

**The Impact of the Internet on English Language Teaching:  
A Case Study at a Thai Rajabhat University**

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## **Certificate**

I certify that the work in this thesis has not previously been submitted for a degree nor has it been submitted as part of requirements for a degree except as fully acknowledged within the text.

I also certify that the thesis has been written by me, and that any help received in this research work and the preparation of the thesis itself, and all information sources and literature used in the thesis have been acknowledged.

Signature of Candidature

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## **Abstract**

This research was conducted in the English Department of a provincial Thai university. It seeks to address the tension between the priority accorded to English by the Thai government and the relatively low levels of English of most Thai people. The study investigates the potential of the Internet to support students' English language development, in particular the capacity of the Internet to support students' English reading development.

The research was located in Central Thailand at Nakhon Pathom Rajabhat University (NPRU), my own work place. Here I investigated students' Internet practices and the potential offered by one English language program that incorporated use of the Internet. My focus on this one program enabled me to address questions about my own teaching practices, and about the implications of incorporating the Internet for program design and teaching.

The research itself was conducted in two stages. Stage One was an ethnographic investigation of students' current Internet practices, both in and out of University. Outcomes from Stage One then informed the development of an English language program that incorporated extensive use of the Internet. This program was implemented and evaluated in Stage Two of the research.

Outcomes from Stage One of the research revealed that the University students had low overall levels of Internet use, low levels of computer and Internet skills, but generally high levels of interest and enthusiasm, and a belief that the Internet could play a positive role in supporting English language learning. Outcomes from Stage Two confirmed that the Internet was potentially a powerful resource for teaching English. However, they also showed that if the Internet was incorporated fully into a program, rather than simply tacked onto a traditional program, then a major rethinking of program design and pedagogical practices was necessary. The implications of such changes in program design and teaching are addressed in the thesis.



## Abbreviations

|        |   |
|--------|---|
| ASEAN  | the Association of South East Asian Nations           |
| HEC    | Higher Education Commission                           |
| CLT    | Communicative Language Teaching                       |
| EFL    | English as a Foreign Language                         |
| ELT    | English Language Teaching                             |
| ENL    | English as Native Language                            |
| ESL    | English as a Second Language                          |
| ICT    | Information and Communication Technology              |
| L1     | First language  |
| L2     | Second language                                       |
| MICT   | Ministry of Information and Communication Technology  |
| MOE    | Ministry of Education                                 |
| MST    | Ministry of Science and Technology                    |
| MUA    | Ministry of University Affairs                        |
| NEA    | the National Education Act                            |
| NECTEC | National Electronics and Computer Technology Centre   |
| NPRU   | Nakhon Pathom Rajabhat University                     |
| NSTDA  | National Science and Technology Development Agency    |
| OCS    | Office of Commercial Service                          |
| OEC    | Office of the Education Council                       |
| OECD   | Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development |
| ONEC   | Office of the National Education Commission           |
| PRS    | Paragraph Reading Strategies                          |
| RINP   | Rajabhat Institute Nakhon Pathom                      |
| SAC    | Self-access Centre                                    |
| SALLC  | Self-access Language Learning Centre                  |
| TCU    | Thailand Cyber University                             |
| TESOL  | Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages       |

# Chapter 1

## Rationale for the Research

### Introduction

This research project seeks to address some major concerns in the current teaching of English in Thailand. In particular, it seeks to address the tension between the need for Thailand to be able to communicate with its neighbours through the medium of English, and the relatively poor outcomes achieved in the teaching of English to date. It investigates current English language teaching (ELT) practice at a Thai university and creates a curriculum initiative which aims to engage students in learning which is technologically-based, and of a collaborative, cognitively demanding and intercultural nature.

Thailand alone of Southeast Asian countries was not colonised by European powers, and while escaping many of the sociocultural and economic impacts of colonialism, at the same time did not inherit the legacy of a European language. In this way, the role and status of foreign languages have been significantly limited in Thailand in comparison with the roles of English or French in neighbouring countries. And so, whereas English in Malaysia, Singapore and the Philippines is a post-colonial language, and sometimes an official *second* language, English in Thailand remains a *foreign* language. This has consequences for teaching and learning as follows. For most students, English is regarded as one subject in the school curriculum. Students usually lack exposure to an authentic English learning environment, materials, and possibilities for engaging with the culture of (native speakers of) the target language beyond the classroom. Texts used in class are mostly commercial textbooks which sometimes fail to provide authentic types of English used in real contexts. In such artificial English classrooms, students may have low motivation in learning and using English for 'real' reasons. Therefore, this research project seeks ways to enhance teaching and learning English by providing students with a more authentic and meaningful learning environment.

The imperative for English in Thailand has been stimulated by the Internet, as the great majority of documents available on the Internet are in English. At the same time, the Internet may provide a powerful genuine resource for the learning of English,

particularly in contexts where opportunities for exposure to and interaction in the English language are limited, as noted above. The Internet may thus provide real-world English language learning contexts, cultures, texts, materials, and activities. It may provide a motivating and exciting learning atmosphere, encourage students' independence, and offer opportunities for students to use English for a variety of purposes. The Internet also offers new processes of reading, where readers encounter multiple modes of texts which include writing, images, sound and video files as well as electronic links to other information. Furthermore, the Internet can provide genuine interaction and communication among students and native speakers or non-native speakers of English through e-mail, newsgroups, mailing lists, and chat rooms. In these ways, the Internet may be said to enhance English language learning in accordance with communicative language teaching principles of meaningful interaction (Warschauer, 2001).

The Thai government's recent educational reform (1996-2007) has highlighted English, technology, creative thinking, critical thinking, problem solving, collaborative learning, and autonomy. This reform aims to shift from traditional teacher-centred to learner-centred classrooms. That is, teachers' roles are required to become less dominant in the classroom, and students are to be more actively involved in the learning process. Both generally in Thailand, and in my own English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classes, especially reading classes, it has been my experience that classrooms are dominated by teacher-talk, which results in students having few opportunities to actively engage in learning tasks where the target language is used for communication. As a Thai EFL teacher, I have an interest in contributing to the improvement of teaching practices in Thailand, and can begin to do by improving my own pedagogical practices.

## **Purposes of the Research**

The broad aim of this research is to investigate the extent to which the Internet can contribute to students' English language development. A particular goal is to explore Internet use in a teacher-guided EFL program at a Thai university. Specifically, the study aims to investigate how Thai students' current English literacy practices can be enhanced by using the Internet and how the Internet may further assist students' English literacy development. The research also explores the potential of the Internet in pedagogy and the implications of incorporating it into program design and teaching.

## **Research Questions**

1. What is the potential of the Internet for supporting EFL development?
  - 1.1. What are students' current Internet practices?
  - 1.2. What are students' perceptions of and attitudes towards use of the Internet?
  - 1.3. What factors support or limit students' use of the Internet?
2. What are the pedagogical implications of use of the Internet in EFL?
  - 2.1. What principles need to inform EFL programs which incorporate extensive use of the Internet?
  - 2.2. What benefits can flow from such program?
  - 2.3. What implications for EFL pedagogies arise from such program?

## **Overall Research Approach and Design**

As indicated above, the broad aim of the research was to investigate the potential role of the Internet in enhancing students' English literacy and overall English skills. Because there is little information available on current use of the Internet in Thailand, it was essential to investigate students' current Internet practices before being able to incorporate the Internet into my own teaching. This process then shaped and informed the development of a teaching program which would allow me to investigate the role of the Internet in enhancing teaching and learning English. Thus, the research project has been undertaken in two stages.

Stage One aimed to investigate students' Internet practices by seeking to discover what the students used the Internet for; what kind of reading and writing they did on screen; how much reading and writing they did; what kind of texts they were engaged with; and their interaction with modes of communication on the screen. This investigation also took note of the frequency and duration of students' Internet engagement, as well as of the languages – Thai or English – used by students in that medium. Additionally, this stage explored the physical location of students' Internet practices. It investigated whether the students used the Internet in the University's Self-access Language Learning Centre (SALLC), whether they used the Internet within the University but outside of the SALLC, and/or whether they used it outside of the University. This first stage of the research also aimed to investigate students' beliefs about the value of the

Internet in general, and its usefulness and attractiveness in helping them learn English in particular. It was important to discover students' attitudes towards Internet use in order to inform Stage Two of the research.

Stage Two aimed to examine the potential of the Internet in enhancing EFL students' English literacy and their overall English language development by means of a newly-created program which required the use of the Internet in various ways in order to complete assigned collaborative tasks. In addition, Stage Two aimed to investigate students' perceptions and attitudes towards the use of the Internet in this Internet-English program. Finally, this stage of the research sought to consider the broad potential of the Internet for EFL teaching.

In order to address the research questions, I, as researcher, needed to closely investigate events that occurred in real contexts – the SALLC and a classroom. The research did not intend to prove hypotheses or test a theory; rather, it investigated phenomena in order to generate theory from data. Therefore, a qualitative approach was pursued in this study, which aimed to capture the contextual nature of Internet practices and of learning in both Internet and classroom contexts; and the methodology employed was shaped by the research questions. It is assumed that because human behaviour, values, beliefs and attitudes are socially constructed, they can be best understood and interpreted in social contexts, in this case, explored through a broadly ethnographic case study (van Lier, 1990; Burns, 2000; Wiersma, 2000).

The methodology of research Stage One is in accordance with the two basic principles of ethnography – an *emic* viewpoint and a *holistic* principle (van Lier, 1990: 42). The *emic* principle refers to an insider perspective, which seeks to understand the rules, concepts, beliefs and meaning of participants and events within a context. The *holistic* principle refers to the need to study an event in relation to its full context in order to grasp its significance. Both these principles indicate that ethnography refuses to control surroundings and that rather, the researcher participates in such surroundings in order to record events and interpret their meanings. In Stage Two, the major part of the project, however, the research approach was narrowed to that of a case study, in which I, as researcher and teacher, intervened in the teaching/learning process. The value of case study lies in its analysis of certain phenomena in order to discover insights which may be applied to the wider population to which a single unit belongs (Cohen, Manion &

Morrison, 2001: 185). In this study, a single classroom was intensively analysed (Nunan, 1992: 89) in order to gain understandings which may be transferred to other EFL teaching programs which incorporate use of the Internet.

### **Data Collection and Data Analysis**

Data in research Stage One were collected through my own observation of students' use of the Internet (supported by field notes, photographs and video recordings), student questionnaires, student diaries, and interviews with both individuals and groups of students. In research Stage Two, an English program consisting of 12 × 100 minute lessons was taught by me. Data were collected through my reflections upon lessons (drawing upon program and lesson plans, my diary, audio-recordings of all lessons, and video-recordings of three lessons), students' diaries, and interviews with groups of students both at that time and one year later.

### **Significance and Contribution of the Research**

The research offers four possible contributions to English language teaching. Firstly, it provides me with a model for improving my own ELT practices. As outlined in Chapter 2, teaching practices in my reading classes at Nakhon Pathom Rajabhat University had formerly been focussed on form, where students only rarely had opportunities to actively use the target language for communication. This research project provided me with insights into setting up classrooms where students could engage in meaningful learning tasks and where English could thus be used for 'real' purposes.

Secondly, the research identifies the kinds of changes in teaching practice which are necessary in order effectively to draw upon the Internet as a pedagogical resource. These changes include a move away from formal, textbook-based curricula towards the use of authentic materials and contexts, together with the striking of a new balance between teacher-centred and student-centred learning.

The third contribution made by the research is the implication of Internet use both in the Thai EFL context and in broader EFL contexts. The results of the study are considered to be of value not only in assisting me to further develop English programs which incorporate Internet use, but also in potentially providing a practical starting point for other teachers of English to do likewise.

Finally, this research project raises questions about simplistic calls for implementation of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) methodology in EFL contexts such as Thailand. Many of the problems of applying CLT in such contexts – its focus on spoken English, its preferred role of the teacher as a *facilitator*, and its rejection of using students first language (L1) – (all of which will be further examined in Chapter 3), can be eased by incorporation of the Internet.

## **Organisation of the Thesis**

Following this introduction, the thesis is organised into six further chapters.

Chapter 2 outlines the English language teaching context in general and more specifically, ELT at Nakhon Pathom Rajabhat University (NPRU) where the research was conducted. It also describes the current state of Internet use both in Thailand and in Thai EFL classrooms.

Chapter 3 reviews theories and pedagogy and provides an overview of pedagogical approaches which are relevant to this study. The chapter then investigates changing concepts of literacy resulting from the impact of Information and Communication Technology (henceforth ICT), especially the Internet, on communication. It also examines the nature of reading processes on the Internet and investigates the value of integrating the Internet into ELT. The chapter finally draws on some principles derived from the literature to provide a theoretical framework for this research.

Chapter 4 describes the approaches utilised in this research: elements of ethnography together with case study; it considers ethical issues; and outlines methods of data collection and analysis.

In Chapter 5, outcomes from Stage One of the research are presented. These encompass students' Internet practices and their beliefs about value of the Internet in general and its value in learning English. It then presents the outcomes of case studies of four students who used the Internet regularly. It finally draws out implications for the development of a teaching program which comprises research Stage Two.

Chapter 6 outlines the development and implementation of the teaching program introduced in Stage Two of the research. It presents the teacher's evaluation of the program in light of the radical changes in teaching which were introduced. It further

presents students' evaluation of their learning experiences in this program. Finally, it reports on students' reflections on the program one year later.

Chapter 7 summarises the major outcomes from both stages of the research. It discusses the significance and contribution of the research, and draws out implications for EFL in the Thai context, as well as in broader EFL contexts. This chapter also outlines the limitations of the study and identifies possible areas for future research.



## **Chapter 2**

### **English Language Teaching Context**

#### **Introduction**

In order to explore the potential for integration of the Internet into ELT in Thailand, it is necessary first to outline the contexts both of ELT and of Internet use.

The first section thus presents an overview of global ELT and examines the nature of ELT in Thailand, including an account of Thailand's current educational reform agenda, said to be the most radical in Thailand's history (Wiriyaichitra, 2002: 5). There is a widespread perception that many Thai students do not achieve highly in their English studies; possible reasons for such outcomes are discussed. This section then describes the curriculum and methodology of ELT at the research site, Nakhon Pathom Rajabhat University. I also evaluate my own former teaching practice at that site, and show how my concerns led to the inception of the current project.

The second section documents current levels of Internet use in Thailand. It describes various networking projects currently being implemented, and considers current constraints upon the use of the Internet. Finally, it examines the relatively limited integration of the Internet into Thai ELT to date.

#### **Section 1: The ELT Context**

##### ***1.1 Global ELT***

English is now widely considered to be a global language and the Thai government has identified the urgent socio-political, commercial and educational needs for Thai people to be able to better communicate in English (Wongsothorn, 1999b; Wongsothorn, Hiranburana & Chinnawongs, 2003). One criterion for a language to be considered global is Crystal's (1997) assertion that the language is used in a number of countries, serving sometimes as a first language, sometimes as a second or official language, and sometimes as a foreign language. By this criterion, English has been global in scope since the 19th century. Another measure of the global character of English lies in the number of people who speak it as a first or second language – estimated to be 400 million for first language speakers and more than double this number for second language speakers (Brutt-Griffler & Samimy, 1999: 419). As Kachru and Nelson (2001:

13) point out, English is used in more countries throughout the world than any other language: “no other language even comes close to English in terms of the extent of its usage”.

Kachru and Nelson (2001) metaphorically divide types of English speakers throughout the world into three groups represented by three concentric circles: Inner Circle, Outer Circle and Expanding Circle. The Inner Circle refers to native speakers, namely British, American, Canadian, Irish, Australian and New Zealander who use English as their first or native language (ENL). The Outer Circle represents users from formerly colonised countries such as India, Pakistan, Singapore, the Philippines, South Africa, Nigeria, and Zambia, where English serves as an official language for parts of education, governance, and the media. In this sense, English is used as a second language (ESL) or as an intranational language. The Expanding Circle consists of countries where English is used as a foreign language (EFL) for international communication by non-native speakers and includes, for example, Russia, Japan, China, Korea, Indonesia, and Thailand. In these countries, English has varying roles and is widely studied as a school subject (Kachru & Nelson, 1996, 2001; Crystal, 2001a; Pennycook, 2001). Another useful distinction between Outer and Expanding Circles has been offered by Jenkins (2003) as that between institutionalised and non-institutionalised varieties of English.

The global spread of English through the three concentric circles has taken place in different ways. Its spread in the Inner Circle has involved migrations of native speakers from the British Isles to Australia, New Zealand, the United States of America, and Canada. The spread of English in the Outer Circle occurred in colonial contexts of Asia and Africa, where English was used in new sociocultural contexts. The spread of English in the Expanding Circle has occurred because of the impact of advancement of science and technology, commerce and various forms of knowledge and information (Kachru & Nelson, 1996; Warschauer, 2002a).

English has become a lingua franca – a common language widely adopted for communication between speakers whose native languages are different from each other (Kachru & Nelson, 1996; Crystal, 1997; Warschauer, 2000, 2002a; Harmer, 2001; Talebinezhad & Aliakbari, 2001; Sifakis & Sougari, 2003). As Warschauer (2002a) puts it:

The intersection of language with international networks and globalisation is perhaps most evident. Put simply, global trade, distribution, marketing, media and communications could not take place without a lingua franca. These processes of globalisation over the last thirty years have propelled English from being an international language...to becoming a truly global one, spoken and used more broadly than probably any other language in world history (p. 64).

Kachru and Nelson (1996) further note that:

...many non-native users of English employ it (English) as a common language to communicate with other non-natives, while the interactional contexts in which non-native and native speakers use English with each other are fast shrinking (p. 88).

English is thus used for many purposes and by a wide range of speakers. First, English is used as a language for international business communication. In this age of globalisation, the market has become a global one where people conduct business with other people worldwide. Second, English is a dominant official language used as a means for contact among governmental institutions and agencies such as the United Nations, the European Union, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) (Phillipson & Skutnabb-Kangas, 1996; Crystal, 1997). Crystal also points out that although languages other than English are used for communication at meetings of the European Union, English is used as an intermediary language or 'interlingua' to facilitate controversial communications in which translating between languages is difficult or confusing (1997: 81). Notably, English is the official working language of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) of which Thailand is a member. Third, English is used globally in education; as a vehicle in academic conferences and contacts; in international tourism and air traffic control; and in entertainment, advertising, media and popular culture (Kachru & Nelson, 1996; Crystal, 1997; Harmer, 2001). In addition, a great number of textbooks and educational materials used worldwide are published in English.

The global nature of English has both enhanced and been stimulated by the growth of the Internet. Because most Internet hosts are based in English-speaking countries, particularly the United States, most web sites and communication through the Internet are based in English (Teeler & Gray, 2000; Graddol, 2001). In 1997, Graddol (2000) noted that English was the medium for 80% of the information stored in the world's computers, and suggested that "English appears to have extended its domain of use to

become the preferred lingua franca for the many new kinds of user who have come online in the 1990s” (p. 50).

The focus of the present study is on users in the Expanding Circle site of Thailand, where English has become the preferred foreign language. In the sections that follow, I outline the status of English in Thailand, and I explain the Thai government’s policies in regard to ELT, which have been developed in recognition of the critical significance of English as a global language.

### ***1.2 The Current Status and Role of English in Thailand***

Currently, English is regarded as the first (the most important) foreign language in Thailand (Wongsothorn, Sukamolson, Chinthammit, Ratanothayanonth & Noparumpa, 1996; Wongsothorn, 1999a, 1999b; Wiriyachitra, 2001, 2002; Wongsothorn, Hiranburana & Chinnawongs, 2003). The Thai government has clearly stated that Thai people’s capacity to deal with globalisation needs to improve, and that English skills are a crucial part of this (Chayanuvat, 1997; Srisa-an, 1998; Wongsothorn, 1999a; 1999b; Wongprom, 2000; Wiriyachitra, 2002; Wongsothorn, Hiranburana & Chinnawongs, 2003).

The current impact of English in Thailand is evident in four major domains.

First, proficiency in English is a means of obtaining better and well-paid jobs in the workplace as a whole (Wongsothorn et al, 1996; Komin, 1998; Wongprom, 2000; Todd, 2001; Foley, 2005), and has been described as the ‘key to professional advancement’ (Wongsothorn, 2000: 332). Having a good command of spoken and written English is a requirement which can be commonly seen in job advertisements. And generally speaking, those who have obtained degrees from overseas countries tend to have a better chance to obtain lucrative employment than do local graduates. As well as these broad needs for English in the workplace, there are two particular areas where English skills are in great demand: the IT industry and the tourism industry.

Tony Waltham, editor of Database ISM Technology (Waltham, 2003) argues that Thai graduates who want to pursue their career in IT need at least the ability in essential skills of speaking and writing in English. In recruiting qualified IT persons, he states that:

The “number one” difficulty we face, however, is the lack of English language competency among Thai IT professionals. It is not “language chauvinism” but simply a fact of life that the language of IT, worldwide, is English. (Online).

Waltham points out that the English those graduates need to use should be at a level adequate for easy communication, which may not even need to be grammatically correct. He further comments:

All of which is why we have long been amazed that Thailand’s top IT graduates can complete their studies without also needing to demonstrate at least that level of English language proficiency. While English may generally be part of their curriculum, the evidence we see implies that there is no special emphasis placed on it. (Online).

This view is echoed in Wiriyachitra’s (2002) report of criticisms commonly made by IT companies regarding Thai graduates who enter the workplace with low level of English proficiency. For example, she refers to Rom Hiranyapruet, director of Thai Software Park, who states that, English, like other infrastructure, is vital to the domain of information technology, and who also notes that in spite of Thai people’s high proficiency in technology, national progress in science and technology is now hampered from further development by Thai graduates’ relatively poor English proficiency.

English is also in high demand in the tourism industry, which is a key part of the Thai economy. Wiriyachitra (2002) refers to comments made by Arunsri Sastramitri, director of the Academic Training Section of the Academic Tourist Section of the Tourist Authority of Thailand, regarding Tourism graduates’ poor command of English. Siripunyawit (2004) records similar views on the part of Ms Tidarat Kanchanawat, general manager of Adecco Consulting Ltd as follows:

Graduates of Thai schools still lack a number of essential qualifications that leave them unable to fill the demand made by the real working world. One significant limitation is their weakness in foreign languages especially English. (Online).

Second, English is used in Thailand as a tool for study, especially at the higher education level. For example, it is a required part of the entrance examination for state universities (Wongsothorn et al, 1996; Wongsothorn, 1999b; Wongprom, 2000; Todd, 2001). Moreover, to study at overseas universities or to obtain grants for further education, students need English competency as validated by English tests such as TOEFL and IELTS in order to meet the requirements of institutions and grant providers. English classes are widely offered by private institutions for students who wish to prepare for University Entrance Examinations or higher education in foreign countries.

Moreover, English is starting to be used as a medium of instruction in a limited number of international educational institutions and in some international programs offered by both Thai state and private universities, and by international universities operating in Thailand. The Office of the Educational Council (OEC, 2004) reported that in 2003, both state and private universities offered 521 international programs in total where English is used as a medium of instruction, and where both Thai and international students attend. Fry (2002a) notes that a number of these international programs are offered so that Thai students can fulfill the requirements of overseas universities that they have already undertaken English-medium studies. Predictably, this option of English-medium instruction in Thailand is less expensive than studying abroad.

Third, English is utilised in Thailand to gain access to recreation and entertainment through media such as newspapers, magazines, movies, some TV programs, and radio programs (Wongsothorn et al, 1996).

Finally, English is used to gain access to knowledge and information through computer-mediated communication including e-mail, chat and the resource of the World Wide Web (Chayanuvat, 1997; Srisa-an, 1998; Wongsothorn, 1999a; Wongprom, 2000; Wongsothorn, Hiranburana & Chinnawongs, 2003; Prapphal, 2004; Foley, 2005). Srisa-an notes that with the sheer volume of information available worldwide, Thai students need English as a crucial tool to access the original sources of such information.

On account of these various roles played by English both at a global level and a local level, Thailand is recognising that knowledge and competence of English is “no longer a luxury but a necessity” (Wongsothorn, Hiranburana & Chinnawongs, 2003: 452). Since 1996 English has been placed as the foremost foreign language in Thailand and has been taught from grade 1 onwards (Wongsothorn et al, 1996). Because of its significance, English has been advocated by some scholars to be given the status of the country’s second language. However, Wiriyachitra (2001, 2002) notes that this advocacy is contentious because Thailand prides itself upon having never been colonised, and upon having one official national language. Srisa-an (1998: 2) writes in support of the ongoing importance of both L1 and L2 in Thailand:

This advocacy of mastering a second language does not mean we are replacing or diminishing the importance of our national language. The national language will always

have a place in our daily life, in our national culture and heritage. However, bilingualism if not multi-lingualism, is a global competency that will be required of a global citizen who works as a member of a multi-disciplinary and multinational team. It means mastering two or more languages, not replacing our national language. Or to put it another way, *as English becomes everyone's second language, their first language, their mother tongue, becomes more important and more passionately held.* (Italics in original)

Because of the significance of English in Thailand, ELT has been the focus of a great deal of attention in recent years. Before discussing English language teaching policy, I first outline the broader educational reforms in Thailand which have resulted from the demands of global economy, and which provide the context for further reforms in English Language teaching. Following this, I outline the attempts to achieve radical shifts in English curriculum and pedagogical practices at both school and university levels which have resulted from these reforms.

### ***1.3 Thai Educational Reform***

Current educational reforms in Thailand (1996-2007) have been initiated in response to the urgent needs of human resources development in a society which has been rapidly changing through the impact of globalisation, advancement of science, and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) (Ministry of Education, 1996). Through the process of globalisation, and advancement of ICT, new socio-economic patterns have emerged which have been called knowledge-based, information-based, technology-based, or technology-driven. In addition, the economic crash of the mid 1990s experienced by Southeast Asian countries greatly affected Thailand's economy, politics, culture and society (Pitiyanuwat & Anantrasirichai, 2002), and caused a decline in Thailand's economic competitiveness.

The Thai economy is undergoing a rapid transformation from an agricultural-based economy to a globalised market-driven economy (Atagi, 2002; Pillay, 2002). To deal with the demands of this new economy effectively, it is essential for Thailand to possess knowledge workers who are well-trained, computer literate and who possess abilities such as problem-solving, analytical thinking, critical thinking, and creative thinking (Fry, 2002b; Pillay, 2002; Stamper, 2002). In addition, Thai graduates need knowledge of and competence in English and ICT (Gipson, 1998; Prapphal, 2004).

The former Thai Prime Minister, Thaksin Chinawatra stated that Thai people need to have global literacy, which in the age of globalisation, he views as encompassing knowledge of English language, the Internet and international cultures:

We want graduates who are prepared to be this nation's good human resources. I would like them to have global literacy, think critically, be eager for lifelong learning and be able to adapt to change (cited in Assavanonda & Bunnag, 2001: online).

In its educational reform documents (ONEC, 1999), the Thai government pinpointed the weaknesses of human resources which inhibit the development of the country, and which are regarded as resulting from inefficiencies of education management and administration, lack of quality in education, and inequity of access to quality education (MOE, 1996; Parkay, Potisook, Chantharasakul & Chunsakorn, 1999). The Thai educational system has been highly centralised, which has been both ineffective and inefficient, especially in terms of budget and personnel management. Atagi (2002) also reports that the Thai government has not provided enough funds to significantly improve the quality of teachers.

As for quality of education, teaching practices, especially at the secondary level, are predominantly teacher-centred: that is, the teacher speaks, and students listen. One important influence here is the National University Entrance Examination, which continues to focus on reproduction of subject matter and consequently encourages teacher-centred practices. In its reform the Thai government has given priority to teaching science, mathematics and English because these subjects are essential in order to advance in a hi-technology and information-based society. However, the quality of teaching in all three subjects has been found to be inadequate. There has also been a problem in providing equity of access to quality education, particularly for those who live in rural areas on low incomes. Schools in rural areas have less developed infrastructure and fewer well-qualified teachers compared to schools in Bangkok and other urban areas (Atagi, 2002).

The 1999 National Education Act (NEA) was introduced in order to meet the requirements of the 1997 Constitution, and represents the legislation of educational reform (ONEC, 2001b). Provision of education aims at full development of Thai people in all respects, including physical and mental health, intellect, knowledge, morality, integrity and desirable ways of life which will enable them to live in harmony with other people. The provision of education is based on life-long education for all,



participation by all sectors in society, and continuous development of knowledge and learning processes (ONEC, 2003).

In order to ensure basic education, the NEA specifies that all Thai citizens have equal rights and opportunities to receive at least 12 years free basic education of which 9 years are compulsory from grades 1 to 9, and 3 years optional from grades 10 to 12. Notably, since May 2004, two further years of pre-primary education have served to extend free basic education to 14 years in total (MOE, 2004).

Formal education in Thailand is divided into two levels: basic education and higher education. As outlined in Table 2.1 below, basic education includes 14 years, from two-year pre-primary level, primary level (grades 1 to 6), lower-secondary level (grades 7 to 9), and upper-secondary level (grades 10 to 12). Higher education is divided into two levels: diploma and degree. Higher education is provided in universities, colleges and other institutions (ONEC, 2003).

**Table 2.1: Thai formal educational system**

|       | Basic Education   |   |  |  | Higher Education |                         |
|-------|-------------------|---|--|--|------------------|-------------------------|
| level | Pre-primary       | Primary                                 | Lower-secondary                          | Upper-secondary                            | Diploma          | Degree & Higher Degrees |
|       |                   | Grades 1-6<br><i>Pratomsuksa</i><br>1-6 | Grades 7-9<br><i>Matayomsuksa</i><br>1-3 | Grades 10-12<br><i>Matayomsuksa</i><br>4-6 |                  |                         |
| age   | 3-5               | 6-11                                    | 12-14                                    | 15-17                                      | 18+              |                         |
|       | <i>Compulsory</i> |   |  |  |                  |                         |

The Ministry of Education's reforms of learning were introduced with the aim of improving the quality of education for all Thai people, and of promoting students' capability of learning and developing themselves at their own pace and to their full potential (ONEC, 2001a; Atagi, 2002; ONEC, 2003). In order to meet the goals of learning reform, the policy specified the need to improve both curricula and teaching/learning processes. This is the first time in Thai education that the development of curriculum has been decentralised. That is, the MOE has provided the framework of core curriculum for each educational institution to develop their own

curriculum, including goals, teaching/learning activities, materials, assessment and evaluation, in order to suit the needs of the local community.

Teaching/learning processes are required to take into account learners' aptitudes and interests and to be based on principles of life-long learning. The learning environment itself, as well as the activities selected by teachers, should encourage thinking processes such as problem-solving, critical thinking, creative thinking and analytical thinking skills. In addition, teaching/learning processes need to encourage learners to apply their knowledge and experience to new situations. In order to achieve such requirements, a learner-centred approach has been proposed, in order to achieve "a significant shift from a traditional teacher-centred approach" (ONEC, 2000: 39). Educational institutions are also required to encourage instructors to conduct research into teaching/learning development.

The 1999 National Education Act also stipulates distribution of technology infrastructure; promotion and support of the production of technologies; development of knowledge, capabilities and skills in using technologies; promotion of research and development; production and modification of technologies, follow-up, examination, and evaluation of use for effectiveness; and establishment of organisations responsible for policies, plans of technologies utilisation; promotion, coordination of research, development and utilisation of technologies for education (ONEC, 2003).

#### ***1.4 Educational Reform and English Language Teaching***

Educational reforms in English language teaching (ELT) in Thailand have taken place within the context of the broader educational reforms outlined above. Because of the special place of English in Thailand, reforms in ELT have been given priority by the Ministry of Education. ELT policy reforms from 1996 to 2015 contain four key aims:

- 1) To make English the first foreign language and to require its study from grade 1;
- 2) To improve teaching and learning through teaching technologies and innovations, libraries, and networking between formal and non-formal education;
- 3) To emphasise diversity in English language teaching and learning in both style and content; and
- 4) To involve communities to participate in curriculum development [sic].  
(Chayanuvat, 1997: 4).

The reform of English language teaching policy started with the implementation of the 1996 English curriculum at primary and secondary level and was followed by the 2001

Basic Curriculum. This Basic English Curriculum introduced two major changes. The first was the freedom of each school to create their own syllabus, content, activities, times and assessment that suit the needs of local community. The second change lay in its view of English as a means of communicating with the wider world, which included an emphasis on use of English in acquiring content knowledge and information. Through these major changes in English teaching and learning at the basic education level, it was intended that Thai students would be able to enhance their English competence and life-long learning and thereby keep pace with social change and the high demands of the global economy. The reform incorporated the view that English, as well as digital literacy, is essential for national development (Department of Curriculum and Instruction, MOE, 2001; Wongsothorn, Hiranburana & Chinnawongs, 2003). It also aimed to provide continuity between ELT at school level and at University levels.

In 2002, the Ministry of University Affairs (MUA) also initiated reform of the English curriculum and teaching and learning in Thai universities. The new policy specifies changes as follows: first, an English Proficiency Test is to be used to stream students as they enter university. Less competent students are required to take a remedial non-credit subject, while those who have average proficiency are required to undertake a first compulsory subject. Students with high proficiency are required to undertake only second or third compulsory subjects. Secondly, students are required to undertake at least 12 credits of English study, double the previous 6 credit points requirement. Thirdly, all students are required to take an exit test, which aims to ensure the quality of English language teaching and learning. The results of this test, however, will not appear on their academic transcripts. Finally, in the spirit of learner-centred pedagogy, universities are encouraged to set up self-access learning centres which are intended to promote autonomous student learning of English and life-long learning, as well as to utilise technology, especially the Internet, in teaching and learning (Wiryachitra, 2002; Wiryachitra & Keyuravong, 2002; Wongsothorn, Hiranburana & Chinnawongs, 2003). It may be seen that my research is particularly relevant to this fourth aim.

### ***1.5 The Current English Competence of Thai Graduates***

The government's aims for English teaching and learning in Thailand, described in the previous section, represent a radical shift in policy. However, there is general agreement amongst Thai academics and teachers that the aims of the policy in terms of curriculum

and teaching practices are not yet being met, and that the English competence of Thai students, particularly in respect of both oral and writing skills remains low. Indeed, it has been widely asserted in Thailand that graduates who enter the workforce after spending many years learning English at school and university have relatively low English competence (Komin, 1998; NaChiengMai, 1998; Wongprom, 2000; Prapphal 2001; Wiriyachitra, 2001, 2002; Kanadpon, 2002; Sikkamarn, 2003; Techa-Intrawong, 2003; Kongpetch, 2004; Forman, 2005). Komin (1998) notes that only about 5 percent of some 60 university graduates who applied for a master's degree level showed evidence of understanding from reading a short paragraph. Additionally, Prapphal (2001) found that the English language proficiency of Thai graduates was lower than that of graduates in other Southeast Asian countries such as Singapore, the Philippines, and Malaysia. However, comparisons with such countries may be unfair, since all three were formerly American or British colonies, where English has retained a broad second language currency. A comparison with China and Indonesia, as countries whose English language profiles could reasonably be compared with Thailand, may be more realistic. However, the net result is that despite government reform that has specifically focused on ELT, Thai students continue to struggle with the learning of English. Why is this so?

A number of factors have been identified as contributing to the low English proficiency of the majority of Thai students. These include the impact of traditional pedagogical approaches, the influence of Thai culture, the examination system in Thailand, and the learning environment of English as a foreign language (EFL).

### *Traditional Pedagogical Approaches*

In spite of the reform policy and the provision of training in Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) methods, in most cases, Thai teachers of English still believe in, and are accustomed to, conventional teacher-centred classrooms. Typically, the teacher is dominant and students are rarely given opportunities to speak the target language (Todd, 2001). This teacher-centred teaching/learning culture has been in practice for many years. This can be evidenced by the comments made by Mountford (1986), a British Council expert in Teacher Education in Thailand, that one problem of English language teaching/learning is that “teaching methodology throughout Thailand in all institutions at all levels is still far too teacher-centred or teacher-dominated”, by which he means that “teachers do too much work, and learners do too little” (p. 4).

Despite attempts by the Thai government to promote a more communicative approach to ELT, the Thai teaching/learning culture, similarly to that of other Asian countries, has been characterised by traditional teaching approaches which retain a strong emphasis on memorising what is prescribed by teachers and textbooks. More recent research confirms this, with both Kongpetch (2004) and Forman (2005) asserting that ways of teaching and learning remain structurally-based. Most recently, a study conducted by the Thailand Research Fund confirms that Thai teachers of English still tend to use traditional teaching methods, with an emphasis on grammar and vocabulary (Bunnag, 2006).

*The Examination-based Assessment System and the National University Entrance Examination*

One of the reasons for the continued dominance of traditional approaches to language teaching in Thailand is the examination system. Examination-based assessment occurs at all educational levels in Thailand, and typically such assessment emphasises grammar, vocabulary and reading (Markmee & Taylor, 2001, cited in Forman, 2005: 98). Both teachers and students believe that success in written examinations means that students have achieved the goals of learning English (Todd, 2001). Teachers and students feel that it is teachers' responsibility to enable students to develop linguistic competence, especially vocabulary and grammar, in order to help students pass the examinations. Therefore, as teachers prepare students for examinations, they focus on grammar, vocabulary and reading skills, rather than on developing students' speaking and writing skills or achievement of communicative goals. A successful teacher therefore is thus perceived as someone who is grammatically competent, who has knowledge of a large vocabulary, and who is able to clearly explain the rules and the meaning of the foreign language. A successful student is one who does a great deal of practice using grammar and vocabulary in non-communicative written exercises such as multiple choice, cloze and transforming sentences.

As indicated earlier, this situation is further reinforced by the National University Entrance Examination which also focuses on grammar, vocabulary and reading. Many students attend tutoring schools from their early years of secondary schooling in order to prepare for this examination (Wongsothorn, Hiranburana & Chinnawongs, 2003).

Because of the nature of the University Entrance Examination, the emphasis in tutoring schools is on grammar and vocabulary.

Overall then, there is a circular relationship between teaching and assessing. Thai students mostly learn grammar at school and university, with the main goal being to pass examinations (Broughton, 1997). Because examinations do not test productive skills of speaking and writing, these skills are largely ignored in most English classrooms (Promsiri, Prapphal & Vijchulata, 1996; Biyaem, 1997; Naranunn, 1997; NaChiengMai, 1998; Kanadpon, 2002; Sikkamarn 2003; Wongsorthorn, Hiranburana & Chinnawongs, 2003; Saengboon, 2004; Foley, 2005). Until there are changes in the examination system it is difficult to promote changes in teaching practices.

### *Impact of Thai Culture*

A further influence on traditional teaching approaches has been Buddhist-based Thai culture, which reinforces beliefs/attitudes about how teachers should teach and how students should learn.

In describing the impact of Thai culture on teachers' and students' beliefs, I have drawn on the work of Hallinger and Kantamara (2001) who use Hofstede's framework for analysing cultures of different countries in their study of school improvement in Thailand. Hofstede (1980) categorises national cultures into four dimensions: *Power Distance*, *Collectivism & Individuality*, *Uncertainty Avoidance* and *Masculinity & Femininity*. These categories are based on his six-year study of 100,000 IBM employees in 40 countries, including Thailand. Two of Hofstede's dimensions are relevant to this study: *Power Distance*, and *Collectivism & Individuality*.

Hallinger and Kantamara (2001) claim that "Thai culture is a high power distance ... In Thai society, differences in power and status are accepted as the natural order of life. People expect to be told what to do and how to do it" (p. 391). Therefore, it is claimed that Thais place value on deference to people in a position of authority (Ballard, 1996; Hallinger & Kantamara, 2001; Foley, 2005). That is, juniors are respectful and deferential to seniors in age or status; they would hesitate to refuse, question or challenge the seniors (Hallinger & Kantamara, 2001); and thus they may lack initiative and practice in expressing their own ideas or opinions. While this characterisation of

Thai people may be a little stereotypical, it does reflect values that exist within Thai culture.

The general respect for seniority is reflected in students' respect of teachers, who are regarded as persons of high status, with knowledge and expertise, as well as integrity. In Thai society, the teacher's role is to give accurate knowledge to students, and that knowledge should not be questioned or critiqued by students (Mulder, 1990; Knee, 1999). Students are considered to be inexperienced and not in a position to express their own ideas and opinions (Saengboon, 2004). This leads to the standard form of classroom interaction being monologue, in which the teacher lectures and where students are expected to listen, absorb the knowledge, and write it down. Students speak when the teacher asks questions, or when s/he allows them to practise asking and answering questions. Nakamura (1998), a representative from Japan in the Thailand-Japan teacher exchange program, described his experience of team teaching with a Thai teacher in a junior high school. He notes that the teacher's practice was based on a detailed lesson plan, which provided examples of questions and answers for students to practise orally. However, students did not have a chance to interact with the teacher or with each other spontaneously in L2. He also notes that Thai students show respect for teachers, are well behaved, and are reluctant to speak out in front of the class.

According to my background as a Thai, teachers are regarded as the second parents. In addition to their teaching responsibility, teachers must thus guide students to follow a moral way of life. In other words, teachers must be role models for students to follow. Thai people also believe that they must show gratitude and obedience not only to teachers but also to all seniors, including parents and elder relatives. They must be grateful to those who provide benefits, support and kindness; and do something good for them in return.

Drawing on a second of Hofstede's categories, Hallinger and Kantamara (2001) claim that Thai societies are high in collectivism but low in individualism. That is, people in Thai society are cohesive in groups throughout their lifetime: they seldom think in terms of the individual; rather, they think in terms of the group. Moreover, they wish to avoid conflict, confrontation, and competition in daily life (Hallinger & Kantamara, 2001: 394). Foley (2005) further claims that Thai people value politeness and reticence, both qualities which have an impact on learning in the classroom in that students may

be hesitant to speak or undertake activities that require individual presentation in front of the class (Nakamura, 1998). Saengboon (2001) further points out that students may fear losing face if they make mistakes, or to be seen as showing off if their responses are correct. It is noticeable that in a Thai classroom, for a student to raise her/his hand in order to express ideas or to attempt to 'bid' for the teacher's attention would be quite foreign. Lawson (1998) describes Thai students in a reading class as follows: "Students would sit in class obediently repeating after the teacher, chanting together or memorising passages of reading" (p. 19).

These features of Thai culture have a major impact on ways of teaching and learning in classroom, resulting in many Thai teachers and students feeling comfortable with a teacher-centred approach. Thus the attitudes and beliefs that are traditionally held by Thais seem to be incompatible with the communicative approach as proposed by the Thai government. (It is worth noting, however, that the emphasis on 'learner-centred' in the Thai government policy could more accurately be interpreted as 'learning centred'. Thai policy encourages teachers not only to focus on what they teach, but also on how students learn. Thus 'learner centred' in the Thai context has a slightly different meaning here than in Western contexts.)

#### *The Learning Environment of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in Thailand*

The learning environment of English as a foreign language (EFL) in the Thai context is also an important factor that contributes to Thai students' low level of English proficiency at both school and university level.

In spite of its significance in Thai contemporary society, English is still learned as a foreign language. As Forman (2005: 339) points out, EFL education in Expanding Circle contexts such as Thailand offers few opportunities for the use of the target language, and little contact with its associated cultures. Unlike students in ESL contexts, Thai students lack opportunities to use English in a real environment in their daily activities outside the classroom (Chayanuvat, 1997; Techa-Intrawong, 2003). Target language resources which may be available outside the classroom, such as television programs, movies and pop music, may be comprehended only by the most advanced students (Forman, 2005). Additionally, Thai is generally used as a medium of instruction rather than English (Boonkit, 2002).



Secondly, the majority of English language teachers in Thailand are non-native speakers; with a minority of expatriate teachers working in higher educational institutions. Forman (2005) points out that EFL teachers will usually be the main, and sometimes, especially in rural areas, “the only source” of the target language (p. 340). These teachers’ English language skills, cultural knowledge and confidence in using English for communication in classroom vary from the very capable to the barely competent. Moreover, teachers, especially in primary schools, have a problem of high workloads (Biyaem, 1997; Wongsothorn, Hiranburana & Chinnawongs, 2003; Bunnag, 2006), so they may not have enough time to prepare appropriate English lessons and learning materials. Thus a number of studies have noted that Thailand still lacks sufficient numbers of English teachers of high quality (Chayanuvat, 1997; Fry, 1999 cited in Atagi, 2002: 25; Bunnag, 2006).

Thirdly, English language teaching resources in Thailand generally consist of print materials with little use of audio visual aids, realia, cassettes, videos, or language laboratories. The inclusion of ICT, particularly the more sophisticated form of the Internet, is still rare, in spite of strong support by education policies (Banpho, 2001; Fry, 1999 cited in Atagi, 2002: 25).

One other significant condition of ELT in Thailand is that most Thai classes are large, with numbers of 45 to 60 students being commonly found (Biyaem, 1997; Wongsothorn, Hiranburana & Chinnawongs, 2003). Such big class sizes cause problems in setting up and monitoring communicative activities, and in following individualised or student-centred approaches in general.

The combination of the factors that I have outlined above impact on the overall context of English Language Teaching in Thailand. They also impact on ELT at Universities in Thailand and at Nakhon Pathom Rajabhat University (NPRU), the site where my research was conducted.

### ***1.6 ELT at Universities and at Nakhon Pathom Rajabhat University (NPRU)***

Tertiary institutions in Thailand are of four types: Universities, Rajabhat Universities, Technical Institutes, and Vocational Training Colleges. The second of these, Rajabhat Universities, are 'new' universities, formed, as with 'new' universities in Australia and the UK, from existing Colleges of Advanced Education and Teacher Training Institutes.

In each of these four types of tertiary institution, English is taught according to the needs of differing curricula.

English is by far the most popular choice of language taught at tertiary level. It is offered as a foundation subject, major and minor subject, and as an elective subject (Wongsothorn et al, 1996). English teaching and learning generally at Universities aims to prepare students to have knowledge of English and its cultures, and competence for communication, through the macro skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing. It is considered that Thai graduates must have sufficient English proficiency to enter the workforce and to contribute to Thailand's participation in the world marketplace (Srisa-an, 1998; Wongprom, 2000; Wongsothorn, Hiranburana & Chinnawongs, 2003). As noted earlier, most web sites are in English, and thus English knowledge and competence are considered to be crucial for students to participate in global communication. Such communicative ability is also regarded as a significant tool in searching for, reading, and evaluating information critically. Thus, the purpose of learning English is not only for communication, but also for gaining knowledge and ideas and accessing to global information. As Srisa-an (1998) points out:

...Specifically for English language education, especially at the tertiary level, our programs must enable students to make use of all academic materials available in various media in their own field of specialization. They must be able to use the language in the further pursuit of their areas of specialization (p. 3).

The Thai government, Thai educators, administrators and linguists, have acknowledged the significant roles of English, and the global market demand for Thai graduates who are well-equipped with English competency. Teachers have been made aware of the significant roles of English in the changing world, and are required to be able to keep up with rapid changes in technology, such as the Internet, which impact on English language teaching. Some writers, for example, Wiriya-chitra (2001, 2002), Wiriya-chitra and Keyuravong (2002), and Wongsothorn, Hiranburana & Chinnawongs (2003) have argued that in response to the impact of globalisation, the advancement of technology and the demand for Thai graduates with English competence, the teaching and learning of English in Thai universities needs to be urgently evaluated. It has also been suggested that learning English in classroom settings is inadequate: students need to learn and practise English in the real world beyond the classroom through electronic-multimedia resources (Chayanuvat, 1997).

As noted above, Rajabhat Universities are new universities, and thus their recent ELT policy has evolved in line with other universities and higher educational institutions.

