison of the mean score was analyzed by using Arithmetic Mean ( $\bar{x}$ ), Standard Deviation (S.D), and t-test for the dependent. And A significant difference between the pre-test and post-test was presented in table 2.







Table 2 The comparison of the students' mean scores under the pre-test and the post-test.

Assessment	n	$\bar{x}$	S.D.	t	p
Pre-test	25	25.17	4.44	13.35*	.000
Post-test	25	32.29	3.16		

Table 2 above revealed that MBC students' post-test mean score (32.29) on the English reading comprehension test was significantly higher than the MBC students' pre-test mean score (25.27) at the level of .05. this indicated that the student's English reading comprehension had positively improved after learning English reading comprehension via task-based learning on Dhamma.

2. MBC students' responses to the questionnaire were analyzed by using the mean ( $\bar{x}$ ) and standard deviation (S.D.) as presented in table 3 below.

Table 3 The mean score and the standard deviation (S.D.) of the questionnaire.

Items	$\bar{x}$	S.D.	Interpretation
1. The experiences I have gained from learning English reading comprehension through task-based learning on Dhamma.	5.00	0.00	Strongly agree
2. I have gained English reading skills in real life from learning task-based learning on Dhamma.	5.00	0.00	Strongly agree
3. I apply modern technology more in learning English reading comprehension.	5.00	0.00	Strongly agree
4. I have known more about the Dhamma in Buddhism after learning English reading comprehension through task-based learning.	4.97	0.17	Strongly agree
5. Task-based learning made learning English reading comprehension more interesting.	4.66	0.48	Strongly agree
6. I have gained higher proficiency in English reading comprehension skills.	4.94	0.24	Agree
7. Task-based learning on Dhamma enhance me to use of English reading comprehension skills outside of the class anywhere and anytime.	4.03	0.30	Strongly agree
8. Task-Based Learning on Dhamma helped me become more responsible in learning English.	4.66	0.48	Strongly agree
9. Task-based learning helps me gain more confidence in using English.	4.63	0.65	Strongly agree
10. Task-based learning on Dhamma helped me learn new vocabulary.	4.74	0.56	Strongly agree
11. I enjoyed learning Dhamma in learning English reading comprehension through task-based learning activities.	4.91	0.28	Strongly agree
12. I participated more in the community in a reading-social context.	4.97	0.17	Strongly agree
<b>Total</b>	<b>4.79</b>	<b>0.22</b>	<b>Strongly agree</b>

Table 3, showed that with the mean score of 3,2, and 1, which were ranked first, most MBC students strongly agreed that they got English reading skills in real life from carrying out task-based learning by participating with the community. Question 7 was ranked the last with a mean score of 4.03 and a standard





deviation of 0.30. The MBC students only agreed that their English reading comprehension skills had been highly improved after the treatment. As the total mean score of the questionnaire was 4.79 with an S.D. of 0.22, it could be analyzed that the MBC students had positive satisfaction towards learning English reading comprehension through task-based learning on Dhamma.

## Discussion

The data of the English reading comprehension post-test led to the conclusion that the task-based learning method did improve MBC students' English reading comprehension ability. It showed that the MBC students' mean score highly increased from 25.17 in the pre-test to 32.29 in the post-test. It can be completely confirmed that task-based learning on Dhamma is very effective for MBC students' English reading comprehension proficiency. Moreover, the result of the MBC students' satisfaction with the TBL process of learning English reading comprehension was positively high, with a total mean of 4.79. The following can be considered factors of success.

### 1. Task-Based Learning Method

This study used the integration of task-based learning with Dhamma in Buddhism. During the learning process of the task-based learning method, students worked cooperatively in the group on the different learning topics concerning the Dhamma in Buddhism. The MBC students' individual development proceeded via social interaction as they were brainstorming on the target sites, and for the learning task. Put the related paper to support the finding

### 2. Dhamma in Buddhism

According to Buddhism, another factor that directly contributed to the success of this study was the integration of Dhamma into Buddhism. The learning contents of Dhamma in Buddhism promoted students' English reading comprehension skills in the way that they integrated their prior knowledge and experience they had gained from other learning sources into the updated information of English via reading comprehension skills, followed by listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The learning content of Dhamma in Buddhism provided the MBC students with multiple exposures to reading words, vocabulary, phrases, essays, paragraphs, and structure learned; they searched for information needed from various sources and then presented it orally in front of the class. In English reading comprehension, the word, vocabulary, phrase, essay, paragraph, and structure were used repeatedly by the students, and their reading skill in English reading comprehension ability increased (DeCarrico. 2001). In addition, It is also supported by Richards and Rodgers (2001), who pointed out that the coherence of useful information encouraged better learning of English and deeper procedure. Also, the learning content of Dhamma in Buddhism was authentic to the MBC students' daily lives. After learning English reading comprehension through the 6 steps of the TBL process, the MBC students accepted that the experience could be positively adapted to their lives in the future, so, it enhances their success in learning English reading comprehension.

### 3. Students' satisfaction towards 6 steps of the TBL process

According to the questionnaire in table 3, the MBC students were analyzed positively high with a total mean score of 4.79. The MBC students strongly agree with all items. It can be considered that MBCC students could not perform well in learning English reading comprehension within the limited time. Furthermore, some students could be an obstacle to English reading comprehension practice. Despite having all of these problems, their learning was carried out successfully through 6 steps of the TBL process. The questionnaire indicated that the MBC students' satisfaction was significantly positive with the 6 steps of TBL learning; it was also an essential support for successful learning. The effects of the 6 steps of task-based learning focusing on Dhamma in Buddhism provided the opportunity for MBC students to practice English reading comprehension more in their daily lives. It also supports the sense of autonomy and responsibility that benefited their careers in the future. Thus, it can be concluded that learning English reading comprehension by focusing on Dhamma through 6 steps of task-based learning is an effective teaching method that can be applied to enhance MBC students' English reading comprehension ability as evidenced by the results of this study.





## Conclusion

For this study, the researcher sought to understand the role of Dhamma in Buddhism and the Task-based learning method in supporting English reading comprehension. Thai and English to interpret familiar and unfamiliar understanding texts with English as communication. Also, this study also tried to follow the participants' satisfaction with using Dhamma context written in English reading comprehension. The participants expressed a positive satisfaction with learning English reading comprehension through the integration of Dhamma in Buddhism and the TBL method. Thus, the MBC students stressed the importance of having reading cultural experiences which make them more engrossed when they read different thing relevant texts.

## Recommendation

### 1. Recommendation for this study

1.1 TBL method could affect MBC students' English reading comprehension and their performances in end products: TBL lessons, slide presentations, and oral reports. The students can be evaluated separately applying detailed rubrics instead of applying an overall evaluation.

1.2 The MBC students ought to be motivated to use more technology to support their learning of English, both as learning sources and as learning tools for continuous learning and teaching feedback.

### 2. Recommendations for further study

Other scholars and researchers can continue to study the effects of the TBL method focusing on Dhamma in Buddhism in English reading comprehension practice and other practices in the English department. As Dhamma in Buddhism involves various types of technology used, Students are able to gain these learning benefits from learning sources.

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