#### *Nakhon Pathom Rajabhat University*

Nakhon Pathom Rajabhat University (NPRU), where my research took place, is located in the central part of Thailand, 56 kilometres west of Bangkok. Initially established in 1936, it has a long history in providing teacher education, first as ‘Nakhon Pathom Female Teacher Training School’, then, from 1960 as a coeducational teacher training institution. In 1970, teacher training at NPRU was upgraded from a two-year diploma to a four-year certificate in higher education. From this time on with its new title, Nakhon Pathom Teachers’ College, it played a wider role in training beginning teachers, developing existing teachers and educational personnel, promoting research, preserving arts and the culture, and providing academic services for the local community. In 1978, a bachelor degree in teacher education was introduced and in 1985, diplomas in fields other than teacher education: in liberal arts and sciences, were also introduced. In 1992, the title of ‘Teachers’ College’ was changed to Rajabhat Institute, and master’s programs in Educational Administration, and Thai Studies were introduced. In 2004, Rajabhat Institutes were further upgraded to ‘Rajabhat Universities’.

Currently, Nakhon Pathom Rajabhat University (NPRU) offers both teacher education and other fields of studies, ranging from diploma to master’s degree level for both full-time and part-time students, through four faculties: *Education, Humanities and Social Sciences, Sciences and Technology, and Management Sciences* (NPRU, 2005). Courses are offered on both a full-time and part-time basis, the latter serving to provide education for those in the workforce who had not earlier attended university. Such part-time students come from different occupations and include school teachers, police, nurses and people from the health sector, local politicians, and people working in banking. It can be said that Rajabhat Universities aim to provide education for all who need to be more literate, to upgrade their status at workplaces, and to effectively participate in a changing society.

In relation to teacher education, NPRU offers a diploma in *Early Childhood Education*. It offers bachelor’s degrees in *English, Thai, Social Studies, Mathematics, Sciences, Physical Education, Chemistry, Physics, and Primary Education*. It also provides

master's degrees in many of these fields, including *Thai Studies*, *English* and *Educational Administration* (NPRU, 2006).

English is taught as a foundation subject for all students, and as a major subject for students majoring in English Education or in Business English. It is also available as a compulsory or elective subject for students majoring in Tourism. All first-year students at NPRU are required to undertake two foundation English subjects which aim at enabling them to develop basic skills for communication. Students in the Bachelor of English Education program are required to undertake a number of English studies relevant to their field as part of their training to become teachers of English.

In 1996, the University established the Self-access Language Learning Centre (SALLC), in which print-based materials, audiovisual materials, computers and Internet access were provided in order to assist students' autonomous English learning. In 1998 this SALLC became part of a more general Language Centre, which aimed to provide training in English and other foreign languages such as Japanese, Korean and Chinese for students, staff and other interested people outside the University. Staff in this Language Centre are now responsible for providing additional English courses for all first-year students who do not pass the initial English placement test.

### *ELT Curriculum*

Students in the Bachelor of Education (BEd) program at NPRU are being trained in English and Education, among other studies. After their graduation, they are expected to become teachers of English at the secondary level.

The BEd at NPRU requires four years of study, including two-semester of teaching practice (this degree has very recently been increased to a total of five years of study). Since the students who participated in my research were English Education students who were enrolled in the BEd, it is relevant to provide a summary of the curriculum and goals of this degree.

The English Education Curriculum aims at enabling students to:

- have sufficient knowledge and understanding of English and the education process and have the capacity to teach English at the secondary level;

- develop skills in listening, speaking, reading and writing and gain experience in teaching methods, utilise innovation and technology and apply these skills, knowledge and experience to effective teaching practices;
- listen to and read information in English available in the media and understand the culture of native English speakers in order to increase their knowledge and appreciation of the language;
- have knowledge of basic research methods, possibilities for further education and for self-development and teaching improvement;
- have positive attitudes towards learning and teaching English and enhance morality, faith, pride and responsibility in their teaching careers  
(Office of Rajabhat Institutes Council, 2000: 204).

The following table summarises requirements for students who major in English Education.

**Table 2.2: English subjects requirements in the English Education Curriculum (2000)**

| Subjects           | Credits |
|--------------------|---------|
| Foundation English | 3       |
| English pedagogy   | 4       |
| Core               | 22      |
| Elective           | 45      |
| Total              | 74      |

### *ELT Teachers and Methodology*

The NPRU English department consists of 14 Thai teachers, and 4 or 5 English-speaking teachers. Most Thai teachers have a master's degree in English, linguistics, or English teaching. A few teachers hold only a bachelor's degree in English, and one holds a PhD. Three teachers, including me, are currently on leave undertaking a PhD in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL). The expatriate teachers hold bachelors and masters degrees in English or English teaching.

Most classrooms are teacher-fronted, with the teacher's table facing students' desks. Typically, the teacher dominates the classroom while students sit in rows, listening and doing what the teacher requires. However, classrooms are sometimes reorganised to suit small-group or pair-work activities.

While official university policy advocates a communicative approach to ELT, in reality, more eclectic approaches are practised, depending on the features of each subject. Some courses, such as *Forms and Usage*, are teacher-centred. In others, such as listening and speaking classes, teachers encourage students to speak in small groups or in pairs. However, before having students complete such activities, the teacher will normally

present language structures, key vocabulary and expressions as well as encourage students to practise by repeating a dialogue chorally. It can thus be said that on those occasions, the teacher moves from dominating the classroom to taking on more of a facilitator's role. Role-plays are also introduced to students in the *Listening and Speaking* class and the *Language Learning through Drama* class.

In writing classes, teachers typically begin by teaching language structures, text types and key vocabulary which students are expected to use in writing. There may be discussions (brainstorming, for example) involving the entire class before writing actually begins. Students are provided with a writing topic and are required to compose a paragraph following guidelines and examples. The teacher checks their writing and corrects grammatical mistakes.

A typical Reading class similarly starts with an explanation of relevant grammar, vocabulary and perhaps some aspects of culture. The teacher guides students in using appropriate reading strategies. The students then silently read the text and usually answer written questions, writing the answer under each question. Then, the teacher reads out the questions, and the students read their answers aloud chorally or individually. If the students give incorrect answers, the teacher gives the correct ones and explains in Thai until the students understand clearly. Other reading tasks involve finding topics and main ideas, finding references, matching words found in the text with their meanings, matching a paragraph with its topic, and completing cloze exercises. Students are assessed via sub-tests, assignments, class attendance, and a midterm and a final examination. The above teaching and learning patterns are typical of NPRU and in general of tertiary level EFL in Thailand.

In linguistics classes, students are taught the language rules and structures of English explicitly, and they work through a series of exercises designed to check their knowledge and understanding of the subject. Thai is the usual mode of communication between teachers and students. Spoken interaction is usually one-way: the teacher transmits knowledge to students who are placed in a receptive position in the classroom. The teacher as an information giver must have accurate knowledge and skills in transferring this knowledge to students.

It can be seen that overall NPRU teaching/learning culture is teacher-dominant, in spite of providing some opportunities for students to interact with each other in listening/speaking and communication English classrooms.

### ***1.7 My Previous Teaching Practice in the Paragraph Reading Strategies Subject***

The Paragraph Reading Strategies (PRS) subject is a two-credit core subject that English-major students both in Business English and English Education are required to undertake. The duration of the course in 2000 was 15 weeks/2×50 minutes periods per week. This course aimed to:

...develop basic reading strategies for reading efficiency at the complex sentence level, including embedded forms, and the paragraph level, understanding language pattern, references and connectives, using context clues and skills for discovering meaning of new words. Besides, reading for topics and main ideas are also emphasised (Office of Rajabhat Institutes Council, 2000: 98).

The aims of this course were highly structured and its focus was a sole skill: reading comprehension. In order to serve students' needs, interests and language abilities, it was the teachers' responsibility to select texts and materials, and to create teaching and learning procedures, assessment and evaluation which they thought appropriate for their students.

My previous teaching practices, which were similar to those of other teachers, can be summarised in the following table:

**Table 2.3: *Paragraph Reading Strategies* subject and teaching practices**

|                     |  |
|---------------------|--|
| Language focus      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Emphasised reading; non-integrative</li> <li>Each reading undertaken separately</li> </ul>  |
| Curriculum content  | Analysing words, guessing word meanings, using dictionaries, scanning, skimming, recognising textual cohesion, and recognising text organisation   |
| Goals               | <p>Goals of teaching and learning were set in accordance with the aims of the course, with the aim that students would learn to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>predict word meanings from context using knowledge and understanding of prefixes, suffixes and compound words</li> <li>predict word meanings using context clues</li> <li>use dictionaries effectively</li> <li>scan various texts to find specific information</li> <li>identify the topics and main ideas of paragraphs</li> <li>recognise textual cohesion</li> <li>recognise patterns of text organisation</li> <li>skim texts to find the gist</li> <li>express opinions</li> </ul> |
| Texts and materials | Textbook prepared by the teacher; texts were copies from books and real-life sources e.g. magazines, newspapers, brochures, advertisements, dictionaries, and the Internet   |
| Teacher's roles     | Teacher-dominated: Preparing texts and exercises, teaching and explaining, controlling and supervising the class, providing feedback i.e. correct answers and explaining, and assessing students' learning achievement   |
| Students' roles     | Receptive/quiet learners: Doing what they were told to do e.g. listening to the teacher, reading texts and doing exercises, waiting for the teacher's feedback   |
| Activities          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Giving an overview of the course</li> <li>Students completing pre-reading activity</li> <li>Advising reading strategy for each lesson</li> <li>Teaching and explaining aspects of vocabulary, grammar, and culture</li> <li>Practising reading texts and completing written exercises individually, both in class and outside the class</li> <li>Checking the students' answers</li> </ul>  |
| Assessment          | Students' answers in reading each text and their class participation, written sub-tests, final examination (multiple-choice), class attendance   |
| L1 and L2           | Code switch between L1 and L2  |

As indicated in the above table, the focus of my previous teaching of this course was specifically on reading skills, rather than on integrated skills. The only writing that students did was to provide answers to the questions related to the texts they read. The skills basis of the curriculum was intended to develop reading comprehension per se, rather than, for example, in order to gather information for a specific purpose.



As indicated above, there was some flexibility in choice of texts for this course. My teaching material was a resource book that I had developed by drawing on textbooks and real-life texts from newspapers, magazines, books, brochures, advertisements, and the Internet. The reason that I developed this resource book was my concern about the fragmented nature of the subject. This resource book was composed of two parts: part one, which dealt with word skills, included three chapters – analysing words, guessing word meanings, and using dictionaries; part two, which dealt with developing reading skills, included six chapters – scanning, identifying topics, identifying main ideas, recognising textual cohesion, recognising text organisation, and skimming. A pre-reading activity was provided at the beginning of the chapter, followed by explanation and text to be used for the focused reading strategy. Each chapter included eight exercises such as multiple-choice type, cloze, matching and diagram completion (Noytim, 2001).

In each lesson, students were familiarised with a reading strategy along with key aspects of vocabulary, grammar, and culture. In a different approach from other teachers, I introduced each lesson by presenting students with a pre-reading activity. Then we discussed this activity and linked it to the reading strategy they were going to learn. Students were allowed to practise reading texts and to complete related exercises individually both in class and outside the class. They were asked to provide the answers and if the answers were incorrect, I provided the correct ones and explained in Thai for students' better understanding. After the reading, each text was put away and students started reading a new text. This teaching and learning process did not encourage students to be involved in meaningful, real-life tasks. As noted earlier, although students were exposed to some genuine texts, they did not have a 'real' reason, that is, a 'beyond the skill' reason, to answer the questions posed.

Assessments consisted of students' written answers, sub-tests, final examination, and class attendance.

My pedagogical practices in the PRS subject described above have both strengths and weaknesses. The strengths involved, firstly, use of some authentic texts prepared in the resource book. However, students lacked the opportunity to select such authentic texts independently or from a variety of sources. Another strength of my teaching practices was familiarising students with reading strategies, language structure, vocabulary and

cultural aspects. It is essential to teach and guide students how and when to employ a repertoire of reading strategies with different types of texts. In addition, students need to know and understand forms and function of the language, as well as vocabulary and cultural aspects, because these are part of students' background knowledge in comprehending texts. Moreover, reading a variety of texts provides the opportunity for students to practise intensive reading and develop reading strategies that they could apply to broader contexts.

The weaknesses of the pedagogical practices in the PRS subject are that firstly, it was a highly-structured curriculum with an emphasis on reading skills only, rather than integrated skills of reading, listening, speaking and writing. This does not reflect real-life reading where people talk about reading or write after reading, and where people read for a purpose rather than to develop a skill. Secondly, the classroom was highly teacher-centred, even teacher-dominated, where students would read only under the teacher's supervision. My responsibilities in the learning process included preparing texts, teaching about them, allowing students to read texts individually, controlling and supervising the class, providing feedback and correcting answers, explaining if answers were incorrect and assessing students' learning achievement. Classroom interaction was teacher to whole class; students were not provided with the opportunity to use English to interact with each other.

Thirdly, students were required to read texts that were prepared by the teacher rather than having freedom in searching texts that were available outside the classroom. It is important for students to develop skills in searching for information which will benefit their long-term learning. Students' reading was intensive only; no opportunities for students' extensive reading were provided either in the classroom or beyond it.

#### *My Concerns about ELT Practices*

I held concerns about ELT, both in respect of my own teaching as well as in respect of ELT at NPRU and generally in Thailand. My particular concern was the imbalance between teacher and students' roles in the classroom. That is, the teacher dominated the classroom while students seemed to be peripheral. Students lacked opportunities to use English for real reasons of communication and to be exposed to English outside the classroom. The same teaching practices were followed day after day until the end of the

semester. I often felt that in my class, students were pursuing a limited range of activities. They sometimes appeared bored and to be lacking in motivation to learn English. I observed that when some students did not want to listen to me explaining, they would talk with peers.

I was also aware that the students lacked a chance to use English for real communication and they did not have a real reason for reading. Neither did they find or choose texts to read by themselves. In examining my teaching practices, I realised that these could change in order to encourage students to actively engage in meaningful learning tasks; students' active roles could be developed; and that this could enhance students' English abilities and enable them to develop more positive attitudes towards learning English.

My concern also parallels the concern of the Thai government, particularly with current educational reform which emphasises classrooms where teacher roles are less dominant; and where students actively engage in learning tasks in order to develop skills essential for a knowledge-based society. It has been these reflections upon practice which have led me to develop this research project. From my extensive reading about English language teaching and learning, the Internet seemed the most likely resource which I might tap, and so I decided to undertake research Stage One in order to investigate students' current use of the Internet in their literacy practices.

## **Section 2: Integration of the Internet in Education**

As this research links both ELT and ICT, and as the Thai government has prioritised both areas in its educational reform, I will, at this point, outline the state of ICT in education in Thailand. The government believes that ICT is a critical tool in improving teaching and learning, in providing life-long education for all Thai people, in strengthening the education system, and in developing the economy (OEC, 2004). In addition, enhancing ICT is seen to assist in building students' socio-cultural knowledge, as students can access different regions and cultures both in Thailand and beyond (Stamper, 2002).

### ***2.1 Internet Use in Thailand***

Access to the Internet in Thailand was established in 1988 by the cooperation between the Asian Institute of Technology, Bangkok, the University of Tokyo, and the

University of Melbourne. An Australian International Development Plan also assisted Thailand's Prince of Songkhla University in setting up dial-up e-mail connectivity to the University of Melbourne. Then, in 1991, a computer network was established amongst five universities in Thailand. By 1995, Internet usage had increased extensively and expanded outside academic domains to the general population (Palasri, Huter & Wenzel, 1999). Initially, the government's response to ICT was to reserve facilities for state academic institutions and government agencies because of the urgent needs for producing Thai computer-literate workers (Borton, 2003).

Currently, in addition to education, the Internet has been integrated to other domains in Thailand such as business and industries. Nevertheless, Internet usage in Thailand is low compared to many other countries (Vateulan, 2004). As reported by Thailand's National Statistics Office, in 2004, the number of Internet users in Thailand was 11.9% of the population (seven million out of 64 million). Among these users, 28.7% were located in Bangkok and 71.3 % were located in other cities. The majority of users were between 15 to 24 years of age (NECTEC, 2005a). Bangkok has about 12.5% of the Thai population, and usage per person is more than twice as high in Bangkok.

NECTEC (2005b) conducted an online survey of Thailand's Internet users from November to December 2004. There were 10,525 respondents in total who self-selected to participate. That survey aimed to explore Internet use and attitudes of Internet users in Thailand in order to gain insights for the further development of ICT policies and plans. The responses to this survey indicated that the majority (60.5%) of respondents were located in Bangkok and suburbs. The majority (90.1%) of respondents had home access and those (52.3%) whose ages were between 20 and 29 used the Internet the most. The majority (53.2%) of users were employed; 24.8% were full-time students, and 5.3% were both employed and part-time students. Those who were employed worked in IT (19.4%), education and research (12.6%), manufacturing (6.9%), healthcare (4.8%), mass communication and advertising (4.6%), and banking and finance (4.5%). Purposes of use were searching the Web for information (35% of respondents), e-mail (29.2%), chatting (9.1%), reading news and current affairs (9%), playing online games (3.9%), discussion boards (3.7%), and downloading software (3.5%). Those users who were over 20 years of age tended to use the Internet for finding information, while those who were lower than 20 years old tended to use it for

entertainment such as chat and online games. Problems of Internet use included virus infection and reliability of information sources.

NECTEC (2006) also conducted the latest online survey of Thailand's Internet users profile from September to November 2005. There were 21,880 respondents in total who self-selected to participate. The aims of the survey were the same as those in the 2004 survey mentioned above, and the responses to this survey were broadly similar to those of the earlier survey.

## ***2.2 Networking Projects for Higher Education***

There are a number of networking projects established in higher education in Thailand. The most significant is the *UniNet* project, which was established in 1997 to connect all public higher educational institutions in Thailand (Stamper, 2002; Charnsripinyo, 2004). The project aims to develop high-speed information access and to set up a distance learning network for the university system in order to (1) develop self-access learning centres within universities, including establishment of e-library facilities in campus network; (2) develop courseware for collaborative use by university members and databases/instruction via video conferencing; and (3) develop the capacity of personnel in research, management and application of new learning technologies (Bhangananda, 2003: 67). In 2003, the UniNet was able to connect 145 higher educational institutions throughout the country and provide 38 distance-learning classrooms (OEC, 2004). The language used for all these projects is Thai.

In 2001, *SchoolNet* (a project for primary and secondary levels) and *UniNet* were combined in order to be able to provide networking services to schools and higher educational institutions in Thailand (Stamper, 2002). The new network is called the *National Education Network* (EdNet), and is the joint responsibility of the Ministry of University Affairs (MUA) and the Ministry of Education (MOE). The MUA is responsible for the development and management of the infrastructure, while the MOE is responsible for installation of computers and other equipments. The project involves five plans of development of IT infrastructure: development of e-library and e-learning centres, production of electronic media for teaching/learning, development of human resources for ICT and research and the development of international connectivity. In 2003, IT infrastructure – electricity and telephone – and networking systems were

expanded to cover 56 percent of primary schools, all secondary schools and higher educational institutions (Bhangananda, 2003; OEC, 2004).

E-learning in several universities both in Bangkok and other cities has increased, as for example in the case of *Chula Online* operated at Chulalongkorn University, and KULN – *KU Learning Network* at Kasetsart University. In addition to educational institutions, other government institutions provide online learning. For example, the National Science and Technology Development Agency (NSTDA), in collaboration with Thailand Graduate Institute of Science and Technology, has launched a web site called *LearnOnline*, a web portal for web-based courses from well-known universities and business organisations in Thailand (OEC, 2004).

In 2004, the National ICT Learning Centre was established by the Software Industry Promotion Agency assigned by the Ministry of Information and Communication Technology (MICT). This centre is located at Central World plaza, a major shopping centre in Bangkok. It functions as a resource of learning for Thai people and it is regarded as an example of educational reform with learners as its centre (Foreign Office, Government Public Relations Department, 2005).

The National ICT Learning Centre has also piloted in Bangkok the *GoodNet* project, which aims to transform Internet cafés into learning centres, so that teenagers are protected from potentially harmful uses of the Internet. More than 300 Internet cafés had participated in this project at the end of 2003 (Koanantakool, 2005); it is planned to expand to remote areas of Thailand in the future (Nimkannon, 2005).

The MOE's Higher Education Commission (HEC) launched another online education project called *Thailand Cyber University* (TCU) in 2005. TCU aims to (1) assist all higher educational institutions to deliver distance learning via the Internet; (2) ensure the quality of online courses; and (3) promote the sharing of teaching resources and human resources (HEC, 2005) both in Thai and in English (for English subjects). TCU functions like a virtual university with a web portal for Thai universities to share their resources, including courseware, materials and library resources such as e-journals, books and research papers. It will also provide tools for students' self-learning so that they can study at their own pace. Students will be able to access their e-community via chat rooms and web boards (Karnjanatawe, 2005).

### ***2.3 Internet Use in Thai Higher Educational Institutions***

In 1999, Srichaliang (2000) conducted a survey of Internet use in 36 Rajabhat Universities – known as ‘Rajabhat Institutes’ at that time – in order to investigate (1) to what extent the Internet was used in teaching and learning; (2) constraints of Internet use; (3) use of the Internet by students from different faculties; and (4) use of the Internet by teachers from different backgrounds. Participants in the study were 1,084 teachers and 2,837 students. Results indicated that 69.3% of students had experience in using the Internet while 30.7% had never used the Internet. For students, the purposes of use were searching for information related to their study (76.6%), entertainment (76%), and general knowledge (63.2%). The locations of Internet use were the university’s library (78.8%), computer centre (23.2%) and in various faculties of the universities (17.6%). The study also revealed that 68.6 % of teachers lacked experience of Internet use while 31.4% did have experience of use. For teachers, the purposes of use were to find general knowledge (79%), to use information available on the Internet for classroom instruction (69%), and for entertainment (53.7%). The locations of use ranged across departments (41.1%), faculties (35.2%), and the universities’ computer centres (29.7%). Problems faced by teachers and students involved inadequate computers, frequently slow speeds of connection time and failures of connection, and inadequate computer/Internet specialists who could provide supervision and support. In addition, teachers reported that often they could not find information that suited their needs. Students specified their needs for more computers, Internet training and specialist support, while teachers specified their needs in training, provision of e-mail accounts for all teachers, and specialist support.

Phophrom (2002) investigated the use of technologies for education according to the 1999 National Education Act in teaching and learning management of four Rajabhat Institutes: Rajabhat Institute Petchaburi, Rajabhat Institute Muban Chombung, Rajabhat Institute Kanchanaburi and Rajabhat Institute Nakhon Pathom. The respondents of questionnaires were 250 teachers and 383 students. The study revealed that the use of technologies for teaching and learning took place at only a moderate level. The problems of use included inadequate hardware and user manuals, lack of skilled technicians, language difficulty, and lack of technological literacy.

These two surveys of Rajabhat Universities took place close to the time that I began my research project and I consider that their findings accurately reflect the state of Internet use at my own institution at that time. It is significant that despite the centrality of ICT in the government's reform plans, use by teachers and students is often limited, and/or problematic.

#### ***2.4 Constraints/Challenges to ICT Adoption in Education in Thailand***

This issue of the gap between ICT policy and practice will now be further explored in terms of ICT access, English language barrier; lack of appropriate software, and levels of expertise of administrators and teachers.

##### *Access*

There are three factors which influence access to ICT in Thailand. These involve funding, the digital divide, and connectivity. Concerning funding, the government's budget for ICT implementation in education and maintenance of resources is limited (Fry, 2002b; Stamper, 2002; Prammanee, 2003; Vateulan, 2004). Moreover, Internet service, hardware and software are costly in Thailand in comparison with salary levels, with IT costs being estimated at around 50% higher than in other countries of the region (Palasri, Huter & Wenzel, 1999). It appears that the government's emphasis is placed on systems and hardware, with less than 10 percent being invested in software and personnel (Atagi, 2002). Stamper (2002) points out that often there is also a lack of support from public school administrators for ICT, and suggests that because administrators lack knowledge of when to integrate ICT resources in teaching and learning, they redirect the majority of funds to other learning environments.

The second aspect of access is the digital divide, or the gap between those who have access to new technologies and those who do not. This digital divide remains deep in Thailand. Internet access is predominantly available in Bangkok and large cities (Boonsiripunth, 2001; Vateulan, 2004). There is still a shortage of computers in educational institutions located in rural districts (Stamper, 2002; Borton, 2003). Todd (2005) points out the continued inequality between rich and poor: richer students at better-funded schools, especially those in Bangkok and big cities, have significantly greater opportunities to access the Internet. According to a survey carried out by NECTEC in 2003, the ratio of computers per student at the basic education level is low:



1:120 in primary schools and 1:54 in secondary schools (OEC, 2004). Bhangananda (2003) reports on several surveys which indicate that educational institutions are not using computers in teaching or in educational administration to full capacity. In addition, in terms of ICT infrastructure, while around 97 percent of villages throughout the country have electric power, only around 75 percent have telephone lines. About 2.61 % of all schools in Thailand still lack electricity, while 17.05 % of secondary schools and 69.6 % of primary schools do not have telephone lines. Moreover, in many schools where computers are available, they are scarcely used because administrators fear they may be damaged, while in some other schools there are neither technicians nor teachers who can operate computers (Todd, 2005).

The third aspect of access is connectivity, which remains a problem in Thailand. The speed of Internet connection is very slow, especially in remote areas, or when access by many people occurs at the same time. Thus, as noted by Todd (2005), even when schools are well-resourced with IT, the Internet service itself may not meet demand.

#### *English Language Barrier*

Because English dominates the Internet and software applications (Atagi, 2002), its use is limited to English-speaking Thais, who represent a small percentage of the total population. To address this problem, the government has developed more local software which uses the Thai language (Palasri, Huter & Wenzel, 1999; Borton, 2003). In addition, NECTEC has developed software to translate English to Thai digitally, and it is hoped that this software will enable Thai people to make greater use of the Internet (Prammanee, 2003). Todd (2005) comments that although the quality and range of Thai-language web sites have increased, they still lag far behind English-language sites. Moreover, while highly-proficient English users in Thailand may be able to use English language media, and can thereby enhance their second language proficiency, lower-level students may find that authentic native-speaker texts in English are not comprehensible and thus of little value in their learning.

#### *Limited Quality Software*

Much educational software available in Thailand is created by computer programmers who generally lack knowledge of subject content and pedagogy (Atagi, 2002). In the case of English, Todd (2005) comments that most English language software is not of

good quality. For example, practice exercises available on the Internet are mostly closed-ended with only one correct answer, or multiple-choice questions. Open-ended activities where students can express their ideas and opinions are difficult to find. In addition, much English language educational software is not appropriate for English learning because it incorporates irrelevant and sometimes distracting multimedia.

### *Levels of Teacher and Administrator Expertise*

The integration of ICT in pedagogical practices is still problematic because administrators, educators and teachers lack knowledge and experience in its use. Such personnel are not confident and are therefore unable to fully support the integration of ICT in education. Todd (2005) points out that research has shown that only teachers with confidence in computer literacy can use computers effectively in teaching. Stamper (2002) notes that older members of the teaching profession will not have had the opportunity to develop their familiarity with ICT in their initial training. Without adequate in-service training, such teachers are unlikely to adopt new technologies in the classroom. However, it is also the case that newly-graduated teachers may lack training in ICT pedagogies, as tertiary institutions have not yet made ICT a priority for training at either pre-service or in-service level. In addition, many schools lack Web developers and computer training personnel who can supervise, support and train administrators, educators and teachers in computer skills (Stamper, 2002; Prammanee, 2003). Stamper points out that particularly in rural schools in Thailand, the supervisors most commonly assigned to supervise computer laboratories are teachers who usually lack training and experience in ICT use, whereas in fact, specialists are needed for this task.

As a result, the use of ICT in education in Thailand generally remains limited (Srichaliang, 2000; Stamper, 2002). According to a report of the Asian Development Bank project team which visited schools over a four-month period in 2002, ICT use for direct instruction was rare. Instead, computers were used in most schools for typing lesson plans and reports (Stamper, 2002). Atagi (2002) also notes that another factor that hinders successful use of ICT in education is teachers' heavy teaching loads. Moreover, Sunitham (2003) points out that a gap exists between most language teachers and most Web designers. That is, the former often lack computer literacy, while the latter generally lack linguistic knowledge to create good Web-based language courses.

Sunitham suggests that collaboration between teachers and Web experts is crucial for the proper use of new technologies in education.

### ***2.5 Use of the Internet in ELT***

The factors that limit use of computer technology in education generally in Thailand, also impact on its use in ELT. Although research on using the Internet in ELT in Thailand is still limited, there is evidence of both constraints and possibilities in this field. In a very relevant recent study, Banpho (2001) surveyed 150 instructors in six leading public universities in Bangkok about their use of IT in English teaching. The study found that more than half of the instructors had no experience in using computers, but despite this, most agreed that IT should have a positive role in ELT and they said they would welcome training for this purpose. In another study, Vattanapath, Charupan and Soranastaporn (2002) used questionnaires with 180 Thai English teachers working at Thai public universities to investigate students' use of web sites in practising their English skills and teachers' choice of activities. This study found that students used web sites for doing English exercises, homemade exercises, writing reports, playing vocabulary and grammar games, and writing to pen pals. Teachers' favourite activities were assigning students to use English learning web sites for language exercises and finding information for writing reports. Findings from these two studies suggest an overall level of enthusiasm for Internet use in ELT, but very limited knowledge and skills, with the result that Internet use tends to replicate drill and practice activities, except that these activities took place on screen rather than on paper.

There is, however, evidence of increasing interest in the possibilities offered by the Internet. A number of researchers in recent years have investigated the possibilities of using the web and the Internet for more authentic learning materials (Prapphal, 1997; Srisa-an, 1998; Banditvilai, 2000; Wongprom, 2000; Charupan, Soranastaporn & Suwattananand, 2001).

Wongprom (2000), for example, provides suggestions for ways in which teachers can adapt new technology to support and facilitate their teaching by exploring use of non-print/electronic sources. Charupan, Soranastaporn & Suwattananand (2001) point to the value of the Internet as a free-access resource of global information available to both students and teachers to support English teaching. Srisa-an (1998) suggests that resources, such as e-mail, can be used to facilitate discussion and sharing of

information, finding information, and creating new information. Prapphal (2004) further supports the use of Internet applications such as e-mail, as well as web-based projects, in ELT. Prapphal (1998), in a survey of 28 first-year Economic students at Chulalongkorn University, analysed students' needs and interests in using computers. She reports that the Web provided opportunities for both procedural and declarative learning, as well as comprehensible input which can facilitate and enhance learning. Similarly, Banditvilai (2000) investigated the use of the Internet, particularly the Web, as a resource of authentic, realistic and up-to-date information, and asserted that it can be a powerful and motivating tool for students in learning English.

Other recent research has investigated the integration of the Web in English for the teaching of reading. Banditvilai (2000) examined a teacher's experience of incorporating the Internet into a university level reading course to assist second year English major students in developing their reading skills. Similarly, Chantarasorn, Cowan, Paulin and Soranastaporn (2000) conducted an empirical study by integrating Web resources with extensive reading for first-year medical students at Mahidol University. In Banditvilai's study, students had an opportunity independently to search for information, while in the latter study by Chantarasorn et al, students were directed to specific web sites rather than required to search independently. Thus, students in the latter study lacked opportunity to research independently and to evaluate knowledge and information on the Web. Further, both these studies used Web resources in a traditional print based form rather than having students experience reading on screen.

Another study, conducted by Maneekhao (2002), made more extensive use of the resources available on the Internet. Maneekhao examined how 58 Thai university students applied Internet technology in a course-length project. The students were required to collect data from a variety of sources and later analyse, interpret, publish a paper on the Internet and present their written project to the class. Student evaluations indicated that they were satisfied with the course especially because they had learned how to use computer programs and how to create a web site.

In summary, for Thailand, as for many other countries, the Internet could become a powerful tool in facilitating teaching and learning of English. But from the studies referred to above, it appears that this practice is happening in Thailand only in limited ways and mainly at universities. In general, these ways have consisted of e-mail, finding

information on the Web, and accessing English practice web sites. The studies also reveal that in most cases, activities are constructed around traditional print-based materials which have been downloaded from the Web, rather than being in the form of on-line communication. Nevertheless, most studies do show positive attitudes amongst teachers and students towards the current and potential use of ICT in ELT, and suggest that there is room for more research in this area.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has outlined the context in which my research is located. In Section 1, I focused in particular on issues relevant to the status and teaching of English in Thailand. I began by addressing the status of English as global language and its status as the first and most important foreign language in Thailand. I outlined government policy reforms that have been implemented to improve the overall quality of education in Thailand as well as to improve the quality of language teaching in schools and in universities. In addressing ELT practices and problems in Thailand, I have argued that issues of the dominance of teacher directed pedagogy in Thailand, the traditional nature of the powerful examination system, the nature of Thai culture and the learning environment where English is a foreign language have all contributed to the current low levels of English proficiency amongst Thai students. I then turned to an analysis of ELT practices at NPRU, the site in which my research was conducted. More specifically, here, I described my own previous pedagogical practices in the PRS subject as well as my concerns on my own teaching practices, ELT at NPRU and generally in Thailand.

In Section 2, I examined the current situation in regard to use of the Internet in Thai education and, more specifically, the extent to which the Internet is incorporated in Thai ELT. In my account of ICT in education in Section 2, I addressed the tension that exists between projected and actual practices in regard to Internet use in Thailand. My review of recent policy and research has shown that while the government has set up a number of policies and plans to provide infrastructure and training, few students, teachers or educational personnel have the skills to use the Internet extensively. In addition, the majority of users are located in Bangkok and use the Internet at home, which is indicative of the problem of the digital divide between the capital and rural areas. Limited access to the Internet, the barrier of English language, limited software, lack of personnel training especially of teachers, and lack of computer and Internet trainers

together form a significant barrier to the implementation of government policy regarding ICT and education.

For English teachers, there is a further paradox: on the one hand, as recent research in the area suggests, ICT affords exciting opportunities for ELT in Thailand, while on the other, effective use requires both high levels of English language proficiency and skills with technology. Given the current tensions between the government's educational reform agenda and teaching practices, it appears that new ways of incorporating ICT in ELT need to be investigated.

In light of the Thai educational reform outlined in this chapter, it may be seen that my research project seeks to contribute to *the broad reform of learning*, to *the development of English language capacities*, and to *the use of technologies in education*.

However, before turning to details of the research project, in the following chapter, I first review literature of relevant pedagogical approaches in order to seek ways to balance the traditional teacher-centred approach and the learner-centred approach in terms of roles of teacher and students. I also examine the potential role of the Internet in enhancing English learning. The purpose of this review of pedagogical approaches and potential of the Internet is to seek further insights for the development of a teaching program to be implemented as part of this research project.

## **Chapter 3**

### **Theories and Pedagogy**

#### **Introduction**

This chapter investigates research literature relevant to the thesis topic of the role of the Internet in English language teaching. Section One outlines three pedagogical approaches relevant to this study. It first revisits Communicative Approaches with their student-centred base. Secondly, it examines Content-based Instruction. Thirdly, it explores aspects of neo-Vygotskian Sociocultural theory in an attempt to achieve a balance between the student-centred approach of Western communicative methods and the teacher-centred approach to learning which is traditional in Thailand. Section Two investigates changing concepts of literacy resulting from the impact of ICT, particularly the Internet, on communication. This section also examines the nature of reading processes on the Internet; outlines the impact of ICT on ELT; and explores the value of incorporating the Internet into teaching English. Finally, in Section Three, this chapter draws on some principles derived from the literature in order to provide a theoretical framework for this study.

#### **Section 1: Relevant Pedagogical Approaches**

This section firstly delineates various communicative and learner-centred approaches which have underpinned the current educational reform agenda of the Thai government. It also discusses strengths and constraints of these approaches. Then it documents Content-based Instruction and neo-Vygotskian approaches to English language teaching which have been drawn upon in this research. These are the approaches that are most relevant to the educational context of EFL in Thailand and also to the theoretical framework in which my research is located.

##### ***1.1 Communicative Approaches***

Communicative language teaching originated in the late 1960's as part of a reaction against structural approaches and situational language teaching in the United Kingdom, and against audiolingual methods in the United States. Those existing methods were considered to provide few opportunities for learners to use language for communication, being instead focused upon mastery of structure. Communicative approaches were

influenced by functional linguists, such as Halliday in the United Kingdom, and sociolinguists, such as Hymes in the United States, and then developed by writers such as Munby (1978), Brumfit (1984) and Nunan (1987). Early forms of communicative language teaching were provided by Wilkins' notional and functional syllabus which was based on both notional categories, such as time, sequence, location, frequency, and communicative functions, such as requests, offers, apologies (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). In the following section, I will first outline the main features of CLT, and follow this by a discussion of some major limitations of this approach, especially in contexts such as Thailand.

### *Tenets of Communicative Approaches*

The primary goal of CLT is to enable learners to develop communicative competence in order to use the target language in communication (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). Communicative competence is the term coined by Hymes to refer to an aspect of learners' competence that enables them to convey and interpret messages and to negotiate meanings interpersonally within specific contexts (1967, 1972 cited in Brown, 2000: 246). It can be said that communicative competence constitutes "what learners need to know in order to be communicatively competent in a speech community" (Richards & Rodgers, 2001: 159).

Canale and Swain (1980), further developed Hymes' communicative competence into four components: grammatical or linguistic competence, discourse competence, sociolinguistic competence, and strategic competence. Grammatical/linguistic competence includes knowledge of lexis, syntax and semantics; that is knowledge of the correct forms to be used in communication. Discourse competence is the ability to connect sentences in discourse and to understand the meaning of connected utterances. Sociolinguistic competence is the knowledge of the social and cultural contexts in which language is embedded. Strategic competence refers to verbal or nonverbal communication strategies that learners use to compensate for their limitations in other competences. Speakers may, for example, substitute words used in sentences with other words, or they may use gestures to facilitate communication.

The view of language which underlies communicative pedagogy is a functional one, which considers language as a means of enabling various communicative functions to



be performed. An early proponent of CLT, Littlewood (1981) notes that in such an approach, attention to structure has not been lost, but accompanies the functional view of communication. He further explains the relationship between form and function as follows:

...the foreign language learner needs more than a 'fixed repertoire' of linguistic forms corresponding to communicative functions. Since the relationship between forms and functions is variable, and cannot be definitely predicted outside specific situations, the learner must also be given opportunities to develop strategies for interpreting language in actual use (p.3).

Larsen-Freeman (2000) echoes this view, indicating that students need both knowledge of linguistic forms, and the ability to choose forms appropriate to the social context and to the roles of participants. Similarly, Celce-Murcia asserts that "grammar interacts with meaning, social function or discourse – or a combination of these – rather than standing alone as an autonomous system to be learned for its own sake" (1991: 459).

The characteristics of CLT will be further described in terms of classroom activities, the teacher's role, and student-centred learning.

### *Classroom Activities*

CLT emphasises communication as the goal of learners and aims to provide the best means of achieving this goal (Pica, 2000). Richards and Rodgers (2001) similarly stress that the goal of CLT is communication, which is furthered by tasks requiring students to share information and negotiate meaning. Such activities typically include problem-solving tasks, role-plays, simulations, and games (Johnson & Morrow, 1981), and usually exclude the use of students' first language (Larsen-Freeman, 2000).

In CLT methodology, students are expected to play active roles through 'negotiating for meaning', that is, through trying to understand their interlocutors and make themselves understood by their interlocutors in spite of their incomplete knowledge of the target language (Richards & Rogers, 2001). Accordingly, students in the communicative classroom are expected to interact primarily with each other rather than with the teacher (Richards & Rogers, 2001). Students are intended to have opportunities to express ideas and opinions, to take risks, and to experiment with the new language.

Pair and group work are central in CLT because they provide greater opportunities for learners' communication than do whole class activities (Pica, 2000). Moreover, because in real life, students often combine various language skills, so in the communicative classroom are combined the skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing (Burns & Joyce, 1997).

The communicative approach also emphasises the use of authentic learning materials to promote students' communication. Richards and Rodgers classify such materials as texts, tasks, and 'realia' (2001: 168). 'Texts' here refers to textbooks that are designed to support communicative language teaching, and which include authentic or simplified materials of types which learners would be expected to meet beyond the classroom. Authentic tasks are those, as indicated above, which replicate or simulate the kinds of communication required beyond the classroom. 'Realia', or authentic materials, refers to signs, magazines, newspapers, advertisements, graphic resources, graphs, charts, and various audio and video resources.

### *Teacher's Role*

Breen and Candlin (2001) have specified a variety of roles for the teacher in CLT as follows. The first is to facilitate the communicative process amongst all students in the classroom, using a range of activities and texts. In addition, the teacher plays the role of an interdependent participant who shares responsibility for learning and teaching with students. This role also implies secondary roles for the teacher as an organiser of resources, a resource her/himself, and a guide to classroom procedures and activities. The third role is that of a researcher who contributes appropriate knowledge and abilities, and who draws upon her/his experience of the nature of learning. Richards and Rodgers (2001) suggest other roles of the teacher to be needs analyst, counselor, and group process manager. To be a needs analyst, the teacher determines and responds to learners' language needs. To be a counselor, the teacher has to be able to connect speaker intention with listener interpretation through paraphrasing, confirming, and giving feedback. In taking on the role of group process manager, the teacher organises the classroom to be a setting that maximises communication.

Of these various roles, the primary one is that of *facilitator* (Larsen-Freeman, 2000; Breen & Candlin, 2001): one who enables students to reach their potential by a focus on student *learning*, rather than upon *teaching* itself.

### *Learner-centredness*

While the terms Communicative Approaches and CLT have been broadly used in the literature, one particular dimension of CLT has received particular attention in the Thai context, that of ‘learner-centredness’. Hedge (2000) points out that the term ‘learner-centred’ has four central characteristics. The first is that learners participate in the whole process of designing the course content and selecting learning procedures. A second is that learners participate in the design of language activities. A third is that learners are encouraged to take responsibility to a great degree for their own learning, and in this respect, the teacher needs to ensure that learners employ effective learning strategies in planning their performances and monitoring their own learning. A fourth characteristic is that of enhancing learner autonomy.

This focus upon the learner results in a ‘bottom-up’ program being developed through collaboration between teachers and learners, rather than one introduced by specialists in a top-down or ‘specialist’ approach (Johnson 1989, cited in Tudor, 1992: 32). Through this collaboration, learners are expected to be actively involved in all stages of program development, including setting learning goals, selecting learning materials, and negotiating teaching methodology which suits their learning styles. By the same token, students and teachers are also expected to collaboratively make decisions concerning assessment and evaluation (Nunan, 1988; Tudor, 1992; Nunan & Lamb, 2001).

In particular, the notion of learner participation in program design has been supported by Nunan (1988) and Nunan and Lamb (2001), who assert that:

In an ideal learning-centred context, not only will decisions about what to learn and how to learn to be made with reference to the learners, but the learners themselves will be involved in the decision-making process (Nunan & Lamb 2001: 28).

It should be said that characteristics of ‘learner-centredness’ as outlined above may be developed more readily in the Western contexts where they originated than is possible in quite different cultural contexts such as that of Thailand. Indeed, it is important to

reappraise the extent to which Communicative Approaches overall can be applied in EFL contexts such as Thailand. The following section will offer such a reappraisal.

### *Constraints of CLT*

Although, as indicated above, CLT has been the dominant language teaching methodology in the West for some decades, there has been an increasing discussion of its possible limitations, particularly when exported to non-Western contexts. Some major constraints will be discussed here in relation to fluency/accuracy focus, learner and teacher roles, and cultural appropriacy.

### *Focus on Accuracy/Fluency*

Significant critiques of CLT have concerned its movement away from form and onto meaning, sometimes also described as a focus on fluency over accuracy. It has been argued that neglect of explicit teaching of grammar may cause students confusion and frustration in using the target language accurately, and that by instead focusing upon both form and meaning, learners can benefit from the teacher's linguistic expertise.

Nunan (1995) points out that systemic linguists hold the belief derived from Halliday (1985) that grammar should be taught explicitly at text level because the context and purpose of language use will determine the forms through which it is realised (p. 151). Teaching is thus recommended to start from the whole text to smaller units, rather than starting from isolated items to the whole text. Hammond (1989 cited in Nunan, 1995: 152) asserts that other advantages of explicit instruction of grammar include its contribution to learners' awareness of the nature of and differences between written and spoken modes of language, as well as its provision to teacher and learners of a metalanguage, that is, of a means for talking about language and how it works.

Pica (2000) argues that if attention is focused exclusively on communicating meaning, students may lack opportunities to notice how the sounds and forms of the second language relate to the meanings of messages they try to convey. They may also fail to notice social conventions which require appropriacy of language use. In addition, Pica comments that if students' grammatical errors during communicative activities are tolerated, students will repeat such errors and find the learning experience more frustrating and complex. She asserts that students need corrective feedback on their

production for accurate use of the language, and concludes that students must be given not only opportunities to understand and produce the target language, but also opportunities to attend to linguistic forms and patterns.

### *Learner and Teacher Roles*

Learner-centredness may be advantageous in terms of addressing students' needs, interests and language abilities (Holec, 1987; Dickenson, 1988). However, a number of writers have pointed out that the practical implementation of a learner-centred approach may be problematic. Wenden (1986), for example, doubts the preparedness of learners to play active roles in the overall development of a teaching and learning program. Littlejohn (1985) and Clarke (1989) question learner participation in choosing learning modes and methodology. Le Blanc and Painchaud (1985), Blue (1988), and Lynch (1988) question the learner's role in program evaluation. Therefore, Tudor (1992) suggests that teachers who plan to adopt this approach should consider a range of factors, including students' motivation, maturity, level of education, prior language learning experience, aptitude, intelligence, self-reliance, linguistic readiness, and cultural expectations of the roles of teacher and learners.

Hammond (1990) summarises differences between teacher-centred and learner-centred classrooms as follows. In the former, the teacher dominates the teaching and learning process, imparting knowledge to students who take receptive roles. The teacher controls language interaction, and she does most of the talking. However, in the latter type of classroom, the teacher's role is de-emphasised while the students play active roles in the learning process, participating in deciding on both the content and methods of learning. In the student-centred classroom, students are encouraged to express their opinions and to question the teacher. In this latter type of classroom, Hammond argues that teachers, by trying to avoid intervening in the learning process, may deny what their own expertise can provide. Hammond suggests that a dichotomy of teacher-centred and learner-centred is unhelpful, and proposes a third possibility for a teaching program, that is, one which is neither exclusively teacher-directed nor learner-focused but both teacher-directed and learner-centred. This type of program retains the teacher's expertise, and at the same time de-emphasises the authority and status of the teacher in order to increase the options for learners. Here, the classroom control shifts between teacher and students; that is, either the teacher or the students dominate the teaching and

learning process at different times. The teacher uses her expertise where there is a need for explicit input in order to assist students; then the teacher steps back and allows students to take control of their own learning; and when students falter while performing tasks, the teacher directly intervenes. Hammond concludes that in this type of teaching program, the teacher provides a kind of *scaffolding* for students that guides them towards greater mastery of language and greater control of their own learning process.

### *Cultural Appropriacy: ESL and EFL*

A different kind of criticism of CLT is related to the issue of cultural appropriacy, especially in EFL contexts (e.g. Ellis, 1996; Bax, 2003). Anderson (1993) comments that:

While the communicative approach may be the best way of training those from other language backgrounds here in the United States and the most efficient kind of training for those who need to be part of our culture, it may not meet the needs of others in distant lands, who are learning English for a different purpose and who have no hope of ever visiting our country and no desire to adopt our culture (p. 471).

The role of English in most East and South East Asian countries such as Korea, China, Japan, Vietnam and Thailand is that of a foreign, rather than a second language. That is, English is neither used in everyday spoken/written communication, nor does it occupy a role as an official language. It is important at this stage to flesh out some of the major differences which exist between EFL and ESL contexts, for this distinction is fundamental to an understanding of the nature of ELT in Thailand.

In Chapter 2, use was made of Kachru's concentric circle model of global Englishes. Kachru's Inner, Outer, and Expanding Circles of English may be said to broadly correspond with the pedagogies of ENL (English as a Native Language), ESL, and EFL (Kachru & Nelson, 1996: 79). These three types of English differ as follows. ENL is used and spoken in a natural setting in everyday life by native speakers. ESL is used as an official language and sometimes as a medium of instruction in formal schooling in the Outer Circle. It is also used in the Inner Circle where non-native speakers of English learn it as a medium of instruction at school, and have the opportunities to use it in the community or the workplace. On the other hand, EFL has its major role in the

Expanding Circle where it is increasingly used for international communication in a variety of domains such as business, politics, media and entertainment, technology, and education.

In the Inner Circle, English is taught and used not only in the classroom but also in the real world outside the classroom. Because ESL learners have driving reasons to use the target language to communicate, express their needs, and to get things done, this learning environment is generally a motivating one. Moreover, ESL learners also have opportunities to be exposed to authentic input beyond the classroom, such as in media and popular cultures (Kachru & Nelson, 1996: 81; Lee, 2004). In the ESL environment, it is also usually the case that teachers are native speakers of English, which may benefit learners in terms of their exposure to Standard English and its culture.

Studying English in an ESL context thus offers several conditions which are favourable to language learning. By contrast, however, the conditions in which the learning of EFL takes place are less favourable in a number of respects. These conditions, which will be outlined below, are as follows:

- students' lack of target language exposure;
- traditional teaching/learning culture;
- teacher expertise and student English proficiency level;
- lack of learning resources/support; and
- class size.

#### *Students' Lack of Target Language Exposure*

As indicated above, ESL students have the opportunity to practise using the target language in genuine situations which will support their language acquisition outside the classroom. In such situations, the ESL teacher may act more as a facilitator who provides structure, explanations and a forum for discussions. By contrast, in an EFL context, English is not used as a means of communication; rather, EFL students generally learn English to fulfill the requirements of school curricula. EFL students are mainly exposed to classroom English rather than English in real-world settings, and they do not have immediate reasons to use English in real life outside the classroom. In addition, such students lack opportunities to be exposed to sociocultural contexts of various English-speaking environments (Tarnopolsky, 2000; Lee, 2004; Forman, 2005).

The English which students learn typically comes from international, monolingual, commercial textbooks which sometimes fail to address the needs of local students. In such EFL contexts, without the reinforcement of an English-speaking environment, students' motivation is largely dependent on the teacher's initiative and the students' aim to succeed, or their fear of failure. The various limitations of EFL have been further identified in the context of Vietnam (Canh, 1999) and Thailand (Sukanake, Heaton, Chantrupanth & Rorex, 2003).

### *Traditional Teaching and Learning Cultures*

Ellis (1996) notes that the dichotomy between ESL and EFL highlights “a mismatch for Asian learners between the instrumental aims of the communicative approach and their own situation” (p. 215).

Generally speaking, the teaching and learning culture in East and South East Asian countries such as Korea, China, Japan, Vietnam and Thailand follows a teacher-centred approach, which is influenced by teachers/students' beliefs, attitudes and expectations, and reinforced by structurally-based examination systems. While Thailand may be more accurately described as a Buddhist rather than a Confucian society, as indicated in Chapter 2, it nevertheless shares with Confucian countries a number of traits such as moral order, obedience, respect for superiors, modesty, security and concept of face (Canh, 1999; Kolarik, 2004). Scovel describes the Confucian styles of Japanese and Chinese learners as “... deductive, product, hierarchical, cooperative, group-centered, field independent and introverted” (1994: 214). These characteristics result in a teaching/learning culture where teachers are the centre of the classroom and students are quiet, obedient and respectful. Students are expected to believe what teachers say without questioning, challenging, or expressing personal opinions or ideas (Canh, 1999; Forestier, 1998 cited in Littlewood, 2000: 31). Thus, Asian students are often seen by Western expatriate teachers as ‘passive’ learners in spite of their being actively and purposefully focused upon gaining knowledge from their teachers (Li & Chang, 2001). Students may also be reluctant to participate in oral communication because they are afraid of making mistakes, which would result in loss of face (Nevara, 2003). Moreover, communicative activities such as role-plays, problem-solving tasks, or information gap tasks are unfamiliar to their learning culture (Canh, 1999). Ellis (1996) points out that in the case of Vietnam, CLT is inappropriate because its process-



orientation is not compatible with the product-orientation of Vietnamese teaching and learning culture. Similarly, Chowdhury (2003) indicates that in Bangladesh, language classes are expected to consist of grammar, reading and translation, because the teacher's job is seen as transmitting knowledge to students.

In Thailand ELT, the teacher traditionally takes a dominant role, leaving students subordinate in classroom activities, with the result that students may become inhibited and reluctant to use the target language for communication (Maurice, 1985).

Wongsothorn, Hiranburana and Chinnawongs (2003) also note that in implementing the former 1996 English curriculum in which CLT was the favoured teaching method, students failed to achieve learning goals because CLT practices did not accord with cultural expectations. Jarvis and Atsilarat (2004) similarly reported that the introduction of CLT at a private university in Thailand was hindered by students' shyness, deferential nature, preservation of face, reluctance to question the teacher, and fundamental preference for a teacher-centred approach. Weerawong (2004) too asserts that the failure of CLT results from the traditional expectations of both teachers and students in Thailand.

The educational systems of the Asian countries mentioned above are closely linked to the requirements of state or national examinations. Such examinations focus on grammar, vocabulary and reading and their impact encourages teachers to use a traditional teacher-centred approach to teach accurate knowledge of grammar/vocabulary, and reading skills. For example, Li (1998) has reported that continuing use of grammar-based examinations in Korea has caused difficulty in introducing the communicative approach there. Similar responses have been reported in the Chinese context (Harvey, 1985; Burnaby & Sun, 1989; Anderson, 1993; Zou, 1998; Rao, 2002) and in Vietnam (Canh, 1999).

In Thailand, Jarvis and Atsilarat (2004) similarly indicate that the demands of examination-based assessment hinder CLT implementation at university level; and Weerawong (2004) asserts that CLT implementation in Thailand will not succeed if the Ministry of Education's current systems of evaluation and the National University Entrance Examinations remain the same.

### *Teacher Expertise and Student English Proficiency Level*

Although there are some native speakers from countries in the Inner Circle who teach in EFL contexts such as Japan, Korea, China, and Thailand, these teachers are a small minority. The majority of teachers in such contexts are usually local non-native speakers of L2, and may lack confidence in using English communicatively (Lee, 2004). In many EFL classrooms, moreover, the teacher will normally be the major source, and sometimes, the only source of English language, as noted earlier. Since the communicative approach primarily focuses on communication and fluency, particularly oral skills, EFL local teachers may thus be at a disadvantage. However, it should also be noted that local EFL teachers are usually bilingual to a greater or lesser extent, and share their first language with students in their classes (Forman, 2005). This can be a benefit in such EFL contexts, and as Tarnopolsky (2000) argues, by taking a different perspective, we might judge that ESL teachers who do not share a first language with their students are disadvantaged in a different way.

One consequence of local teachers' relative lack of proficiency in English is a decrease in their capacity to implement communicative methodology. This has been reported for the Vietnamese context, Canh (1999); in the Korean context (Li, 1998; Anderson, 1993); and in the case of Thailand (Maurice, 1985; Promsiri, Prapphal & Vijchulata, 1996; Stroupe, Shaw, Clayton & Conley, 1998; Weerawong, 2004).

In addition, students' English proficiency level has an impact on CLT implementation. Li (1998) reports that Korean students' low English proficiency, their lack of motivation for communicative competence and their familiarity with traditional classroom culture cause students to resist participation in communicative classroom activities. Chowdhury (2003) notes that students' low level of English competence and their failure to adjust to learner-centred approaches appear to be a major constraint of CLT implementation in Bangladesh. A number of studies in the Thai context have reached similar conclusions (Promsiri, Prapphal & Vijchulata, 1996; Jarvis & Atsilarat, 2004; Weerawong, 2004).

### *Lack of Learning Resources/Support*

Another limitation of EFL contexts that hinders the use of the communicative approach is deficiency of training and learning resources such as textbooks and technology.

Textbooks used in schools, which are prescribed by the government, are designed for teaching grammar, reading, and writing, with little emphasis on speaking. In addition, educational institutions provide inadequate support and funding. This limitation is found to be the case for Thailand (Maurice, 1985; Promsiri, Prapphal & Vijchulata, 1996), as well as for its closest neighbours: China (Anderson, 1993; Zou, 1998); Korea (Li, 1998); and Vietnam (Canh, 1999).

### *Class Size*

With large class sizes of over 50 students in these EFL contexts, the feasibility of communicative approach is questionable. It is difficult for the teacher to organise and monitor students' pair or group work on such a large scale; and similarly difficult for the teacher to give attention to individual students.

In addition to the factors described above, there are criticisms that CLT does not provide adequate means of conducting assessment of large numbers of students (Anderson, 1993; Canh, 1999). Moreover, CLT is said to place great demands upon individual teachers because it requires a high degree of expertise in designing and implementing communicatively-based programs (Medgyes, 1986, cited in Chowdhury, 2003: 286).

### *Proposed Adaptations of CLT*

Implementing CLT in EFL contexts appears to have been often unsuccessful because of the nature of EFL and because of the limitations of CLT itself as outlined above. A number of authors propose adaptations or alternatives to CLT for implementation in their local contexts. For example, Anderson (1993) argues that in order to integrate the communicative approach to the Chinese EFL context, one must be sensitive to the Chinese culture of teaching and learning. Li (1998) also suggests that EFL contexts should adapt CLT rather than adopt it, in order to suit the immediate needs of local contexts. Ellis (1996) also finds a similar case in Vietnam and argues that “for the communicative approach to be made suitable for Asian conditions, it needs to be culturally attuned and culturally accepted” (p. 213). Canh (1999) also suggests changes in systems of testing, modification of goals of communicative competence, and cultural adaptation of the communicative approach to suit the Vietnamese context.

In order to take into account the different contexts in which learning occurs, Bax (2003) proposes what he calls a 'Context Approach' (p. 278), which suggests that the context – including many aspects such as an understanding of individual learners and their learning expectations, attitudes, learning styles and strategies – needs to be the first consideration in designing and delivering ELT programs. In addition, there needs to be taken into account the culture of the community and school, as well as the availability of teaching materials. In Bax's view, through the consideration of such factors, teachers will be able to identify the best methods of teaching. Bax proposes that an eclectic approach be used to suit any particular context. For example, he suggests that grammar-translation can be used to teach language forms, and then, CLT can be used to develop oral communication. In further developing Bax's Context Approach for Thailand, Jarvis and Atsilarat (2004: online) propose a 'Context-Based Approach', through which language learners are seen to learn best "in teaching and learning environments that are harmonious with their learning styles and expectations...".

In sum, there is increasing evidence that CLT as conceived in English-speaking Western countries is unlikely to be directly and unproblematically exportable to EFL contexts because of its focus on function/fluency over form/accuracy, its learner-centredness, its preferred teacher role of facilitator, and its cultural inappropriateness. In a major recent article that tracks changes and trends in TESOL methods over the past fifteen years, Kumaravadivelu (2006) summarises criticisms of CLT by raising questions about its authenticity, acceptability and adaptability. By authenticity he refers to the extent to which CLT promotes serious engagement with negotiation, interpretation and expression in the language classrooms. By acceptability he refers to the extent to which CLT represents a radical departure from previous approaches to language teaching. And by adaptability he refers to the extent to which principles and practices can be adapted to suit various contexts of language teaching across the world and across time. While each of these categories of questions addresses shortcomings of CLT, it is the issue of adaptability that is especially relevant to my research. As Kumaravadivelu points out, research undertaken in different parts of the world has consistently reported difficulties in implementing objectives and methodologies of CLT. He quotes research from India (Prabhu, 1987); Pakistan (Shamin, 1996); China (Yu, 2001) and South Korea (Li, 1998) amongst others, where CLT was found to be inappropriate and unworkable, and where attempts at implementation were met with

resistance from students. Overall, criticisms of CLT suggest the need for major adaptations, especially in non-Western educational contexts. It may be seen, therefore, that there appears to be a contradiction between the implementation of CLT in English classrooms as required by the Thai Ministry of Education (as described in Chapter 2), and existing ELT pedagogies in Thai schools and universities.

### *The Thai Context*

Notably, CLT in Thailand has been claimed by Wongsothorn et al (1996) and Wongsothorn (2000) to have been implemented with an eclectic orientation. This is echoed by Wasanasomsithi's study (1998 cited in Saengboon, 2004: 28) which found that Thai EFL teachers at university level used a variety of teaching methods with a broad goal of developing communicative competence. This finding has been interpreted by Saengboon (2004) as indicating that these Thai teachers are at least aware and understand CLT and that they have to some extent adapted it for use in their classrooms. However, Saengboon ironically notes that "more often than not, what teachers say they do in class may not necessarily match with what they actually do" (p. 28). As a means of distinguishing local Thai practices from Western CLT, Saengboon suggests replacing the term 'communicative competence' with 'intercultural communicative competence'; that Thai teachers should employ an eclectic approach in teaching; and that L1 be incorporated into teaching, particularly when explaining grammar.

It was noted earlier that CLT generally rejects the use of L1 in the teaching/learning process. As the role of the L1 in L2 teaching may be one of the most significant considerations in EFL methodology, the next section will briefly outline its relevance in the Thai context.

### *The Use of L1 in L2 Teaching*

In multilingual ESL contexts such as Australia, it is clearly not feasible to conduct bilingual lessons which draw upon students' many different first languages, and ESL methodology accordingly has made monolingual teaching a virtue of necessity. However, in Thai EFL classes, it seems possible for L1 to be used in ways which help students' actual language learning as well as their motivation to learn.

All three major methods of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century have sought to exclude L1 from the L2 classroom, ie The Direct Method, Audiolingual, and CLT. However, in recent years, signs of a reappraisal have emerged. Cook, in particular (1999, 2001), argues that concurrent use of L1 and Target Language (TL) creates an authentic learning environment as this acknowledges the continuing presence in the learner's mind of her/his L1. Cook further claims that code switching between L1 and L2 is a natural phenomenon in settings in which speakers share two languages, and thus teachers should encourage this process actively and systematically in the classroom. Murakami (2001) offers strong support for this view, as do Weschler (1997) and Nation (2003).

Forman's recent study (2005) into nine ELT classrooms at a Thai university found that L1 and L2 were used by every teacher in every class, in a variety of productive ways, and that the degree and nature of L1 use depended upon students' EL proficiency levels, the focus of the lesson, and upon individual teachers' teaching styles. Forman concluded that what was common to all nine teachers was "the way in which L2 was embedded in L1", and that "L1 was seen not as a barrier to L2 but as a resource" (p. 180).

The next two sections move from the pedagogy of CLT to explore the possibilities offered by two other approaches: Content-based Instruction and Neo-Vygotskian theory.

### ***1.2 Content-based Instruction***

Content-based Instruction (CBI) is a second language teaching approach in which language is used as a tool to acquire content knowledge and information (Brinton, Snow & Wesche, 1989; Larsen-Freeman, 2000; Richards & Rodgers, 2001). It draws on a number of principles. The first is that a second language is learned most effectively when it is a means to an end, rather than as an end in itself. The second is that teaching and learning should focus on content or subject matter, that is, content is the point of departure in organising the course. The use of academic subjects which provide authentic contexts for language teaching and learning, and the use of content of interest to learners are assumed to increase learners' motivation and to promote more effective learning (Brinton, Snow & Wesche, 1989). Richards and Rodgers (2001) point out that language is purposeful when it is used for specific communicative purposes, for example, academic, vocational, social, or recreational. As learners focus on the purpose

of the language they are exposed to, they become involved in following through and seeing if the purpose is attained and how their own interests relate to this purpose or purposes. Thus, Content-based Instruction offers opportunities for learners to be exposed to meaningful use of a second language. The third principle is that teaching should build on students' previous experiences and their use of the language; it also needs to take into account learners' existing knowledge of the subject matter and of the academic environment as well as their second language knowledge (Brinton, Snow & Wesche, 1989). The fourth principle is that the teaching and learning process should include authentic tasks and should involve integrated skills of reading, listening, speaking and writing needs, because skills are generally integrated in the real world (Brinton, Snow & Wesche, 1989). Brinton, Snow and Wesche point out that as language occurs naturally as 'discourse', that is, in 'meaningful chunks', rather than as isolated sentences, it should be taught at discourse level, and that thereby learners will become aware of larger discourse level features and the social interaction patterns which are essential to effective language use.

### ***1.3 Sociocultural Theory***

The research presented in this thesis draws upon key notions from neo-Vygotskian Sociocultural theory, in particular those of scaffolding, the ZPD and contingency. Before investigating these concepts in greater depth, a short outline of sociocultural theory will be provided.

The field of sociocultural studies of education has grown significantly in recent years, with neo-Vygotskian educational research conducted by a number of scholars, including Mercer (1994), Lantolf (2000), Hammond (2001), Gibbons (2002), van Lier (2004), Hammond and Gibbons (2005). Central to Sociocultural theory is the view that children do not learn in isolation; rather that learning occurs when a child interacts with other people in various social and cultural environments. Therefore, Sociocultural theory views human learning and cognitive development as socially and culturally mediated, communicative processes. Knowledge is seen to be shared; new understandings are constructed through interaction; and language is the major tool which enables learners to engage in this process. Thus, cognitive development may be seen to result from 'culturally contextualised events' (Mercer, 1994: 93).

According to Vygotsky, as pointed out by a number of authors, for example, Lantolf and Appel (1994), Daniels (2001), and Gibbons (2002), learning is seen as the development of cognitive or mental functions, which occurs when a child internalises external activities, through language as a mediating tool, into mental activities. The child is assisted and guided by more experienced people, parents or peers; that is, the child engages in *other-regulation*, also called *intermental activity* on the interpsychological plane. Later, the child appropriates or takes over the knowledge that she learns from experts, and becomes able to perform such tasks and other similar tasks independently; that is, the child now engages in *self-regulation* or *intramental activity* on the intrapsychological plane. In the transition from intermental to intramental activity, the child and expert(s) engage in a dialogic process, where the expert directs and instructs the child how to perform a task, and the child provides feedback to the expert. In this dialogic process, interaction is mediated by language, where language is seen as a tool or an artifact that is used to construct meaning, and which is historically and culturally created. Language is seen as the primary means for learning, meaning construction, cultural transmission and transformation (Lantolf & Appel, 1994; Lantolf, 2000; Lee & Smagorinsky, 2000).

### *Zone of Proximal Development*

The seminal concept of ‘the zone of proximal development’ (ZPD) was proposed by Vygotsky (1978) to capture the relation between learning and development. He defined this concept as:

...the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers (p. 86)....

And asserted that:

What is in the zone of proximal development today will be the actual developmental level tomorrow – that is, what the child can do with assistance today she will be able to do by herself tomorrow (p.87).

Thus there is a distinction between the child’s *actual* and *potential* levels of development: ‘actual developmental level’ describes a child’s mental ability to perform



certain tasks independently; 'potential level of development' describes the tasks that the child can perform with another person's assistance (Lantolf & Appel, 1994).

The notion of ZPD indicates that in accomplishing a task, learners need assistance and guidance from more knowledgeable people: and that both parties collaborate and interact socially in order to accomplish such a task.

Wells (1999) notes that the Vygotskian's ZPD arose from two different contexts: assessment of children's intellectual abilities, and instruction. In the first context, the ZPD is defined by the difference between a child's test performances under two conditions: with, and without assistance. In the second context, the ZPD, as noted above, determines the lower and upper limits of the zone within which instruction should be pitched. Instruction, according to Vygotsky, is only useful when it is ahead of development and encourages the child to reach the level beyond her current capability.

Mercer (1994) argues that there are two implications of the ZPD for education. The first is that the limits of the ZPD for any particular learner on any particular task will be established in the course of an activity, and a key factor in establishing those limits will be the quality of the teacher's supporting interventions. In this way 'the ZPD is an attribute of an event. It is the product of a particular, situated, pedagogical relationship' (p. 102). By observing and assisting a learner through a particular activity, a teacher may gain understanding of how, and how far the learner may be encouraged to progress. However, learners will find different ZPDs with different tasks and with different teachers, varying from classroom to classroom.

Mercer asserts that a second implication is that learners working in the ZPD need a challenging task to be created by the teacher. He argues:

A task which is designed so that children are able to accomplish it without any assistance whatsoever is unlikely to stretch their intellectual capabilities (p. 103).

Lantolf (2000) points out that when people work together they are able to 'co-construct contexts in which expertise develops as an attribute of the group' (p. 17). Therefore, he argues, the ZPD is more appropriately viewed as the collaborative construction of opportunities for learners' cognitive development. When experts and novices work

together, novices do not only imitate the experts' capabilities; rather they transform what they learn from experts as they appropriate or take over the task.

### *Scaffolding*

The term 'scaffolding' was introduced in early studies by Bruner and his associates (Bruner & Sherwood, 1975; Wood, Bruner & Ross, 1976). Mercer (1995) notes that Bruner uses this concept to highlight the way that an individual can be closely and productively involved in someone else's learning. The essence of scaffolding, in Bruner's view, is the sensitive, supportive intervention of a teacher in the progress of a learner who is actively involved in a specific task which is within that learner's ZPD. As Mercer (1994) puts it, scaffolding is 'an effective conceptual metaphor for the quality of teacher intervention in learning' (p. 96). In his own work, Mercer (1995: 74) uses the notion to represent both teacher and learner as 'active participants' in the construction of knowledge. That is, teachers and students talk to share knowledge and construct new understandings or concepts (Mercer, 1994, 1995). However, Mercer (1994) points out that scaffolding can be planned in advance: the teacher needs to plan teaching and learning activities; decide where to position scaffolding in the teaching and learning process through setting goals; and design tasks that enable students to achieve those goals.

Mitchell and Myles (2004) point out that the concept of scaffolding has been developed in neo-Vygotskian approaches to capture 'other-regulation' in the ZPD. 'Other-regulation' here refers to the process through which unskilled learners or novices learn by performing tasks under the guidance and assistance of more experienced persons or peers. This process is mediated through language; that is, learners learn how to do things through collaborative talk until finally they take over or 'appropriate' new knowledge and skills into their own consciousness.

Hammond and Gibbons (2001) assert that scaffolding also includes assistance that is designed to help learners to work with more independence. Through scaffolding, students are assisted to know not only 'what' to think and do, but also 'how' to think and do, so that they can apply new skills and understanding to new contexts (p. 5). Therefore, teachers' responsibility is to assist students with potential development towards one end of the continuum of the ZPD to achieve actual development towards

the other end of the continuum. And so, through teacher intervention in the learning process, students will develop an ability to succeed and learn effectively. This implies that teachers have their role in teaching and assisting students at initial stages to develop their abilities to learn independently, and that teaching and assistance can be withdrawn later.

Hammond and Gibbons (2001) also extend the notion of scaffolding to micro and macro levels of teaching. The micro level refers to scaffolding that occurs in interactions between teacher and students; the macro level refers to the overall planning of program and curriculum. At the macro-level of scaffolding, or the ‘designed-in’ level (Hammond & Gibbons, 2005: 12), the teaching program is planned, goals are set, tasks are selected and sequenced. These designed-in features then provide a context for micro-level scaffolding, in other words, ‘interactional’ scaffolding to occur. Without such features, Hammond and Gibbons argue, teacher support may contribute little to the learning goals of specific lessons or units of work (p. 20).

An important dimension of scaffolding is its contingency: the capacity of the expert/teacher to *modify* scaffolded support for specific learners in a way required by a particular situation (van Lier, 1996, 2004). Hammond and Gibbons (2001) note that contingency acknowledges the need for the teacher to be able to judge the amount and quality of support required by the learner, so that the teacher can decide from moment to moment when and how to support students. As individual learners differ in terms of their learning ability, learning pace and learning styles, so will the level and kind of assistance also vary from learner to learner.

In sum, pedagogical approaches that have drawn on sociocultural or neo-Vygotskian theory regard learning as taking place through social interaction rather than as an individualistic process. Central to these approaches are the roles of teachers as well as peers in mediating the process of knowledge construction via dialogic speech. Learners can learn best and most effectively in the ZPD, where they perform challenging tasks – tasks that are beyond their actual level of development – with the assistance of the teacher and more capable fellow students. In order to achieve this approach to learning, it is the teacher’s responsibility to plan learning tasks that serve the goals of the teaching program and broader goals of curriculum (the macro level). In addition, the teacher needs to decide when and where to provide scaffolding support in order to help

students know not only what to learn but also how to learn (the micro level), which occurs in ongoing interactions between teacher and students (Hammond & Gibbons, 2001). The teacher also needs to judge when to provide contingent scaffolding during the task performance process because of student individual differences. Thus, the teacher has a very significant role in students' learning as an authoritative guide who prepares teaching and learning activities, teaches and assists students to achieve in learning.

As I have indicated in the previous section, in developing my teaching program, I have been influenced by Communicative Language Teaching, Content Based Teaching, and pedagogical approaches that have drawn on neo-Vygotskian principles. In addition, my teaching program has taken into account research that has been undertaken in both Western and Asian countries regarding the impact of the Internet on teaching, and in particular its impact on language teaching. I turn now to literature that is relevant to this latter area.

## **Section 2: ICT and Education: Implications for My Teaching Program**

As I outlined in Chapter 2, my concerns about my own teaching practices and overall English teaching practices in the Thai EFL context were that students lack opportunities and skills in using English for genuine communication, and I believed that the Internet had potential as a resource for English teaching and learning. This led me to the development of an English teaching program integrating the Internet, to be delivered in Stage Two of the research. This does not imply that the main focus of my research is on developing digital literacy, however. Rather, the research aims to use the Internet to enhance students' English literacy. In what follows I first address one aspect of the intersection between ICT and education that is especially relevant to my research – that of implications for understanding literacy – before turning more specifically to ICT and English Language Teaching.

### ***2.1 ICT and Education: Implications for Understanding Literacy***

A major implication that arises with use of the Internet is its impact on how literacy is conceived and defined. Since my research is concerned with the teaching of reading as part of an English program at a Thai University, this issue is especially relevant.

### *New Literacies*

Electronic media have shrunk the world so that contact and communication have become reachable, rapid and convenient. Significant areas of business, education, governance, media, recreation and entertainment have now changed to e-contexts: e-commerce, e-business, e-education, e-governance, and e-newspapers. Thus in economically-developed countries, literacy practices are shifting from print-based to screen-based medium. Texts which appear on the WWW now include not only the written mode, but also graphic pictures – static or moving (animation and flash), audio and video files. These texts are known as ‘multimodal’ (Kress, 2002, 2003) or ‘hypermedia’ (Snyder, 1996, 1997, 1998, 2001; Warschauer, 1999); and have been seen as constituting a ‘new communicative order’ (Street, 1998: 1).

It is clear that in the new ‘digital’ world, literacy itself has taken on a changed and extended role. In traditional literacy, reading and writing take place through print-based materials. In contrast, in the knowledge-and-technology-based world, a great amount of literacy practices happen online. As indicated in Chapter 2, in this global communication, English is a lingua franca (Crystal, 1997; Warschauer, 1999, 2000); consequently, people in the globalised workplace, especially those from EFL countries such as Thailand, require English proficiency. Indeed, it is suggested that both English and ICT are required tools for individuals to fully participate in the world community (Warschauer, 2002b).

As a result of the impact of ICT upon communication in recent years, there have been moves to extend or reconceptualise the scope of literacy and literacy practices (Street, 1998; Leu, 1999; Warschauer, 1999; Brindley, 2000; Snyder, 2002; Sutherland-Smith, 2002; Kress, 2003).

The model of literacy that I have drawn on in my research is that of *literacy as social practice* in which specific varieties of reading or writing are inescapably shaped by people’s beliefs, ideas, and values, and the power relationships that exist between readers and writers (Heath, 1983; Street, 1984, 1993, 1999; Gee, 1990; Barton, 1994; Baynham, 1995; Barton & Hamilton, 2000). My understanding of the term ‘literacy’ includes written language and ‘multimodality’. Here I incorporate the term ‘literacy practices’ (Barton, 1994; Barton & Hamilton, 2000) to address the ways in which

people use literacy – both reading, writing and multimodality – in their daily lives in social contexts. I also draw on the term ‘literacy events’ (Barton, 1994: 37) to describe particular social activities in which literacy plays a role to a greater or lesser extent in communication. Literacy events shape literacy practices, and different types of literacy practice may be produced from a common social purpose (Holme, 2004: 66). This concept of ‘literacies’ shaped by the contexts in which they are produced, stands in contrast to a traditional view of literacy, which has been variously described as the autonomous, traditional, or skills-based view.

According to Street (1984, 1993, 1999) the autonomous model describes literacy as produced by cognitive abilities and sets of skills learned formally in schools and which are separable from social contexts. Street rejects this autonomous view, claiming that particular reading and writing practices, and their meanings, can be understood only in the social contexts that produce them. Through his ethnographic fieldwork he asserts:

The meaning of literacy depends upon the social institutions and ideology in which it is embedded. Literacy cannot be separated from such social contexts and ideology. The particular reading and writing practices depend upon such aspects of social structure and stratification and the role of educational institutions (1984: 8).

In a related description of literacy that has proved very useful in my research, Freebody and Luke (1990) argue that in order to be literate in a developed technological society, individuals need to be able to take on four related roles of *code breaker*, *text participant*, *text user*, and *text analyst* (p. 7). To take on the role of *code breaker*, the reader needs to be able to decode a text. That is, s/he needs to know the relationship between sounds and letters, sentences, paragraphs, syntax and semantics. However, the authors argue that code breaking alone is inadequate for participating in a range of social functions and uses. Thus, the reader needs to take on a second role of *text participant*. In this role, the reader needs to draw on inferential meaning of text by using background knowledge or schemata; the reader needs to interact with text and make predictions of what will happen next. To take on the third role of *text user*, the reader needs to be able to consider how a text can be used in the real world. To describe this role, Freebody and Luke draw on social theories where reading is socially and culturally embedded. As a text user, the reader needs to be able to participate in social activities in contexts where written text has a central role and s/he must know what to do with the

text in particular contexts. To take on a final role of *text analyst*, the reader needs to read critically; that is, to be aware of underlying ideological perspectives in a text, of how a text positions the reader, of the writer's intention or purpose and opinion in creating the text.

In another related approach to redefining literacy, Kress (2003) identifies two major changes that have emerged due to the advancement of ICT: the shift from the dominance of writing to the dominance of image and the shift from the dominance of book or page to the dominance of screen. Kress explains that the mode of writing is organised by chronological sequence. For example, a sentence is comprised of words in a predictable order according to syntax and function. This provides a pathway, constructed by the author, for the reader. On the other hand, the mode of an image is organised by space, and by elements such as shape, size, position, and colour. The image may provide a reading pathway either arranged by the producer or created by the reader. This means that space and elements such as picture, size, colour, shape, and position are filled with meaning, giving the reader more freedom in interpretation of image than exists in traditional writing. Regarding the shift from the dominance of book or page to the dominance of screen or information and communication technologies (ICTs), Kress explains that with print-based technology, the production of written text is made easy whereas the production of image is difficult. On the other hand, with the new media – the screen or information and communication technologies, multiplicity of modes or 'multimodality', particularly the mode of image (still or moving) as well as other modes such as audio and video files are made easy by the advancement of ICTs. ICTs provide the user with 'interactivity' and 'hypertextuality' (p.5). The notion of interactivity means the user is allowed to write back to the creator or producer of a text or even change the text with no difficulty. The notion of hypertextuality means that the user has opportunities to access other texts by following hyperlinks. Thus, these two changes of the mode of writing to the mode of image and of the medium of print-based materials to the medium of screen have an impact on literacy in contemporary society.

Drawing on the assertions made by the theorists as mentioned above, in my view, literacy in the contemporary world is the potential to participate confidently in the knowledge-and-technology-based society. This requires capability in communication (reading, writing, speaking, listening and viewing) in various modes (writing, image

and multimedia) and media (print-based and screen-based); skills in critical thinking and problem solving; and skills in utilising technologies, particularly the Internet.

My re-thinking, and re-conceptualising of the nature of literacy has also led me to rethink the way in which I understand reading. I turn now to a more specific discussion of reading.

### *Web Reading and Underlying Theories of Reading*

The concept of literacy as social practice has specific implications in a digital world. New literacies require a new repertoire of skills such as the ability to conduct online navigation and research, onscreen reading, hypermedia interpretation, writing, authoring, and various other kinds of computer-mediated communication (CMC) (Warschauer, 2001); to synthesise information from multiple sources for problem solving and decision-making; and to use skills in collaborative learning (Kasper, 2000). Literacy learners need to handle and construct non-static texts which include graphics, multimedia, and hyperlinks, and these are processes which require reading skills beyond traditional print-based ones (Street, 1998; Brindley, 2000; Slaouti, 2002; Snyder, 2001, 2002; Sutherland-Smit, 2002). Moreover, Web reading requires skills in dealing with an unprecedentedly great volume of information.

These new demands on reading require new ways of theorising reading. Previous skills-based and psycholinguistic models of reading have tended to emphasise individualistic, passive and transmissive processes (Hood, Solomon & Burns, 2002). Socially oriented theories of reading, however, fit more comfortably with the views of literacy as social practice as documented earlier (e.g. Hood, Solomon & Burns, 2002; Street, 1984; Barton, 1994; Baynham, 1995). In such theories, reading relies not only on psychological interaction with a particular text but also on a reader's social understanding of how that text functions within broader political, social and cultural contexts. Thus, reading can be seen as a social practice or social activity rather than an individualistic activity. It is an activity which is conducted for a purpose, and which differs from culture to culture and from community to community within a particular context. In sum, I view the reading process as involving cultural, social, personal knowledge, and the ability to bring this knowledge to the text and understand its meaning (Aebersold & Field, 1997; Hedge, 2000; Hood, Solomon & Burns, 2002).



Critical reading theorists such as Gee (1990) note that the process of reading also depends on the reader's ideologies, beliefs and viewpoints. Readers will make meaning of the text based on their relevant social experiences and the social contexts in which such experiences were constructed. That is, different readers make different interpretations of texts.

This discussion of Web reading can be related to Freebody and Luke's (1990) four roles of the reader, which provides a framework for integrating the kinds of reading strategies that are required in both traditional print-based reading and also in Web reading. In reading multimodal texts, the reader still needs to engage with all four roles. To take on the first role of *code breaker*, the reader needs to decode the new mode of text which includes digital features which differ from the print texts that they are familiar with. Then, in undertaking the second role of *text participant*, readers need to employ a number of reading strategies both traditional and new as well as draw upon background knowledge in making meaning of text. Here both text based and digital reading require skills of scanning, skimming, previewing, predicting, dealing with unfamiliar word, identifying textual cohesion, and using reference skills. In taking on the third role of *text user*, readers need to use knowledge from reading to engage in social activities rather than just reading for its own sake. They also need to recognise the cultural significance and value of texts. To take the last role of *text analyst*, when readers are faced with the multiplicity of hypertexts available on the WWW, they need well-developed evaluative skills. The latter skills are particularly important in the case of second language learners of English (Murray, 2005: 191).

It may be seen that many of the traditional skills in print reading are also relevant to digital reading (Grellet, 1981). Warschauer (2000, 2001) argues that when reading on the Internet, readers need enhanced searching and evaluation skills in order to find information that they need. These involve initially being able to use search engines effectively, then being able to skim and scan information, making on-the-spot decisions about whether to read the Web page; to pursue other links within the page or beyond the page; to go back to the search engine; to revert to further searching; to save the information, or to give up searching. Moreover, on-line reading involves the ability to critically evaluate not only written texts but also multimedia documents (Shetzer & Warschauer, 2000; Todd, 2000; Warschauer, 2001).

Specific skills that are required for digital reading are further discussed below.

### *Specific Skills in Locating/Reading Hypertext Information on the WWW*

In the first instance, in order to be able to read digital texts, students need to know how to use the Internet. Students need to learn how to use a web browser, how to navigate a Web page, how to follow hyperlinks, how to search for and evaluate information and as well as a range of other necessary skills. Moreover, if e-mail is included in the teaching and learning process in order to enhance students' ability to communicate with other people and to enhance their ability of writing, novice students need to learn a range of skills from how to access an e-mail web site, how to apply for an e-mail account, how to compose a message, how to send it, how to attach a file, and how to read and reply to a message.

Having learned these basis skills, students then need a range of other skills.

### *Researching Information*

Warschauer (1999: 158) asserts that reading on the Web requires “intelligently finding, evaluating, and making uses of a great variety of sources of information.” Thus readers become information seekers (Tuman, 1992 cited in Thurstun, 2000: 65), or information explorers. Unlike finding information in a book where table of contents, page numbers, and index are provided, readers need to search the Web with tools such as directories (e.g. *Yahoo*) and search engines (Snyder, 1997; Thurstun, 2000). There are a number of search engines such as *Google*, *Alta Vista*, *Hotbot*, *Lycos* and each operates somewhat differently.

The current research project requires students to use search engines in locating relevant information that is available on the Internet. Steps in using search engines to search for information and skills in navigating, scrolling and reading have been identified by several authors such as Dudeney (2000), Hahn (2001), and Snell (2002) and are summarised as follows:

- Go to a search engine web site;
- Type key words or a search term (specific/connected with the information the user is looking for) into the *Search Term* box;
- Click the submit button (with the word *Find*, *Search* or *Go*) or press *Enter* to reveal the search results (hit list);

- Scan the results page for the typed key words;
- Skim each summary for an overview of the text to determine whether it matches the search;
- Click to see each Web page and browse the page to preview the entire web page (the title, subtitles, headings, sub-headings, pictures, graphics and hyperlinks) by scrolling up and down using the vertical scroll bar or the page-up or page-down, and scroll from left to right using the horizontal scroll bar or left or right keys on the keyboard;
- Skim text for the gist;
- Click the hyperlink in the hit list, to read more details;
- Click *Back* button to return the search results page (hit list) to skim more information in the next links;
- Scroll to the bottom of the page to see more links and move forward to more pages of the hit list (if the information in the previous link does not match the searching); and
- Click *Next* button or the numbers (2,3,4,5...) at the end of the results page to view further results pages.

It may be seen that the use of search engines to research information on the Net requires both new and traditional reading skills.

### *Scrolling and Navigating*

To read online, readers need to interact not only with texts and their inclusive multimedia but also with the Internet and the computer screen (Pino-Silva, 2006: 86). Scrolling and navigating are initial skills that readers need to use in order to view Web pages. Scrolling is required because hypertexts are displayed on-screen and lack boundaries between web pages. Accordingly, readers need to be able to scroll or move the page up and down (vertically) or left to right (horizontally) using scroll bars, or page-up or page-down and left or right keys on the keyboard. The metaphor 'navigating' refers to moving from one web page to another (Hahn, 2001: 150). Navigation has been described as a non-linear process (Barnes, 1994) and 'multidimensional' (Crystal, 2001b: 196). That is, readers/users follow or pursue hyperlinks to more information on other web pages. Then they may click on *Back* and *Forward* buttons to go back and forth between web pages. On the other hand, reading print texts is primarily a linear and sequential process (Burbules & Callister, 1996), that is, reading in English (and Thai) is from left to right, and from top to the bottom of the page.

### *Evaluating Information*

The WWW presents an enormous volume of information created by anyone who has Internet access and knows how to create Web documents, and therefore readers need to be able to select appropriate, reliable and relevant information. Reinhardt and Isbell (2002: online) describe Web reading as a series of ‘technical, critical and analytical skills, which users need to effectively locate and evaluate online information according to their personal or academic needs’. Criteria for evaluating web resources can be summarised as follows. Firstly, readers need to identify whether a resource meets their needs. Secondly, readers need to assess the subject area and type of information covered, that is, breadth, depth and range, including the level of detail and the value of its linked sites. Thirdly, readers need to assess the authority and reputation of the resources. Generally, any resource that is produced by an expert or is provided by an institution with knowledge and expertise in that particular area is considered reliable. By considering the authority and reputation, readers can further assess the accuracy of resources, that is, to assess whether the information is factual or correct. Fourthly, readers need to assess the currency and maintenance of resources. This can be evaluated by examining when the information was produced, when it was last updated, when it will be next updated, and by noting the frequency of updating. In addition, the currency of hyperlinks and contact details for site maintainers should be examined. Finally, readers need to consider the accessibility of a resource, for example, the speed of download and ease of navigation (Ryder & Graves, 1997; McMillin, 1998; Cooke, 2001).

My initial survey of students’ use of the Internet, as reported in Chapter 5, revealed a number of barriers experienced by students in making use of Web resources. Some of these difficulties were related to technological aspects of accessing information, while others were due to students’ limited repertoire of reading skills in electronic media. Either way, they indicated that students needed quite specific teaching of digital reading skills to support them in their engagement with multimodal reading. While the majority of the barriers faced by students were relevant to the general challenges presented by multimodal reading, some were specific to the context where students were learning English as a Foreign Language.

I turn now to a discussion of implications of ICT for the teaching and learning of English as a Foreign Language.

## ***2.2 ICT and Education: Implications for English Language Teaching***

Globalisation and the advancement of ICT have had a profound impact on the teaching of English as a second language and a foreign language. While it is sometimes assumed that this is a relatively recent phenomenon, there is in fact quite a history of using computer technology to assist in English Language Teaching (Kern & Warschauer, 2000; Fotos & Browne, 2004).

Early approaches to the integration of computer assisted language learning (CALL) were often limited in their conception in that they tended to consist of grammar and vocabulary drill and practice activities. Later approaches encouraged learners in communicative use of language through information gap activities, language games and so on. However, such approaches were still criticised for not being sufficiently interactive and for not being sufficiently effective in supporting language learning (Warschauer, 1996; Kern & Warschauer, 2000). More recently, approaches to using ICT that are consistent with sociocognitive approaches to teaching and learning have emerged. These approaches emphasise the importance of providing comprehensible input for learners but also emphasise the importance of helping them engage in authentic discourse situations that they encounter in the real world. Such approaches specifically draw on two technological developments – multimedia (e.g. CD-ROM) and the Internet (e.g. Computer Mediated Communication and the World Wide Web).

My research is located within the later approaches to Integrative CALL (the Internet), and the following section elaborates my rationale for using the Internet in English language teaching and learning.

### ***Rationale for Using the Internet in ELT***

The Internet provides authentic language learning contexts that are rich in communication and in global diversity. When effectively exploited, the Internet enables students to participate in a wide range of meaningful and interactive tasks (Derewianka, 1997; Singhal, 1997; Silc, 1998; Graus, 1999; Levy & Debski, 1999; Warschauer, 1999,

2000, 2001; Krajka, 2000; Kern & Warschauer, 2000; Warschauer, Shetzer & Meloni, 2000; Harmer, 2001; Kasper, 2002a; Murray, 2005). As Hanson-Smith (2001) puts it:

... The widespread use of software, local area networks (LANs) and the Internet has created enormous opportunities for learners to enhance their communicative abilities, both by individualising practice and by tapping into a global community of other learners (p.107).

Especially valuable for EFL learners are both the 'authentic language material' (Wilson, 2004: 5) available on the Internet, and its interactive possibilities (Warschauer, 2001), as such learners may have few other means of obtaining genuine communication in the target language.

The Web itself, as pointed out by Warschauer and Meskill (2000), supports a sociocognitive approach to learning by helping students engage in the real-world discourses beyond those met in their classrooms and textbooks. As noted above, this is crucial for EFL contexts such as Thailand, where students lack an exposure to authentic contexts of learning. Now, students do not need to wait for the knowledge that is prepared and imparted by the teacher and is restrictively learned in class, but may become more self-initiating and self-monitoring in their learning (Singhal, 1997; Graus, 1999; Levy & Debski, 1999; Chun & Plass, 2000; Kern & Warschauer, 2000; Krajka, 2000; Warschauer & Meskill, 2000; Harmer, 2001; Kasper, 2002a).

The most common and popular form of CMC in language classrooms to date is e-mail, the use of which can encourage interaction between students and other students within one country as well as globally (Warschauer, 1995, 1999, 2000; Warschauer, Turbee & Roberts, 1996; Knobel, Lankshear, Honan & Crawford, 1997; Peterson, 1997; Warschauer & Meskill, 2000; Gonglewski, Meloni & Brant, 2001). Wilson (2004) indicates that e-mail exchanges between native and non-native speakers can provide the latter with opportunities to develop their reading, writing, grammar and cultural knowledge. He also notes that chatting requires speedy typing, and suggests that it may be advantageous for students to have to perform without having time to think in their first language and translate it into the second language. Derewianka (1997) also suggests using e-mail exchanges between teacher and students, as this can provide students with the opportunity to reflect on their learning, ask questions and make comments. Another Internet application suggested by Derewianka is participating in

chat rooms, where students have opportunities to read various messages from other chatters without needing to formulate replies.

Fotos (2004: 116) also notes that the combination of features of e-mail such as embedded text in the message (text written by the sender still appears when the receiver composes a reply to the message), the use of relatively simple grammar, non-attention to surface errors, and the speed of e-mail exchange can enhance not only second language learners' achievement of meaning-focused language use but also their development of cognition.

Other studies into the use of e-mail have shown that because students can log in, read and respond to e-mail at their own convenience, they are likely to spend more time writing and reading in the target language (Gonglewski, Meloni & Brant, 2001). Students have been found to not only spend a longer time in writing, but also to pay greater attention to detail, spelling, and to conveying meaning than when they write in a conventional classroom (Littleton et al, 1998 cited in Brindley, 2000: 15).

#### *Additional Factors that Contribute to Effective Language Learning*

There is evidence from the literature that the Internet also offers additional factors that contribute to effective language learning; such evidence is especially relevant for my research.

##### Enhancing Students' Oral Language Development

Warschauer (1996) compared face-to-face (spoken) discussion to electronic (written) discussion in respect of 16 students from the Philippines, Japan, China and Vietnam who enrolled in an advanced ESL composition class at a community college in Hawaii. These students were divided into four groups of four, and all groups conducted both face-to-face discussion and electronic discussion using software called *Daedalus InterChange*, which offered synchronous or real-time communication. The first two groups discussed face-to-face and the other two discussed electronically; groups later changed mode of discussion. The analysis and comparison of both modes of discussion indicated that the language used in electronic written discussions was more lexically and syntactically formal and complex than the language used in the face-to-face spoken discussions. In addition, the electronic exchanges were longer and there was more equal

participation among students. Students also reported that they could express themselves freely, comfortably, and creatively during the electronic discussions. That is, the electronic discussions appeared to enhance their thinking ability.

#### Enhancing Students' Literacy Abilities

Kasper (2000; 2002a; 2002b; 2002c) conducted extensive task-based, student-centred and project-oriented classes using the Internet as a tool to develop literacy skills of high intermediate ESL students at Kingsborough Community College in the United States. The purpose of these studies was to enhance students' competence in functional, academic, critical and electronic literacies so that they could develop the range of skills required to pass instructional reading and writing examinations and to enter mainstream college courses. In order to achieve this purpose, Kasper (2002a) notes that students should be engaged in meaningful and authentic learning processes. Therefore, tasks in all studies were designed to provide students with an opportunity to use English in gathering, synthesising, and evaluating resources of information and constructing responses using appropriate discourse patterns. Students were assigned to do an activity called *focus discipline research*. That is, each student chose a focus discipline or topic from a range of content areas such as psychology, computer science, and sociology based on their personal interests and/or college majors and then pursued in-depth information research from the Internet over one semester. Students used the information that was obtained from their search to write essays and publish a research project on a web page for peer responses prior to collaboratively writing a long research project in groups. Kasper (2002a) claims that the Internet is a highly motivating learning environment that encourages students to interact with language in new and various ways. It provides a great number of texts and materials for meaningful reading, writing and communicating, and assists students to develop a range of literacy skills.

Stakhnevich (2002) investigated the impact of the Web as an instructional medium on L2 comprehension during the independent learning of 90 ESL students who were enrolled in an intensive English program at the University of Mississippi in 1999 to 2000. The study aimed to determine whether the use of the Web medium for L2 independent reading would result in different levels of text comparison from traditional print reading. The results indicated that students who read Web-based texts had better reading comprehension than those who read print-based texts.



Pino-Silva (2006) describes a web-based extensive reading program (w-ERP) which was conducted with college students enrolled at *Universidad Simón Bolívar*, Caracas, Venezuela. This program drew on the potential of the Internet to enhance students' extensive reading. Students were given a free choice in accessing and reading texts online and also with submitting their work to a web site. Pino-Silva found that extensive reading through the Internet offers a number of advantages including opportunities for students to extend themselves and learn more vocabulary from reading; opportunities for students and teachers to work together; and learning of skills needed in the information age beyond language skills. He noted students' positive attitude towards reading online, and concluded that the Internet appears to provide a very promising pedagogical approach to strengthen students' learning and enhance their life-long learning capabilities.

#### Addressing Challenges of Large Classrooms

Johnson (2002) conducted a study utilising the WWW as resources for student research in order to provide an opportunity for individual students in a large class of 40-80 students to use English for communication. The study was carried out at the Faculty of Engineering at Yamaguchi University in Japan. Participants studied one mode of learning for six weeks, and then switched to a different mode for six weeks. The first mode of learning was a traditional classroom where students practised basic communicative skills of reading, writing, listening and speaking using content-based materials. The other mode of learning took place in a virtual environment where students conducted projects independently. In this environment students worked in groups of 4-5 and were assigned one area of research related to science, technology, or society. Individual students researched the topic on the WWW then they shared and combined information they had obtained in their groups. Finally, each group prepared a presentation using PowerPoint. Results indicated that students had positive attitudes towards using the Internet in acquiring knowledge. They enjoyed group work because they could express their ideas and opinions, learn from other students, and could work faster. In addition, project work increased students' responsibility. From this study, it can be seen that the use of the Internet was purposeful and it helped reduce the problem of large classes where it is difficult for every student to use English for communication. That is to say, the Internet can promote equality in the classroom.

### Learner Autonomy

Warschauer, Turbee and Roberts (1996) reviewed a number of studies which found that CMC could shift authority from teacher to students and thus provide students with a better opportunity to control and initiate language learning. It was found that CMC enabled students to communicate their thoughts at their own learning pace. For example, students can communicate with their interlocutors without needing to wait for other students to finish their conversation or to wait for the teacher to encourage their initiation of conversation. That is, they have freedom in composing and responding to messages on their own initiative rather than being controlled by the teacher. This claim is also supported by a number of authors such as Peterson (1997), Gu and Xu (1999), Tchaïcha (1999), Murray (2000), and Gonglewski, Meloni and Brant (2001). In addition, Warschauer, Turbee and Roberts (1996) assert that “the opportunity for students to communicate with each other, inside or outside of class, can create a new social dynamic, based on student-student collaboration, with the teacher as facilitator” (p. 4). However, in my opinion, a student-centred classroom in which the teacher undertakes a role of facilitator is inadequate unless there is also provided some explicit instruction by the teacher; it does not need to be a case of either/or.

### Equality of Opportunity in the Learning Environment

The use of CMC appears to have a range of benefits that extend beyond learning of specific skills. Many proponents of CMC, such as Sproull and Kiesler (1991 cited in Warschauer, Turbee & Roberts, 1996: 5), Warschauer, Turbee and Roberts (1996), Warschauer (1999, 2001), and Wilson (2004) claim that computer-mediated communication encourages peripheral, marginalised, quiet, or shy students to be more confident in participating in communication compared to face-to-face communication in traditional classrooms. This is because CMC may reduce and/or conceal social context clues such as race, gender, disability, or status which sometimes cause unequal participation; as well as removing paralinguistic features such as frowning and hesitating which can disrupt communication.

### Students' Perceptions of/Attitudes towards English Learning through the Internet

A number of studies have found that systematic use of the Internet can have a positive impact on students' attitudes towards English learning. For instance, Kung and Chuo

(2002) investigated how students who majored in French and minored in English at a technical college of languages in Southern Taiwan, perceived learning English through teacher-selected web sites. They found that students reacted very positively towards the strategies the teachers used to facilitate their learning through ESL web sites. Students also had positive perceptions towards the program itself and appreciated the value of the Internet as a tool for supplementary classroom instruction. Additionally, an investigation of learners' attitudes towards the use of ICT and their experience in using selected web sites in developing autonomous learning which was conducted by Kavaliauskiene (2003) found that more than half of students of the Law University of Lithuania used Internet web sites to improve their language skills and that these students displayed positive attitudes towards learning English on the World Wide Web. Further studies which found use of the Internet for language learning was positively regarded by students include those by Sakar (2001), Hoshi (2002) and Greenfield (2003).

In concluding Section 2, it can be said that the literature relating to the potential value of the Internet provides evidence that the Internet offers a profound resource for English language teaching and learning. It provides a motivating, authentic learning environment and culture for using English in communication as well as resources for reading and writing for a real audience. In addition to providing authentic texts in English, the Internet provides a range of web sites for hands-on activities and practice of English vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and writing. However, in order to take advantage of such resources and use them effectively, teachers need to be able to plan a curriculum/program effectively. The research reviewed here suggests that if the teachers only use ready-prepared activities for students to practise English skills, or use the WWW only for students to research additional information for their assignments or for class subjects, its scope for authentic interactive communication will be minimal. To maximise the value of such resources, students need to have real reasons to genuinely communicate in English.

It appears that a significant challenge faced by teachers who use CMC is that of striking a balance between information/electronic literacy, that is, assisting students to access Web-based sources; and at the same time maintaining a focus on students' language learning. Students need new skills of searching, evaluating, navigating and reading on the WWW when faced with new genres of texts. Therefore, it is teachers' responsibility

to teach these skills, although the teacher's authority has been modified, and there has been a shift towards students being active learners in using the Internet in learning English.

Kasper's studies mentioned earlier (2000, 2002a, 2002b, 2002c) are particularly significant for my research. In Kasper's studies, the teacher provided explicit teaching of vocabulary, language structures, how to talk about text, how to find clues for meaning, and how to compose responses to inferential questions and essay prompts. The teacher also provided students with practice in accessing complex interdisciplinary texts. In addition, the teacher taught how to navigate hypertext and how to evaluate resources in order to protect students from getting lost in a huge amount of information. Kasper reported that teacher and students had multiple roles in these classrooms. The teacher became both a knowledge sharer and an expert in the subject areas studied in the course. As Kasper explained, the teacher became "a sage who guides both on the stage and on the side" (2000: 113; 2002c: 138). The teacher also participated in students' group work and provided them with constructive feedback. Students had greater responsibility for their own learning, and collaboratively worked in constructing knowledge. In this collaborative working, students saw themselves and their peers as valid resources for knowledge. As will be seen in later chapters, my own research had many similarities to this work.

### **Section 3: Implications for a Theoretical Framework: a Concluding Discussion**

This final section, which also serves as a conclusion to the chapter, summarises the implications which were drawn from relevant studies of pedagogy (CLT, CBI and approaches drawing on neo-Vygotskian theories), and studies of the Internet as an educational resource, in order to provide the basis of a theoretical framework for this research. Through the application of this framework, there also emerged a reshaping of my own teaching philosophy, which will be described in Chapter 6.

#### ***3.1 Implications Drawn from Relevant Pedagogical Approaches***

All three pedagogical areas outlined earlier provided insights for the conduct of this study. In considering the tenets and characteristics of the Communicative Approach, I find its strong points for the Thai EFL context to be three principles identified by

Richards and Rodgers (2001: 161): promoting learning through the establishment of communicative goals, the engagement of learners in using the target language for communication, and the use of authentic materials. To learn a language, a primary goal is the ability to use that language for communication in order to make meaning and to get things done. In order to achieve these goals, learners need to be involved in real communication in the learning situation. Tasks should be designed not only to be meaningful but also challenging in order to encourage and motivate students' desire to use the language for communication. The term 'authenticity' should be taken to include learning situation, texts, materials, and student interaction. Using pair and group work to foster students' interactions are appropriate techniques which enable individual students to have equal opportunities to use the target language. However, they may not be appropriate in all contexts, particularly in large EFL classes, where pair/group work amongst 50 or more students may become chaotic. In my own experience of using this technique in a large class, once students started talking it was difficult for any speaker to be heard, and not too long after the activity started, the teacher in the next classroom came and asked me to control the noise.

Content-based Instruction provided additional principles as follow. Firstly, the target language is learned most effectively when learners use it as a tool for acquiring information. Secondly, teaching and learning should focus on content or subject matter. Thirdly, the teaching and learning process should include authentic tasks and should involve integrated skills of reading, listening, speaking and writing. Although Content-based Instruction is mostly used in ESL contexts, I argue that this approach is also likely to facilitate teaching and learning in EFL contexts. There is a difference however; in ESL contexts, the content of the language program is typically drawn from the school curriculum (for school students) or from social, work or academic demands (for adult learners). In EFL contexts, the content needs to be negotiated between teacher and students according to contextual needs.

Pedagogical approaches that draw on neo-Vygotskian theory indicate the value of collaborative learning, including the roles of the ZPD, and designed-in and contingent scaffolding. In collaborative learning, language is seen as a mediating tool, through which participants share knowledge and ideas in order to construct meaning and new understandings. In the process of learning, teacher and students undertake different roles at different times. The teacher provides explicit instruction, guidance and support

for students, and steps back when students are able to do tasks alone. Then the teacher judges students' performance during the learning process and provides contingent scaffolding from time to time when students need support. These principles are found to be of great value in the Thai tertiary context.

### ***3.2 Implications Drawn from ICT/the Internet***

As I have previously argued, language and literacy practices are embedded in sociocultural contexts. In today's societies, these contexts are ones where computer technology has wrought major changes in how people communicate. New modes of online communication – CMC and WWW hypertexts – have changed practices of literacy, resulting in the emergence of new genres of written text-based communication and multimodal texts online. Readers or users of these new genres need new skills in reading and writing which accompany the traditional skills they employed in handling print-based texts. The focus of this research is reading, and it takes account of the four roles of the reader: *code breaker*, *text participant*, *text user*, and *text analyst*. In order to read texts on the Internet, the reader needs skills in making sense of visual information and text based on her/his background knowledge (linguistics, context, and sociocultural knowledge), interpreting and using text in the real world, as well as evaluating text and determining a writer's intention, purpose and opinion.

Additionally, reading new genres of texts and reading on the medium of a screen require new skills in researching, scrolling/navigating, and interacting with the Internet, as well as the evaluating skills and traditional reading strategies that are normally used in reading print-based texts.

The implications for teaching reading are, first, that teachers need to build on students' understanding of reading as social practice and the fact that in real life people read a variety of texts and use different strategies depending on their purposes for reading and genres of text. Students therefore need to be exposed to authentic texts that they encounter in the real world in order to guide them in the development of appropriate reading strategies. Secondly, the role of the teachers is to set goals and meaningful tasks that serve the school curriculum and take into account of the four roles of readers. Thirdly, teachers need to familiarise students with the content of written texts that they are going to engage with. That is, teachers need to elicit students' background knowledge or develop existing knowledge through pre-reading activities. Such activities

include instruction relating to vocabulary, language structures, content of the topic which students are going to read, culture, and ideological perspectives embedded in written texts. Moreover, teachers need to teach and guide students with a repertoire of reading strategies that will suit certain types of texts and purposes of reading. Students need to be ready to engage with all types of texts, especially multimodal texts which include written texts, images and multimedia.

All the potential value of the Internet as summarised above is viewed as providing solutions to some of the problems of ELT in Thailand in general and ELT practices at my university in particular. In particular, use of the Internet may offer a way to deal with the lack of opportunities in using English for communication in EFL classrooms, enabling a move away from lessons where teacher talk dominates the teaching/learning process, where students tend to lack motivation in learning English, and where there is little access to authentic learning tasks or materials. My concern in this project was to raise students' involvement in learning tasks, and to build up their motivation and confidence in learning English. I do believe that when integrated in teaching and learning appropriately, the Internet may assist Thai students to develop their English literacy and give them an opportunity to learn in real context with real-life materials and purposeful learning activities.

Later chapters of this thesis present the outcomes of Stage One of the research – students' current use of Internet, and outcomes from Stage Two of the research in which the Internet was incorporated into a teaching program. Before presenting and discussing the outcomes of both Stages, however, it is necessary to describe the research methodology employed in this research, and this will be presented in the next chapter.

## **Chapter 4**

### **Methodology**

#### **Introduction**

This chapter outlines the design of Stage One and Stage Two of the research. It begins by providing details of the participants in the research – students from Nakhon Pathom Rajabhat University (NPRU) and a profile of their strengths and weaknesses in English. It then outlines the research approaches and methodology utilised in Stages One and Two of the research. Finally, the chapter describes data sources, collection, analysis and interpretation; and addresses ethical issues.

As previously indicated, the questions investigated in Stage One and Stage Two of the research shape the conceptual framework for this thesis:

1. What is the potential of the Internet in supporting EFL development?
  - 1.1. What are students' current Internet practices?
  - 1.2. What are students' perceptions of and attitudes towards use of the Internet?
  - 1.3. What factors support or limit students' use of the Internet?
2. What are the pedagogical implications of use of the Internet?
  - 2.1. What principles need to inform EFL programs that incorporate extensive use of the Internet?
  - 2.2. What benefits can flow from such program?
  - 2.3. What implications for EFL pedagogies arise from such programs?

#### **Section 1: Research Participants**

Participants in Stage One of the research were 35 third year students majoring in English Education who were preparing to become English teachers in secondary schools. I selected this group of students because they had already passed beyond the initial stages of learning English, and thus they were more advanced both in English proficiency and their use of the Internet than would be 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> year students. Fourth year students were not selected because they were undertaking teaching practice for large parts of their final year.



Participants in Stage Two were 15 volunteers who were first year English-majored students enrolled in the Bachelor of Education in English at NPRU. At the time of data collection, these students were enrolled in the *Paragraph Reading Strategies* (PRS) subject in the first semester (June to September 2003). I selected this group of students because they had not yet studied English extensively at tertiary level. They would be taught to use the Internet as part of their English study, and by the time they were in their third or fourth year of study, it was anticipated that they would be able to use the Internet more broadly to assist in their English studies.

#### *NPRU Students' Typical Strengths and Weaknesses*

First year students who enrol in the English Education program at NPRU generally enter the University with eight years of English learning background: 6 years at secondary level and 2 years at primary level. The majority of first year students can be ranked as pre-intermediate learners of English. As indicated in Chapter 2, the English they learned in high school typically consists of mastering English structures and memorising vocabulary. High achievers can pass the National Entrance Examination for public universities, while the majority who do not pass the entrance exam need to choose among the state's two open universities, Rajabhat Universities, or the relatively few private universities. It may be seen then that while they are certainly academically able, students who attend Rajabhat Universities are not those of the highest rank in academic performance.

The NPRU has its own entrance examination and interviews for placement of students. However, this system is sometimes problematic. Because of the University's need to consider funding and class sizes, students who have not elected to study in the English Education program, and even those with limited abilities in English, may nevertheless be placed in that program. Such students may be frustrated by their limited English and show low motivation to learn English. By the end of their second semester, quite a number of these students will have dropped their English subject.

As an experienced lecturer who has worked extensively with English major students in the university, I am very familiar with their typical strengths and weaknesses. Before conducting my research, however, I undertook a preliminary needs analysis that was based on observations from my teaching experiences, as well as upon extensive

discussions with colleagues on characteristics of students and their English language abilities. This initial analysis, summarised below, provided a starting point for my research design and also served to contextualise the challenges that the participating students faced in learning English and in accessing the Internet.

### Listening

NPRU students lack exposure to real English outside the classroom because of the limitations of an EFL context where English is taught as an academic subject rather than for use in society. Although there do exist English TV and radio programs in Thailand, this type of input is comprehensible only to the most advanced students. Listening tasks which are suitable to students' levels include, for example, listening to sentences and repeating in order to practise pronunciation, or listening to dialogues. Students may also listen to conversations, find the gist and identify speakers; listen to texts and complete tasks (e.g. cloze exercises, multiple choices exercises); listen and complete charts or tables; and match sentences with pictures or descriptions.

### Speaking

As mentioned in Chapter 2, the quiet and non-interactive disposition of most Thai students often appears to discourage expatriate teachers who are accustomed to Western learning styles where students are often encouraged to interact individually with the teacher within a whole class setting. Hence, it is common to hear expatriate teachers' complaints about Thai students' reticence and 'passivity'. However, as previously discussed, there are Thai cultural values which minimise drawing attention to oneself, and which preserve face, particularly when interacting publicly. It is notable that when Thai students are provided with opportunities to speak freely away from the teacher's supervision, it is likely that they will do so and feel more confident. Therefore, student participation may be said to depend on teaching methods employed by the teacher. Because Nakhon Pathom does not have many foreign visitors, the chances for students to practise speaking English outside the classroom are rare. Thus, students rely upon classroom opportunities in order to develop their speaking skill.

The most common speaking tasks which students undertake are those relevant to everyday situations such as greeting, introducing oneself and other people, taking leave, expressing thanks, making apologies, making requests, asking for permission, giving

directions, shopping, and talking on the phone. However, speaking in these tasks often takes the form of memorising dialogues rather than spontaneous speaking. Other speaking tasks which students can master in English are, for example, talking about themselves, describing things and pictures, recounting past events (recount), and giving instructions. In order to talk in English, students need the teacher to teach, guide and introduce them to language features and key vocabulary. For example, they need to know how to use the simple past tense to recount past events; they need to be able to use imperative patterns and sequences in giving instructions.

### Reading

Students are required by the syllabus to read and interpret English texts for comprehension and to identify the writer's purpose. Difficulties experienced by students generally relate to lack of schemata or background knowledge such as cultural aspects, as well as to vocabulary and grammar in the texts they read. This is why the teacher focuses on these aspects prior to students' reading. Generally when facing unknown words, students look for meanings in an English-Thai dictionary. They write the meaning in Thai under each unknown word, resume reading, and look up the meaning of the next unknown word until they finish the paragraph. This is time-consuming and students' reading is interrupted, but the practice does ensure that a text is understood. Another problem, which is quite common, occurs when a word has many different meanings and students do not know which meaning fits the word they come across in a particular context. From my experience, although I teach students how to predict word meanings from context, they may not comprehend the text if relying upon context alone. For although students have learned particular techniques in predicting word meanings, they still lack knowledge of semantic clues in the L2. In terms of reading materials themselves, these are nearly always selected and prepared by teachers.

### Writing

As with speaking, the writing tasks which students can master are based on topics that are relevant to them and their context, in this case, for example, writing about their family and about themselves, about their country and hometown, describing places, objects, people, giving instructions such as a recipe or how to make something, comparing things or places, and writing about festivals in their country. Such writing tasks are completed in line with the writing models provided by the teacher. Therefore,

the teacher assigns students to write about topics of their interests and gives them models of writing. The major difficulty which students face is to construct paragraphs which flow smoothly from topic sentence, to elaboration and then to conclusion. Other difficulties faced by students are related to spelling, using correct grammar, vocabulary, punctuation, and connectors to make the text cohesive. It is common to find that students need to think in Thai prior to writing. Mistakes often found in students' writing include verb tenses, verb and subject agreements, plural form, order of adjectives and nouns, and the use of articles. In spite of students' conception of learning English as the understanding of grammatical features and the accumulation of vocabulary, it appears that most students lack such competence.

It can be concluded that these students usually learn English under the supervision and guidance of teachers, that teachers need to set learning tasks and teach relevant aspects (e.g. vocabulary, grammar and cultural aspects) and essential skills (e.g. speaking, reading). That is, students are accustomed to teacher-guided learning rather than being independent learners. For example, in reading classes, students need texts that are prepared by the teachers rather than being required to search for texts from other sources.

Again, it may be stressed that these Thai students are learning English as a foreign language which they encounter almost entirely in the classroom. Such students rarely have reasons for using English to communicate. Moreover, Thai students are quiet learners who listen to their teachers and complete required tasks. In other words, they expect, and are expected to be dependent on the teacher.

As this preliminary analysis suggests, a major challenge in Thai ELT is providing students with a 'real' reason for learning English – that is, with a reason beyond the requirements of passing examinations in compulsory subjects in their University course. The analysis also provides a summary of issues that needed to be taken into account when developing the teaching program for research Stage Two.

## **Section 2: Research Approach and Design**

### ***2.1 Research Approach***

As indicated in Chapter 1, in Stage One of the research, my intention was to investigate students' current Internet practices as well as their views of the value of the Internet and its role in developing their English literacy. In Stage Two, I aimed to explore the potential value of the Internet in enhancing students' English literacy and overall English skills. In this stage, I also aimed to evaluate the overall effectiveness of a teaching program, and this included students' own evaluation of the program.

In developing my research design, I have drawn, particularly in Stage One, but also in Stage Two, upon characteristics of ethnography. My purposes here were to seek to understand students' behaviour in natural contexts (Stage One) and in the contexts of classroom interactions (Stage Two).

Ethnography has derived from anthropological studies that seek to answer questions concerning people's ways of lives through examining culture, behaviour, and perceptions. Ethnography, as pointed out by Burns (2000: 395), has the purpose of uncovering social, cultural, or normative patterns, and generally "this involves an analytic description in terms of a social setting, organisation, behaviour and activities." Thus, ethnographic research aims to investigate participants' behaviour and perceptions in real contexts, and involves processes of describing, analysing, and interpreting such behaviour and perceptions as well the contexts where the behaviour occurred. Similarly, Wiersma (2000) has defined ethnography as "an inquiry process guided by experience in the research setting" (p. 237). That is, it requires the researcher to immerse her/himself in the real setting, and to observe and record what happens in that situation in order to gain understanding. Because ethnography is naturalistic in nature, researchers do not create settings for investigation; and neither do they manipulate participants in the study (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983; Nunan, 1992; Burns, 2000; Wiersma, 2000).

Ethnography is holistic in nature; that is, the researcher takes into account the whole context because human behaviour cannot be understood outside of the context in which it is embedded (Burns, 2000; van Lier, 1990; Wiersma, 2000). Moreover, ethnography follows an emic principle, which seeks to understand how the research participants

perceive events in the light of their own knowledge and belief systems. This means that the researcher needs to understand the context of study as well as participants' behaviour, experiences and perceptions. An emic viewpoint or understanding is derived from the study of the meanings that participants invest and develop in a specific social context – in this case, Thai ELT classrooms – as manifested through their interaction and various kinds of documentary evidence. The etic perspective, on the other hand, describes a view taken by an outside observer of a situation. In ethnography, the researcher needs to be able to adopt both emic and etic perspectives and to move between these as the research requires.

Ethnographers view the social world as a world of interpretations and meanings which are produced through social interaction (Burns, 2000: 397). Thus, the theoretical framework underpinning this research can be described as *interpretive*. Mertens (1998: 12) points out that an interpretive paradigm views reality as socially constructed: it sees that “research is a product of the values of researchers and cannot be independent of them.” Thus, in interpreting the meaning of happenings and behaviours, the researcher's subjectivity is inevitably involved. Mertens further notes that the researcher and the participants of the study are dependent on and interact with each other. Therefore, it may be said that in this research, I described, analysed and interpreted students' behaviour, perceptions and attitudes from my own perspectives, and within a shared social context.

Although this study is ethnographic in approach, it is not wholly an ethnography, for it has been bounded in the shape of a case study. As a result the research differs from ethnography as follows. Firstly, data were collected over a limited period of time: a two-month period in Stage One and a four-month-period in Stage Two. Secondly, in Stage One, I deliberately organised time for four 'heavy' Internet users to use the Internet. Thirdly, in order to explore potential value of the Internet in enhancing students' English learning in Stage Two, I attempted to manipulate students' use of the Internet. That is, I deliberately established a learning environment – a classroom with integration of the Internet, and intervened in the process of data collection.

Case study and ethnography have commonalities in their philosophy, methods and concerns for studying phenomena in context (Nunan, 1992). The case studies in this research are limited to the extent that they focus primarily on a group of students in

Stage One of the research and a classroom in Stage Two, rather than upon the populations of the whole university or populations of other universities in Thailand. Arguably, case studies of a single group of students and a single class can provide insights into the larger educational context (Hammond, 1995); that is, research outcomes from specific educational context are highly likely to be relevant to other similar contexts – in my case to other universities in Thailand or to similar EFL, Expanding Circle contexts.

Bogdan and Biklen (1992) note that in ethnography, natural settings are the direct source of the data, and “the researcher is the key instrument for analysis” (p. 29). In the present study, both researcher and participants were sources of information. That is, I as the researcher observed and recorded the situation; students reflected on their behaviour, ideas and perceptions in their diary entries, and responded to interview questions.

In summary, in research Stage One, students’ behaviour, activities and interactions during their use of the Internet and their views about the role of the Internet were investigated. Such behaviour, views and activities depended on the social context in which they were involved, and thus needed to be studied, interpreted, explained and understood in these natural settings – Internet sites – rather than in artificial settings designed only for the purposes of the research. The data were obtained from the perspectives of both researcher and participants (students).

Similarly, in Stage Two, I looked at natural surroundings and at what happened in the classroom in terms of verbal interaction (teacher-students interaction, student-student interaction), and students’ behaviour. In this stage of the research, I intervened in the process of data collection by providing instruction and support, I observed students’ performances and I recorded what occurred in the classroom environment.

My dual role as researcher and teacher in research Stage Two was a challenge in the conduct of this study. On the one hand, this duality is beneficial in terms of enabling an *emic* perspective: I have the advantage of being a Thai teacher of EFL at this institution, which means that I understood very well the context of the research, the students, the culture, and the teaching/learning situation. On the other hand, it is difficult to hold simultaneously both *emic* and *etic* – both insider and outsider – perspectives. I used

*triangulation* to answer this challenge. That is, data were collected by a variety of means, which included questionnaires, audio recordings, video recordings, my diaries, students' diaries, and interview transcripts. In doing so, I attempted to construct a "thick" description (Geertz, 1973) and interpretation of what happened in those lessons in those classes, and in students' use of the Internet outside the classroom.

## 2.2 Data Collection

The data were gathering in two main stages as indicated in the following table:

**Table 4.1: Stages of data gathering**

| Stage of Data Gathering |                            | Date                              | Data Gathered   |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|
| <i>Stage One</i>        |                            | August – September 2002 (6 weeks) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Questionnaire (35 students)</li> <li>• Group interviews (35 students: 5.15 hours)</li> <li>• Field notes from focus observations (4 students: 5 sets)</li> <li>• Video recordings (individual student use, 4 students, total 6 hours)</li> <li>• Students' diaries (4 observed students: 19 entries)</li> <li>• Photographs (25)</li> <li>• Copies of students' digital texts (25)</li> <li>• Individual interviews (4 students: 2 hours)</li> </ul>   |
| <i>Stage Two</i>        | <i>Teaching program</i>    | June – September 2003 (14 weeks)  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Questionnaires (17 volunteers)</li> <li>• 12 lessons: 24 (2×50 minutes) periods</li> <li>• Audio recordings (12 lessons)</li> <li>• Video recordings (3 lessons)</li> <li>• Teacher's diaries (14 entries)</li> <li>• Students' diaries (12 lessons and out-of-class Internet use: 89 entries)</li> <li>• Group interviews (10 students: 2 hours)</li> <li>• Assessing students' tasks: Treasure hunt exercise (10), notes (42), draft of a holiday plan (2), holiday plan (2)</li> <li>• Web sites accessed by students (59)</li> <li>• Copies of digital texts viewed by students (45)</li> <li>• Examining students' final results of PRS course</li> </ul> |
|                         | <i>Follow-up interview</i> | 30 July, 11 August 2004           | 3 interviews (10 students: 3 hours)   |

As Table 4.1 indicates, data collection was extensive for both Stages One and Two. There was a reason for this. Although the research was carried out in Thailand, I was based in Australia for the duration of my PhD candidature. Analysis of data therefore was primarily undertaken while I was in Australia. In order to ensure that I had all the data that I needed for analysis, I deliberately undertook extensive data collection. While all data were drawn upon in my analysis, not all were equally central. Further details of



procedures for data collection, and the ways in which these data were drawn upon in analysis, are provided in following sections of this chapter and in Chapters 5 and 6.

## **Stage One**

### *Entering the Site and Recruitment of Research Participants*

In negotiating access to my research site, I first wrote to the President of the university asking for permission to carry out Stage One of the research with third year English Education students. Having received permission, I contacted all third year students from August to September 2002. I returned to Thailand and met the 35 third year students (100% of the class) to explain the nature and purpose of the research, procedures for data collection and timeline. I invited the students to participate in the research and also informed them of their right to withdraw at any time if they wished. In addition, I provided written handouts for students, in order to aid understanding, which included detailed information about the project. All 35 of the third year students volunteered for the research and signed a written letter of consent in line with UTS ethics requirements.

### *Data Sources*

The data included short questionnaires, group interview transcriptions, observation notes of participants' use of the Internet, a summary of video recordings, photographs, copies of the students' Internet texts; students' diary entries; and individual interview transcriptions.

#### Questionnaire Completion

Short questionnaires, copies of which are presented in Appendix 1, were completed by 35 respondents. The questionnaire which was presented in both Thai and English, aimed to elicit respondents' demographic information (gender and age), frequency of their Internet use, location of Internet access, the languages they used when accessing the Internet, and their views about how the Internet assists them in learning English. I classed users of six or more hours per week as 'heavy' Internet users, those of three to six hours as 'medium' users, and those of less than three hours as 'light' users. Although six hours of Internet use would probably not be considered 'heavy' in other countries, this categorisation was useful for my research. I wanted to be able to investigate Internet practices of students who used the Internet more frequently than

others, thus the term 'heavy' here means in relation to other students in the group. The summary from questionnaires then provided background information that enabled me to select four 'heavy' Internet users for observation.

#### Group Interviewing

Semi-structured open-ended interviews supplemented by audio recordings were conducted in Thai with students in groups of five outside their normal class times. Each interview took about 45 minutes and all interviews were completed within one week from 6<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> August 2002. The purpose of the interviews was to establish broadly the extent and range of Internet use within and outside of the Self-access Language Learning Centre (SALLC). Interview questions aimed to elicit (1) informants' previous Internet use; (2) their current Internet use; (3) their views about the impact and potential of the Internet for them, for other Thai people and for people in other countries; (4) their views about the potential of the Internet in assisting their own English learning and other students'; and (5) if they would use the Internet more often if they had greater access. In conjunction with questionnaires, these interviews assisted me in identifying types of Internet users.

#### Observations

Based on the summaries of questionnaire responses and summaries of group interview transcripts, four students who were identified as heavy Internet users were selected to enable more detailed examination of their Internet practices. I used overt observations, in which students or informants were aware that I was an observer. Observations of these four students were conducted out of their normal class times. The first observation took place in the Self-access Language Learning Centre (SALLC) for one hour. The rest were carried out in the library's Self-access Centre (SAC) because of the inconvenience of the SALLC. I conducted the fourth and the fifth observations on the same day because participants were not free in the following weeks.

As I observed students individually accessing the Internet, I took field notes in English. The first draft of notes were some kind of mental field notes or head notes, then jotted notes – words or phrases written quickly and briefly because I had to concentrate on how students were interacting with the screen. Expanded field notes were written up as soon as possible after each observation. The content of the notes included two parts:

descriptive and reflective. The descriptive part involved some basic information such as where the observation took place, a picture of the physical setting, participants' behaviours, spoken interactions, and facial expressions during their use of the Internet. That is, field notes answered the who/what/where/when/how/why questions. They contained everything that I believed to be worth noting and served as a reference for me to return to later during analysis (Patton, 1990). The second, reflective part of field notes included my feelings, ideas, concerns and comments or reflections on what was happening (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992; Patton, 1990).

Observations were supplemented with video recordings of students' Internet use. I also took photographs which focused on computer location, layout, students' behaviour and interaction, and spatial position. Such photographs provided much useful contextual data and factual information and they could be utilised when contextualising the research results. Additionally, I asked the students to copy digital texts they were working on onto a floppy disk and print off the texts, affording me more detailed information of students' Internet use.

#### Students' Diaries

I asked the four 'heavy' use focus students to keep diaries in Thai of their Internet use on a daily basis for one week in their free time. Before starting their diaries, I gave students clear guidelines and instructions which included the need to report on the purposes of their Internet use; web sites they accessed; the language used; their interaction with what happened on the screen; kinds of reading and writing they did; types of text they engaged with; and their views of value of the Internet in helping them learn English. Students were encouraged to express their personal thoughts and reflections. These diaries, which provided an account of students' personal Internet use either inside or outside of the University, were used in conjunction with field notes as a basis for individual interviewing. In this way, I could ask appropriate questions for more in-depth investigation of students' Internet use.

#### Individual Interviewing

Semi-structured interviews, based on observations and participants' diaries, were conducted with the four students individually. Interviews took about half an hour per student and were audio taped. The interviews aimed not only to elicit more detailed

information from informants but also to elicit their reflections on the methodologies of data collection. This assisted me in further planning research in Stage Two. Thai was used to facilitate communication, with the result that I could enter into rich discussion with students.

Following collection of data in Stage One, I returned to Australia to undertake analysis. Findings from my analysis then informed planning for Stage Two, including development of the teaching program that was central to Stage Two. This planning occurred while I was in Australia.

## **Stage Two**

### *Entering the Site and Recruitment of Research Participants*

I arranged to meet 34 first year English Education major students on June 12<sup>th</sup> 2003 at the library's Self-access Centre (SAC); 28 students attended. As in Stage One, I introduced myself and explained to them the nature of the research, including its purposes, research procedures and methodologies, advantages, risks and harms, confidentiality and anonymity, and participants' right of withdrawal from the research. Accompanying the explanation, a student information sheet both in Thai and in English was provided for students. The language used in my verbal explanation was Thai in order to ensure students' clear understanding. After my explanation, students were encouraged to ask questions. Then I invited them to volunteer to participate in the research, and 17 students out of 28 volunteered to take part.

### *Data Sources*

Sources of data in Stage Two consisted of short questionnaires, transcriptions of audio lesson recordings, a summary of video recordings of some lessons, the researcher's diary entries, students' brief diary entries, printed copies of students' digital texts and web sites, transcriptions of group interviews, students' completed learning tasks, and students' final results in that semester.

#### Short Questionnaire Completion

The main purpose of questionnaires was to establish whether or not the broad profile of students in Stage Two was similar to those in Stage One. The seventeen students who

participated in Stage Two were asked to complete a short questionnaire which aimed to elicit the background of their Internet use; their views of the value of the Internet in helping them learn English, and their needs and interests of Internet applications to be adapted to an English class. Furthermore, it aimed to explore whether the students were willing to participate in a teaching program incorporating the Internet.

When developing my initial plan, I aimed for 15 students to participate in the teaching program. Because all 17 volunteers assured me of their desire to participate in the research, I decided to accept all of them. However, on the first day of the teaching program, only 15 students came to class. All these students were asked to sign consent forms, both in Thai and in English, in line with UTS ethics clearance.

Based on a summary of the responses to the questionnaire, no student identified as a heavy Internet user, one student identified herself as a medium Internet user, and the rest identified as light users. At the first lesson, handouts of an overview of the program both in English and in Thai were provided for the volunteers; and followed by my explanation about the goals, context, objectives, tasks, assessment and evaluation of the program.

By the middle of the teaching program, five students had dropped out. This may have been because they were too busy with their normal classes because of extra activities required by the University such as sports participation. This may also have resulted from the timing of the data collection which took place in the first semester of students' first year of study, when they were in the process of adjusting to the requirements of the University. Consequently, ten students completed the project. Although my ideal number was 15, the 10 participating students enabled me to undertake the teaching program in the way that I had planned.

#### Teaching Program

Details of the content of the teaching program are provided in Chapter 6. However, because of the centrality of the program for Stage Two of the research design, a summary of major features of the program is provided here.

Teaching was conducted out of students' normal class time for 12 double periods of 100 minutes a week, from 8:30 to 10:10 am, from 19<sup>th</sup> June to 4<sup>th</sup> September 2003. Students

were required to work in groups of five people to plan a holiday trip to Australia. In order to do this, they needed to find information on the Internet and further discuss and plan the trip. They needed to word process their plan and e-mail the file as an attachment to the teacher and other students. The Internet applications utilised in the teaching program thus consisted of e-mail and the World Wide Web. In the early stages, using e-mail, using search engines to find information, and reading web pages effectively were demonstrated to students by the teacher.

Students spent five weekly classes searching for information. Then they spent three classes in sharing information and planning the holiday trip and another two classes word processing the plan. Finally, they sent the plan to me and other students via e-mail. Both searching and writing stages were conducted in the classroom and outside the classroom. Group discussions were conducted in class only because this activity was video recorded for investigation of student interaction.

#### Audio Recordings of Lessons

All lessons were audio recorded and I used two tape recorders – one was placed on the computer desk in front of me and the other was in the middle of the room. Additionally, while the students were working in each group, I organised a recording of the conversation of each group. Both Thai and English were used in communication between teacher and students and amongst students.

#### Video Recordings of Lessons

Video recordings were made by an assistant in three lessons (9 to 11) in which students came back to their group, shared information they had obtained from their reading on the WWW, and discussed the holiday plan. Hence, I could get additional visual information relating to students' behaviours, interactions and facial expressions.

#### Researcher/teacher's Diary Entries

Because during the lesson, I played two roles as a teacher and a researcher at the same time, I could not take field notes. Therefore, I observed what happened in class and as soon as I finished each lesson, I wrote a diary in English because it saved my time rather than writing in Thai and translating it into English. The diaries were used in conjunction with audio recordings of lessons.

### Students' Diary Entries

To enable insights into students' perspectives on lessons and Internet use out of class, students were asked to keep brief diaries. These were written in Thai, rather than English, to enable students to write freely. Diary guidelines – both in English and in Thai – were provided for the students as well as my explanation of what they needed to include in their diaries. The students needed to describe their use of the Internet and learning experience based on the main question “What was your general reaction to the lesson today?” and sub-questions, “What did you find easy? What did you find difficult? Did you use the Internet? If so, did it help you learn English? How? What was your attitude to the lesson – interesting, boring, motivating, easy, exciting, useful, meaningful, encouraging, unhelpful?”

### Group Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with two groups of students after the twelve lesson teaching program. Each interview took one hour, and the language used was Thai so that students could express their ideas and feelings more fully. The interviews aimed to elicit students' perceptions of:

- value of the Internet in helping them learn English;
- skills developed from searching for and reading hypertexts;
- increased L2 abilities and cultural knowledge;
- effectiveness of the program;
- teacher and students' roles in the program compared to teacher and students' roles in their normal classes;
- differences between reading hypertexts and reading print texts;
- hypertext reading strategies; and
- their applications of knowledge and skills they had learned in the program to other courses and to using English in 'real life' (after program participation).

Furthermore, interviews aimed to draw out students' attitudes towards:

- the tasks in the program;
- aspects of using the Internet;
- their feelings about teaching and learning activities from the beginning to the end of the program; and
- their suggestions for future similar programs and other comments about the program and about what they had learned in the program.

### Evaluation

The data in Stage Two were drawn upon to evaluate the teaching program. As will be seen in Chapter 6, this evaluation was conducted from the perspective of both teacher and students. From the teacher's perspective, the program was evaluated from analysis of audio recordings of the whole lesson, video recordings, my personal observations noted in my own diaries. It was also evaluated through assessment of students' performances and completion of written tasks. Students' performances included:

- use of e-mail;
- use of search engines in finding relevant information;
- spoken interactions in identifying tourist destination and time to travel; and
- spoken interactions in collaboratively planning a holiday trip.

Students' completion of written tasks included:

- students' e-mail messages,
- the Treasure Hunt exercise;
- printed copies of students' digital texts;
- students' notes and records of obtained travel information (passport and visa requirements; flight information, tourist attractions information and accommodation);
- students' notes of shared information;
- draft of a holiday plan from each group of students; and
- copies of the written holiday plan.

From the students' perspectives, the program was evaluated primarily from their diaries, and from group interviews conducted after the program was completed.

### Follow-up Interview

A year later after the completion of the teaching program, in 2004, I returned to Thailand to follow up the ten participating students' current practices of Internet use, and their views towards their practices. Three interviews, one hour each, were conducted with group of these students in Thai. The first two interviews were conducted with nine students on the same day, and another was conducted with a single student who had quit her study at NPRU to study at another university. These interviews aimed to elicit students' views on:

- what they still regarded as important in the teaching program;
- the potential role of the Internet in learning English;
- students' transfer of knowledge and skills to other situations; and
- their current needs for Internet use in English language learning.



### ***2.3 Data Analysis***

The process of data analysis in both stages of the research was primarily ‘content analysis’. All data were read several times in order to find recurring themes. The themes which emerged from these data were interpreted and categorised into major areas. The outcomes were written up in descriptive, interpretative, and analytical ways (Patton, 1990).

#### **Stage One**

In practice it is difficult to separate the process of data collection and analysis in an ethnographic study. That is, they overlap and recur; the data analysis can be conducted at the same time as the data collection. Thus, initially, questionnaires were summarised and group interview recordings were transcribed in order to identify light, moderate and heavy Internet users. Observation notes and students’ diaries were informally analysed in order to create group interview questions for more in-depth investigation of students’ Internet use.

After data collection was completed, individual interviews were transcribed. Then I translated the summary of questionnaires, group interview transcripts, students’ diaries, and individual interview transcripts from Thai into English. In order to save time, video recordings were summarised directly in English, rather than first summarising in Thai and translating into English. Then, all data were analysed – questionnaire, open-ended questions, interview transcripts, field notes and students’ diaries to identify major content, categories and recurring themes. After that I interpreted the recurring themes and began writing up the outcomes, which are presented in Chapter 5.

#### **Stage Two**

Questionnaire responses from students, which had been completed in Thai, were summarised and translated into English. Major themes arising from these responses were identified and compared in a preliminary way with responses made by Stage One participating students.

Audio recordings of all lessons, which included both languages, English and Thai, were transcribed in full and analysed for recurring themes. Due to the lengthy transcriptions,

it was found more efficient to first establish and rank the themes by content rather than by language, and later to translate all themes into English.

Video recordings of lessons 9 to 11 were summarised in English. It was not necessary to transcribe video recordings because interactions could be captured from audio recordings of the same lessons.

Students' diaries were translated from Thai to English because of their small quantity, and they were searched for recurring themes.

Recordings of group interviews and recordings of follow-up interviews, which were in Thai, were transcribed and identified for recurring themes. Then those themes were translated from Thai to English.

All recurring themes described above were categorised into major categories and interpreted.

At the end of semester, in October 2003, I compared students' final results in the PRS course with the results of other students who were non-participants in the research.

#### ***2.4 Ethical Issues***

Before conducting the research, I negotiated entry and obtained permission from the President of NPRU and from the people in charge of the SALLC and SAC. I also obtained ethics approval from the UTS ethics committee.

In terms of pre-existing relationship with participants of the research, I had taught the students who participated in research Stage One when they were in their first year, in 2000. By the time I left Thailand in 2001 they were in their second year. I conducted Stage One of the research in 2002, by which time these students were in their third year. The students were willing to participate in the research because of their interest in how the Internet could be used in learning English.

I had not known the participants of research Stage Two because by the time of data collection in 2003, they were in their first year of study. They knew that I was a lecturer at the University, and they possibly felt that they should participate in the research. However, it may be seen that only 17 students (out of 28) in the first year class volunteered to participate in the program; only 15 attended on the first day and later, as

previously mentioned, five dropped out. I believe that this confirms the voluntary nature of students' participation.

Before collecting data, I clarified students' rights to withdraw from the research at anytime without giving any reason. In addition, students were told that the two stages of the research would not affect the students' assessment in their normal class because I was not teaching them in their normal classes during the course of data collection, and that there could be no negative implications for their other study. All procedures in research Stage One and Stage Two were carried out in students' free time. Therefore, their learning progress was not disrupted, hindered or harmed.

In Stage Two of the research, students' achievements of goals of the program were assessed from their performances and completed tasks. These assessments were not relevant to their normal subjects, and therefore the evaluation of my teaching program could not have any impact on students' normal program of study. I also reassured students that when writing up the research, I would use pseudonyms and would keep all information confidential; that the audio and video recordings would be transcribed in such a way that names would be changed; that information about the allocation of codes would be stored separately from the coded data; and that identifying references would also be removed. Furthermore, I explained to participants that no-one would be identifiable from published or unpublished data except by me and by my supervisor.

## **Conclusion**

In this chapter, I have outlined the research design of Stage One and Stage two of my thesis. In Section 1, I described the students who participated in the research, including their characteristics in terms of strengths and weaknesses in English, and I noted that these broad characteristics were taken into account in developing the teaching program for research Stage Two.

In Section 2, I outlined the approach and design of this study; that it followed an ethnographic approach and made use of case study design. Although traditionally, ethnography is conducted in natural contexts without a researcher's intervention or manipulation, I did manipulate participants and intervene in the research process especially in the teaching program of Stage Two of the research. In order to balance inside perspectives and outside perspectives, I triangulated the data with various means

of data collection. Data were analysed primarily by content analysis, which enabled me to interpret students' perceptions and attitudes as well as my own perceptions and reflections.

In the next chapter (Chapter 5), I will report findings from data analysis of research Stage One: Students' Internet practices and beliefs, and implications for the teaching program in Stage Two. Then Chapter 6 will describe the development and implementation of the new program incorporated the Internet and report its effectiveness evaluated from both teacher's perspective and students' perspectives.

## Chapter 5

### Students' Internet Practices and Beliefs; Implications for the Teaching Program

#### Introduction

As previously discussed in Chapter 4, the data in Stage One of the research were collected in order to investigate students' use of the Internet and their beliefs about the potential value of the Internet. Thirty-five Year 3 English major students participated in Stage One. Since little was known of these Thai students' use of the Internet, such an investigation was necessary to provide a basis from which to develop a teaching program incorporating the Internet to help students develop their English literacy and to improve my subsequent teaching.

The chapter is organised in four sections. The first section presents students' Internet practices – practices prior to and during the research period. The second section reports on students' beliefs about the value of the Internet in general, its usefulness in helping them learn English and, in particular, its applications for English classes. The third section deals with the case studies of four students who self-identified as heavy Internet users. These case studies provide insights into the potential use of the Internet for English classes. The final section draws implications from analysis of data for the development of the teaching program in research Stage Two.

Detail of data collection and analysis has been given in Chapter 4. However a brief reminder of data sources is provided in the following Table:

**Table 5.1: Sources of data in Stage One**

| Types of Data                    | Quantity             |
|----------------------------------|----------------------|
| Questionnaires                   | 35                   |
| Group interviews transcripts     | 5.15 (7 × .45) hours |
| Observation notes                | 5 sets               |
| Students' diaries                | 4 (19)               |
| A summary of video recordings    | 6 hours              |
| Individual interview transcripts | 2 (4 × .30) hours    |
| Photographs                      | 25                   |
| Internet texts                   | 25                   |

These data were analysed in order to address the first of my research questions:

1. What is the potential of the Internet for supporting EFL development?
  - 1.1. What are students' current Internet practices?
  - 1.2. What are students' perceptions of and attitudes towards use of the Internet?
  - 1.3. What factors support or limit students' use of the Internet?

## **Section 1: Students' Internet Practices**

In presenting outcomes from Stage One of my research, I begin by summarising students' patterns of Internet use. This summary includes an overview of students' Internet use both prior to, and during, the data collection period for this research. Data from questionnaire responses and interviews with 35 third year English Education major students inform my analysis in this section. Discussion of students' Internet practices in this section is organised as follows:

- Extent of experience with the Internet;
- Purposes for using the Internet;
- Choice of language: Thai or English;
- Access to the Internet; and
- Strategies for reading on the Internet.

### ***1.1 Extent of Experience with the Internet***

The major finding from analysis of questionnaires and interviews was that prior to the data collection period, the majority of students made very little use of the Internet. Most students, 27 of the 35 interviewed, reported that they had not begun to use the Internet until they started at University. The eight who did have prior experience, said they began using the Internet when they were at high school. Of these, five learned to use it in class while the other three started using it at different places outside the school environment – at an Internet café, at home or in their off-campus dormitories.

Of the 27 students who began using the Internet while at University, just over half (14) said they were introduced to it in the two foundation subjects: *Information and Technology for Life* and *Information for Study Skills and Research* that they were required to take in their English Education degree. Of the remaining 13, most said they

were introduced to the Internet as a result of their supervisors' instructions to apply for an e-mail account. The others had their first Internet experiences at the University's Computer Centre and library, or at Internet cafés.

The following comments by students illustrate the ways in which most reported being introduced to the Internet:

I started using the Internet in a computer class when I was in the first year. I also asked a classmate sitting next to me to help while learning. We had to send e-mail to the teacher (Pimpa, group interview).

...I started using the Internet because our advisor forced us to apply for an e-mail account. One of my friends helped me with an application and sending the first e-mail. After that I tried to use it myself. Later I took a course in computers and the teacher assigned the students to send e-mail to friends from different classes. This made me use the Internet...I rarely searched for information because some of my friends did it for me... (Laugh). I couldn't do it. We were assigned to do group work searching for information and I thought my friends could do it better than me (Chabaa, group interview).

While most students' initial experiences with the Internet involved learning how to use e-mail, others began by searching for information on the Web, for example:

Mostly, I used Yahoo and Sanook directories. I just typed key words of the information I needed and clicked (Enter). For example, I typed the name of the author of the short story I read in class, then, clicked Enter. I got a lot of information and started reading bit by bit. Once I searched for information on Christianity and had got a lot of web sites but couldn't find any proper information (Pimjai, group interview).

Some teachers of English told us that web sites for English practices are available, but they never gave us those web sites (Oranuch, group interview).

Since most students had only recently begun using the Internet, it is not surprising that these quotes indicate an overall tentativeness and lack of confidence in their abilities.

Even when introduced to the Internet, the majority of students did not become frequent users. A majority (24 of 35) of students indicated that they used the Internet less than four hours a week; seven used it between four to six hours a week and only four used it more than six hours a week. Nearly all (33) students reported using it at an Internet café and 16 of these also used it within the University – either at the Computer Centre (including during their computer class), in the library or at the Self-access Language Learning Centre (SALLC). Only two students said they used it at home or in their off-campus dormitories.

### 1.2 Purposes for Using the Internet

Students were asked about purposes in using the Internet, and the language (English or Thai) of their use. Their responses regarding both purposes and choice of language are summarised in the following table.

**Table 5.2: Students' range of purposes and language of Internet use**

| Internet Applications |                | Language       |         |      | Total no. of students |    |     |
|-----------------------|----------------|----------------|---------|------|-----------------------|----|-----|
|                       |                | Thai           | English | Both |                       |    |     |
| Study Purpose         | E-mail         | 0              | 30      | 5    | 35                    |    |     |
|                       | Search engines | 0              | 28      | 7    | 35                    |    |     |
| Personal Interests    | E-mail         | 11             | 5       | 5    | 21                    |    |     |
|                       | Search engines | General topics | 8       | 0    | 0                     | 8  | 15* |
|                       |                | News           | 1       | 1    | 0                     | 2  |     |
|                       |                | Entertainment  | 8       | 3    | 1                     | 12 |     |
|                       | Chat rooms     | 10             | 1       | 5    | 16                    |    |     |
|                       | Mailing lists  | 0              | 0       | 2    | 2                     |    |     |
|                       | Newsgroups     | 0              | 0       | 1    | 1                     |    |     |
|                       | E-cards        | 2              | 0       | 2    | 4                     |    |     |
|                       | Online games   | 1              | 0       | 0    | 1                     |    |     |

\*Some of these 15 students used search engines for more than one purpose.

As Table 5.2 indicates, the range of purposes for which most students used the Internet was relatively narrow. Their most frequent use was related to study purposes that involved e-mail and search engines. All 35 students were required to submit assignments after reading print texts in an English subject via e-mail every week, and others also submitted assignments for other subjects. In addition, all students used search engines to find additional information for two English subjects and some found information in Thai for other subjects.

Students' use of the Internet in the subject *Introduction to Literature* was typical of requirements in other subjects. In this subject, students were required to use e-mail in submitting assignments. The students indicated that after reading print texts such as



poems and short stories, they were required to write their comments in an e-mail and send them to the teacher. They then received feedback from the teacher via e-mail.

Requirements of students' two foundation English subjects illustrate the ways in which search engines were used for the purpose of acquiring information. In one of these subjects, students were asked to find music or movie reviews in English, identify the reviewers' attitudes and opinions, and then summarise and present them to the class in Thai. The teacher and classmates would then ask questions in Thai. In the other subject, some students reported that they had themselves chosen to use search engines to locate relevant information and vocabulary for essay writing on the topics such as "The Differences between Thai Culture and English Culture" and "The Differences between Christianity and Religions in Thailand". They were not specifically required to do this; rather they elected to do so because they regarded the Internet as a resource of knowledge and information.

The following comments from students illustrate the ways in which they used the Internet for study purposes:

I use e-mail to submit assignments in a computer subject as well as an Introduction to Literature subject. I also search for information as assigned by some teachers. I access English web sites reading the history of computer (Apichart, group interview).

(I use the Internet) Once a week – about half an hour each time. I only use e-mail to submit assignments in the Introduction to Literature subject and I use search engines to search for information about movie reviews in English (Karuna, group interview).

I often use the Internet – about three to four days a week. I mainly search for information for some subjects, both in Thai and in English. I use e-mail to submit assignments and homework, and play games. Mostly, I use it at an Internet café (Pimpa, group interview).

Mostly, I use e-mail to submit assignments...I use Google search engine to search for information in English. I also search for information related to education subjects (Cherdchom, group interview).

A student explained the procedures they were required to follow when submitting assignments:

...After reading short stories, we have to make comments about the stories in English and submit to the teacher via e-mail. Then we get feedback from her via e-mail as well (Chabaa and others, group interview).

Another student described searching for information for the *Reading for Opinions and Attitudes* subject:

Students are assigned to find movie reviews and read the reviewers' opinions and comments in order to learn the expressions they use. Mostly, I need to translate the reviews into Thai for my understanding. Then report them to the class in Thai (Karuna, group interview).

Although most students were introduced to Internet use at University, their responses indicated that the Internet generally was not systematically integrated into the subjects that they were studying. Rather it was used as an 'add-on' tool which enabled them to send homework and assignments via e-mail, or to find additional information via search engines. That is, use of the Internet was supplementary rather than integral to their study.

Apart from study purposes, a significant number of students (21) used e-mail for personal use, and a majority (16) engaged in chat rooms. Some used search engines to locate information of interest to the individual student, most often related to entertainment (TV programs, music, movie stars), but sometimes related to other general topics. A small number of students used mailing lists, newsgroups, e-cards and online games.

The following are typical comments from students that illustrate their use of the Internet for personal interests:

I mainly used it for entertainment, such as TV programs and searched for information as requested by some of my friends, as well as for reading something interesting. I didn't use it often because I had to pay 25 baht (\$A .90) per hour for the service (Yada, group interview).

Many students first addressed the demands of study and then, if there was time, they used the Internet to pursue some of their personal interests, for example:

I always use it (the Internet) for pleasure and use e-mail to submit assignments...I use less e-mail than before...I don't have any foreign friends, but I sometimes e-mail a former American teacher. I also send e-cards (Wadee, group interview).

Mostly I use Yahoo e-mail to submit assignments and search for information about entertainment and something interesting (Lakana, group interview).

When I have free time I play games, search for information about beauty and horoscopes. However, I love playing games (Nuanchan, group interview).

Like the others, I use e-mail to submit assignments and use chat rooms sometimes (Preeya).

I started to send more e-mails when teachers assigned students to submit assignments via e-mail. At the Internet café, I spent two hours using e-mail to submit assignments and if there was enough time, I accessed various web sites (Paweena, group interview).

... When I had free time, I accessed different web sites such as horoscopes, personality tests and information about love (Cherdchom, group interview).

A small number of students accessed the Internet simply to follow up an area of interest or to access information about current events or entertainment in English when this information was not readily available in Thai:

I access National Geographic web site, which is in English... There are many things for me to read about, such as animals, sports, and technology. I can read what I am interested in, and can see a lot of pictures. I also print out the pictures I like, (Aree, group interview).

Yes (I read news online), I read about the terrorist attack of USA's World Trade buildings. It was better than reading from Thai newspapers because I could get more details and pictures (Cherdchom, group interview).

I started using the Internet when I was in the first year. I mainly searched for English songs that I was interested in and fond of as well as movie stars and singers' biographies. Then I copied them onto a floppy disk, printed out and kept them... When listening to the songs from cassettes, I can practise singing by looking at the texts... (I read in) English. I rarely used Thai and mainly searched for western music and movies because I like them so I know many singers and movie stars... During the first two years of my study I used it a lot when I was free from my study. I searched for interesting poetry and short stories (Jurai, group interview).

Such comments suggest that personal interest (in news events or entertainment) could offer opportunities for more integrated use of the Internet for teachers of English as a second language. Further opportunities could be provided by chat rooms, as the following students' comments suggest:

I started using it (the Internet) when I was 18. I used chat rooms and chatted in Thai and sometimes I used ICQ to chat with international key pals...After accessing the ICQ web site, we need to fill in our pin code and choose from a list of names one person or more to chat with... I chose the people my age both boys and girls. I mainly talked about Thailand (Lakana, group interview).

I started to use the Internet during the vacation before I entered the first year at the University. I had a computer with Internet access at home. At first I didn't know how to use it very well. I used chat rooms all day everyday. That was because we just bought the computer and it was vacation...I sometimes accessed other web sites but I was addicted to chatting. I used ICQ (Nanta, group interview).

... I seldom used it (e-mail) but I used chat rooms to chat in Thai instead. Later I changed to use in English...When the Computer Centre provided a free Internet service,

I used it more. I used a chat room in a web site called Bangkok Chat and chatted in English with international key pals. Sometimes, they complained that I was too slow (Wanna, group interview).

The students who learned to use chat rooms did so despite, rather than because of, their University courses. They were actually not allowed to use chat rooms while at University. Yet the few students who did begin to use chat rooms became very enthusiastic about them. This type of Internet application is exciting and interesting for many teenagers, and emerged as having potential for English learning. In using this Internet application, students had an opportunity to communicate with people from other countries in genuine contexts, rather than communicating with peers or their teacher in simulated settings.

However, if chat rooms were to become part of any English program, the idiomatic and abbreviated nature of the English that is typically used between chatters would need to be taken into account, as the following students' comments suggest:

I've talked to DJ once and he thought that chatting doesn't help improve your English but makes it worse because the language used is not grammatically correct in terms of words and grammar... (Wanna, group interview).

Chatters use informal language sometimes it wasn't grammatically correct. They emphasised understanding, such as "What you doing?" They omitted "are" (Paweena, group interview).

...I chatted at nighttime until midnight or 1 am... At the beginning I used Thai. Later a teacher suggested I use a "talk web site" and I chatted with international key pals. I could click to choose a key pal or more from any continent. Then I chose from names and ages...(I chatted about) General topics, such as who they are, what they do, where they live and so on...We needed speed in typing so people used abbreviations, such as 'u' rather than 'you'... Some friends who had experience chatting explained this to me (Apichart, group interview).

The informal and abbreviated English that is used by chatters seems to presents both opportunities and challenges for English language teachers.

### ***1.3 Choice of Language: Thai or English***

Students were asked in questionnaires and group interviews about their use of English and Thai when using the Internet and about the extent to which they switched between languages. Their responses indicated that their choice of language was closely related to purpose of use. Most use of English on the Internet occurred in relation to study. Here students were required to send e-mails in English or to search for specific information in English. Internet use for purposes other than study was more likely to be undertaken in

Thai, although some personal e-mails were also sent in English as the following quotes demonstrate:

(I used) Thai. I sometimes used English when sending e-mails to a Thai friend who's living in Australia. Thai language can't be read via his computer (Weena).

Like others, I began using the Internet when I was in the first year. I mainly sent e-mails both in Thai and in English. I had to send e-mails in English because the senior students who majored in English forced me to send them (Churee).

I also used the Internet to search for information, both in Thai and in English to write assignments for some subjects. At first I used it in Thai more than in English because I wasn't good enough at English. Later I used English as well (Kanchana).

Responses suggested that only a small number of students (7) were able to switch codes with confidence. These seven used both languages for study purposes and for personal purposes. Most students revealed that they were discouraged from using the Internet because of the English language barrier – mainly comprehension. Their responses also indicated that although teachers encouraged students' use of English, they did not provide sufficient support in learning relevant English, with the result that students found tasks involving Internet use to be burdensome.

The following quotes illustrate the students' reluctance to use English with Internet tasks:

When accessing English web sites, I didn't understand them (Kanchana).

I mainly use Thai because sometimes, I don't understand when reading information in English (Apichart).

I once accessed an English web site and could read only one page because I didn't understand what I read... (laugh). I didn't have enough time to find the meaning of unknown words from the dictionary because it wasted time. I had to pay for service (Jurai).

I use English when sending e-mail to a Thai friend, who is studying abroad... (But) Not very often because reading her e-mail I have to find some word meanings from a dictionary. Her English is much better than mine (Nanta).

Despite the lack of prior support in learning English, comments from the students suggest that pressure from teachers to use Internet sites forced them to engage with English, and motivated a shift from Thai to English:

I used search engines to search for information in Thai. Then I began searching in English in my second year of study because I was assigned by the teachers (Pattama).

I shifted to using English when submitting assignments via e-mail. Usually, I use Thai because it is easier to understand than English (Pimpen).

I started using it (the Internet) when I was in the first year. I used Yahoo e-mail but always in Thai. I only used English when submitting assignments to teachers (Preeya).

... I accessed various web sites, such as entertainment, horoscopes, verses and pictures. I rarely access English web sites because I didn't understand what I read. I always used it in Thai. Then I began to use English in the second year of my study because I had to submit assignments in English via e-mail. I had to search for information in English as well. When finding the right information, I copied it onto a floppy disk and printed it out, translated into Thai and presented to the class (Oranuch).

To submit assignments via e-mail, I use English and I use both Thai and English to search for information. To search for information as assigned by teachers and to read tips about general topics, I use English (Lakana).

I use it (English) when assigned by teachers and my own interests. I always access the same English web sites because I have no ideas about different web sites (Nanta).

Another student, Pimjai, reported that she used e-mail both in Thai and in English to contact Thai key pals. However, she preferred using Thai because she felt it was easier than English. She sometimes used mailing lists and e-mailed Thai friends in English.

Students' responses suggest that there was little code switching between Thai and English because the majority of students used the Internet in English only to fulfill class requirements. Most students who used the Internet for personal purposes were reluctant to use English because of difficulties with reading comprehension and with writing. When they experienced difficulties with reading comprehension they gave up attempting to use the Internet. This suggests that initial access to the Internet in Thai could support and encourage students to develop relevant technical skills that would then encourage them to switch to English or to switch between Thai and English. If teachers allow free choice of language, students may be encouraged to make more use of the Internet.

#### ***1.4 Access to the Internet***

A major issue that emerged from the analysis of students' responses to questionnaires and interviews was that of (lack of) access to the Internet.

As indicated in Chapter 2, the University provided Internet access for students' use out of class at the Computer Centre, the library, and the Self-access Language Learning Centre (SALLC). Yet the analysis of questionnaires and transcripts of group interviews

indicated that there were problems with Internet use within the University. None of the students nominated the Computer Centre, the library or the SALLC as their first choice for Internet use. It appeared that they only used such locations when they had no other option. Questionnaire and interview responses indicated there were a number of reasons for this.

Many students mentioned that there were not enough computers with Internet access within the University and that the speed of connection time was very slow. As well, frequent failure of connection occurred. The SALLC, for example, had only 17 computers for students, and some of them were out of order. A number of students complained that the Computer Centre was not open regularly for students to use in their free time beyond class subjects, as it was usually booked for first year students, and that Internet access at the old library building was unavailable due to building maintenance.

Typical comments from students include:

(The speed of Internet connection at the Self-access Language Learning Centre is) Very slow. Many students wanted to use the Internet there and there aren't enough computers (Wanna).

...Then I stopped using it (chat room) when I was in the third year because there was not enough Internet service in the library...The University does not provide enough Internet service and the Computer Centre is not open for students (Kanchana).

Since the beginning of this semester the library hasn't been open because the Internet system is in the process of maintenance (Supa).

The Computer Centre used to be open for students until 8 p.m. Because at present there are many first-year students, the service for other students is not available. Those students have to use the Internet at an Internet café or at home (Aree, Kanchana, Chabaa, Jurai and Wanna).

When I was in the third year, I used it less, twice a week. At present I use it at an Internet café because it's more convenient and the speed of connection is faster (Pattama).

(I mainly used the Internet) At an Internet café. It's more convenient. If I wanted to use it at the University, I had to wait because many students wanted to use it as well (Weena).

In addition to insufficient computers and connection time, students complained that at the SALLC, they were only supposed to use English when accessing the Internet. As I mentioned in Chapter 2, this centre was part of the Language Centre which aimed at

encouraging students to use this learning resource for their English practice in their leisure time.

As the following comments demonstrate, students objected both to having to use English and to the surveillance they experienced while there:

I felt uncomfortable because the assistant at the centre always keeps an eye on students while using the Internet. I feel free to use it at an Internet café (Weena).

Not really (I don't use the Internet at the SALLC). The rules of this centre are all students have to use the Internet in English. I sometimes went there when I was assigned by teachers to search for information in English (Wadee).

No, (I've) never (used the Internet at the SALLC)...Because students are not allowed to use Thai but English. I went there once and while I was using the Internet, the teacher in charge always kept an eye on me, to check whether I used Thai. At that time, I was not good at English so I always used Thai. After that, I always used it outside of the University (Kanda).

Students also complained about the limited access time for using the Internet within the University:

If using it in the SALLC, I needed to use it during daytime. I didn't have enough time because I need to go to the library, too (Aree).

I don't have enough time because I have to study hard and I participate in the University Students' Affairs activities (Pimpen).

Because of the problems of access within the University, most students preferred to use the Internet outside of the University. When asked where they used the Internet, all but one (34) student indicated that they used Internet cafés as their first option, with 17 of these saying they only used the Internet at cafés (that is, they never used it at University). Significantly, only two students reported using the Internet at home, and one of these said that she had to compete with other members of her family for access there.

Those who chose to use Internet cafés experienced another problem – expense of use. Because of this, their Internet use was limited primarily to study purposes, as the following quotes indicate:

At an Internet café we use the Internet for study only because of the service charge. After submitting assignments or searching for information, we use it until it covers the time we pay for (Kanda).



I mainly use e-mail to submit assignments and to talk with a former American teacher. Apart from this, I don't use other Internet applications because it wastes the money (Oranuch).

In their interview responses, students explained some of the measures that they took to reduce the expense. The following quotes provide examples of these:

(I use it) Outside of the University and pay 20 baht (\$A .70) per hour. Four of us share the computer. Before using e-mail to submit an assignment, we have written a draft so we don't waste the time (Somjai).

I rarely use it (the Internet). Like Karuna, I always ask one of my friends to submit assignments for me (Tip).

Mostly I use e-mail to submit assignments and other tasks for my study. After that I access other web sites until it reaches the rental time. In some weeks I don't use it because one of my friends submits assignments using the draft I write (Paweena).

### ***1.5 Strategies for Reading on the Internet***

An issue that is especially relevant to my research is that of reading strategies. My previous teaching had focused specifically on reading, and it was dissatisfaction with my previous courses that led me to undertake this research. Consequently, I was particularly interested in identifying what reading strategies students used when reading hypertexts. When asked about this issue, students indicated that they used a range of strategies. When locating information, they used strategies of skimming and scanning, but generally when they needed to read texts in more detail they needed to print off the texts and often to translate the text into Thai in order to be able to understand it. By printing texts, they also reduced the amount of time they needed to spend on-line and, for those who were using Internet cafés, this helped reduce costs. Moreover, students indicated that they read the same content in Thai before reading in English. Thus, it helped them in comprehending text. They also commented that they found the hypermedia (pictures, animations and sound files of hypertexts) attractive and motivating and that these non-linguistic features also helped them in guessing meaning of the texts they read. The following students' comments provide an indication of the strategies that they used:

Skim it and print out the information I need. Then I read it in detail and select the most comprehensible one (Karuna).

After finding information, I print it out and then read and translate into Thai (Sasikan).

We always save the information we need onto a floppy and print it at home or other places (Aree).

In summary, the most significant points to emerge from analysis of students' Internet practices were that the majority of students lacked both experience and expertise in using the Internet. These outcomes reveal similar patterns of limited use to those found by other researchers (e.g. Srichaliang, 2000; Prophrom, 2002). Students in Stage One of my research had had little access to the Internet at school prior to beginning University. Although most had been introduced to the Internet during their first year at the University, they still lacked ready access. There were insufficient computers available to the students at the University, and when there was access, students resented the rules and surveillance that went with use of University computers. Unlike students in many other countries, very few had access to computers at home. This meant that most were forced to use Internet cafés, and because the cafés were expensive, students mainly used the Internet just to meet University requirements of submitting assignments or searching for specific information. In fact it appeared that if there had been no requirement from the University to use the Internet, a number of students would not have used it at all. However, although the University clearly played an important role in introducing students to the Internet and encouraging them to use it, students' questionnaire and interview responses suggested that use of the Internet was not well integrated into their learning in those subjects. Rather it was used as an 'add-on' tool where students undertook normal activities, but then were required to search for additional information via the Internet, or submit assignments via e-mail rather than via more traditional channels.

Overall, the combination of difficulties with English, lack of technical skills in searching for information, and the challenge of huge amount of information on the World Wide Web hindered students' use of the Internet. Students' limited use resulted from problems of access, problems of use, particularly in English, as well as the demand of time for their normal subjects. Those few students who did use the Internet for their own interests mostly used it in Thai because of their difficulties in reading extended texts in English.

These findings from Stage One broadly reflect those of other researchers. Although there has not been extensive research undertaken in Thailand into use of the Internet, as indicated in Chapter 2, there are a small number of relevant studies. The experiences of students in Stage One of this research reflect similar problems reported by other researchers in other educational institutions in Thailand, especially those beyond

Bangkok and large cities. These problems include access, inadequate funding for hardware and software, and language difficulty (Stamper, 2002; Fry, 2002b; Borton, 2003; Prammanee, 2003; Vateulan, 2004; Todd, 2005).

## **Section 2: Students' Beliefs about the Value of the Internet**

In this section, I report on students' beliefs about the Internet. I focus first on their beliefs about the Internet in general – its usefulness and attractiveness to the students themselves, to Thai people and to other people in the globe. I then describe their beliefs about the value of the Internet in helping them learn English, and their beliefs about Internet applications that could beneficially be used in English classes. In presenting this section, I draw on data from questionnaires and group interviews.

### ***2.1 Students' Beliefs about Value of the Internet in General***

Analysis of questionnaires and group interviews revealed students' strong belief in the overall importance of the Internet at both local and global levels. They thought the Internet was important not only to them as students of English, but also, more broadly, to Thai people and to people in other countries. They believed that the Internet provided a great source of global information; that it provided rapid and inexpensive communication; that it provided access to other cultures, and that it represented a source of entertainment. The students also believed that ability to access the Internet was important as it enabled them to be up-to-date with world events – something they regarded as important in their role as future teachers.

Major findings can be organised around following themes:

- The Internet as a resource of global information;
- Communication and being up-to-date; and
- The Internet as entertainment.

#### ***The Internet as a Resource of Global Information***

When asked their beliefs about the value of the Internet, the most common response related to accessing information. The majority of students (32 of 35) viewed the Internet as a resource that could provide them with huge amounts of global information. They also believed that they could find this myriad of information rapidly and conveniently, and that therefore, the time currently spent finding information from books and in the

library could be reduced. The following comments illustrate students' views about the Internet being a rapid, extensive and convenient source of information:

With the Internet we can find all the information we need. If we need a variety of information we need to find it from many books because different information may be found in different books. We can also read the newspapers from the past (Pimjai).

It helps me search for information conveniently and rapidly. We don't need to go to the library and we can get more information than in the library...The Internet offers a lot of information from everywhere in the world (Alisa).

... I think the Internet provides me with convenience such as I can read online news without buying newspapers. It helps me more up-to-date...the Internet helps me develop ideas when reading online news, and other people's comments (Weena).

Approximately half the students (18 of 35) thought that Thai people as well as those in other countries needed to know more about the Internet. They viewed it as a tool that could be used by people in Thailand and other countries for national development. For example:

I think it's important to Thai people in terms of economy and rapid communication. The Internet assists people in searching for information as well as learning global cultures. As such Thai people need to use the Internet (Saran).

In the future, Thai people should know the Internet otherwise they may not know many things – they will be unsophisticated. It is necessary that everyone needs to learn more (Aree).

I think the Internet benefits Thai people because of modern technology development. Thai people need to develop themselves and can help develop their country like other countries (Wadee).

It's important in terms of national development. Because of the global Internet, networks provide rapid access of information. Each country can be known worldwide (Naree).

A small number of students (4) believed that the Internet helped them gain more knowledge and experiences from other countries; they emphasised the importance of Thai people learning about international (global) cultures.

#### *Communication and Being Up-to-Date*

Apart from the Internet being an important source of information, a second common response from more than half (18) of the students was that the Internet provided them with a rapid, convenient and inexpensive means of communicating with others.

Surprisingly, since most students had been required to use e-mail as part of their study

in specific University subjects, only a relatively small group (6) specifically nominated e-mail as a useful means of communication in their responses. This may have been because they were required to submit assignments via e-mail and had therefore not explored its possibilities in communicating on other levels. Despite this, a number of the students noted that the Internet offered rapid, convenient and inexpensive communication for Thai people. They argued that the Internet facilitated people's lives and it helped save time and expense in a modern society. Examples of these views can be seen in the following comments:

I think because of the Internet, the world gets smaller and people in the globe can communicate in terms of business more rapidly, conveniently and easily (Lakana).

It facilitates more rapid, convenient and inexpensive communication than is available by telephone or letters (Nanta).

The Internet is important to people in other countries because it is like a communication tool that helps create relationships among people from different cultures and ways of life (Saran).

... I know how to communicate with other people rapidly and the Internet provides me entertainment when accessing interesting web sites (Supa).

I think it's very necessary because it helps us save time and expense in a modern society. The Internet facilitates people's daily lives. It always offers new things, from which Thai people can gain experience and knowledge (Pimpen).

I think the Internet is important to Thai people because Thailand is a developing country and still follows other countries. The Internet has spread through many countries so Thai people need to know and use it (Oranuch).

In related comments, a number of students (11) emphasised the importance of being 'up-to-date'. They said that Thai people needed to know about the Internet and they needed to use it in order to be up-to-date in a modern world. They emphasised the importance of this in terms of overall development of the country, and they also emphasised the importance to them, as future teachers, of being up-to-date with world events. For example:

It's important to me because it is part of my daily life. We, as students who are up-to-date, need to know and use the Internet. Particularly if we become teachers we need to know it. When we want to know anything, we can find it from the Internet (Chabaa).

It helps me learn about technology and be up-to-date. In the future, if I am an English teacher, I will be able to apply the Internet in my teaching. My future students will have knowledge about the Internet and be up-to-date as well. In addition, they will be able to decide to use the Internet positively and efficiently, avoiding its disadvantages (Naree).

The Internet helps me to be up-to-date. In the near future, as an English teacher I need to know how to search for information from the Internet (Churee).

While there was broad agreement on the value of the Internet, a number of students (8) also argued that the Internet was not equally valuable to all people in any society. They noted that it was important to groups such as students, businessmen, educators and professionals, but that it was of little value to the economically disadvantaged in Thailand.

### *The Internet as Entertainment*

Apart from the value of the Internet as a source of information and rapid communication, a number of students (9) referred to its value as a source of entertainment and pleasure. They pointed out that the Internet is a great source of information about music, singers and movies, and that it provides access to online games, chat rooms and online music. Their comments on the value of entertainment include:

The Internet provides heaps of information about entertainment, news, verses, songs, and so on. It has got everything so we don't need to waste the time finding from books and other sources. We can find everything from the Internet in a short period of time (Karuna).

The Internet offers entertainment and pleasure. To read Internet texts we can look at animations, which make texts more interesting. We can't find such things in books (Saran).

It's important in terms of entertainment as well. To be up-to-date, we should use chat rooms because chatting helps us know more about other people but not too much (Wadee).

...chatting and playing online games give me pleasure... Although the Internet has an impact on me, that doesn't mean I can't live without it. However it's essential to have the Internet (Lakana).

...In addition, the Internet offers me entertainment such as sending e-cards and reading horoscopes... (Weena).

## ***2.2 Students' Beliefs about Value of the Internet in Helping Learn English***

In addition to their comments about the general value of the Internet as a resource for information, all students believed that the Internet could help them learn English. In their questionnaire responses and interviews they referred to a range of aspects of learning English. Most frequently students commented on the assistance that the Internet provided with vocabulary learning, but their comments also addressed the

ability to read in English (reading comprehension, specific reading strategies) as well as the ability to understand idiomatic expressions, and to develop writing skills, grammar, and general English skills.

As indicated above, the most frequent response (from 27 of the 35 students) was that the Internet could help students learn English vocabulary. Significantly, in their responses, students frequently referred to the importance of context in helping them to work out the meaning of unfamiliar words, and they described how they had developed skills in guessing word meanings of unknown words from context clues. The following quotes provide examples of students' comments about the importance of context:

It helps me learn more vocabulary which can be applied to use in class. I can guess word meanings (Pattama).

Reading information in English from the Internet helps me be familiar with structures and know more vocabulary (Supa).

It helps me develop skills in guessing word meanings using context clues in paragraphs. It helps me learn and memorise more vocabulary as well as expressions to use when chatting (Lakana).

To access English web sites helps me become familiar with vocabulary. Sometimes, I guess the meanings of unknown words from their context as well as from pictures. To make sure of the meanings, I always look them up in the dictionary. I don't read every word but read for main point – to know what the text is about. Sometimes, I omit unknown words and guess meanings of some words. While reading I need to think and translate into Thai otherwise I won't understand the text (Aree).

After vocabulary development, the most common response from students was that the Internet helped them with reading in English (22 of the 35 students). Many commented that the Internet helped them to develop specific skills in reading and that this improved their reading comprehension as well as their vocabulary development. The following quotes are typical of the students' responses:

Because most web sites are based on English, it's impossible that we can avoid encountering reading in English. This helps me develop reading skills (Nuanchan).

For me, I think reading skills are important in searching for information. To comprehend the text we read depends on our background knowledge of vocabulary. If we know more vocabulary, we can click and read more information (Wanna).

I think the Internet helps me learn English. For example, in a literature subject, we can search for the stories we have learned in class, and read them. This helps us comprehend the stories better (Kanchana).

We can learn more vocabulary and develop reading skills when we read information on the Internet... I use summarising, interpretation, as well as guessing word meanings. When reading, we don't know every word (Apichart).

(The Internet is) very important to the study because we need to search for a variety of information. It's important for reading skills as well. We can practise more reading and learn more vocabulary, and finally we may like English more (Oranuch).

It's very important in searching for up-to-date information, which sometimes, can't be found from books. Besides we can search for English information and learn new words which we've never come across before (Wadee).

Students also noted the value of the Internet in assisting them with writing and with grammar. Eleven students thought that using e-mail to submit assignments helped them improve writing skills as well as grammar. Eight students pointed out that the Internet helped them improve general English skills. For example:

Like the others, I think the Internet helps me learn more vocabulary, and using e-mail to submit assignments also helps increase the knowledge and the use of grammatical structures (Walai).

... Using e-mail to submit assignments helps develop writing skills as well as structures, especially from the lecturers' feedback (Nanta).

Submitting assignments via e-mail helps develop writing skills...(Pimpa).

I think using e-mail helps me increase knowledge of vocabulary, starting with opening the e-mail, applying for an e-mail account, composing and sending. In addition, to search for information frequently helps develop English skills (Alisa).

Students were also able to be quite specific about the ways in which the Internet could be used in English classes. The most common suggestion was that students should be encouraged to search for information that was relevant to specific topics that they were studying at the University. For example:

I think students could be asked to search for information from web sites given by teachers. This could be an additional activity, which is motivating (Kaan).

Yes, I think it could be. For example, teachers may ask students to search for information, which is relevant to the topic they study in class, from the Internet. They may give the students web sites or ask them to search by themselves. This helps develop the students' English language skills...(Aree).

Yes (the Internet can be used in English classes). For example, ask students to search for additional information from the Internet. This helps the lessons in class more motivating (Naree).

Another common suggestion was that students be taught to create their own web sites. Some students also suggested that such tasks could be done in groups in order both to



make the task easier and to overcome difficulties that some students had with access to computers:

I think it's interesting. When I was in grade 12, I learned how to create a web page with many links... Students may create their web page called 'My Story' or 'My Family'... Of course (we can insert pictures). We may create many pages with links. I think it's a lot of fun (Supa).

I think students should create their own web pages and teachers could access them (Preeya).

I think the most difficulty is the information we have to include in the web page. How to create it is not a problem because we can follow instructions (Jurai).

It should be done in groups because it seems too difficult to do individually (Alisa).

However, teachers would know their students' ability very well so they could evaluate. My further comment is that students could do group work in the case of students who don't have a computer at home (Nanta).

Interestingly, in the light of students' objections to having to use English practice sites and the surveillance they experienced when using computers in the SALLC at the University (see earlier discussion), only two students thought that the use of English practice web sites would help them with their English development. The following quotes are from those two students:

It can really help because if we access English web sites, we can practise more language skills. As the Thai Prime Minister, Dr Thaksin Chinawatra said that the government's policy aims to enable Thai students to use English to communicate with foreigners (Chabaa).

It really helps me because I major in English. The Internet helps me improve the four skills. This is because most web sites are based in English (Naree).

The majority of students clearly preferred more open ended access to web sites that they perceived as relevant to their needs or interests at that time. It was through this open ended access that they encountered unfamiliar vocabulary and where they were required to employ a variety of reading strategies in order to work out what the digital texts were about. As Saran, noted, this open-ended access enabled him to work across different registers of English:

It really helps me learn both formal and informal English. I have learned informal English from chatting with international key pals, which I can adapt and use with some friends in real situations (Saran).

The use of English in 'real' situations also enabled him to practise English:

Naturally, when we read in English sometimes, we can't understand everything but we have an opportunity to practise (Saran).

Although most of the students supported open-ended access to the Internet where students were required to work either in groups or independently, some also commented on the role of the teacher. They suggested that the teacher needed to provide support both in accessing relevant sites, and also in editing the students' writing of texts:

Teachers may find the Internet texts that are relevant to the topics they teach or they may ask students to access some relevant web sites. For example, in a literature subject, the lecturer gave us web sites of interesting short stories. Then we accessed and read the short stories (Jurai).

Although the Internet is used in class, teachers need to monitor as well (Kanchana).

I think it's a good idea but it's difficult to do because of the Internet system at our university (Wanna).

We need the teacher to check grammar first (Kanda).

In sum, students agreed that the Internet was significant to them, to Thai people and to people in other countries, and most of them viewed the Internet as a rich resource for all kinds of information and cultures from countries worldwide. They also believed it was important to access this information as a way of ensuring that they were up-to-date with world events, and that as future teachers, this was important for them. Additionally, they believed that the Internet provided them with entertainment and pleasure.

The consistent picture that emerged from analysis of data was that students who participated in my research, like other Thai students (Vattanapath, Charupan & Soranastaporn, 2002), were convinced that the use of the Internet provided an important resource for helping them learn English. Despite their current limited use of the Internet, they were also able to be quite specific about how use of the Internet assisted them. Broadly, students believed that the Internet helped them with English vocabulary and reading comprehension. More specifically, they believed that through reading on the WWW, they learned how to read strategically and selectively. They employed a wide repertoire of reading strategies such as skimming for main points, reading in Thai prior to reading in English, guessing word meanings from context clues which included non-linguistic features – graphics and pictures – as well as using dictionaries. They summarised, interpreted and skimmed texts for main points. Such reading strategies helped them develop not only reading skills and reading comprehension but also

reading speed. They were able to provide specific suggestions about how teachers could incorporate use of the Internet into English classes. Suggestions included providing references to suitable web sites, encouraging students to search for relevant information, and supporting students to create their own web sites. They also commented on the on-going need for support from teachers in tasks that involved use of the Internet.

### **Section 3: Case Studies of Four Heavy Internet Users**

In addition to gaining an overview of the students' reported Internet practices, and their beliefs about the value of the Internet, I was interested in investigating in more detail the kinds of Internet practices undertaken by students. To do this, I selected four *heavy Internet users* from the 35 students for further investigation. I expected that close observations of these students' practices would provide more specific insights and implications for the development of the teaching program in research Stage Two. As indicated in Chapter 4, the term 'heavy' Internet user is relative to others in the group of students, and means that students used the Internet for 6 hours or more per week.

The four heavy Internet users were Kanda, Walai, Nanta and Saran. Three of these four students (Kanda, Walai and Nanta) first learned to use the Internet before entering the University; for Kanda and Walai this occurred at high school, while for Nanta this was out of her school environment. The fourth (Saran) began using the Internet when he started his first year at the University. After entering the University, three of the students enrolled in an elective computer subject. Thus, they had more knowledge, experience and opportunity to use the Internet than other students. Only two heavy users had home access, with the other two mainly using Internet cafés. Saran, for example, used Internet cafés five days a week and stated that the Internet was really important to him and that it had become a part of his life. It appeared that these four students read extensively on the Internet and used a wide variety of Internet applications.

In analysing findings about Internet practices of these four heavy Internet users, the following issues were of critical interest to my research questions:

- the breadth and depth of students' literacy practices while undertaking research and extending knowledge; and
- the range and variety of reading strategies that were employed by students to access web sites and to comprehend English digital texts.

In discussion of these issues, I draw on the data from my observation notes, students' diaries, a summary of video recordings, photographs, copies of digital texts that were viewed by students, and transcripts of individual interviews.

### ***3.1 Breadth and Depth of Literacy Practices while Undertaking Research and Extending Knowledge***

Analysis of the data revealed that the four heavy Internet users used the Internet both for study purposes and for personal interest. Their range of uses included sending e-mails, finding information, playing games, listening to online music, sending e-cards, and doing personality tests. These students' purposes for using the Internet are similar to those of the other students who participated in the research. However, their frequency of Internet use is higher and the range of their activities, especially for personal interest, appears to be greater than for the other students.

Like other students that participated in the research, these students used the Internet for a range of study purposes. They searched for additional knowledge and information both in Thai and in English. For example, in response to requirement of assignments in specific subjects, they searched for movie and music reviews, and for historical information.

The following excerpts illustrate the nature of their Internet practices:

Listened to the music from atimedia.com and searched for music reviews. After that I accessed pop.co.th and searched for words of the song "Superman (It's not easy)" and "Whenever Whenever". Finally I got information, of Oasis and their latest album called "Heathen Chemistry". I wasn't sure if it was a music review so I saved it onto a floppy disk (Nanta, diary).

We were assigned to search for a subject, Reading for Opinions and Attitudes. When we get the information, we need to read and summarise in Thai and present it to the class. We need to tell whether which reviews are negative and which are positive. To do this we can learn the reviewers' attitudes. After the presentation, the teacher and classmates may ask questions or make comments (Nanta, individual interview).

I, then, went to commonwealth.org and looked for information about "Commonwealth and England Empire". I need this information for my essay in the Socio-cultural Background of English-speaking Countries subject, but the speed of connection was so slow that I gave up (Nanta, diary).

Where these students differed from the others was in their greater expertise in using the Internet and in their greater technical abilities. Their more frequent use of the Internet appeared to have enabled them to develop a more strategic approach to finding the

information that they wanted, and hence they were less likely to give up when they encountered difficulties. An example of this can be seen in Kanda's following comment:

I tried to search for information about sexual relations for a subject called Psychology for Adolescence. I couldn't find the right information so I sent a question to a doctor and would get the reply via e-mail (Kanda, diary).

Kanda, like other students, was required to find movie reviews on the Internet. Unlike other students, however, she was able to engage interactively with others via the Internet, as she explained:

I made comments in Thai. At first I started searching for movie reviews as required for a class subject. I accessed the web page of the movie called "The Eyes", which is a popular movie I have watched. On this web page you click the word "movie review" and read a lot of comments. There is also a box provided with a sentence "Make your comments here and use appropriate words." Then you click the box, fill in your name and e-mail address, type comments, and finally click "send" (Kanda, individual interview).

She noted the usefulness of this practice in the following comment:

It helps me learn about other people's opinions and I can use those opinions as a reference when giving a presentation to class... I can express my opinion and see whether it's different from other people. Sometimes, I e-mail some reviewers asking them why they think differently from other people. I sometimes receive their replies, sometimes not. In addition, I have pleasure accessing these web pages (Kanda, individual interview).

The other major way in which the four heavy Internet user students differed from others was in the extent to which they used the Internet to pursue their personal interests. As indicated in the previous section, without the requirement from the University that students had to use the Internet for specific study purposes, it appeared that a number of the students would not have used the Internet at all. This was not the case with the heavy Internet users. They each used the Internet extensively to find information about topics of personal interest, and they also used it for entertainment.

An example of way in which the four students used the Internet to pursue topics of interest can be seen in Walai's and Nanta's search for tourist attractions. They planned to travel in Thailand during their vacation and they researched their travel plans via the Internet. They described these practices as follows:

It was a Tourism Authority of Thailand's web site. I was looking for an interesting place to visit during the vacation. I think I'm going to Phuket with some friends. I read

the information in the Thai web site and look at pictures in an English web site (Nanta, individual interview).

...After that I read other information before accessing a web site of tourist attractions. Most of them were about sea and beaches in the south of Thailand (Nanta, diary).

I finished at [tat.or.th](http://tat.or.th) which is a web site of Tourism Authority of Thailand. I looked at information of Andaman Sea (Nanta, diary).

I, then, turned to read about computer in [gazib.com](http://gazib.com) and saved it onto a floppy. After that I accessed [tat.org.th](http://tat.org.th), a Tourism Authority of Thailand's web site. This is the first time I found this web site. I was impressed because I could see many interesting places. I also accessed its English web page (Walai, dairy).

It's the Tourism Authority of Thailand's web page. I accessed it because I'd like to travel somewhere. I'd never seen it before until I saw Nanta's screen. I asked her its web site and accessed it. It's [tat.org](http://tat.org)... (Walai, individual interview).

Another example can be seen in Walai's and Saran's search, via the Google search engine, for information about health. Walai explained her interests and activities as follows:

I read about diet because I always care about my mother's health. She always eats any diet without caring about her health. I always remind her about fat and cholesterol. When finding such information, I'll print it out and stick it on the wall in my house so this can be her reminder (Walai, individual interview).

Saran noted that he read about health every time he accessed the Internet. He explained that the web site *health.com* provided information about vitamins and nutrition. The additional benefit of reading about nutrition in English, he pointed out, was that he could learn more vocabulary and improve his reading skills.

Students also 'surfed' the Internet more broadly to find articles about general topics of interest. Walai described her practices as follows:

I read both in Thai and in English, but I seldom read in English and mainly read short articles...I mainly read about how to be successful in life. If I find ones that I really like, I attach them with e-mail and send it to some of my friends who have stress or pressure. Sometimes, I jot them in my diary. The articles I like are about love, how to adapt oneself to live with other people in society (Walai, individual interview).

All four students also used the Internet for entertainment. Walai, for example, regularly searched for reviews of movie programs in English:

...because I need to be part of a group of my friends. I need to know what they talk about then I can participate and to be up-to-date (Walai, individual interview).

When asking whether she watched the movies after reading, Walai replied:

Yes, but not every week. There are about two movies that interest me in a month. I read the introduction and see who the movie stars are. Sometimes, I'm not interested in the movie itself, but I like the movie stars. For example, I like Brad Pitt and always watch the movie he stars in... (Walai, individual interview).

Saran was very interested in music and he pursued this interest by listening to songs and reading about music and singers both in Thai and in English. It appeared that his interest in music had been a major factor that had encouraged him to learn how to use the Internet. He had a number of favorite singers and as he enjoyed reading about them and listening to their music. He explained his interest in specific singers in his interview:

Celine Dion is one of the world's top hit singers or "Diva". The top hit singers also include Mariah Carey and Whitney Houston. The outstanding features of their songs are their voice and range of octave and pitch, which is at level 5 notes from 8 levels. Such outstanding, I like these singers (Saran).

Saran's confidence in use of English enabled him to engage interactively with others via the Internet in either Thai or English. His English abilities were thus reinforced and further developed as a result of his use of the Internet.

Another significant reason for using the Internet for the four case study students was to access Internet games. For example, Saran accessed the web site – *harrypotter.com* – to play an online game. He explained what he read and did on this web site as follows:

I played a game choosing a house. To choose a house we need to answer the questions about the story in English. After the evaluation, I got Slytherin house, a house for bad kids but intelligent. We need to choose magical animals such as cat, and owl (Saran, individual interview).

Nanta also played online games in the same web site as Saran. She explained in her interview that there were four titles in the Harry Potter series, all of which she had read. I asked if she read the story in Thai or English and she said that she read the books in Thai but played games in English. She explained:

When I first accessed this web site, I took part as Harry Potter, played Quidditch, a game in the story. This game was represented by a snitch, a ball used in playing the game. If I got 150 scores, I'd be a winner. Later I played another game which could be observed by the picture of a flying car. This car was in the second title, *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*. If we've read the story, we can guess when playing the games (Nanta).

Nanta went on to explain how she played these games:

...according to the first title, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*, we can play a game and choose a house. We have to answer the questions about the story in English

by choosing an animal such as cat, owl, rat and snake. If we choose a good animal, we'll be placed in a good house, Gryffindor. On the other hand, if we choose any bad animal, we'll be placed in a worse house, Slytherin. I got Gryffindor because it was very easy for me that I had read the story. It seemed I knew the answer. However, it's fun and the game is relevant to the story. Another game I played is choosing a broomstick. After you click any broomstick, you can read the information which tells you what that broomstick is used for. I think to access this web site helps me learn English and have fun. When coming across unknown words, I find their meanings from a dictionary (Nanta, individual interview).

Clearly the fact that Nanta had first read the Harry Potter books in Thai helped her to play the games in English. Interestingly, when Nanta was unable to find the fourth Harry Potter book in Thai, she read it in English. She said that although she could not understand everything when reading in English, she could guess the meaning of words from the characters and the story.

Another way in which the four case study students used the Internet for personal interest was through the use of e-cards. Walai, for example, regularly sent e-cards to her friends as a way of everyday online communication. On each e-card web page, there was a picture with an English caption. The following quote indicates her explanation of how to send e-cards:

I think Blue Mountain and Jipata offer beautiful e-cards. Blue Mountain offers e-cards in English whereas Jipata offers Thai e-cards. They have a variety of cards for you to choose. As I'm a Christian, I send Christmas and Easter cards. For example, I access a web site and click on Happy Easter then I can choose heaps of cards such as animation and flash. After choosing the cards, I click to see bigger picture. In some web sites we can choose the background colour and letters. Next, we type the sender's name and e-mail address, the recipient's name and e-mail address. Then type the message in the box and click Preview. If you are pleased with the message, click Send (Walai, individual interview).

It was clear that the four case study students found the Internet to be a valuable resource for knowledge and information relevant to their study and to their personal interests. Although Saran was the most confident user of English, all four students were able to use a combination of Thai and English to access relevant sites and locate the information that they sought. Their extensive use of the Internet for locating information for purposes of study and personal interest and their use of the Internet for entertainment supported all of them in their development of English. Their interviews confirmed that they were aware of this, and that they consciously used strategies to help them work out the meaning of unknown words. This is especially relevant in the light of the comments made by all students about the restrictions on Internet use while at



University. While using the Internet at University, students were not allowed free choice and were required to work with specific programs designed to teach English. They found these programs boring and unhelpful. As the four case study students showed, where students have free choice in how they use the Internet, they are much more adventurous and they engage with real life hypertexts that challenge and extend their abilities to understand English. In such cases they were clearly working within their *zone of proximal development* (Vygotsky, 1978).

In addition, it was clear that the more frequently the students used the Internet, the more their technical skills developed, and hence the more they wanted to use the Internet. It is reasonable to conclude that free choice in use of the Internet in the SALLC and the Computer Centre in the University would encourage all students to use the Internet more enjoyably, more experimentally, and more frequently, and hence encourage them to develop the necessary technical skills to make further use of the Internet. In addition, if students are able to switch between Thai and English as they wish, as was the case with the four case study students, they are more likely to engage with the Internet. Since so much of the information on the Internet is only available in English, their contact with English can only increase with their more frequent use.

### ***3.2 The Range and Variety of Strategies that Were Employed by Students to Access Web Sites and to Comprehend English Digital Texts***

All four case study students used varied and complex strategies while accessing English digital texts. The most frequently used strategy was accessing the same content in Thai and in English and switching between Thai and English. This occurred most frequently where students actually read about the same topic in Thai prior to reading it in English. An example of this can be seen where a number of the case study students reported reading news articles in a Thai newspaper prior to reading the same news in an English newspaper. A further example can be seen where, as previously discussed, Nanta read the Harry Potter books in Thai before engaging with Internet games in English that were based on the Harry Potter books. A major benefit of reading in both Thai and English was the assistance that this provided for students in working out meaning of unfamiliar words and grammar.

The following comments from students' interviews illustrate their awareness of the value of reading in Thai prior to reading in English for both overall comprehension and for English language development:

To read English news, I sometimes compare it with the news in Thai newspapers and find that they are the same news. This means that I can understand when reading in English. I have fun doing this...I use the same technique in reading about tourist attractions (Kanda).

Yes, I read from CNN but not frequently, only once a week. This is because I come across a lot of difficult words and don't understand the news. I need to find their meanings from a dictionary all the time. However, when reading some news I read from a Thai newspaper first, then read in English. I can understand them and learn new words such as "arrest", which has been found many times. Mainly I learn vocabulary from reading on the Internet (Walai).

... There are many links you can choose and click both in Thai and in English. I read both versions because they are the same content. I can learn more vocabulary, which is quite easy for me because I can guess word meanings. I think it's easier than reading movie reviews (Walai).

A second way in which students accessed the same content in Thai and English occurred where students switched between sites that were written in Thai and those that were written in English. All students reported doing this when they were looking for information for study purposes and also when they were pursuing topics of personal interest. The following comment provides an illustration of how and why the students switched between Thai and English:

I e-mail friends in Thai, but submit homework in English. I mainly search for information in Thai. If in English, I have to translate it into Thai so I can understand what I read (Kanda, individual interview).

A further illustration of switching between Thai and English can be seen in Kanda's use of the web site *sanook.com*. *Sanook*, a Thai word, means fun. This web site offers a variety of links, mostly in Thai, on different topics such as sports, education, entertainment, news and media, computer, shopping, social affairs, cars, science and engineering, as well as arts and culture. Additional English as well as Thai web sites are linked to this site. Kanda described her use as follows:

I access this web site to look at information on entertainment, sports, health and general topics. It offers heaps of links both in Thai and in English. For example, if I want to search for information about computer, I type the word "computer" and press Enter. There are many web sites I can choose and click such as computer studies, applied computer and history of computer which are in English. English web sites are linked to Google web site. I like using *sanook.com* because on its web page there are a variety of

topics I can choose to click and read such as news both in Thai and in English (Kanda, individual interview).

The opportunity to switch between Thai and English was something that all case study students commented on positively. As the above comments illustrate, students were consciously aware of the benefits of being able to access web site content in both languages.

A related strategy used by all students but especially by the four case study students, was that of talking interactively about what they were reading on the Internet while they were accessing specific web sites. Video recordings and observation notes that were made while students used the Internet in the SALLC showed that all students engaged in such talk. They commented on specific web sites; they pointed out aspects that they thought were funny; they asked questions of each other and of me about ways of accessing specific web sites; and they asked questions about specific technical skills that they were unsure of.

The case study students tended to talk to each other in greater depth/at greater length about what they were reading probably because they were quicker than many of the other students in accessing web sites of interest. Not surprisingly, much of the talk between case study students was in Thai, but when discussing specific web sites, they often switched between Thai and English. Typically they would read out sections of the text in English; switch between Thai and English when discussing meaning, and revert to Thai if they were discussing aspects of technology, but would intersperse this discussion with English terms. The data indicated that this interactive talk was one of the strategies used by students both to access web sites and also to help them comprehend English.

A further strategy that the case study students used when they encountered unfamiliar words was the use of tools such as computer dictionaries and computer translation programs to assist their reading comprehension. Kanda commented as follows:

When reading information which interests me such as information about health, I click the word "health" and look at topics and find any interesting ones. Then click and access those web pages and read. If come across unknown words, I look them up from a dictionary on the computer. At the Internet café, a program for translation is provided. I can copy the sentence, which I don't understand and paste it on the translation page, the word-by-word translation will appear on the screen. I have to reorganise them into a

comprehensible sentence. This doesn't help much, only to find word meanings but not in full sentences (Kanda, individual interview).

Tools such as computer dictionaries were particularly useful if the students pursued a topic of interest and read a number of articles on this topic. This meant that they encountered the same words again and again. An example of this can be seen in Walai's interest in movies, and the impact of her reading about movies on her ability to read in English:

At the beginning, I didn't understand so I guessed from the pictures and looked for word meanings from a computer dictionary. Later I can remember those words such as 'thriller' and become familiar with technical terms of movies and this really helps with my following reading (Walai, individual interview).

Another strategy that students used in order to increase their comprehension in English texts was simply to read extensively on a topic. Saran, the most proficient of the students in English, in particular used this strategy. His interest in music led him to read extensively about specific singers and in doing so, he was able to guess word meanings from the context in which those words were encountered. He stated:

...When I come across unknown words, I guess their meanings from contexts and can understand the text I read (Saran, individual interview).

Saran was also able to skim texts when reading about his favourite singers – Celine Dion and Mariah Carey – and contribute online comments in English about their songs. When I asked him if he found this online chat difficult he confidently replied:

I don't think it's difficult because I always do it. In addition, I think my reading comprehension is about 70-80%. Although I don't know the meanings of all words, I can understand what I read (Saran, individual interview).

In sum, the analysis of strategies used by the case study students revealed that they engaged with hypertexts in ways that are very similar to other proficient English speaking Internet readers. The students read for meaning and they used the context of texts they were reading to guess the meaning of words and grammatical patterns that they were unfamiliar with. The more extensively they read, the easier it was for them to work out the meaning of unfamiliar words and grammatical patterns. Extensive reading also ensured that the same words were encountered again and again, thus making it easier for students to remember these words.

Students were able to engage with the multimodal nature of the digital texts that they were reading. To play the Harry Potter games, for example, the students not only needed knowledge of the Harry Potter stories, but also needed to engage with digital texts that included written text, graphics, video and sound files, flashes and animations. When the students were together they talked about what they were reading and this talk provided support for each other in comprehending the texts, as well as in learning relevant technical skills. As with English speaking Internet users, the more frequently they used the Internet, the more familiar they became with these multimodal digital texts.

The use of tools such as online dictionaries and translation programs supported those students in their reading in English, as would be the case with other Internet users. However, if students' levels of English meant that they were unfamiliar with too many words, then the time taken to search for word meanings made the task of reading too laborious. It appeared that students needed to have reached a certain level of English proficiency in order for these tools to be of help.

Where the case study students differed most from English speaking readers, was in their strategic use of Thai as well as English. Their strategy of reading in Thai prior to reading in English meant that they were familiar with the main ideas, meanings of key vocabulary before they began reading the English text. As a result, they were able to engage with English texts that otherwise would have been beyond their abilities (cf Vygotsky, 1978). The real-life reading and discussion that they undertook both in Thai and in English around topics that were of genuine interest to the students also provided strong support with comprehension of English texts. Evidence from these case study students suggests therefore that, rather than hindering their learning, this use of Thai helped them in learning English.

The case study students also differed from the other Thai students who participated in the Stage One research primarily in that they used the Internet more frequently and for a greater range of purposes. These students used the Internet for study purposes as did other students, but they used it more extensively to pursue topics of personal interest and for entertainment. This more extensive use enabled them to become more technologically skilled and also served to support their English development. Implications that can be drawn from these case study students for teaching more

generally include the importance of frequent Internet use and the value of providing students with opportunities to pursue topics of interest, the value of opportunities to play with the Internet, and the value of allowing students to switch between Thai and English as they do so.

## **Section 4: Conclusion and Implications for Teaching Program Development for Research Stage Two**

This chapter has presented the findings from Stage One of the research. The Internet practices of the 35 students (i.e. all three groups of light, medium and heavy users) who participated in the investigation of Internet practices are likely to be typical of other students in other Universities in rural regions of Thailand. This is confirmed by the similarity of these findings to those reported by other researchers (e.g. Banpho, 2001; Vattanapath, Charupan & Soranastaporn, 2002). Students who have grown up in cities may have greater access and experience with the Internet than the students who participated in this research. However, these research students are also likely to be typical of many others in similar circumstances in other countries of South East Asia. This inequity, as noted in Chapter 2, is the problem of the digital divide. That is, the best Internet access is mainly available in large cities while in other cities, especially those in remote areas, Internet access is problematic or even unavailable.

The findings of Stage One of the research provide some answers to my initial research question of: (1) What is the potential of the Internet in supporting EFL development?; and to my sub-questions of:

What are students' current Internet practices?

What are students' perceptions of and attitudes towards use of the Internet?

What factors support or limit students' use of the Internet?

The findings confirm the willingness of students to embrace the Internet and show how the Internet can provide access to a rich source of English Language resources, most importantly through an enormous range of authentic texts, as well as a wide range of activities and self help tools. The data indicate serious weaknesses of the current use of the Internet in the University context – its cost and limited access, and students' reluctance in using the Internet in English because of its difficulty. Importantly, they also indicate that although there have been attempts to incorporate the Internet into

various subjects in the University, these attempts have essentially been as an ‘add on’ extra to current teaching practices. To date, there are few examples of programs where use of the Internet is integral to the program design and delivery. These findings broadly confirm those from the limited available research into Internet use that has been conducted in Thailand (Vattanapath, Charupan & Soranastaporn, 2002; Wongprom, 2000; Charupan, Soranastaporn & Suwattandanand, 2001).

There are a number of implications that can be drawn from Stage One of the research for the development of programs that seek to exploit the potential of the Internet for teaching and learning English. These implications are both generally for ELT programs at NPRU and specifically for the development of the teaching program in Stage Two of the research.

A major implication for ELT programs at NPRU is that students need to be strongly encouraged to begin using the Internet as soon as they arrive at the University. Programs need to take advantage of students’ positive attitudes towards Internet use in English; and integration of the Internet both in English and Thai needs to start in the first year teaching programs, ensuring that students are proficient Internet users in the remaining years of their studies. Their Internet use initially would probably need to be in Thai as their levels of English proficiency at this point would not be high.

The more specific implications for both general ELT programs at NPRU and the development of the teaching program in Stage Two of the research include:

1. Internet programs need to be incorporated into regular subject programs rather than remaining as an optional ‘add- on’.
2. Students need to be taught necessary technical skills for use of the Internet early in their University courses. In addition, the teachers of individual subjects that incorporate use of the Internet need to be prepared to build in explicit teaching of relevant technical skills. Initial skill development could be done first in Thai so that students are not discouraged by the barrier of difficulties with English comprehension.
3. English language programs need to take account of students’ own preferences in use of the Internet and build on these to provide opportunities for students to use English for real purposes.
4. Strategies for reading that students are already using, such as skimming and scanning, guessing word meanings, and using Thai to understand English can usefully be incorporated in English language programs. Explicit teaching of reading

skills would be a useful part of such programs. The implications from students' use of Thai in helping them read in English are that they needed background knowledge of vocabulary, language structure and culture.

5. Opportunities and encouragement to switch between Thai and English when accessing web sites are likely to support students' learning of English and such opportunities need to be built into English language programs.
6. Students should be encouraged to talk about what they read on the Internet. This can be done in groups to support interactions amongst students and between teacher and students as they engage in learning of English.
7. Most urgently, the University needs to ensure that students have greater access to computers.

In the next chapter I explain how these implications have been taken up in the development of a program designed to integrate use of the Internet to support students' English language development.



## **Chapter 6**

### **Development/Implementation/Evaluation of the Internet-English Program**

#### **Introduction**

This chapter is comprised of three sections. The first section explains the development and implementation of the Stage Two program integrating the Internet, which was based on the findings of Stage One and my own reconceptualised teaching approach. The second section presents an evaluation of effectiveness of the program from the teacher's perspective and from students' perspectives. The final section reports on the longer-term impact on students, including students' recollections of the program and their perceptions of its impact on their learning.

Before properly beginning the chapter, a brief explanation of similarities and differences between students in Stage One and Stage Two of the research is necessary. As mentioned in Chapter 4, the students in these two stages were from different groups. Both cohorts consisted of English Education major students, but those in Stage One were 3<sup>rd</sup> year students, whereas those in Stage Two were 1<sup>st</sup> year students. As explained earlier, I selected this second group of students in order to teach them at an early stage of their tertiary study how to use the Internet for the purpose of learning English. At the beginning of Stage Two, twenty-eight students were asked to voluntarily participate in my teaching program and 17 of them – 14 females and 3 males – volunteered to do so. These volunteers, who became the participants in Stage Two teaching program, were then asked to complete a short questionnaire, similar to that used in Stage One.

Despite differences in their stage of study and some differences in English language proficiency, the two groups of students were similar in most respects of their Internet use. Questionnaire responses from Stage Two students revealed that, like those in Stage One, the majority were light Internet users. Also like Stage One students, they mainly used the Internet for their studies and mainly used it in Thai and switched to English only to meet subject requirements. Their use for personal interests included reading about general topics of interest and current affairs, e-mailing, chatting, playing games, listening to music and downloading ring tones to their mobile phone. All of them

believed that the Internet was a great potential learning resource and that it would help them in learning English.

Overall, the patterns of Internet use of Stage One and Stage Two students were very similar. These similarities were important because they provided me with a starting point in terms of what I needed to know in developing the new teaching program. These similarities also suggest that patterns of Internet use of these two groups of students were likely to be typical of those of other EFL students of Rajabhat Universities and other students from remote areas who enter other universities. There was, however, one difference between groups. It was found that most Stage Two students had been introduced to the Internet at high school, whereas the majority of Stage One students were exposed to the Internet only upon arrival at the University. This suggests that, even in Thailand, where there are problems of access, use of the Internet is rapidly increasing, including in secondary schools. Indications of the increasing prominence of the Internet in Thailand highlight the significance of this research.

### **Section 1: My Work Towards the Internet-English Program**

This section outlines my work towards the new Internet-English program. I begin by summarising my impetus to change my own teaching practices, the factors that informed the program development, and the components of the program.

As noted in Chapter 2, the impetus for undertaking this research project was driven by concerns about my English teaching practices – in particular the PRS subject. This course was somewhat limited and narrow in choice of texts, types of learning/comprehension activities, and the passive and at times unmotivated role that students played along with the dominating role of me as teacher. Learning activities were mainly individualised and focussed on reading and writing. Also, as noted in Chapter 5, computer-based tasks in this and other courses did not play a central role as a learning resource; rather they were an add-on extra that did not essentially change the purpose or type of activities. My personal concerns were mirrored by the Thai government's educational reforms which required teachers to adopt learner-centred approaches.

My concerns led me to hypothesise that use of the Internet could enhance English language learning especially in EFL contexts, because of its wealth of authentic and

motivating learning resources, and that its use could at the same time address the need for a more student-centred approach to learning. As outlined in Chapter 3, such Internet resources include computer-mediated communication (CMC), and the WWW. CMC provides a great range of communicative activities for non-native speakers of English in EFL contexts, such as e-mail, chat rooms, instant messaging, mailing lists and newsgroups (Warschauer, 2001). Through these activities, learners may engage in authentic communication with peers and teacher or with other native-speakers or non-native speakers of English outside the classroom. The WWW offers students access to 'real-world' texts and global culture and thus provides students with the opportunity to choose texts of their interests and needs. To access digital texts on the WWW, students need to develop new literacy skills as outlined in Chapter 3. Students can access global culture by engaging with texts on the WWW, and thus they have a better understanding of not only the culture of native speakers but also cultures of other non-native speakers. Moreover, the WWW provides students with the opportunity for authentic writing for a real audience; students can create their own web sites, which enables their written work to appear digitally and to be viewed not only by their peers and teacher but also by a global audience.

In light of this research literature and my own expectations, I proposed two key research questions that addressed the potential of the Internet in supporting EFL development and the pedagogical implications of its use. Analysis of findings from Stage One data, particularly the behaviours of the four heavy Internet users, confirmed students willingness to embrace the Internet, demonstrated that Internet applications can provide a rich source of contextualised English language and learning tools, and highlighted that present uses of the Internet in the students' University courses contained serious weaknesses in terms of access, cost and motivation to use. From this Stage One data it became evident that I could not simply map Internet activities on to the existing PRS course, but would have to reconsider aspects of structure, content and pedagogical approach if I were to exploit the potential of the Internet in EFL learning. In particular I realised the need to change significant aspects of my teaching approach.

In the conclusion of Chapter 5, I listed the main factors to consider in developing a new Internet-English program. However, before explaining in detail the development of the new program, I firstly explain the theoretical basis for reconceptualising my teaching philosophy.

### ***1.1 Reconceptualised Teaching Philosophy***

I drew on elements from various pedagogical approaches – Communicative Approaches, Content-based Instruction, and neo-Vygotskian Sociocultural Approaches – and reconceptualised my own teaching philosophy as an *interactive approach*. My new approach served to narrow the gap between my previous teaching practices, which were traditional in Thailand, and the learner-centred approach which although advocated by government policy is problematic if embraced in its entirety in an EFL context (see detail in Chapter 3).

The principles that I drew from Communicative Approaches were student engagement in meaningful learning tasks in order to use language for communication, integrated skills, and use of authentic materials. The principles drawn from Content-based Instruction were that learners learn a second language most effectively when they use the language as a tool to acquire knowledge content which is of interest and relevance to them, and when they use authentic texts/materials which learners encounter in the real world. There are various models of Content-based Instruction, but the main one I drew on in my program was theme-based instruction, which is more widely used than other models. Theme-based instruction is organised around single or several topics or themes with the content material providing the basis for language analysis and practice. Activities involve integrated skills around topics. For example, a topic might be presented as a reading section; then the topic and vocabulary might be used in guided discussions; and following this, students can engage in writing which synthesises the various sources of materials. Materials in a theme-based model are usually teacher-generated or adapted from outside sources rather than being taken from textbooks. Therefore, learners have opportunities to move to higher level of language processing such as comparison, or separating fact from opinion (Brinton, Snow & Wesche, 1989).

In this new program, the theme was set by the teacher in order to guide students to acquire knowledge and information from authentic resources and materials available on the Internet so that they would accomplish tasks through using English. That is, texts were not prepared for students; rather, students were exposed to authentic texts available on the Internet. The assumption was that learners can learn effectively when they use language as a tool for acquiring knowledge relevant to the topic of their interests.

Finally, my work drew on neo-Vygotskian Approaches (Mercer, 1994, 1995; Hammond & Gibbons, 2001, 2005). A key feature of such approaches is the ZPD, and as outlined in Chapter 3, it is through teachers providing students with tasks of sufficient complexity to move them beyond their current ability that learning occurs. Working within students' ZPD should enable students and teacher to be active co-participants in the learning process by means of social interactions which take place between teacher and students, and amongst students. The teacher may take on the role of an expert who provides scaffolding or support so that students learn how to do tasks through interacting, sharing knowledge and constructing new understandings and concepts. In this sense, I have drawn upon Hammond's (1990) notion of the 'authoritative' role of the teacher, as documented in Chapter 3. That is, the teacher takes on the role of planner/manager of a program, and provides explicit instruction and guidance/support while students are performing tasks.

In conclusion, the principles underlying my reconceptualised teaching approach – *interactive approach* – are as follows:

1. Students need to be encouraged to be actively engaged in genuine use of English for communication in a context. That is, they need to be engaged in meaningful learning tasks that involve integrated skills and authentic texts and materials;
2. Students need a collaborative learning environment in which they take part in social interaction in the ZPD;
3. The teacher plays an authoritative role in planning teaching programs, providing scaffolding of explicit instruction, guidance and support for students;
4. Students need to be guided to develop 'meta-linguistic awareness' in order to support their language learning; and
5. Students need to be encouraged to develop 'meta-cognitive awareness' in order to promote life-long learning skills which are essential for the knowledge-based society.

### ***1.2 The Development and Implementation of the New Program***

As noted earlier, in developing this new program, I also took into account implications from findings of research Stage One which revealed students' needs, interests and abilities, as described in Chapter 5. Additionally, I drew upon guidelines for program planning provided in the National Curriculum Project framework, 'Beginning Reading and Writing' (AMEP National Curriculum Project Team, 1988), as well as upon Hammond, Burns, Joyce, Brosnan and Gerot (1992), and upon Freebody and Luke's

(1990) discussion of roles that need to be taken up by readers (see Chapter 3). The program also made use of Lo Bianco and Freebody's (2001) notion of a 'strong pedagogical framework'; that is, that planning and teaching an English program needs to be based on a strong theoretical framework so that ideas from different perspectives may be integrated in a principled manner.

### *Components of the New Program*

I started by setting overall aims for the program, and by selecting a topic in accordance with these aims. The next step was setting goals of the program in order to achieve the overall aims. To achieve program goals, communicative teaching and learning activities were identified and learning materials were prepared. Finally, appropriate procedures for program evaluation that included ongoing student assessment were developed in order to determine the extent to which the students achieved the overall aims and whether the program was effective.

Because the University Internet connection was not reliable (as reported in Chapter 5), the new program, consisting of twelve weeks of 24×50-minute periods, was developed to complement the existing PRS (as detailed in Chapter 2). As explained in Chapter 4, attendance was voluntary and program implementation took place in students' free time. Table 6.1 below presents an overview of the new program.

**Table 6.1: An overview of the Internet-English program**

|                              |   |
|------------------------------|---|
| (1) Aims                     | Enable students to develop their English literacy skills particularly reading, and also overall skills in genuine communication in English  |
| (2) Topic/Learning Situation | 'Two Weeks in Australia': Developing a holiday plan to Australia  |
| (3) Goals                    | <p>Primary goal: To enable students to develop skills in reading texts on the Internet in relation to the topic of a holiday plan to Australia.</p> <p>Secondary goals: To enable students to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use e-mail as a means for communication;</li> <li>• Identify key locations where they would like to travel and specify when to travel;</li> <li>• Develop skills in locating and evaluating relevant information on the WWW, and skills in reading using various reading strategies;</li> <li>• Make notes and record the information obtained from searching and reading;</li> <li>• Develop listening and speaking skills in sharing acquired information with other students;</li> <li>• Make notes of information obtained from reporting/sharing;</li> <li>• Participate in discussing, arguing, reasoning and convincing, and collaboratively planning a holiday trip; and</li> </ul> |

|  |  |
|--|--|
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop skills in writing the draft of and the holiday plan using a word processor.</li> </ul>  |
| <p>(4) Learning Tasks</p> <p>(a) Steps in Teaching/learning</p> <p>-Cognitive activities</p> <p>Meta-linguistic awareness</p> <p>Meta-cognitive activity</p> | <p>(i) <i>Introduction/preparation (preparing students for subsequent tasks)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Giving an overview of the teaching program</li> <li>Demonstrating how to use e-mail; sending e-mail talking about oneself in English</li> <li>Discussing how to search for information; introducing some search engines and demonstrating how to use <i>Google</i> to search for tourist cities in Australia</li> <li>Practising using the search engine by doing Treasure Hunt exercises</li> <li>Demonstrating how to evaluate web pages and how to save web sites for re-access and reference; how to write the holiday plan using a word processor, how to copy and paste pictures from web pages, and how to send e-mail with a file attachment</li> <li>Discussing features of hypertexts and students' current reading, introducing reading strategies and demonstrating how to read on the WWW</li> <li>Eliciting students' background knowledge and activating existing knowledge about the holiday plan to Australia (using semantic mapping)</li> <li>Explaining the tasks</li> <li>Introducing and talking about language structures used in group speaking activities and writing activities</li> </ul> <p>(ii) <i>Performing tasks</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Group discussing, choosing a city of destination and specifying when to travel</li> <li>Jigsaw reading – searching for information on the WWW, evaluating information and saving web sites</li> <li>Making notes and recording information</li> <li>Sharing obtained information in groups</li> <li>Making notes when sharing information</li> <li>Discussing, arguing, convincing and collaboratively planning a holiday trip</li> <li>Writing a draft of a holiday plan following the given guidelines</li> <li>Writing the plan using a word processor and sending it to other students and the teacher via e-mail</li> <li>Teacher-led discussion about students' awareness of how to learn</li> </ul> |
| (5) Texts and learning materials   | Guidelines for doing tasks, Treasure Hunt exercises, guidelines of reading strategies, forms for making notes from reading (passport and visa information, flight information, tourist attractions and accommodation), guidelines for speaking tasks, and guidelines for writing a holiday plan  |
| (6) Assessment   | Assessing students' completed tasks and performances in relation to achieved aims and goals of the program (students' e-mail messages, Treasure Hunt exercises, written notes and recorded information from reading, notes of information from group discussion, drafts of holiday plans, and written holiday plans)   |

Following is an explanation and rationale for each of the six components of the new program as indicated in the above table.

*(1) Aims*

The table indicates that the aim of the program was to incorporate the Internet, specifically the WWW and e-mail, into English teaching and learning in order to enable students to develop their English literacy skills and participate in a technology-based society. Particular emphasis was placed on developing students' abilities to read broadly and effectively in English, especially on the Internet. There was also a secondary emphasis on developing students' motivation to engage in real use of English in order to develop their overall English skills. Students were to read extensively on the WWW, talk about their reading, and work collaboratively and partially independently from the teacher. These aims were to be achieved through active learning and problem-solving skills, and the use of authentic learning context and materials, all of which are necessities in a knowledge-based society.

*(2) Topic and Learning Situation*

Students were required to develop a holiday plan to visit Australia under the topic '*Two Weeks in Australia*'. The selection of this topic was based on the principles of Content-based Instruction, as described earlier and my own reconceptualised teaching philosophy, in which students would use English as a tool to acquire knowledge and information in relation to the topic by using authentic resources that they encountered in the real world. In addition, this choice of topic was based on one of the outcomes from research Stage One – namely that those students who read in English for their personal interests, such as music and artistes, appeared to be more motivated in their learning (see Chapter 5). Australia was chosen as a destination because of its use of English and because of my own familiarity with the country and its culture.

*(3) Goals*

The development of the program was an opportunity to move beyond the structured PRS course, (which had no Internet component), by drawing on the Internet as a way of providing a stronger motivation, a more interesting context, and opportunities for students to expand their use of English in genuine communication beyond the classroom. The program integrated listening, speaking, reading and writing skills, starting with students reading for meaning on the Internet, then talking about their reading in order to develop a holiday plan, and finally recording their plan in written



form. The primary goal was to develop students' reading skills by dealing with texts on the Internet; the secondary goal was for students to develop general integrated English skills.

These aims and goals would provide opportunities for students to use English for real purposes. Data from Stage One indicated that students viewed the Internet as attractive in offering a resource of a vast amount of information. I could build upon their interest by teaching student to use search engines as tools in accessing information and knowledge on the Internet. Most students in Stage One of the research were basically interested in general reading for pleasure and entertainment. In addition, according to the students, e-mail was viewed as a tool for convenient and rapid communication. Therefore, all the Internet applications which I integrated into the program were based on students' interests.

It should be clear from the above explanation that these aims and goals embodied Principles 1 and 2 of my reconceptualised teaching approach. First, students would be engaged in meaningful learning tasks that involved authentic texts and integrated skills. They would have a 'real reason' or a 'driving reason' for using English rather than merely completing language tasks. Moreover, students would use English through integrated skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing because in real life, we may talk and write about what we have read, or we may relate what we have read to something we might have heard, and therefore it is important to integrate the various language skills. Second, these goals would allow me as teacher to set up a collaborative learning environment in which students would take part in social interaction in conditions advocated by the neo-Vygotskian approach – i.e. in a ZPD.

#### *(4) Learning Tasks*

Collaborative planning of a holiday trip was intended to create opportunities for students to use English in communication through discussing, expressing ideas, negotiating, convincing other people, explaining and giving reasons, and questioning. It was also intended that this would enhance students' problem-solving skills as required by the Thai government (and noted in Chapter 1). As can be seen from the summary Table 6.1 above, main tasks included:

- Choosing a destination and specifying time to travel;

- Jigsaw reading – finding information from the WWW that relates to the development of a holiday plan to Australia;
- Making notes and recording information obtained from reading;
- Reporting and sharing information to other students in groups;
- Making notes of information obtained from sharing;
- Discussing and collaboratively planning a holiday trip;
- Writing a draft of a holiday plan from the discussion; and
- Writing the holiday plan using a word processor and sending it to the teacher and other students.

Getting students to discuss information they obtained not only promoted their transfer of knowledge but also aided in assessing their reading comprehension. I drew on the principles of the communicative approach that:

- activities which involve real communication will promote learning;
- activities in which language is used for carrying out meaningful tasks will promote learning; and
- language which is meaningful to learners will support the learning process (Richards & Rodgers, 2001: 161).

Most tasks were designed in order to provide the opportunity for students to participate in group work. This is because in a collaborative learning environment, learners have an opportunity to use the language as a means of interaction, and to work together in constructing knowledge. For example, the jigsaw reading activity was designed to encourage students to have a need for reading to fulfil their goal, with each member (or pair) of each group being required to research different information and share findings.

The idea of writing a holiday plan using a word processor was drawn from the work of Gitsaki and Taylor (2000), who proposed use of the Internet in creating communicative activities. Writing a holiday plan served not only to enhance students' writing skills but also their reading, and through discussion, their listening and speaking. To give students further exposure to computer technology, they were assigned to write on screen rather than on paper.

*(4a) Steps in Teaching and Learning*

Teaching and learning activities (including both cognitive and meta-cognitive activities) involved two stages: introduction/preparation and performing tasks.

*(4a) (i) Introduction/Preparation*

It was essential to prepare students to have a thorough understanding of features of the program and sufficient background knowledge/skills which would enable them to succeed in performing Internet-based tasks. Therefore, the teacher's explanation of the Internet program – the topic, aims, goals, tasks, assessment and evaluation – along with handouts was vital for students. Throughout the first stage the teacher's role as an authoritative expert was dominant.

The knowledge and skills that were necessary in carrying out tasks, particularly finding information on the WWW, involved both technological skills and English language skills. That is, students needed both digital literacy and English literacy. English could assist students to develop knowledge/skills in using the Internet, and such knowledge/skills could assist them to learn English. In other words, this was a circular, or interdependent process, which required me to assist students in both areas.

Preparing students with technological skills in reading digital texts included, firstly, explicitly demonstrating how to use e-mail, as students would be required, for example, to send an electronic file of students' written holiday plan to the teacher and to other students. In order to assess student's progress in this skill, they were assigned to e-mail me, and introduce themselves in English, giving information relating to their educational background, family members and personal ambitions. I, in turn, emailed my response to each student.

Secondly, students were taught and shown how to use search engines to locate information. Then, they were advised how to evaluate and select relevant information following the criteria that were described in Chapter 3, including relevance of information, subject area/type of information, authority and reputation of the resource, currency and maintenance, and accessibility of the resource.

Thirdly, students were also taught how to save web sites when searching for and reading information so that they could use them for re-access and reference when later

writing their holiday plan. Before allowing students to search for information in relation to the holiday plan, they were required to complete a treasure hunt exercise that was drawn from the web site of *Internet Treasure Hunts for ESL Students* (<http://iteslj.org/th/>). The purpose of this exercise was to determine whether students were able to use search engines to find information. Students were required to find the answers to questions and write down the answers, and addresses of the sites (URL) they might want to visit again. This Treasure Hunt also served as one of the major ongoing assessment tasks in the new program (see Appendix 8).

Preparing students to be equipped with English language skills involved teaching specific reading strategies in dealing with digital texts (including meta-linguistic awareness); eliciting students' background knowledge and activating existing knowledge (using 'semantic mapping' technique); and preparing/explaining subsequent tasks. To raise students' meta-linguistic awareness, I discussed features of hypertexts and specific reading strategies students needed in reading these texts.

There is a substantial body of research that demonstrates the value of developing meta-linguistic awareness in order to support students' English language learning (van Lier, 1996; Berry, 2005; Hammond & Gibbons, 2005; Robinson, 2005). Related to the term meta-linguistic awareness is 'metalanguage', or 'language reflexivity' which, according to Berry (2005: 3), refers to 'language about language' that is, the use of language to talk about language. Meta-linguistic abilities help learners interpret and construct an understanding of the language they learn and use in reading these texts (van Lier, 1996). Robinson (2005) also points out that metalanguage illustrates meta-linguistic awareness and that it is highly significant in the ongoing development of students' language abilities. Hammond and Gibbons (2005), in their longitudinal research project concerned with scaffolding in ESL education, similarly claim that the development of meta-linguistic awareness or discussion about language assists students to develop abilities to engage in effective construction and critical analysis of their own and others' spoken and written text.

Although digital literacy was an essential tool in searching for information, English language knowledge and skills were crucial in reading and comprehending texts. However, as noted in Chapter 3, hypertexts have some different features from print texts in terms of hyperlinks, multimedia, non-static qualities, non-linearity and the

unprecedentedly large and accessible volume of information in which they are embedded (Snyder, 1996, 1997,1998; Warschauer, 1999; Crystal, 2001b). These features present challenges for readers who need to interact not only with the text but also with the computer and the Internet. Thus, in order to familiarise students with this type of text and reading, discussion of features of digital texts as well as reading strategies were included. In particular, I advised students to observe hyperlinks which were indicated on the screen by words underlined in blue, and how these links could be accessed by clicking at the words, referring them to another page with more information and resources (see details in Chapter 3). I indicated to students that proper use of hyperlinks could help avoid aimless wandering on the Internet.

The following list summarises specific steps in reading Internet texts that formed part of the new teaching program:

- Scan each result for the key words;
- Skim each summary for an overview of the text to determine whether it matched the search;
- Click to see each web page and browse the page to preview the entire text (the title, subtitles, headings, sub-headings, pictures, graphics and hyperlinks) by scrolling up and down using the vertical scroll bar or the page-up or page-down, and scroll from left to right using the horizontal scroll bar or left or right keys on the keyboard;
- Click on the number or the word *Next* at the end of the results page to see the next results page;
- Predict the main idea of what is going to be read – from pictures, title, headings and sub-headings;
- Skim the entire text for the gist;
- Scan text for specific information;
- Work out the meaning of unknown words by guessing from context (including graphics) or using online dictionaries, both English-English and English-Thai, if necessary;
- Identify how each element of the text is connected in order to give a better understanding of the paragraph: finding references, substitution, lexical cohesion, and conjunction; and

- Use reference skills or follow hyperlinks.

During the early weeks of the new program there were many intensive lessons which demonstrated and practised these digital literacy skills. As can be seen from the list of learning tasks indicated earlier there was also a heavy emphasis on speaking and listening during the early weeks. These activities involved (1) discussing the topic and related information – aspects of culture, for example, or key words – to provide contexts for students’ reading; (2) brainstorming ideas about planning a holiday trip to Australia; (3) asking focused questions about the holiday plan; and (4) introducing how to make notes and write information on charts (relating to flights, tourist attractions, accommodation, and so on). My rationale for this intensive focus on spoken language in the introduction/preparation stage was based on the work of Aebersold and Field (1997); Hood, Solomon and Burns (2002); and Gibbons (2002: 12), the latter who notes that “the development of the spoken language is both a tool for learning and a bridge into literacy.” English was primarily used in these discussions, though at times students gave answers in Thai.

In addition, students were prepared to perform subsequent tasks by my specifying each task in the order it was to be performed: choosing a city of destination and specifying when to travel, researching and sharing information, planning a holiday trip and writing a holiday plan. Moreover, students were provided with written support for each task in the form of proformas for conducting information searches, handouts with guidelines on how to share information, examples of language patterns used in discussing and planning a holiday trip, and guidelines in writing up plans.

#### *(4a) (ii) Performing Tasks*

Following the introduction and preparation sessions of the program, students were assigned to work in three groups of five people each. Each group had a secretary to record the information from their discussion. In choosing a city of destination for their holiday plan, these three groups chose Sydney, Canberra and Melbourne. Then, students in each group worked in pairs or threes, each looking for different information (jigsaw reading). The first two students researched passport and visa requirements, currency, local time, and the weather in the city of their destination, while the other three investigated tourist attractions, special events, activities, where to eat, accommodation and transportation. Proformas were provided for students to make notes and record

information from their reading so that they could bring the information back to their group. The underlying purpose of this activity was to enable students to write about what they had read.

Students' research, both in and out of class, took five weeks (weeks 4 to 8). After obtaining the required information, students returned to their groups in order to report on information found and thereby formulate a holiday plan. Before reporting back, they were instructed in how to (1) present the information they had found by means of written notes and charts; (2) discuss, argue, negotiate, give reasons and convince other people; and (3) plan the trip based on the guidelines provided. They were encouraged to speak in English but could switch to Thai if they found difficulty; and they were encouraged to ask the speaker to repeat, slow down or spell unfamiliar words.

Additionally, I suggested that students took notes during the report and discussion segments as a basis for their further planning. Three classes (six hours) were spent on sharing information and planning the holiday trip using this information.

As explained in Chapter 4, as a result of pressures from their study, five of the students had to withdraw in the middle of the program, leaving just ten, unfortunately not enough to carry out a number of planned tasks. After discussion, the remaining students agreed to work in two groups of five each, with one group focussed upon Sydney and the other upon Canberra.

The beginning of each class session was allocated for reviewing student learning by means of a teacher-led discussion about students' awareness (meta-cognitive awareness) of their learning in the previous lesson. I intended this to be a cumulative awareness-raising process taking place across the duration of the program. Students were asked to reflect on what they had learned about the use of the Internet; its value in helping them learn English and about Australia; reading strategies they had used; and their experience of working in groups. In addition, students were asked to reflect on the problems and difficulties they faced in learning, and what kind of guidance they needed from the teacher.

The rationale for drawing on meta-cognitive awareness was that in order to participate in contemporary society, learners need life-long learning skills. They need to know how to learn not only in a classroom, but also they need skills and strategies to learn

independently in the real world without a teacher's instruction and support. Thus, as pointed out by Williams and Burden (1997), language teaching and learning needs to enhance learners to be equipped with appropriate skills and strategies to learn a language in a self-directed way. This leads to the concept of 'learner training' (p. 147) in second and foreign language pedagogy, which is concerned with ways of explicit teaching of language learning techniques and an awareness of how and when to use these strategies, so that students will be capable of learning by themselves. Hammond and Gibbons (2005), in their study mentioned earlier, report that students developed meta-cognitive awareness when teachers encouraged them to reflect and talk about what they had learned.

#### *(4b) Teacher's Role*

In the teaching and learning activities described above, the teacher played different roles at different stages. In the introduction/preparation stage, the teacher played an authoritative role in planning the program, providing explicit instruction, scaffolding, and supporting students. In articulating my reconceptualised teaching approach (see section 1.1) I suggested that the initial role of the teacher should be 'authoritative' as argued by Hammond (1990). That is, initially, the teacher is a planner and manager of a program, who needs to plan appropriate teaching activities that provide opportunities for students to use language for communicative purposes. These activities assume that students will be active learners involved in collaborative learning tasks and that they will develop integrated skills based on authentic texts and materials. Secondly, the teacher needs to provide explicit instruction in aspects of language such as semantics, syntax and lexis before students perform tasks. Then the teacher needs to provide guidance and support to facilitate student learning within the ZPD. Once students are able to do tasks independently, the teacher steps back to allow students to proceed. However, while students are performing tasks, the teacher also needs to judge whether they need further support if they appear to lack confidence or encounter problems. At that point, the teacher will provide further 'contingent scaffolding' (Gibbons, 1999). Finally, the teacher needs to assess students' task performance and learning achievement as well as to evaluate the effectiveness of the teaching program in order to improve the next program.



This theoretical justification for an authoritative teacher role in the early stages of the program was further confirmed by findings from Stage One of the research that students lacked computer skills. Students in Stage Two also had limited computer skills and needed to be explicitly taught with demonstrations of specific technical skills in using computers and the Internet related to the program. Students needed to be taught how to use search engines to search for information, how to read text on the web page, how to evaluate and choose needed information as well and how to use e-mail. Moreover, students needed to be explicitly taught English knowledge and skills, as well as specific reading strategies in reading on the Internet, and key language aspects so they could use the Internet in English more effectively. They needed help to grapple with language barriers, and to develop and build upon English literacy skills.

#### *(4c) Code Switching*

The main purpose of the program was to encourage students to use English as much as possible. However, Thai was used in order to facilitate communication, especially when I was explaining how to use the Internet, and when students experienced difficulties in undertaking group tasks. Research Stage One had shown that students valued being able to switch to Thai at certain points of their communications with me or with each other, and throughout the program I maintained a policy of allowing judicious use of Thai, although for some students, this became a contentious issue (see discussion L1 and L2 in student evaluation section).

#### *(5) Texts and Materials*

Texts used in the Internet program were available on the WWW. They were original, not simplified in any way, and were therefore challenging for the students. In addition, as previously noted, hypertexts are non-linear and provide multiple paths for readers to access information and associated hypermedia, including graphics, video/sound files and animation.

In order to support students to perform learning tasks, other learning materials related to all activities were prepared beforehand. As indicated earlier, these included guidelines for reading strategies and for doing tasks, a Treasure Hunt exercise, forms for making notes from reading, grids for information of flight, tourist attractions and accommodation (South, 1999), guidelines for speaking tasks and for writing a holiday

plan; and forms for documenting travel itineraries, weather, local time, currency and special events (Cowles, 1997).

In my view, there are a number of advantages in making use of authentic web-based texts without any changes or simplification. Firstly, authentic texts are those which students will encounter in the real world, where they will need to handle them alone without the teacher's guidance and support. Secondly, using authentic texts provides students with an opportunity to learn English in a real context. Thirdly, using original authentic texts provides ZPD for students so that they experience what lies beyond their ability and this promotes their learning by interacting with teacher and peers. Finally, students have an opportunity to choose authentic texts from a variety of resources, such as newspapers, magazines, brochures, or hypertexts on the WWW, that are of their need and interests, and which suit their ability. In making their own choices, students will not feel that they are forced to read texts that are prepared by the teachers. However, in order to enable students to select such texts, teachers need to plan units of work or teaching programs carefully and systematically. Where authentic texts present challenges that are too great for students, the teacher may need to intervene by directing students to other texts or by providing further support for students.

In order to overcome frustrations of Internet access, reported by students in Stage One, (see Chapter 5) I had a backup/alternative plan. This plan included, firstly, designing tasks that allowed students the flexibility of using the Internet anywhere and anytime. For example, in case the Internet connection within the University was either slow or failed, students could use the Internet in their free time at Internet cafés. Secondly, before implementing the teaching program, the Internet site (the library's Self-access Centre – SAC) within the University was reserved for class commencement. Thirdly, in order to reduce the expense for students of use at Internet cafés, students had access to limited funds for use during their participation in the program, in case they could not access the Internet within the University. Finally, appropriate Internet sites that students might access had been organised and copies of Internet texts had been saved onto floppy disks as a fallback position in case of Internet failure. This back-up plan could solve anticipated problems which might otherwise discourage students from using the Internet.

*(6) Assessment*

Assessment in the teaching program was ongoing, occurring at every step of teaching and learning. However it is important to note that my purposes in assessing students were to gain insights into their abilities to learn from tasks, rather than to establish strict criteria for determining success or failure in tasks. I therefore regarded assessment of completed tasks as one of my sources of data. Students' completed tasks were assessed as follows:

1. Students' e-mail messages introducing themselves were assessed to determine how well students were able to use e-mail as a means of communication.
2. Treasure Hunt exercises were used to determine whether students were able to use search engines to find information.
3. Printed copies of students' digital texts indicated the extent to which they were able to find relevant information.
4. Notes and records of obtained travel information (including passport and visa requirements, flight information, tourist attractions) were assessed to determine students' achievement in reading for meaning.
5. Students' notes of shared information and of holiday plan discussions, as well as drafts of their holiday plans, were assessed in order to consider whether students had achieved writing goals.
6. Files of written holiday plans indicated students' degree of success in developing written plans.

In addition, ongoing assessment was enabled by my personal observations of lessons and activities, as well as through video and audio recordings.

The rationale for assessment tasks being integrated into the teaching-learning cycle, rather than culminating in mid-term and end-term testing, is that ongoing assessment allows for formative evaluation of students' progress, and enables teaching to be modified according to need.

In sum, this new program was designed to trial use of the Internet to enhance English literacy – reading. The next section reports teacher and students' evaluation of this innovation.

## Section 2: Evaluation of the Program

In the previous section, I described the nature and purpose of my teaching program. In this section I evaluate the overall effectiveness of that teaching program. The first part of evaluation focuses on the teacher's perspective – my analysis of the extent to which students were able to achieve the learning goals of the program, and my own responses to changes to the teaching program. The second part focuses on students' responses to the program.

Details of data collection and analytic procedures used in this evaluation have been outlined in Chapter 4. However, a brief reminder of the data that informs this evaluation is provided in the following Table.

**Table 6.2: Sources of data in Stage Two**

| <b>Types of Data</b>                       | <b>Quantity</b>                                       |
|--|---|
| Audio recordings                           | 12 lessons: 24 (2×50 minutes) periods                 |
| Video recordings                           | 3 lessons: 6 (2×50 minutes) periods                   |
| Teacher's diaries                          | 14 entries  |
| Students' diaries                          | 89 entries (12 lessons and out-of-class Internet use) |
| Group interview transcripts                | 2 interviews (10 students: 2 hours)                   |
| Follow-up interview transcripts            | 3 interviews (10 students: 3 hours)                   |
| Students' written tasks                    |   |
| • Treasure Hunt exercises                  | 10  |
| • Notes                                    | 42  |
| • Draft of holiday plan                    | 2   |
| • Holiday plan                             | 2   |
| Web sites accessed by students             | 59  |
| Copies of digital texts viewed by students | 45  |
| Students' final results of the PRS subject | 1   |

### *2.1 Evaluation from Teacher's Perspective*

The evaluation from the teacher's perspective addresses the following criteria:

- Evidence from assessment tasks of the extent to which students were able to achieve the program learning goals; and
- My own analysis of the impact of changes to the teaching program.

### **Criterion 1: Evidence from Assessment Tasks of the Extent to Which Students Were Able to Achieve the Program Learning Goals**

In addressing the first criterion I draw primarily on outcomes of student assessment tasks and performances that were completed during the teaching program, and relate these to the program learning goals. As indicated earlier in Section 1, and summarised in Table 6.1, the learning goals of the program were:

*Primary goal:* To enable students to develop skills in reading texts on the Internet in relation to the topic of a holiday plan to Australia.

*Secondary goals:*

1. Use e-mail as a means for communication (assessment task 1);
2. Identify key locations where they would like to travel and specify when to travel (students' performance);
3. Develop skills in locating and evaluating relevant information on the WWW, and skills in reading using various reading strategies (assessment tasks 2 & 3);
4. Make notes and record the information obtained from searching and reading, and save web sites of digital texts (assessment task 4);
5. Develop listening and speaking skills in reporting/sharing acquired information with other students (students' performance, assessment task 5);
6. Make notes of information obtained from reporting/sharing (assessment task 5);
7. Participate in discussing, arguing, reasoning, convincing, and collaboratively planning a holiday trip (students' performance, assessment tasks 5 & 6); and
8. Develop skills in writing the draft of and the holiday plan using a word processor (assessment task 6).

The assessment tasks that students undertook during the program (as indicated at the end of Section 1) were:

1. Students' e-mail messages introducing themselves were assessed to determine how well students were able to use e-mail as a means of communication. (Sub-goal 1)
2. Treasure Hunt exercises were used to determine whether students were able to use search engines to find information. (Sub-goal 3)
3. Printed copies of students' digital texts indicated the extent to which they were able to find relevant information. (Sub-goal 3)
4. Notes and records of obtained travel information (including passport and visa requirements, flight information, tourist attractions) were assessed to determine students' achievement in reading for meaning. (Sub-goals 3 & 4)

5. Students' notes of shared information and of holiday plan discussions, as well as drafts of their holiday plan, were assessed in order to consider whether students had achieved writing goals. (Sub-goals 5, 6 & 7)
6. Files of written holiday plans indicated students' degree of success in developing plans. (Sub-goal 8)

Stage One of this research had revealed that students' levels of computer skills were generally low. Students who participated in Stage Two research similarly had limited computer skills and limited experience with the WWW. Consequently, learning about the Internet was an important element of the teaching/learning processes in the new program. One of the first tasks that students were required to undertake was applying for an e-mail account (sub-goal 1). All students, with support, were able to do this, and they subsequently used e-mail as one means of communicating with each other and with me during the program. In the remainder of the program, teaching about the Internet was interwoven with teaching the 'content' of the program (planning the trip to Australia) and teaching the English that enabled students to engage with the content. As a result, the program goals and assessment tasks addressed a combination of Internet skills, teaching about content, and developing students' English language abilities. In the following discussion, I draw on evidence of students' knowledge and proficiency in four specific areas in order to gauge the extent to which students were able to achieve the goals of the program:

- Locating and reading relevant information on the Internet;
- Making notes and recording information;
- Spoken English; and
- Written English required to produce a holiday plan.

Each of these will be examined in turn.

#### *Locating and Reading Relevant Information on the Internet (sub-goal 3)*

Analysis of students' responses during lessons, their participation in teaching/learning tasks during the program, and outcomes from assessment tasks 2, 3 and 4 indicated that by the end of the program all students had improved their skills in using search engines to locate and read information on the WWW. They had also developed skills in evaluating and selecting relevant information.

A task undertaken early in the program was the Treasure Hunt exercise. This was specifically designed to help students develop their Internet skills of finding, evaluating and choosing relevant information. As noted in Section 1, the task required students to find answers to questions and to save addresses of sites (URL) which they might want to revisit.

Assessment of students' outcomes on this task revealed that in the early stages of the program, the students lacked skills and confidence in locating information. Although the Treasure Hunt task was relatively easy, and students had considerable support during class, students were unable to answer all questions correctly, succeeding with between 5 and 8 questions out of a total of 10.

Students continued to grapple with the challenges of other aspects of Internet use in the early stages of the program. For example, they were unsure how to choose appropriate key words to type in the *Search Term* box, they were unsure how to interact with web pages and to trace hyperlinks, and they were inclined to become lost in a large amount of information. The following comments illustrate the nature of these challenges:

I started by getting the students to talk about the previous lesson. I asked them to reflect on using *Google* search engine, how to find needed information from result pages, how to read, difficulties, advantages of using the search engine, their likes and dislikes about using the search engine and how this activity assisted them in learning English.... Most participants said that they found difficulties in reading when encountering unknown words. They also found difficulties in understanding when reading summaries on result pages (teacher's diary for lesson 3).

I asked the students to reflect about what they did in the previous week. They said they used *Google* search engine to find needed information such as tourist attractions, accommodation and flight information. The difficulty they faced was thinking about appropriate key words and encountering unfamiliar words (teacher's diary for lesson 6).

In lesson 7, one student responded to my question as follows:

T: What difficulties did you find in searching for information?

Panu: ค่อนข้างเปลืองเวลาค้นหามาก ๆ ข้อมูลเยอะ จนทำให้ตัดสินใจลำบากว่าจะเข้าดูอันไหนดี นี่คือปัญหาหลัก

[It's boring when doing several searches and finding a lot of information so it is difficult to decide which information I should read. This is the major problem.]

As indicated above, teaching about the Internet was an important component of the program overall, and because of students' lack of skills and confidence in Internet use, this teaching needed to be quite explicit, as is evident in the following exchange from Lesson 2 of the program:

- T: ต่อไปเราจะเริ่มค้นข้อมูลจาก Internet กัน ซึ่งข้อมูลทั้งหมดที่กำหนดไว้ใน task ของโปรแกรมการสอนนี้ นักศึกษาสามารถหาได้จาก Internet ...  
 [Next, let's start searching for information from the Internet. All information that you need to complete tasks in this teaching program can be found on the Internet. Which country are we planning to visit?]
- Ss: ออสเตรเลีย [Australia.]
- T: “World Wide Web” ซึ่งเป็นส่วนหนึ่งของ Internet จะสามารถให้ข้อมูลกับเราได้ ทั้งนี้เราต้องรู้จักวิธี search ข้อมูลเหล่านั้น เครื่องมือที่จะช่วยเราในการค้นหาข้อมูลคือ...  
 [The World Wide Web which is part of the Internet can offer you this information. However, we need to know how to search for such information. Tools that can help you in finding the information are...]
- Panu & others: Search engine.
- T: search engines ที่ใช้ เช่น *HotBot, Lycos, Alta Vista, Excite* และ *Google* ทั้งนี้ *Google* is the most powerful search engine. ซึ่งสามารถให้ข้อมูลได้มากมาย ถ้าเรา click ตรงคำว่า Pages from Australia ก็จะได้ข้อมูลตรง จากประเทศออสเตรเลีย นอกจากนี้ นักศึกษาสามารถใช้ search engine อื่น ๆ ได้แล้วแต่ความต้องการ ต่อไปจะสาธิตการใช้ *Google* ให้นักศึกษาได้ดูกัน...เช่น ถ้าเราต้องการค้นหาเกี่ยวกับเมืองท่องเที่ยวที่สำคัญในประเทศออสเตรเลีย นักศึกษาคิดว่า key words ที่เราจะใช้ในการค้นหาคือคำว่าอะไร  
 [Search engines that we can use are, for example, *HotBot, Lycos, Alta Vista, Excite* and *Google*. *Google* is the most powerful search engine which can retrieve a lot of information. If we click at the words “Pages from Australia”, you can retrieve the information from Australia. In addition, you can use other search engines as you need. Next, I'm going to demonstrate how to use the *Google*. For example, if you need to search for main cities of tourist attractions in Australia, what key words do you need to type?]  
 ....  
 ในการหาข้อมูลเราต้องพิมพ์ key words ของสิ่งที่เราต้องการค้นหา ลงใน search term box ซึ่งครูจะสาธิตให้ดู เริ่มแรกให้พิมพ์ ชื่อ web site ลงในช่อง address หรือ URL โดยพิมพ์ web site: <http://www.google.com.au/> ตัวอักษรทุกตัวเป็นตัวเล็ก (lower case) ทั้งหมด ให้ระวังอย่าพิมพ์ผิด http ย่อมาจาก hypertext transfer protocol ส่วน WWW ย่อมาจาก...  
 [Yes, that's correct. Key words are important words. In finding information, we need to specify its key words which we can type in the search term box. Now I'm going to demonstrate how to do this. First, type a web site or URL in the address box. Type the web site: <http://www.google.com.au/> with lower case. Be careful not to type it incorrectly; http is the abbreviation of hypertext transfer protocol. What about the WWW?]
- Ss: World Wide Web.
- T: เมื่อพิมพ์ URL เรียบร้อยแล้ว ให้กดที่ Enter แล้วจะปรากฏหน้า *Google* search engine ให้ดูที่ search term box ซึ่งเป็นช่องสี่เหลี่ยมซึ่งเราต้องพิมพ์ key words ลงไป ดังนั้นถ้าเราต้องการหาข้อมูลเกี่ยวกับเมืองที่เป็นสถานที่ท่องเที่ยวของประเทศ ออสเตรเลีย เราต้องพิมพ์ key words ใด  
 [After typing URL, press Enter and the result page of the *Google* search engine appears. Look at the search term box where we need to type key words. If we want to find out about tourist attractions in Australia, what key words do we need to type?]



- Ss: Australia's tourist cities.
- T: ดังนั้นเราจะพิมพ์ คำ Australia's tourist cities ลงใน search term box และเลือก Pages from Australia แล้ว click ที่คำ Search หรือ press or hit "Enter" on the keyboard...หลังจากนั้นก็ปรากฏหน้าขึ้นมา ซึ่งเรียกว่า result page...  
[Thus, we type the words 'Australia's tourist cities' in the search term box and choose 'Pages from Australia'. Then click at Search or press or hit "Enter" on the keyboard...After that, a page called 'result page' appears...Next, can you count summaries or descriptions on this web page?]  
...  
เมื่อผลการค้นออกมาแบบนี้ นักศึกษาคิดว่าควรทำอะไรต่อไป... ก่อนหน้านี้เราพิมพ์ key words อะไรลงไปคะ  
[For this result, what should you do next? What key words did we type?]
- Ss: Australia's tourist cities
- T: ดังนั้นเวลาอ่านเราจะอ่านอย่างไร เราต้องใช้วิธีการ scanning คืออ่านเร็วเพื่อหา key words ที่เราพิมพ์ลงไป เพื่อดูว่าข้อมูลในแต่ละ summary meets your search หรือไม่ ดูว่าตรงกับความต้องการในการ ค้นหาหรือไม่...ลองดู summary ที่ 1 หา key words พบไหม  
[How will you read? We need scanning technique that is, read quickly to find key words that were typed in order to see whether each summary meets your search. Let's look at the first summary. Have you found the key words?]
- Ss: พบค่ะ [Yes.] Tourist attractions and cities.
- T: ต่อไปก็ใช้ เทคนิค skimming ในการอ่านเพื่อหา...  
[Then skim that summary to find...]
- Ss: Main idea.
- T: ใช้อ่านเพื่อหา main idea ซึ่งเทคนิคนี้นักศึกษาสามารถนำไปใช้ในวิชา Paragraph Reading Strategies...ลองอ่านดูซิคะ...Cities and Tourist attractions. Adelaide. ...Melbourne. Melbourne is Australia's second largest city, with a population of...  
เป็นไงบ้างอ่านแล้วน่าจะได้อะไรที่ต้องการไหม ถ้าคิดว่าได้ก็ลอง click ตรง web site เพื่ออ่านรายละเอียดใน web page ต่อไปต้อง preview text...preview หมายถึงเราจะดู text ทั้งหน้าของ web page โดยจะนำ cursor วางตรง scroll bar แล้วเลื่อนลงมาเรื่อย ๆ ซึ่งเรียกว่า scroll down หรือจะใช้ page up and page down บน keyboard ก็ได้ ในการเลื่อนหน้าขึ้นลง แล้วเราก็ preview ดูตรง heading ซึ่งคือส่วนไหนของ paragraph  
[Yes, find the main idea. This strategy can be applied in the Paragraph Reading Strategies subject. Read the information, Cities and Tourist attractions. Adelaide.... Melbourne. Melbourne is Australia's second largest city, with a population of.... If you find this information meets your need, click at the web site to look for detail on a web page. You need to preview the whole text on the web page. You can do this by putting the cursor at the scroll bar and scroll down the page. Or you can press the page up and page down on the keyboard to move up and down the page. Preview the heading. What is the heading of this text?]
- Ss: Cities and Tourist Attractions
- T: นอกจากนี้ยังดู subheading...คำว่า ...  
[In addition, you can preview subheading. Which word is the subheading?]
- Panu: Adelaide

- T: นอกจากนี้เราต้องดูอะไรอีกบ้าง ในหน้านี้  
[What else can you preview on this web page?]
- Ss: pictures
- T: ดังนั้นเราจะ preview text ก่อนแล้วทำอย่างไรต่อไป  
[After previewing the text, what should we do?]
- Ss: Scan.
- T: skimming คืออ่านอย่างรวดเร็ว อ่านแบบข้าม เพื่อดูว่า text ที่อ่านให้ข้อมูลที่เรากำลังต้องการหรือไม่  
ซึ่งเป็นการอ่านที่มีจุดมุ่งหมายว่าอ่านเพื่ออะไร...  
[You might skim the text – read fast and skip some words or parts in order to see if the text gives the information you need. This is purposeful reading.]  
....  
...ต่อไปให้ scroll down ไปเรื่อย ๆ web page จะไม่บอกว่าเป็นหน้าที่เท่าไร ดังนั้นเราต้อง scroll down ลงไปเรื่อย ๆ ดังนั้นเราต้องรู้จักวิธีการอ่านที่ถูกต้อง...ดูที่ Ayers Rock...Great Barrier Reefs...ซึ่งอยู่ที่ Cairn อ่านเนื้อหา The Great Barrier Reef is located in the Coral Sea  
[Next, scroll down the web page. Because there isn't a page number, you need to scroll down. You need to know how to read the hypertext appropriately. Look at Ayers Rock...Great Barrier Reefs...in Cairn. Read the text...The Great Barrier Reef is located in the Coral Sea....]

After spending over five weeks (weeks 4 to 8) in-and-out-of-class searching for needed information, all students had substantially improved their skills in using search engines to locate information; reading web pages; and evaluating/selecting relevant information. Evidence of this can be seen in students' final holiday plans for Australia (see Appendices 12 & 13), where students had succeeded in finding information regarding passport and visa requirements, local time and weather in Australia, Australian currency, flight information, tourist attractions, transportation and accommodation. The students worked in groups and in class support, but the fact that they were able to find this information independently indicated that their abilities to locate and use relevant information had increased substantially. It also indicated that they had significantly extended their abilities to read in English – an issue that I discuss further in a later section of this chapter.

#### *Making Notes and Recording Information (sub-goals 4 & 6)*

Related goals in the program were those of making notes to record information obtained from the Internet, and making notes from reporting and sharing information with other members of the group. In the program, students were required to make notes as they collected information that they needed for their holiday plans. These notes then became the basis for group discussions and decisions that contributed to the final overall holiday plan. Student notes were thus an important interim step in the process of preparing the

holiday plan, and students were required to write these in English. Following further group work, a 'secretary' from each group wrote more extended notes in which more detailed information about the planned trip was recorded. Thus there were two levels of notes: initial notes recorded by all students, and then collaborative notes recorded by the secretaries on behalf of the groups.

Examples of initial and collaborative notes from the 'Canberra' group are shown below:

Table 6.3: Initial note from 'Canberra' group

| Airline   | Flight   | Departure                     | Arrival                        | Stops     | Duration       | Price                     |
|---|----------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------|----------------|---------------------------|
| When we go<br>14 October 03<br>Thai Airways             | TG 991 E | Bangkok<br>18:15              | Sydney<br>06:15 + 1<br>day(s)  | Non-stop  | 9 h            | 25945<br>bath<br>↓<br>too |
| When we back<br>12 November<br>03<br>Thai Airways       | TG 980   | Kingsford<br>Smith,<br>Sydney | Bangkok<br>08:30 + 1<br>day(s) | 2 stop(s) | 14 h 10<br>min |                           |
| Go to<br>Canberra<br>15 October 03<br>Qantas<br>Airways | QF 1509  | Sydney<br>10:40               | Canberra<br>09:30              |           | 50 min         | \$100<br>adult            |
| Back from<br>Canberra<br>Qantas<br>Airways              | QF 1432  | Canberra<br>16:40             | Sydney<br>17:30                |           | 50 min         | \$71 adult                |

We go to Sydney before go to Canberra because we don't have flight from Bangkok to Canberra.

#### Collaborative note:

Flight : Bangkok to Sydney  
 Thai Airways TG 991 E  
 Departing - Bangkok, Bangkok 18:15  
 Arriving - Kingsford Smith Sydney 06.15 1 day  
 Non-stop  
 Duration - 9 h

Flight back : 2<sup>nd</sup> November 03 / Thai Airways TG 980  
 Departing - Kingsford Smith, Sydney 22:20  
 Arriving - Bangkok Bangkok 08:30 1 day  
 Duration - 14 h 10 min

Flight : Sydney to Canberra  

| Fare Type   | Price          | Flight  | From   | To       | duration   |
|-------------|----------------|---------|--------|----------|------------|
| Super Saver | \$100<br>adult | QF 1509 | Sydney | Canberra | 0 h 50 min |
|             |                |         | 10:40  | 11:30    |            |

Flight : Canberra to Sydney  

| Fare Type  | Price         | Flight  | From     | To     | duration   |
|------------|---------------|---------|----------|--------|------------|
| Red e-Deal | \$71<br>Adult | QF 1432 | Canberra | Sydney | 0 h 50 min |
|            |               |         | 16:40    | 17:30  |            |

- Price =  
 Bangkok to Sydney about 25945 Bath  
 Sydney to Canberra about \$100  
 Canberra to Sydney about \$71

As these copies indicate, the information that students recorded in English was comprehensible. There are, however, some spelling and grammatical errors, and some

of the details of required information are missing. However, by the time the group notes were completed, the English is more accurate and the information is more detailed. It would appear that the group discussions that occurred in the program as part of the holiday planning process played a major part in enabling students not only to clarify details of their holiday trip, but also to improve their written English.

*Developing Abilities in Spoken English (sub-goals 2, 5 & 7)*

Although a major emphasis in the program was the teaching and learning of reading, as indicated previously, the program was organised around the notion of Content-based Instruction. As a result, it also included teaching of listening, speaking and writing. A significant feature of this program, therefore, was the opportunity it provided for students to talk to each other, and in fact three of the sub-goals of the program addressed the impact of such tasks on students' developing abilities in spoken English. Students' achievements in relation to spoken language can be assessed from their abilities to choose a destination and a time to travel, report and share information to other students in groups, as evidenced in transcripts of lessons, and from my diary observations.

Transcripts from lesson 3, where group tasks were first introduced, indicate that students were able to communicate in English, with the aid of Thai, to choose a city of destination (either Sydney, Melbourne or Canberra) and a time to travel. Students were also able to negotiate each person's responsibility to conduct an information search.

Later in the program, students shared the information that they had located via the Internet to begin to plan their holiday trip. By this time in the program there were only two groups – one planning a trip to Canberra and the other planning a trip to Sydney. Interestingly, differences in the dynamics between the two groups were beginning to emerge. The following extract from lesson 9 provides an example of the kind of interaction that occurred between the 'Canberra' students as they pooled their information to begin planning their holiday trip:

- Panu: We'd like to know about Australian currency. Who are finding about Australian currency?  
Bua: We need to convert Thai baht to Australian dollar. One dollar equals 27.7262 baht.  
Nicha: Again, please.  
Panu: Could you please slow down?

- Bua: We need to convert Thai baht to Australian dollar. One dollar equals 27.7262 baht.
- Panu: OK. And the local time?
- Bua: The time in Australia is three hours ahead of the time in Thailand.
- Panu: OK, three hours ahead of the time in Thailand. Thank you. And next, the person who is finding about the weather in Canberra? Who? ...OK, information about the weather...and...  
Do you think what airline should we choose?
- Bua: In Canberra, Australia, the maximum temperature is 20°C.
- Panu: What about the airline to go to in Canberra, Australia? Who are finding about airline to go to Canberra? Do you think what airline should we choose?
- Napak: I think we choose Thai Airways to Canberra.
- Panu: OK, Thai Airways to go to Canberra.
- Napak: No. We should to Sydney before to Canberra.
- Panu: To Sydney before Canberra. OK. Thanks. What flight to go in Canberra?
- Napak: We're departing from Bangkok.
- Panu: Bangkok?
- Napak: Bangkok International, Bangkok, Thailand about 18:15. We leave from Thailand on Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> October because the Thai Airways is full. And we arrive Kingsford Smith in Sydney in Australia about 6:15 in the morning.
- Panu: What about the price of air ticket?
- Napak: 25,945. When we arrive Sydney, we leave from Sydney about... We leave Sydney to Canberra... We arrive Sydney on 15<sup>th</sup> October and we leave from Sydney at 8:45 am and arrive Canberra at 9:05 am. พูดภาษาไทยได้ไหม...ก็จะไปถึง Sydney ประมาณ 6 โมง 15 แล้วยกออกจาก Sydney ตอน 8:45. ไปถึง Canberra 9:05 น.  
[Can I speak in Thai?...it will arrive in Sydney at 6:15 am and leave Sydney at 8:45 and arrive in Canberra at 9:05 am.]

The above extract indicates that, the 'Canberra' students were quite task focused. They succeeded in presenting information in English that was generally accurate, and in negotiating agreement on details of their holiday plan. However, they engaged in relatively little discussion or argument or negotiation about details of their trip. They simply agreed on the information and recorded it. They also needed teacher support to encourage them to find sufficient tourist attractions for their holiday and to complete other details of their trip.

In contrast, the 'Sydney' group was more interactive and students engaged in considerably more argument and negotiation in working out their holiday plan. The following short extract from lesson 9 provides an example of their interactive pattern:

- Jira: Where to stay?
- Prapa: Where to stay, Juree?
- Juree: เราจะพักที่ Stellar Suites [We're going to stay at Stellar Suites.] It's not expensive.
- Prapa: ทำไมล่ะ ส่วนมากเราก็แค่นอน ตอนกลางวันก็ไปเที่ยว  
[Why? Mostly we'll stay at night and go out in the daytime.]
- Araya: Um...

- Juree: หรือจะพักที่ Manly Beach ละ ใกล้ชายหาด หรือจะพักที่ Sebel Pier One Sydney ก็เป็นที่ดีที่หนึ่งใน Sydney  
[Or shall we stay at Manly Beach? It's close to the beach. Or shall we stay at the Sebel Pier One Sydney? It's one of good hotels in Sydney.]
- Jira: แล้วอันไหนถูกที่สุด [Which one is the cheapest?]
- Juree: หรือเอา Kestrel Hotel ละ มันก็ถูกทั้งหมด  
[What about Kestrel Hotel? All of them are cheap.]

A second example from lesson 11 provides further illustration of the students' collaborative interactions:

- Jira: What...สถานที่ท่องเที่ยว มีอะไรบ้าง  
[What are tourist attractions?]
- Araya: สถานที่ท่องเที่ยว [The tourist attractions] near Stella Suites. I think, second, I think we should go to Sydney Opera House. Opera House นี่คือ Opera House [This is the Opera House (shows the picture).]
- Jira: มันเป็นโรงละคร [Is it a theatre?]
- Prapa: Theatre.
- Jira: Theatre โรงละคร [Theatre.]
- Araya: And then I think we'll go to Royal Botanic Garden. Um...Royal Botanic Garden จะอยู่ติดกับ [is next to] Sydney Opera House เดินถึงกันได้เลย นี่มันจะเป็นแบบนี้  
[We can walk. Here is the picture.]
- Jira: มันเป็นพิพิธภัณฑ์หรือ [Is it a museum?]
- Araya: เป็น garden เป็นพวก ต้นไม้ในโดม [It is a garden of plants in a greenhouse.] We can walk from Sydney Opera House to Botanic Garden เพราะมันใกล้กัน มันคือพื้นที่เดียวกัน [because they are in the same area] and then...um วันนี้ทั้งหมดแค่นี้ [That's all for one day.]
- Jira: สองที่ [Two places?]
- Araya: ใช่สองที่เพราะว่า จาก airport ก็ไปถึงโรงแรม [Yes, two places and from the airport we're going to the hotel.] วันที่สอง [On the second day], 3<sup>rd</sup> October, in the morning, I think we go to Sydney Harbour Bridge.
- Jira: สะพาน [Bridge?]
- Prapa: นี่มันก็ใกล้ ๆ กัน [They are close.]
- Jira: Sydney Harbour Bridge.
- Araya: I think it's very beautiful.
- Jira: I think so.
- Amorn: Me too.
- Jira: It's a large bridge.
- Araya: OK. In the afternoon, I think we go to Powerhouse Museum. Powerhouse Museum...

As the two extracts from the ‘Sydney’ group discussion illustrate, the interactions in this group were quite dynamic and engaged. The students offered suggestions and actively planned an extensive tourist itinerary for their Sydney stay. This group showed greater energy, enthusiasm and negotiation than did the ‘Canberra’ group.

It is important to note that students in the ‘Sydney’ group switched between Thai and English as they talked, while the Canberra group spoke primarily in English. While other factors may have impacted on the nature of the group interactions (such as personality of the students), it would appear that the opportunity to switch freely between languages contributed to the overall dynamic nature of interaction in the Sydney group. It is also important that while the Sydney group made extensive use of Thai in their discussions, they did not speak only in Thai. They used English (predictably) when referring to places in Sydney but also used entire phrases on occasions to confirm decisions that had been agreed (for example, ‘OK. In the afternoon we go to Powerhouse Museum’). This issue of the value of switching between languages and role of L1 in supporting student L2 development is taken up again later in this chapter.

However, despite the differences between the groups, both succeeded in agreeing upon the information that was necessary for them to plan their holiday trip. Thus the lesson transcripts and the progress of their holiday plans indicate that students managed to achieve the goal of developing their abilities in oral English.

*Developing Written English through Producing a Holiday Plan (sub-goal 8)*

Students’ developing abilities in written English were assessed from drafts and final written holiday plans which were completed on a word processor and sent to me via e-mail.

My assessment of drafts and written holiday plans from both groups indicate that students had managed successfully to use the Internet as a resource for finding relevant information to plan their holiday trip. They had also managed to share information, negotiate agreement on details, and write cohesive plans according to the guidelines. That is, both plans – ‘Two Weeks in Sydney’ and ‘Two Weeks in Canberra’ – included details of dates of traveling, destination, flight information (airline, airfare, type of ticket, flight number, departure/arrival, and duration), places to visit, what to do, and



how to travel to each place, The plans also included details of accommodation, the total cost for trip per person, and references to relevant web sites that had provided information. Both written plans were comprehensible and realistic, and therefore both groups can be said to have achieved the goal of preparing a written holiday plan.

The following extracts are the examples of the final holiday plans from both groups:

### **Two weeks in Canberra**

**Date:** 14<sup>th</sup> October 2003 to 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2003

**Duration:** 15 days

**City / destination:** Canberra

**Airline**

#### **Bangkok to Sydney**

Flight out : 14<sup>th</sup> October 2003 / Thai Airways Int'l TG 991 E

Departing : Bangkok Int'l ( BKK ), Bangkok, Thailand ( time 18:15 )

Arriving : Kingsford Smith ( SUA ), Sydney, NS, Australia ( time 06:15 )

#### **Sydney to Bangkok**

Flight back : 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2003 / Thai Airways Int'l TG 980

Departing : Kingsford Smith ( SUD ), Sydney, NS, Australia ( time 22:20 )

Arriving : Bangkok Int'l ( BKK ), ( time 08:30 )

**Price of Thai Airways** = 25,945 Bath

.....

### **Two Weeks in Sydney**

**Date:** 1st-15th October 2003

**Destination:** Sydney

**Airline:** Thai Airways

**Flight:** TG 991

**Type of ticket:** Economy class

**Price:** 28,500 Thai Baht (AUD 1,017)

**Departure:** Bangkok, 1<sup>st</sup> October 2003, 18.15

**Arrival:** Kingsford Smith, Sydney, 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2003, 06.15

**Duration:** 9 hours, Non-stop

**Where to Visit:**

**2<sup>nd</sup> October 2003**

- check in at Stellar Suites
- go to Sydney Opera House

.....

There were, however, differences between the groups' final plans (see more detail in appendices 12 & 13). It may be seen that the plan of Canberra group is complete in the sense that information is provided for all sections of the plan, while the Sydney plan is not quite complete in that the plan did not include the return flight from Sydney to Bangkok, nor reasons for visiting each place. On the other hand, the Canberra plan is less detailed: it includes fewer tourist attractions and activities than the plan of the Sydney group. In addition, as noted in my diary for lesson 12, it appeared that at least the final writing of the Canberra plan was completed by one student who had worked on

a word processor. That is, the contributions from each group member had been somewhat uneven. In contrast, the contributions from all the Sydney group were more equal. The following extract from my diary for lesson 12 describes the way in which the Sydney group collaborated to complete their holiday plan:

Araya from the Sydney group revealed that most students in her group are collaboratively writing the holiday plan on word processing by doing jigsaw writing. This means that each of them is writing different part of the plan and when they finish they will combine all parts together. Students in the Sydney group said that they copied some pictures from web pages and pasted them on word processing and nearly finished this task. Then they will attach the file with e-mail and send it to other students and me (teacher's diary, lesson 12).

As my diary entry indicates, each member of the Sydney group wrote a different part, then they combined all parts before e-mailing the final plan to me and to the other group. In addition to their more equal participation, the Sydney group overall were more enthusiastic about their plan. One of the reasons this group did not complete all details of their final plan was that they decided to additionally copy and paste pictures and other information about their selected tourist activities into their plans. This group then had to learn how to do this, and consequently took longer to complete the task.

While I cannot be certain, I would speculate that at least in part, differences between groups in overall enthusiasm for completing the holiday plan can be related to differences in using L1 and L2 for group discussions. As I indicated earlier, the Sydney group regularly switched between Thai and English as they discussed their holiday plan, while the Canberra group primarily used English. It is difficult to know which came first: the Sydney group's enthusiasm for the topic, which generated more energetic discussions, which in turn promoted students to switch into their more familiar language; or whether the opportunity to engage with new content in a familiar language generated enthusiasm for the topic, which in turn generated more opportunities for using English. Either way, it seems that opportunities for switching freely between languages as students engage with new content support both the learning of the new content and the learning of the second language.

In sum, I would assert that overall, students did succeed in meeting the learning goals of the program as measured by Criterion 1: their assessed performance upon a range of tasks.

## **Criterion 2: My Own Analysis of the Impact of Changes to the Teaching Program,**

In this section I reflect more broadly on my own responses to changes in the teaching program and the impact of these changes on students' developing English abilities. I discuss two issues that emerged as particularly important in the program. These issues are:

- the relationship between students' abilities to read in English and their meta-linguistic and meta-cognitive awareness; and
- the changed roles of teacher and students in this program.

### *The Relationship between Students' Abilities to Read in English and Their Meta-linguistic and Meta-cognitive Awareness*

The teaching of reading is a central concern of this thesis. As I have previously explained, I began the research with a desire to improve my own teaching of reading and consequently, a major focus in my evaluation of the new teaching program has been its impact on students' abilities to read in English. I have touched on this issue in the previous section where I discussed the extent to which students had achieved the learning goals of the program. Here I revisit the issue, but in further detail.

Evidence from recorded lessons, from my own diary notes, and from the students' own evaluations indicate that the students extended their abilities in reading and comprehending English. I had deliberately included the teaching of reading skills in the new program, and students had opportunities to read intensively and extensively. As I have already indicated, students read a variety of 'real' digital texts to get information for the purpose of creating a holiday plan. Jigsaw reading provided the impetus for students to read, as otherwise they would not have had the information to share with other group members and the holiday plan would not have been achieved. Moreover, students could read at their own pace without teacher supervision.

The program not only included the teaching of reading skills, it also included opportunities for students to discuss their reading strategies. The following extract from Lesson 7 provides an example of such discussions:

- T: นักศึกษาใช้วิธีการอ่านใดบ้างที่นอกเหนือจาก skimming and scanning [Apart from skimming and scanning, what reading strategies did you use?]

Nicha: ใช้วิธีการเดาว่าน่าจะหมายถึงอะไร [Guessing meaning.]

Panu: เมื่อเจอคำยาก ส่วนมากผมจะเดาคำความหมายจากบริบทรอบข้าง [When finding difficult words, mostly, I guess their meanings from context.]

In our discussion of reading strategies, students were able to explain the repertoire of reading strategies that they used. These included skimming, scanning, previewing, predicting, following hyperlinks and guessing word meanings. I reported on these discussions in my diary as follows.

When asking about reading strategies they (students) used in searching for and reading information, students revealed that they used scanning, skimming, previewing and predicting as well as guessing word meanings. They scrolled up and scrolled down web pages to preview the whole text. They also viewed graphics and links on the pages. Doing these things helped them in learning English (teacher's diary for lesson 5).

All students came to class. They told me that they nearly got all information for the holiday plan. When asking whether they had developed reading skills and reading strategies in this teaching program, all students agreed that they had. They had also applied these skills and knowledge to the Paragraph Reading Strategies and other subjects. Araya told me that she also searched for and read information of her interests. She found searching for information easy for her because she learned it in the teaching program (teacher's diary, lesson 8).

These diary extracts also point to the importance of another issue – that of simultaneously teaching technical skills and reading skills. As previously noted, the double focus on technological skills and reading skills was necessary to enable students to use the Internet to enhance their reading in English. But it also meant that there was much more talk about reading than had previously been the case in my teaching of reading. The following extract from lesson 2 provides an example of the kind of talk about reading and technology that occurred in the program:

T: หากเราอ่านหนังสือ แล้วเราต้องการดูข้อมูลอื่น ๆ เราต้องพลิกไปดูหน้าอื่น ๆ แต่เมื่อเราอ่าน text ใน web page เราสามารถ click ที่ hyperlinks เพื่อดูข้อมูลอื่น ๆ ได้ เราไม่ต้องไปหาหนังสือเล่มอื่น ข้อมูลทุกอย่างเราสามารถหาได้จาก World Wide Web เราเพียงนั่งอยู่หน้าคอมพิวเตอร์และเมื่อ click ที่ web site ต่าง ๆ ก็จะได้ดูข้อมูล ดังนั้นนี่คือข้อที่แตกต่างจาก การอ่านหนังสือ... ต่อไปเราจะลอง click ที่คำว่า Activities ก็จะปรากฏหน้านี้ขึ้นมา เราก็ preview text แล้วอ่านโดยวิธีใดละ  
[When reading a book and you need to look at references, you need to turn to another page or find another book. In contrast, when reading hypertext, you need to see other information, very easily, you can click on hyperlinks. You just sit in front of the computer and click at various web sites then you can see more information. This is the difference (of reading hypertexts) from reading print texts...Next we'll click at the word "Activities". This page appeared. Then we preview text and read by...]

- Ss: Skimming.
- T: การอ่าน hypertext เราจะต้องรู้จักวิธีการอ่านต่าง ๆ ไม่อย่างนั้นเราจะหลงได้ กลับมาหน้าเดิมไม่ถูก และทำให้เสียเวลาแทนที่จะได้ข้อมูลที่ต้องการเร็วขึ้น...
- นักศึกษามีวิธีการสังเกตอย่างไรว่าคำเหล่านี้ เป็น links
- [To read hypertext, you need to know how to use various reading strategies otherwise you may get lost and can't come back to the page you're reading. You might waste your time rather than finding needed information...How do you observe the links?]
- Juree: ตัวหนังสือสีน้ำเงิน และขีดเส้นใต้ [Blue and underlined words.]
- T: ไซ้และเมื่อบาง cursor ที่คำเหล่านี้ cursor จะเปลี่ยนเป็นรูปอะไร [That's right. When you put the cursor on these words, what will the cursor change to?]
- Juree: มือ [Hand.]
- T: A pointing hand.

A second example, also from lesson 2, of the double focus on reading and technology, can be seen in the following extract:

- T: ต่อไปเป็นการทบทวนขั้นตอนต่าง ๆ...เริ่มแรกนักศึกษาต้องทำอะไร
- [Let's review how to use search engine. What do you need to do first?]
- Ss: เข้า web site ของ Google [Access Google web site.]
- T: หรือเข้า web site ของ search engine อื่น ๆ ก็ได้ แต่ Google is the most powerful search engine...เมื่อเข้า web site ของ Google แล้วทำอะไรต่อไป [Or you may access other search engines' web sites. But Google is the most powerful search engine. After accessing the web site, what are you going to do next?]
- Ss: พิมพ์ key words [Type key words.]
- T: ในการพิมพ์ key words เราจะต้องสะกดให้ถูกต้อง เมื่อพิมพ์เสร็จแล้วให้ click ที่คำว่า search หรือ Press...
- [To type key words you need correct spelling. After that, click at Search or press....]
- Ss: ...Enter.
- T: หลังจากนั้นหน้าที่ปรากฏขึ้นมาเรียกว่า...
- [Then appears a page called...]
- Ss: ...result page.
- T: ต่อไปทำอะไร [What're you going to do next?]
- Ss: Scanning for key words.
- T: เมื่อพบ key words แล้วทำอะไรต่อไป
- [Yes. After finding the key words, what are you going to do next?]
- Ss: Skim.
- T: Skimming the summary for the gist. อ่านเร็ว ๆ เพื่อดูว่า web site นี้จะให้ข้อมูลที่ ต้องการหรือไม่ เมื่อไซ้ข้อมูลที่ต้องการก็ click ที่ web site เพื่อเข้าไปดู web page ถามว่าใช้เทคนิคในการอ่านอย่างไร
- [Yes, skim the summary for the gist. You need to read fast to see if it gives the information you need. If the information meets your need, just click at its web site to enter the web page. Then what reading strategies are you going to use?]
- Ss: Preview.

- T: จะทำอย่างไรเพื่อ preview [What're you going to do in previewing?]  
 Ss: scroll down และ scroll up [Scroll down and scroll up.]  
 T: Scroll down the web page หรือใช้ เครื่องหมาย page up and page down บน key board...preview อะไรบ้าง [Yes, scroll down the web page or you can press the Page up and Page down on the keyboard. What do you preview?]  
 Ss: Headings, subheadings.  
 T: และดู graphics เช่น pictures และ ดู links หรือ hyperlinks... [You can look at graphics such as pictures and links or hyperlinks...]

By lesson 3, students were beginning to be able to talk about their reading strategies. Class discussions encouraged students to compare the strategies they used when reading in English with those they used when reading in Thai. The following extract from my diary entry following lesson 3 summarises these discussions.

The students said that they use the same strategies such as scanning, skimming, previewing when both reading in Thai and reading in English. One student said that she read every word because she did not know the meaning of vocabulary. I wrote strategies they used on the board.

Then I introduced reading strategies the students need to use in reading and also clarified that when reading text, they can use various strategies to interact with text and get the meaning. After that I guided them how to preview a results page, scan for key words, skim a summary of each web site to decide whether the information met their search, scan for specific information by locating key words. Then they could click on web site to preview the text on that web page. They could browse the page and make predictions. In addition, I guided them to click on links to other web page to find more information etc. The explanation was both in English and in Thai (teacher's diary, lesson 3).

Explicit talk about reading continued through lessons 4, 5 and 6. I discussed with students the reading strategies they used, and I introduced more strategies for them to consider. The following short extract from lesson 6 provides an example of this discussion.

- T: เวลาอ่าน web page อ่านอย่างไร [How do you read a web page?]  
 Manee: โดยมากจะดูว่า มันมีเนื้อหา เกี่ยวกับที่เราหาไหม ดูคำจำกัดเฉพาะเลย [Mostly, I see whether the text is relevant to the information I need and look for specific words.]  
 T: ดู key word [Find Key words.]  
 Manee: ค่ะ ดู key words เลย [Yes, look for key words.]  
 T: แล้วได้ไหม [Have you found needed information?]  
 Manee: ได้บ้าง บางครั้งก็ไปที่อื่น key words ใช่แต่เนื้อหาบางครั้งไม่เกี่ยว [Got some. Sometimes I find the right key words but it isn't the text I need.]  
 T: แล้วเราทำอย่างไร [What did you do next?]  
 Manee: ก็กลับไปหาใหม่ [Searched again.]

As this extract indicates, by this time, students were aware of specific features of hypertexts and were able to be quite articulate about the strategies they employed in reading these texts.

In lesson 7, I talked again about the reading strategies that the students were using and I asked them to consider whether reading hypertexts in the teaching program differed from reading print texts in their normal subject. The following extract provides evidence of this point:

- T: นักศึกษาคิดว่าการอ่าน text ในรายวิชา Paragraph Reading Strategies กับกรอ่าน hypertext ต่างกันไหม  
[Do you think reading text in the Paragraph Reading Strategies subject and reading hypertext are different?]
- Panu: ต่างกันแน่นอน [Of course, they are different.]
- T: แตกต่างกันอย่างไร [How are they different?]
- Nicha: ใจต่างกัน [differently motivating]
- Panu: ทำให้เรารู้สึกว่าอ่าน text ที่เป็นจริงมากขึ้น  
[It makes me feel that I have read more authentic texts]
- Araya: เวลา click ข้อมูลก็จะมา [When clicking, we can retrieve information.]
- Nicha: ไม่ต้องไปนั่งเปิดหา  
[We don't need to open (a book) and find information.]
- Panu: แต่ที่สำคัญคือเราก็อ่าน text ที่คนทั่วโลกอ่านได้  
[The most important thing is we can read texts that people in the globe read.]

Finally, in lesson 8, I asked the students to reflect on the strategies and skills in searching for information and reading that they had developed from the program. The following extract illustrates this point:

- T: ได้พัฒนาทักษะการอ่านการค้นอย่างไรบ้าง  
[Have you developed reading skills from searching for flight information?]
- Napak: ก็ทำให้รู้วิธีการเลือกสายการบินทาง Internet  
[Yes. I learned how to search for and select flights on the Internet.]
- T: ได้อ่านด้วย และคิดว่าอ่านแบบไหน มีวิธีการอ่านอย่างไร เช่น ดู timetable ดู fare  
[What reading strategies did you use, for example, when finding timetable and fare?]
- Napak: Scanning.
- T: Scanning มีวิธีการอ่านอย่างไร  
[How did you scan the text?]
- Napak: ดูรายละเอียดที่เราเลือกแล้ว  
[Find the information that I selected.]

- T: มีวิธีการเลือกราคาอย่างไรคะ  
[How did you select the price of the ticket?]
- Napak: เลือกที่ราคาถูกที่สุด และเข้ากับเวลาที่จะเดินทาง  
[The cheapest one that matched with the time.]
- T: Have you developed reading skills and reading strategies?  
แล้วได้พัฒนาทักษะการอ่านและกลวิธีในการอ่านไหม
- Ss: Skimming.
- Araya: ได้หัดอ่านแบบ skimming ไม่ต้องอ่านทั้งหมด ดูนิดหน่อยก็รู้เรื่อง  
[Practised skimming the text. I don't need to read everything and I can understand what the text is about.]
- Juree: ช่วยให้อ่านเร็วขึ้น  
[We can read more quickly.]
- Jira: เวลาเราจะอ่าน เราอ่านได้เร็วขึ้น  
[I can read more quickly.]
- Amorn: ก็อย่างเราเจอเป็นประโยค เป็น paragraph เราสามารถจับ main idea ได้  
[When reading a paragraph, I can find main idea.]
- Nicha: ช่วยพัฒนาการอ่านให้เร็วขึ้น รู้แนวว่าข้อมูลที่เราต้องการจะอยู่บรรทัดไหน paragraph ไหน  
[I've developed reading skills; I read faster and can locate needed information in which line and which paragraph.]
- T: How did you find it?
- Nicha: อ่านเนื้อความก่อน อยู่แรก ๆ หรือไม่ก็ท้าย ๆ ถ้าหาไม่เจอ  
[I read the first paragraph and if I can't find the information I need, I read the last paragraph.]

The result of all this talk about reading was that the students' meta-linguistic and meta-cognitive awareness of their own reading strategies increased considerably. Students became more aware of their learning overall, and, in particular, more aware of the strategies that they were using in their reading. As the students themselves indicated, this awareness helped them to engage with quite difficult English texts. It provided them with strategies to locate information that they needed, even when they found the texts very challenging. In turn, engaging with these challenging texts supported them in their ability to read more extensively in English, and this supported them in their learning of English more generally.

### *The Changed Roles of Teacher and Students*

The teacher's and students' roles in this teaching program were radically different from those in my previous teaching, as the analyses of the data from my diaries and recordings of lessons confirm. In addition, the data confirm that I undertook different roles at different stages. My two most critical roles were as teacher or 'confidence builder' and 'scaffolding builder'. In my role as teacher or 'confidence builder', I gave



explicit instructions and demonstrations of how to use computers and the Internet, and how to read on the WWW. In my role as ‘scaffolding builder’, I needed to provide support in response to students’ needs. That is, rather than initiating instructions for how students were to undertake particular tasks, I responded to students as they were engaged in tasks by providing ‘contingent scaffolding’ (Gibbons, 1999: 36) at the students’ point of need. It was in this second role that I differed most from my previous teaching.

#### Teacher as ‘Confidence Builder’

In some ways my role as teacher and ‘confidence builder’ reflected my role in previous teaching. Here I provided input and instruction on the purposes of the program, on the tasks that I wanted students to undertake, on the skills involved in using computers, on relevant reading skills and so on. However, my role here differed from my previous teaching in some major ways. Previously my teaching was directed towards paragraph reading, and my instruction, after giving an overview of the course and advising reading strategies, was very much focused on details of paragraph organisation, sentence grammar and vocabulary. My concern was to ensure that students comprehended what they were reading at a fairly literal level. In the new program, my instruction included not only explaining the overall goals of the Unit to the students, but also providing instruction about specific aspects of study that would assist the students to achieve these goals. Thus, my instruction focused much more broadly on the content that the students were working with, the technology that the students needed to complete the tasks that I set them, as well as strategies for reading. But my instruction about reading was contextualised in terms of what the students needed to be able to do to obtain the information that would enable them to complete the next task. One of the outcomes of using ‘real’ texts to teach reading was that my instruction needed to be much more broadly based, and directed towards longer-term goals within the program.

Examples of the kind of instruction that I provided in the program can be seen from my diary notes, and in lesson transcripts:

On teaching of computer skills:

...I demonstrated how to use *Google* search engine, using copies of steps in using search engines to find information... I used Thai when explaining and used English when talking about technical terms. I gave students an example of how to find

information about tourist cities in Australia by introducing them to type key words “Australia’s tourist cities” in the search term box. Then I clicked on the word *Search* and guided students that they could press Enter on the keyboard in order to reveal a result page.

When the search results were revealed on the result page, I guided the students how to scan each result for the key words they had typed and skim each summary to find whether it matched the search. Then, I showed them where and how to click at the web site to read for more details on a web page. When the web page appeared, I guided them how to browse the page to preview the text by scrolling up and down the page using the vertical scroll bar or the page-up or page-down on the keyboard, and scroll from left to right using the horizontal scroll bar or left or right keys on the keyboard. In addition, I suggested they preview the whole web page, the heading, sub-heading, pictures, images, and hyperlinks (I used code switching between English and Thai).

Additionally, I told the students how to click at hyperlinks to see more information in other web pages, how to go back to the previous page by clicking on Back, how to go to the next page by clicking on Forward, and how to view larger text size (teacher’s diary, lesson 2).

#### On teaching of reading:

I reviewed reading strategies the students had learned and combined with more reading strategies. The reading strategies they had learned were scanning, skimming, previewing, predicting. More reading strategies were pre-reading, identifying textual cohesion, dealing with unfamiliar words, and using reference skills. Then, I allowed students to continue searching for information to complete required tasks (teacher’s diary, lesson 5).

#### On teaching of content (from lesson 4):

- T: After you have got a passport and visa, what do you need to do next? How are you going to Australia?
- Ss: By plane.
- T: Right. What information do you need?
- Juree: Check.
- Panu: Check flight.
- T: Flight information. ต้องเลือกอะไรคะ [What do you need to choose?]
- Ss: เที่ยวบิน [flight].
- T: ก่อนเลือกเที่ยวบินต้องเลือกอะไรก่อน  
[Before choosing flight, what do you need to choose?]
- Ss: สายการบิน [airline.]
- T: สายการบิน ตรงกับคำภาษาอังกฤษว่าอะไร  
[What’s the English word for สายการบิน? ]
- Panu & others: Airline.
- T: What airlines do you know?
- Ss: Singapore airlines
- Panu: เอ็งหลวง [Uengluang (Thai word)]
- T: What else?
- Nicha: Australia.
- T: Qantas.

Araya: แล้วของไทยล่ะคะ [What about Thai airlines?]

T: Thai International airways.

Other examples of my instructional teaching include the teaching of language structures used in group discussions (in lesson 7), and providing guidelines for holiday plan writing as well as explaining and demonstrating how to write the plan and attach a file with e-mail (in lesson 11). The following extracts indicate such instructional teaching:

T: Use mainly English but you are also allowed to use Thai to assist in learning English  
 ดังนั้นเมื่อเข้ากลุ่มแล้ว Nicha และ Prapa ต้องบอกข้อมูลเกี่ยวกับ passport และ visa requirements ให้เพื่อนในกลุ่มทราบ โดยใช้โครงสร้างประโยคตามตัวอย่างนี้  
 I'm going to tell you about applying for passport and visa. I've found out that we need to apply for a passport at...  
 Documents we need are...  
 In applying we need to...  
 We must pay...as a fee.  
 It'll take...to get the passport

...  
 T: ต่อกไปพูดว่า [Next you can say] What airline should we choose? What flight? What about...? I think we should visit...and spend...days there. We should visit...  
 What activity should we do?  
 We should...  
 We can...

...  
 T: We may join...(e.g. jazz festival)  
 Where shall we stay?  
 I think we should stay at...  
 I think we can get there by (e.g. bus, ferry)  
 We may rent a four-wheel drive.  
 How much is the rent per day?  
 (Lesson 7)

.....  
 T: In your group, write your holiday plan from the draft you have written in objective 7. draft ที่ secretary เป็นคนเขียน [The draft that was written by the secretary.] In your group, write your holiday plan you have written in objective 7 on a word processing. You may copy pictures from a web page as well as URLs ก็คือ [or] web site address ทุกคน save เอาไว้ใช้ใหม่ [that everyone has saved] and paste on the word processing. Copy มาแล้วก็ paste ลงไป name and save the file ตั้งชื่อ file, attach the file with e-mail and send it to students from the other group and the instructor. ให้ส่งให้เพื่อนในกลุ่มอื่น รวมทั้งเพื่อนในกลุ่มเดียวกันด้วย และส่งให้ครู [Copy and paste on the word processing, then name the file and save. After that, attach the file with e-mail and send it to students from the other group and the teacher.]  
 เพราะฉะนั้นครูจะสาธิตวิธีการ attach file กับ e-mail  
 [Therefore, I'm going to demonstrate how to attach file with e-mail.]  
 (Lesson 11)

## Teacher as ‘Scaffolding Builder’

My other critical role was as ‘scaffolding builder’. The nature of the program was such that it included group and independent work as well as teacher-focused instruction. When students worked in groups or independently, my role became one of providing support. To help me assess the level of support that students needed, and to monitor their progress, I held regular discussions at the beginning of each lesson. Here I asked students to reflect on what they had learned, and what had helped them learn in the previous lesson. An example of this kind of discussion can be seen in the following short extract from lesson 6:

- T: What did you find difficult to do?  
 Bua: เวลากำหนดวันเดินทาง พอพิมพ์ลงไป แล้วไม่ได้  
 [Specifying date of departure. When typing it, I couldn’t get the information.]  
 T: What did you do?  
 Bua: เปลี่ยนวัน [Change the date (of departure)].  
 T: You need to choose city of departure, destination, date of departure, and time.

These kinds of discussions enabled me to judge the level of support and guidance that students needed, and to identify any students who particularly needed group or individual support.

My role as ‘scaffolding builder’ became particularly important when students were working in groups to research information on the Internet. As I have explained, the students faced a number of challenges as they learned the necessary technical skills to enable them to locate relevant information. My role then became one of providing ‘contingent scaffolding’ to support students at their point of need. I intervened in the students’ learning process any time they needed assistance (see students’ comments on teacher’s roles in 2.2). Notes from my lesson diaries provide examples of when and how this support occurred:

Napak still searched for a flight from Bangkok to Sydney and another flight from Sydney to Canberra. She asked me for help so I guided her how to search for this information. She found it confusing because she needed to complete the form such as the city of departure and the city of destination.

Araya told me she had problem with checking the ticket fare from Bangkok to Sydney so I guided her how to do it (teacher’s diary, lesson 8).

Furthermore, I took on the role of assessor, monitoring students’ performance to get a picture of their achievement. In this capacity I gave them suggestions and comments on

their work. Finally, my roles were those of an evaluator and a researcher, assessing the overall effectiveness of the program in terms of learning and teaching.

### *The Role of the Students*

Inevitably, as my role as teacher changed, so did the roles of the students. In my previous teaching, student roles were largely receptive in that they were expected to attend to the tasks that I had set them and to respond to the questions that I asked during lessons. In the new program the students' roles became much more varied and overall more active. The analyses of my diaries and of lesson recordings provide evidence of this.

The nature of the group tasks meant that students had to become more responsible because each one played a vital part in the group effort. Students thus experienced 'peer collaboration' in their learning environment, as they worked in pairs and in groups to negotiate decisions that enabled them to proceed to the next task.

Students also learned to work more independently. Much of the reading that they did in the program was done outside of class and without the teacher's supervision. They were not dependent on readings selected by the teacher; rather they spent considerable time and effort becoming 'information seekers' on the Internet. This meant that students could do their Internet work anytime and anywhere without the constraints of time or the classroom. Working at their own pace, students' self-confidence in reading and acquiring information increased, as did their problem-solving skills. They needed to think carefully and consider what information was relevant to their needs; this was in addition to tackling technical problems. The students had freedom to choose a number of authentic texts from the real-world resource – the WWW. In this group collaboration, each student became, in a sense, an expert in his/her particular area because he/she was the only person who had that knowledge. Thus, all students needed to comprehend what they had read and record their information (see students' evaluation in 2.2). They needed thinking skills and problem solving skills in creating the holiday plan. My aim was that students would be able to apply the skills, knowledge and experiences learned in this program to other learning situations as well as to real-life situations in the future.

### *Implications of Changed Teacher and Student Roles*

Due to changes in roles of teacher and students, classroom interactions in the new program were considerably different from those in my previous teaching. In the new program, interactions were between teacher and students and among students. Classroom interactions in the previous program were between teacher and students, and there were no interactions among students. In my previous teaching, the teacher asked for answers and the students read them from their completed exercises. In the new program, at the beginning, what the teacher had to say was crucial because the students needed to have an overview of the program – they needed to learn their own Internet skills, knowledge of English and reading strategies and use these as tools to acquire information on the Internet. Thus, during pre-reading activities (*Introduction/Preparation* stage), there was interaction between the entire class and the teacher, aimed at motivating and preparing students for their research based on their prior knowledge and reducing feelings of insecurity or anxiety. In the class discussion about the travel destination each group had chosen, most students spoke out and expressed their ideas; they brainstormed what they needed to find out when planning a holiday trip, what documents they needed for applying for a passport and visa, and what flight information they needed to know.

There were interactions among students in each group when reporting and sharing the information each of them had obtained from the Internet; everyone had an opportunity to express ideas and ask for clarification when needed. This interaction occurred without the teacher's intervention and I could observe that students spoke confidently. They were also free to switch to Thai to maintain communication if they had difficulties in English. Thus the emphasis was on learning English in order to be able to solve problems (of planning a holiday trip), rather than on learning English to get correct answers to satisfy the teacher.

Overall, teacher and student roles in the Internet-English program were significantly different from my previous teaching practices. The role of teacher can be summed up with Hammond's (1990) notion of the 'authoritative' teacher, and with the principle of *interactive approach* (see Section 1 of this chapter). The students actively participated in learning tasks and used English for communication. In this learning environment,

they had the opportunity to learn to work with other group members and they learned to solve problems.

## *2.2 Evaluation from Students' Perspectives: Their Learning Experiences*

In this section of the chapter I continue the evaluation of the new teaching program, but from the perspectives of participating students. I begin with a summary of students' overall responses to the program before focusing in more detail on students' specific perceptions of:

- their reading skills development;
- their overall English language development and their awareness of another culture;
- their development of technological skills; and
- their ability to transfer of knowledge and skills learned to other contexts.

Finally, I report more broadly on students' responses to the specific pedagogical changes that were introduced in the new program.

Recordings of lessons, students' diaries, and group interviews have been drawn on in this section of the chapter.

### *Students' Overall Responses to the Program*

Without exception, students stated that the Internet, and in particular, using search engines to find information, was the outstanding highlight of the program. They liked learning about the Internet and stated that using the Internet in learning English was an exciting experience. The following comments are typical of students' responses:

The strength of this program is hi-tech...and reading English. I can comprehend hypertexts after frequent reading... I like this program because I don't need to open a book and read. To read on the Internet I can see pictures by scrolling up and down. The pictures are clear too (Nicha, interview).

Using computers and the Internet (is the strength of the program). I have more opportunities to use the Internet because before participating in this program I hardly used it (Manee, interview).

Students were positive about other features of the program as well. They felt that the program had developed their overall English skills, and that learning about Internet technology helped them, especially with their reading skills. They liked the fact that the

tasks were generally challenging, and their favourite tasks were searching for information and reading web pages.

Students generally had been excited about participating in the program and learning about the Internet and English. They found the program easy at the beginning although later they found the tasks to be time and energy consuming. The students realised that their collaboration in group tasks helped them complete some more difficult tasks, and they were pleased that, by the end of the program, they had managed to complete a holiday plan. The students also liked the teacher-led discussions that occurred at the beginning of each lesson (which reviewed learning that had occurred in the previous lesson). The following comments from group interviews encapsulate the overall positive evaluation given by students.

Learning in this program we have gained more knowledge and experiences (Panu).

We did not make a wrong decision to participate in this teaching program (Nicha).

I felt I've gone international participating in the research because I've learned how to use the Internet in learning English. By the end of the program, I felt released because everything had been completed... The teaching program stimulated me in learning. I want to know many things and want to be very competent in English (Panu).

When asked to name challenges, most (8) students named technical skills. These technological challenges included: using search engines in locating information and web page reading (e.g. searching for flight information); finding specific keywords to type in the Search Term box; skimming each summary on a result page; clicking to see the web page and scanning for needed information; experiencing frustration when faced with overloaded information from their search; and finally, experiencing confusion in following some hyperlinks.

In addition to the technical challenges, other issues or weaknesses mentioned in students' overall comments included: problems of accessing the Internet; difficulties with discussing (using the target language) and writing up the holiday plan (final task in their project); and lack of time for participation in the new course.

In sum, students' overall responses to the new teaching program were very positive. Their responses to more specific issues that are directly relevant to the purposes of this research are addressed in the following sections.



*Students' Perceptions of the Impact on Their Reading Skills Development*

The general theme to emerge from the data was that all students believed that the Internet assisted them in the development of their reading. Data from interviews and diaries suggest that this impact was evident in helping their overall reading development, in helping them develop different reading strategies for reading different kinds of texts, and in developing meta-cognitive awareness of their own reading strategies. Students also reported that they liked the more autonomous approach to teaching reading in this program where they could read at their own speed.

Students not only believed that their reading skills and comprehension had increased, but also that their reading speed had improved, and that they were more confident in encountering English texts. The following excerpts are typical of comments made by many of the students:

Learning in this program really helps me in learning English, especially reading strategies such as skimming and scanning that you guided. I can read a web page quickly and know where to read to get the main idea. I have improved my skills in searching for information and learning more vocabulary. I also look for the meanings of some words in a dictionary online (Napak, diary).

It (the teaching program) really helps because we encounter a large amount of this type of text in daily life. It seems that the Internet makes the world smaller. This makes us develop writing and reading skills and even know current affairs (Panu, diary).

For me I think the Internet really helps. For example, when searching for information and we access English web sites, we can learn English. If we often do this we must be skilful. Unknown words that we encounter very often, we don't need to memorise but we can remember and know their meanings. In addition, the Internet helps me in reading (Araya, interview).

Before participating in the program, I didn't understand what I had read. After learning how to search for information, I realised that I don't need to read everything. I read only for specific information or what I want to know... I have also developed skills in reading hypertexts (Araya, interview).

... Today I learned more how to search for flight information. I searched for more flights so the other students in the group can choose. This helps me in learning English especially reading skills. I used scanning strategy in finding the key words in the text (Bua, diary).

Searching for information helps me develop reading skills and reading strategies especially scanning for specific information (Bua, diary).

In addition to commenting on their overall improvement in reading and understanding in English, the majority of students said that they were increasingly aware of the

specific reading strategies that they used. Examples of such comments from students include:

The Internet also helps me develop scanning techniques in finding specific information. I can save the time by reading quickly. In addition, it helps me improve my knowledge of vocabulary and grammar. I guess word meanings from contextual clues (Panu, diary).

It (the teaching program) helps me a lot. The first thing is all reading strategies I have learned in the program especially scanning and skimming. I can read much faster and guess meanings of unknown words. To do this very often helps me learn more vocabulary (Jira, diary).

Before participating in the program, anytime I saw anything in English, I just ignored it because I felt it was too difficult. Now, I feel that it's not that difficult. I skip the part that I don't understand and look at words and guess their meanings. For some words I can't guess their meanings and I really want to know, I look up the meanings in a dictionary. I will remember them and increase my vocabulary (Araya, group interview).

It helps me a lot. The first thing is all reading strategies I have learned in the program especially scanning and skimming. I can read much faster and guess meanings of unknown words. To do this very often helps me learn more vocabulary (Jira).

Before entering this program, I didn't know how to use a computer and the Internet. Since then I have learned more and more. I've applied reading strategies I've learned in this program to reading English newspapers and this works. When reading, I know what I'm reading about. I skip unknown words and I can understand text (Araya, diary).

In lessons 4 and 8, I specifically asked students what skills they thought they had developed from using search engines to find information. Their replies not only highlight specific reading skills, but also reflect a degree of meta-cognitive awareness on the part of students. Examples of such replies include:

I looked for key words first, for example, to find out about Celine Dion's birthday on the web page, I looked for the word "birthday" (Araya, transcript of lesson 4).

I can develop myself by reading information in the paragraph and I can see new words. It helps me learn English very much and I think that it's beneficial to everybody. I think if you use strategies in reading, you have more ability (Panu, transcript of lesson 8).

I've developed reading skills. I'm not good at vocabulary and when facing unknown words in my searches of information, I found it difficult. However, I guess word meanings by reading the whole text and can understand it (Manee, transcript of lesson 8).

(We used) Skimming (everyone). We've developed reading skills...(Juree). Practised skimming the text. I don't need to read everything and I can understand what the text is about (Araya)...We can read more quickly (Juree)...I can read more quickly (Jira)...When reading a paragraph, I can find main idea (Amorn)...I've developed reading skills; I read faster and can locate needed information in which line and which paragraph ... I read the first paragraph and if I can't find the information I need, I read the last paragraph (Nicha, transcript of lesson 8).

Students' meta-cognitive awareness also extended to their awareness that they could read differently for different purposes. In the group interviews, students were asked to compare strategies they used in reading print texts with those they used in reading hypertexts. When discussing the strategies they typically used with print texts, the majority (7) of students said that they read every word in print texts. Typically, they marked or underlined parts of the text they thought were important (a strategy they had been taught would help them memorise such information), they looked for meanings of unknown words in an English-Thai dictionary, and then wrote the meanings below the words. However, when reading hypertexts, all students revealed that they used quite different strategies. They stated that, because of length and density of the texts, they read hypertexts selectively and strategically rather than reading everything. They were not reliant on a dictionary; rather, they guessed word meanings from contextual clues, which often included visual contexts less likely to be found in print texts. In addition, because they were reading hypertexts in order to obtain specific information, students were encouraged to read more quickly than when they read print texts. With reference to print based reading, some students explained that:

...Print texts are limited and easy to read; there is not much reading but hypertexts are longer and denser. Therefore, I read quickly and found only specific information... (Juree, interview).

I mark and underline important parts while I am reading (print texts). Mostly the first thing to do is to find the main idea which is always in the first sentence. I also stop reading to find the meanings of difficult words from an English-Thai dictionary and write the meaning in Thai under the words (Jira, interview).

...When reading print texts, I do not use specific strategies; I read everything... (Panu, interview).

Whereas for web reading:

[When reading texts on the Internet] I preview the entire web page. I can click at hyperlinks and find information in minutes. But to read print text and if I need more information, I need to find it from books or I have to go to the library (Manee, interview).

Significantly, in addition to noting different reading strategies employed in the two media, the majority (8) of students reported that they found hypertexts more motivating and stimulating than print texts. This was because they could view graphics with beautiful coloured pictures, and click at hyperlinks for more information. Half (5) of the participants mentioned they could guess what they were reading from such pictures.

They stated that, therefore, they preferred reading hypertexts to reading print texts. In addition, some (3) students noted that it was easier to find information on the Internet than to find it from printed materials.

The following quotes from group interviews illustrate these positive attitudes towards Internet reading:

We can't find hyperlinks in print texts. I like looking for a variety of information so I prefer reading texts on the Internet to reading print texts (Panu).

Hypertexts provide more general information. If I need to find any information, I prefer reading on the Internet (Manee).

I like reading on screen because I can click at hyperlinks to find more information on other web pages. I like reading on screen better than reading print texts because I like viewing pictures along with text (Bua).

Reading texts on the Internet is more interesting than reading text from printed materials (Nicha).

Another important finding to emerge from students' comparison of print and web based reading experiences was the potential benefit of increased student autonomy. In the new program, students had opportunities to complete web-based reading tasks without pressure of time and teacher's supervision. This was quite different from my previous program where students were typically required to undertake specific reading during classes. In the group interviews students reported that:

When reading print text, the teacher allows the students to read for one or two minutes. To do this I feel under pressure and I'm tired. I feel that it's too difficult to understand the text I read because I'm forced to do so. It seems that the text is more difficult. On the other hand, reading hypertexts or reading on screen, I didn't have the pressure from any time limitation. I can read as much as I can and I can reread if I don't understand the text (Jira).

When reading in class, I didn't need to understand at the first reading. I just read and could develop my understanding when the teacher explained after the students finished reading. When reading on the Internet, I have more time to try to comprehend the text (Nicha).

...since I have participated in this program, I started to read English web pages and can read at my own pace (Napak).

Despite the overall enthusiasm for being able to read more freely, some (3) students also notes that when following hyperlinks, they sometimes got lost and overwhelmed with information overload. These challenges are evident in the following comments from students:

I get lost very easily when following hyperlinks and don't know where to go and find information (Panu, group interview).

Sometimes, I can't find the information I need because I type an incorrect web site. Sometimes hyperlinks don't provide enough information and it takes longer time to follow another link. Sometimes, I click at a hyperlink but the web page doesn't display or I can't come back to the previous page (Manee, interview).

What I found easy is I knew where to find the information I needed. However, when entering the web site everything was in English and there was a lot of information. I found it difficult because I didn't know where to begin. However, after doing more searches, I might understand English better. I found this task challenging and it was so stimulating that I wanted to learn English better (Nicha, diary).

Such comments confirm the need for explicit teaching about the Internet.

In sum, data from the students' evaluations of the program support the conclusions drawn from the teacher's evaluation that the program was effective in supporting students' reading development. Students' interviews and diary entries indicated that Internet use increased students' confidence in confronting English and motivated them to read in English because of the attractiveness of digital texts. They found hypertexts more attractive and motivating than print texts because of their images and non-linearity. The images served as extra-linguistic contextual clues, which also helped students guess meanings of the reading texts. Student found that hyperlinks offered more non-linear pathways to more information than texts in books. Compared to their conventional reading of print texts where some of them read every word and were reliant on dictionaries, they reported that their methods of reading had radically shifted.

#### *Impact on Overall English Language and Awareness of Another Culture*

Given the students' positive evaluation of their reading skill development, it is not surprising that all students claimed that this English Internet course enhanced their overall English skills and their awareness of another culture. During group interviews, when asked whether the program had helped them to learn overall English, students commented on vocabulary, grammar, writing and spoken communication skills. They particularly emphasised that they had more opportunities to speak in English when doing group work.

The following quotes from group interviews are typical of all students' responses:

Yes. I've learned more vocabulary and reading/writing abilities have increased. I don't need to look for meanings of unknown words from a dictionary because when reading

the whole text I can understand it and guess word meanings. I found out about passport and visa requirements. After reading the whole text, I could understand what documents were needed in applying for a passport and a visa, where to apply, and how much we have to pay. Then I shared this information with other people in the group and they could understand it (Prapa).

...Before entering the program, I did not know a lot of vocabulary. Since the participation in the program, I've learned more vocabulary and sentence structures. I've also learned how to write sentences and practise more reading and spelling when using the Internet (Manee).

Using e-mail helps improve writing skills and I can type in English more skillfully. In daily life, mostly I write in Thai ...I could use English to communicate with the teacher in class. ... I don't speak English but I had opportunities to speak English when learning in this program especially when sharing information in the group (Jira).

Students' diary entries confirmed that the program had helped their overall English skills and abilities. The following excerpts are typical of comments from these students:

Using the Internet really helps me in learning English because I can learn more vocabulary which I have never found before. I can retrieve information from all over the world within minutes. In addition, I have developed skills in typing, reading and writing (Juree).

Today the teacher guided more about how to find appropriate key words in searching for information. Learning in this teaching program assists us to practise English reading and writing skills. In addition, we have to speak to share information in groups. We had an opportunity to speak in English. Then, the teacher gave us worksheet 6 for the next activity (Panu).

Today the teacher allowed the two groups to discuss and plan a holiday trip to Australia. Our group planned to go to Canberra. We mainly spoke in English and everyone enjoyed this activity. The discussion was video recorded and it was fun speaking in English (Panu).

Today we shared the information in groups and we were video recorded. Our topic was Two Weeks in Canberra and in our group there were five people: Panu, Napak, Manee, Nicha and I. Nicha talked about passport and visa requirements and local time. I talked about the Australian currency and weather; Napak talked about flight information. This activity helped us practise speaking in English. I had an opportunity to practise my pronunciation and learn how to work with other people (Bua).

Additionally, students were asked whether their cultural knowledge had increased after learning in this program. All of them pointed out that they learned about the Australian culture from researching information on the Internet such as tourist attractions, festivals, architectures and modernisation as well as people's values and ways of lives. This claim can be illustrated in the following quotes:

I've also learned about the Australian culture from searching for and reading information. Clearly, I learned about architectures and modernisation. I learned that Australian people love freedom and they have activities on holidays such as going

somewhere else with their family. For example, they go to the Botanic Garden and go to concerts at the Rocks (Araya).

...I have also learned about the Australian culture. People in Australia mark holidays and tourist attractions important to them. Reading about and listening to information about tourist attractions stimulated me to visit the Opera House because it's famous (Jira).

I have learned about culture and festivals in Canberra. In terms of reading, it's interesting to read up-to-date information. Reading about tourist attractions, each web site has pictures which stimulate me to read. I'd like to know what to see in such places. Besides, I can learn culture and ways of life of the Australians. This stimulates me to search for and read to find out where I can travel. I want to read and learn more...(Manee).

I've learned that the Australians like nature. I also learned about tourist attractions, for example, to visit the Blue Mountains tourists can take a cable car to see scenic view (Amorn).

Students also indicated their awareness of Australian culture in their diaries, for example:

We continued discussing the holiday plan from last week. There was nothing difficult. We talked about places of visit in Sydney so we learned about the Australians' values and people's ways of life. I talked about tourist attractions that I have found...(Amorn).

Today we had to come to group and plan where to visit, where to stay, what to do and where to shop. I really enjoyed this lesson and I have learned a lot from what we had found out about Australia. We have learned about the Australian culture and people's ways of life. This was challenging and it stimulated our learning as well. We also have a wider vision; I can say that learning in this program, my knowledge has really increased (Juree).

It is noteworthy that students learned English and the culture without being recipients of knowledge transmitted directly from the teacher. Rather they learned as a result of engaging in research and reading on the Internet. In other words, through their focus on content learning in this program, students were able to increase their English abilities and knowledge of culture simultaneously.

#### *The Impact on Technological Skills*

All students reported satisfaction with technological skills and strategies in searching for information such as finding appropriate and specific key words, choosing a summary on a result page, evaluating and selecting relevant information, following hyperlinks and saving web sites. In other words, they developed digital literacy and used it as a tool to interact with computers and the Internet to develop their English

literacy. Six students (6) noted that they also improved typing skills and English spelling.

The following quotes are typical comments from students and provide good examples of how they developed technological skills, awareness of learning, and their confidence in using the Internet in learning English.

...I still couldn't do many things such as sending e-mail and saving web sites onto a floppy disk. The teacher guided us step by step and finally we could do everything. I had much more fun learning. Yesterday I couldn't do anything and I became bored finally. But now I'm OK. I can search for information faster and more skilfully. I looked for the answers by reading quickly for the main idea and I'm more skilful. In addition, I succeeded in applying for an e-mail address (Araya, diary).

Today the teacher guided us how to find key words in searching for information. I could do it but not skilfully. I know that everything the teacher taught and guided was very useful. Before entering this program, I didn't know about how to use computer and the Internet. Since then I have learned more and more. I've applied reading strategies I've learned in this program to reading English newspapers and this works. When reading I know what I'm reading about. I skip unknown words and I can understand text (Araya, diary).

For me, clearly, I have developed skills in finding key words in searching for information. At the beginning, I typed a whole sentence and I felt that was too long and I couldn't find needed information. Then I made it shorter by using more specific key words. I think key words are very important in searching for information. After learning in your teaching program, I used this strategy to search and read anything I want to know...I can read web page more effectively. Before participating in your teaching program I didn't know how to search for information. Now I know how to use it particularly links that lead to more information...When choosing the information I needed, I looked at each summary on the results page. I also learned how to click Back, Forward and Stop and I'm much more skilful. In the first stage I did it very slowly because I still didn't use appropriate strategies. Later I learned more and spent less time in finding information (Araya, interview).

Using the Internet really helps me in learning and in using computer. I can use computer (the Internet) more skillfully. The Internet also helps me in reading. I really enjoy learning in this program (Juree, diary).

To choose the information, I consider if it is up-to-date (Amorn, interview).

I look for words that are similar to the key words I typed and look for needed information. I've developed reading skills and I use the Google search engine to find information as assigned by some lecturers and information of my interests (Prapa, interview).

The following excerpts from another student's diary, not only show the reciprocal nature of reading and technological skill development but also the student's awareness of her own learning strategies.



At first I found difficulty because I did not know what key words I should type (in the search term box). Then I typed the words “Thai airways”. Then I clicked (to see the page) and scanned for the key words and clicked to see the page. I chose the date and time of departure and destination. I needed to choose ‘round trip’, then chose the date of departure from Bangkok to Melbourne and the date of arrival from Melbourne to Bangkok. Finally, I got the information (Bua, transcript of lesson 6).

Data from transcripts of lessons, interviews and diaries confirm students’ perceptions that they made substantial progress in developing necessary skills in using the Internet. The data also provide strong evidence that students believed these skills not only enabled them to read more extensively but also supported their learning of English more broadly. Students’ evaluations confirm the integral relationship between digital literacy and English literacy in the new teaching program, and the circular process of developing enough Internet skills to learn English, and enough English to use the Internet.

#### *Transfer of Knowledge and Skills to Other Contexts*

Students were asked how they thought the Internet-English program helped them in their normal PRS subject (which the students were currently enrolled in), in other subjects, and in using English in ‘real life’. All students claimed that this program helped them in the PRS, and the following extracts are typical comments that indicate how students thought their experience and knowledge of learning from the new program helped them in this subject:

The teaching program went hand in hand with this subject. When reading both in the teaching program and the normal class, I needed to read fast especially the texts on the Internet which were longer than the print texts I read in the normal subject (Amorn, interview).

My reading skills have improved. I can read faster and my knowledge of vocabulary has increased. For example, after searching for tourist attractions in Sydney [in the new course], I found information about the Blue Mountains and I used this information to talk about topic and main idea in the Paragraph Reading Strategies class. Thus, my classmates know how the Internet gives a lot of information (Juree, interview).

It really helps especially when the teacher (in PRS subject) assigned us to read news in newspapers. We guess word meanings and use skimming and scanning (Manee, transcript of lesson 8).

Students’ comments on transfer of knowledge and skills they learned from the program to the PRS subject are supported by their final examination results in this subject. All (10) students who participated in the program passed the PRS course, with the majority (6) scoring *good to excellent* results. Their results were considerably higher than those

of students who had not participated in the new teaching program (10 of the remaining 19 students in fact failed their examination). It cannot be claimed that the new teaching program was the reason for the different outcomes in the examination. These students may simply have been more capable, or perhaps they were just more motivated than those who did not participate in the new program. However, it is noteworthy that the students themselves asserted that they were able to transfer the knowledge and skills they learned from the new program to the PRS subject, and that their new skills had assisted them in the PRS subject.

In addition, students noted that they were able to transfer what they had learned in the new program to other learning contexts. For example, one student noted that she found another subject, *Information Technology* easy because she had learned technical terms and how to search in the new program:

In the subject Information Technology, I found the same technical terms and how to search for information that I had learned in the teaching program. Therefore, I found it easy in this subject. I also applied reading strategies I had learned to my current reading (Napak, interview).

And another student reported that:

I've applied everything I learned in the program such as I use e-mail and search engines in other subjects. Mostly I use google.com because it yields more information. If I hadn't learned in this teaching program, I wouldn't have known how to search for information (Amorn, interview).

All students noted that they applied the knowledge and skills they had learned to real life use both in English and in Thai. For example:

I have applied what I learned from your program to reading and using English in real life. I can search for more information than finding from books (Panu, interview).

I search for tourist attractions in Myanmar... I read about the stupa...I like finding out about tourist attractions...They are in English with pictures...I can understand when reading (Jira, interview).

I've applied how to find and read information on the Internet to reading news in Bangkok Post (newspaper). I found the same news in Thai newspapers. Thus, I learn more English words because I can guess from the Thai words. I can understand more when reading in English (Juree, interview).

Before joining the program, I hardly understood what I read [in English], thus I preferred reading in Thai. After learning in the program, I learned that it was not that difficult to read in English and my reading abilities increased. When reading news on the Internet, I read Thai newspapers first and many other newspapers because the web site provides a lot of links to nearly all newspapers. Then I followed links to the

Bangkok Post, CNN and many others, which I can't remember because there are too many. I clicked on the links and read new on web pages and could understand it because I had read it in Thai already. For example, Supachai Panichapak had a conference in Mexico. Thus, I can learn grammar and applied it to use with many things (Araya, interview).

Araya also mentioned that she used a search engine to find and read information she wanted to know. I asked her for clarification and she responded as follows:

I'd like to know about New Zealand and I search for information by typing key words "New Zealand" and "Christchurch"...I read about sports. For example, I want to know about Paradorn's tennis tournament in a foreign country. The information was in English, which I understood some part and there were some part that I didn't understand. I think my reading skills have improved a lot (Araya, interview).

In sum, data from transcripts of lessons, students' interviews and diaries indicate that the students believed they were able to transfer what they had learned in the new teaching program to other contexts. They stated that their new knowledge had helped them with the PRS subject and had also helped them in tasks that they were required to do in other contexts.

#### *Students' Responses to Pedagogical Changes*

As well as being asked about the extent to which they were able to transfer knowledge to other contexts, students were invited to comment on their overall responses to the quite radical changes in pedagogy that were part of the new teaching program. They were asked to describe how this course differed from their regular subjects, and how they felt about working with other students to complete tasks. They were also asked what they liked and disliked about the teaching/learning situation. Students' comments and responses to these questions are summarised below under the following themes:

- Collaborative learning and the understanding of group work;
- Changes of teacher and students' roles; and
- Role of L1 in learning L2.

#### *Collaborative Learning and the Understanding of Group Work*

Working in groups was a major feature of the later sessions of the course, and so it is not surprising that all students had something to say about this experience. All students spoke positively about learning to work together. They experienced how to share knowledge, ideas and opinions, and how to listen to other people and accept their ideas.

They pointed out that these advantages created a good relationship among group members. Very importantly, students noted that their knowledge and English language abilities increased because they had opportunities to use English for communication, while being able to switch to using Thai when finding difficulties.

The following quotes from group interviews elaborate students' perceptions of the benefits of group learning. As the quotes demonstrate, these benefits included sharing information, and as well as learning strategies, listening to other people, and improvement of their listening and speaking skills.

When sharing information, each of us has our own ideas and share with the others. This makes us realise that we need to listen to other people and accept their ideas. We can't only believe in our ideas. In addition, we have improved our speaking skills (Jira).

Working with other students is good because when searching for information and I could not find key words, my friends helped me. In addition, working in groups helped me learn to listen to other people as well as increase and improve my knowledge (Amorn).

I had found a three-star hotel and other people in the group disagreed and asked why I chose this hotel. They said we would waste the money. I think it was fun that we argued and gave reasons. The others also asked why I thought the hotel was good. Prapa commented that during the trip we would go out to visit places and would be at the hotel only at night. Thus, I needed to find more hotels (Juree).

I found each person had different ideas and these ideas could be combined and were very useful. If the other students' ideas were better, I needed to accept them (Prapa).

After Nicha had found information about passport and visa requirements, she helped the other students in our group find information. I think working together is better than working alone, "Two heads are better than one" (Panu).

One student compared her group learning experience in the program with group work she did when she was at secondary level as follows:

When we did group work in high school, we didn't do a big project like this. This is different and we learned from each other and this program built close relationship among us...When sharing information in our group, my abilities and knowledge increased because each person had different information. Thus, we had to listen, ask for a clear understanding and make notes. While telling the others about the information from my search, I felt I was an expert in that area (Araya).

Students also noted the impact of collaborative learning in their diaries, for example:

Today the teacher asked us to divide into groups of five. We needed to find information about tourist cities and then plan a holiday trip to Australia. We had to discuss what city we'd like to visit, and when to travel. Our group planned to go to Melbourne and will spend two weeks there. In our group, Panu will find out about tourist attractions,

activities, special events and accommodation, Nicha will find out about passport and visa requirements, local time in Melbourne, and transportation. I will search for flight information, Australian currency, and the weather in that city. The other two students didn't come to class today. Nicha volunteered to be a secretary and will write down information during the group discussion. Working in groups, we've learned to help each other and have a good relationship... (Bua).

We continued group discussion about the holiday plan and the assistant video recorded the activities. Everyone expressed their ideas and opinions in planning where to visit and where to stay. For example, we had to say whether it was good to stay at that hotel or whether the place we were going to visit was far from the hotel (Amorn).

In sum, students' responses indicate that they positively embraced the collaborative activities – so much so, in fact, that in the review one year later, many of them recalled these group experiences very positively (see Section 3, *Student reflections one year later*).

#### *Changes in Teacher and Students' Roles*

My earlier discussion of my own responses to the new program highlighted the impact of group work on changing roles for teacher and students. Not surprisingly, students were very conscious of these changes. In discussion about the new program, students identified a number of ways in which teacher and student roles in the new course differed from those in regular courses. They noted distinct differences between the teacher as *lecturer* and teacher as *facilitator* or guide; friendly informal rapport with the teacher; more opportunities to express their own opinions and being given responsibility to select texts for reading (as opposed to always being directed by the teacher). They stated that students in the program did activities and could learn at their own pace; they had more opportunities to talk, think, and express opinions and learn to solve problems and thus were more confident.

The most significant difference noted, by the majority (8) of students, was the way the teacher moved back and forth from a lecturer to a facilitator role at various stages of the course. The following quotes from interview transcripts suggest that the students appreciated both roles of the teacher but in particular were pleased to be able to take a more active role than in many regular classes:

The teacher in the program taught and demonstrated to the students at the first step. The students followed the demonstration. Later, when planning the holiday trip, we had to think and express ideas and opinions, gave reasons and discussed what to do... (Juree).

I feel that the teacher in the teaching program always helped and guided the students when we encountered problems and difficulties. Without your (the teacher's) guidance and support, students could not have done activities independently (Manee).

In normal classes the teacher plays major roles. The teacher asks and students answer the questions or the teacher tells the students about the lesson. On the other hand, in the teaching program, what we saw and what we thought, what we found, we could discuss with the teacher. We need to think and we're more self-confident, we can express our opinions and we have learned how to solve problems (Araya).

Araya concluded that:

In normal classes everyone sits and listens to the teacher. The teacher teaches, writes on the board or explains and talks. In this program, the teacher did not only teach English but also guided us how to use the Internet to find information and read in English. It was fun and I'd like to do more search of information and wanted to know what it would be like when we finished the program...The students are centre of the teaching and learning activities and the teacher helped and guided when the students encountered problems and difficulties. If without your guidance and help we could not do the tasks (Araya).

The difference of relationships between teacher and students in the program and in their normal classes was also an important issue. For example, Panu commented that unlike those in their normal classes, the teacher and the students in the teaching program developed closer and more informal relationships. He said that the teachers of other classes left after the classes finished and there was not much talk and discussion between teachers and students. He further commented:

In my normal classes, teachers teach and students sit and listen to the lecture. The teachers always ask us to look at the lesson and tell us what to do. In your program, I felt comfortable to talk to you. I think that in a classroom teacher and students should be close because the students could learn more effectively in a supportive classroom (Panu).

Another student's comment also supports the point mentioned above:

I think they are different because the teachers in normal classes assign students to do tasks. We dare not give the teachers suggestions or comments. On the other hand, learning in this program the teacher and students talked and we could express our opinions (Amorn).

Students also liked the opportunity to choose texts to read rather than to read texts that were always chosen by the teacher. Typical comments include:

In the program we could choose texts but in normal classes we read texts that are chosen by teachers (Araya).

I could find information by myself without the teacher's help (Panu).

Although I sometimes chose inappropriate texts, it was useful to have free choice of texts which I can select by myself (Jira).

I could choose texts very quickly (Prapa).

It is evident from the above quotes that students are not familiar with the practice of choosing texts or topics as in most of their programs, texts and course books are prepared for students (see Chapter 2). Teachers stick with such materials and students lack opportunities to look for and select texts of their relevance and interests independently. Thus, there is a potential conflict between government's aims of developing student autonomy and life-long learning skills and actual practices as outlined in Chapter 2.

### *Role of L1 in L2 Learning (Switching between Thai and English)*

When initially developing the new program I had not considered the role of L1 in supporting L2 as a major issue in my research. However, I had decided to allow students to use their L1 if they wished. My idea was that I wanted them to be able to focus on the content of the program, and if they had difficulty in communicating in English, then they could switch to Thai. As I explained earlier, the two groups in the new program differed in the extent to which they took up the opportunity to use L1. The 'Sydney' group made considerably more use of L1 in their group negotiations than the 'Canberra' group, and my analysis of the differences between the final holiday plans prepared by these groups suggested that use of L1 had been beneficial. The role of L1 in supporting L2 development has therefore emerged as an important issue in my research.

In discussions with students towards the end of the program, I specifically asked students if they believed that having opportunities to use L1 in the program had helped them in learning English. Students' responses indicated that they had different views on this issue. The majority of students claimed that using L1 had helped them when they were negotiating their travel plans, and had also helped them more generally in learning English. However, use of L1 was identified by some (3) students as a weakness of this program. This debate can be seen in the following extracts from interviews with the students. Students such as Jira expressed reservations about the use of L1:

As you allowed students to use Thai (in group activities), it is fine. However, English should be emphasised especially in speaking tasks. Thus, the students can improve their English. I think students need to be forced to use English sometimes... Because you

allowed the students to speak both Thai and English, so the students mainly spoke Thai in the group discussion (Jira).

Nicha and Panu agreed with Jira that students should speak in English as much as they could when discussing in groups, even if their English contained errors. Amorn and Araya however, had different opinions:

When speaking in Thai we can speak in depth more than speaking in English. It is difficult to speak in English (Amorn).

In fact, our English background is not good enough. Mostly, we get used to just listening to teachers. If we're not forced to speak, we won't speak out. Actually, we don't want to speak.

These differences in points of view reflect differences between the Sydney and the Canberra groups discussed in the teacher's evaluation. The students in the Sydney group switched to Thai more often than those in the Canberra group. Because of the benefits of this switching, the Sydney group performed more interactive engagement in speaking tasks, arguing and negotiating in more in-depth details.

Initially, I was surprised by the strength of the debate that students had about the use of L1. On reflection, however, I realised that in all their previous courses either at school or university, students had been told that they should only use English. Thus having opportunities to switch to Thai seemed counter intuitive to what most students understood about learning a foreign language. However, the introduction of the content focus and use of the Internet in the program had provided the impetus for students to switch between Thai and English, and as a result some, although not all, of the students believed that this opportunity had a positive impact on their learning of English.

In sum, data from all sources, (student diaries, group interviews, lesson discussions) confirmed that the students responded to the Internet as a positive learning resource which helped them to develop their English literacy, overall English skills and increased their knowledge of another culture. They became more self-confident in reading and using English as well as using the Internet without *English or Internet phobia* any more. These are profound changes from their previous learning. These positive outcomes can be summarised in the following quotes from two students:

Absolutely, my abilities in English have increased. When accessing the Internet, I really have learned and developed reading strategies, both skimming and scanning. I learned how to search for information when I was in high school but only in Thai. To learn in this program we had to search for information in English and needed to search until we



obtain needed information. Thus, I had to read a lot of English. When I listen to English such as from sound tracks, I came across with some words I had seen when reading on the Internet. I think reading English more often makes me get used to it and I learn more (Araya, interview).

Today is the last day that we met the teacher. The teacher interviewed the students in our group. The interview was about our feelings and attitudes towards the teaching program, which is part of her research. We are glad that we were selected to be participants. We said that we wanted to learn whatever that helps us improve ourselves. Thus, this teaching program served our needs. The teacher taught us how to use the Internet and we're very happy that we had an opportunity to learn how to use this technology. We've learned a lot including other computer applications. In addition, we've learned how to work in groups and to be responsible and able to work with other people. I hope the teacher succeeds in her study and comes back to teach us (Juree, diary).

One year after the conclusion of the program all ten (10) students were asked to reflect on the effectiveness of the program, its strengths and limitations. I report on these students' reflections in the following final section of this chapter.

### **Section 3: Students' Reflections One Year Later**

Follow up interviews conducted one year after the completion of the new teaching program aimed to investigate what the students still regarded as important, and whether they felt the knowledge they had developed in the program had helped them in their on-going study. In particular, I was keen to know if the students used the Internet more extensively, particularly in English, as a result of their participation in the program.

The first two interviews were conducted with nine students in two groups and the last one was conducted with another student (Araya) who had left the University to attend another university in the same province.

Students were asked what they remembered about the program which had used the Internet for English language learning and about the benefits of the program for their English development, especially reading on the Internet. In addition, they were asked whether they applied what they learned from the program in other situations and whether they used the Internet more and in what language. Finally, students were asked if they perceived roles of the Internet in helping them learn English, and their desire for teachers to integrate the Internet in English classes (see interview questions in appendix 5).

In discussing the students' perceptions of the longer-term impact of the new teaching program, I focus on the following issues:

- Students' recollection of the impact of the Internet-English program on their learning;
- Students' recollection of changed pedagogy; and
- Students' perceptions of the extent to which they could transfer knowledge and skills to other contexts.

### ***3.1 Students' Recollection of the Impact of the Internet-English Program on Their Learning***

Interviews with students revealed that they remembered a number of features in the new teaching program very positively and that they believed the program had helped them with their learning in subsequent subjects in their University study. The features they mentioned as being helpful were: learning to use computers and the Internet; support in learning English; and support in developing reading strategies. These features are broadly similar to those that the students identified as helpful in the immediate post course evaluation.

All students said that the program had helped them learn how to use the Internet. They had learned how to use e-mail, how to find and handle digital texts, and how to evaluate information, and that these skills had had a long term benefit for their later study. They also said that learning to use the Internet had helped them learn English and increased their knowledge of vocabulary and grammar. This in turn had helped them to read in English. They had developed skills in reading selectively and strategically, and they had learned about reading strategies such as skimming, scanning, previewing and guessing meanings. As a result their reading speed had also improved.

The following are typical comments from students:

The first thing (I learned) is computer and the Internet. It's most important in modern society. You taught us until we aren't afraid of computers and the Internet. I can find all the information I want to know. The Internet offers everything I need...I can remember that you taught us how to search for information on the Internet. We accessed English web sites; we skimmed and scanned texts. Then we planned to travel abroad (Araya).

It (the program) helped me in reading and vocabulary.... When finding a lot of information, I couldn't read everything so I read for specific information and guessed. Pictures also helped me in guessing when reading. I learned more vocabulary and now I

use them in my writing. I don't emphasise if my writing is grammatically correct or incorrect. I emphasise content of writing (Manee).

I learned about reading strategies such as previewing the whole text, guessing word meanings in context. I also had an opportunity to practise speaking in groups and learn more when trying to explain about information that I wanted other people in the group to know (Nicha).

(I've) Learned new vocabulary by guessing meanings from context. ... I learned how to read fast on the web page. I used skimming and scanning (Amorn).

The students reported that, one year later, they were now quite confident in their use of the Internet and were more aware of the strategies that they used when they read in English. The combination of skills with the Internet and reading meant that they were now more prepared to tackle difficult English texts. The on-going impact after the completion of the program appears to have been a recursive one, where learning to use the Internet had supported their abilities with English and their developing abilities in English had encouraged their more extensive use of the Internet.

### ***3.2 Students' Recollection of Changed Pedagogy***

Students remembered clearly the changes in pedagogical practices that had been incorporated into the program. In particular they remembered the more interactive nature of the program and their own engagement in meaningful tasks. They described their own roles in the program as more active than in normal classes. Some students recalled a more positive learning atmosphere in the teaching program compared with regular classes. Typical students' comments on the pedagogy of the program included:

Learning in your program was different from learning in our normal classes...It was fun learning and it was different from other subjects because we used computers and the Internet (Napak, Panu, and Manee).

In your program we needed to find knowledge and information and came back to our groups for discussion (Napak).

Normal classrooms are teacher-centred (Panu), but in your program we did activities (Manee).

Students not only read information but also shared that information with other students. We needed to understand what we read so we could tell other people (Nicha).

We needed to try to speak English because mainly we don't speak English in daily life. When working in groups we tried to speak English. We also needed to write in English. When writing the holiday plan we needed to summarise the information in our own words; we needed to reorder the words in each sentence (Manee).

One student commented on the longer-term value of reflecting on what had been learned in lessons. She said:

...I'd like to add that you allowed us to discuss our reflections and feelings. I use this technique when we sometimes work in groups in other subjects (Jira).

One year later, students appeared not only to have remembered details of the pedagogical practices of the program but, generally, to have agreed that the new practices had had a positive impact.

### ***3.3 Transfer of Knowledge and Skills to Other Contexts***

As I have indicated, all students felt that they had developed knowledge and skills in using the Internet as a result of their participation in the new program. They also felt that they developed English skills, and, in particular, skills in reading in English.

Students reported that they had been able to transfer these skills to other contexts, although what they regarded as most valuable was the ability to transfer their Internet skills to other contexts. Students now appeared to be very comfortable with the Internet, and used it frequently in relation to their study. The following comments illustrate some of the ways in which they used the Internet to locate information, both in Thai and English, relevant to their university study:

I use it once a week. I read in general and read more information related to topics I learned in class and I still don't understand some points. Sometimes, I want to know if there's any information additional to what I learn in class. For example, when learning about intonation, the teacher teaches in Thai but when searching on the Internet everything is in English. It makes me learn more. (Juree).

What I have learned and still use it up until now is searching for information on the Internet. Actually, currently I don't need to search for information in English for class subjects because I'm not enrolled in many English subjects. However, the Internet helps me with writing reports for other subjects and I can find information I want to know. (Araya).

I use the Internet every week – about 3 to 4 hours a day. I use it at the old library building. I use it in English... I use Google to search for public holidays. (Panu).

I use it but not as frequently as Panu. I use it in the evening and mainly search for information in Thai. (Jira).

In addition to using the Internet for study, all but three students reported that they now used the Internet widely to pursue personal interests. In fact, this use of the Internet for personal interests emerged as one of the major long-term benefits of having participated

in the new program for the majority of the students. Gaining confidence in use of the Internet had opened up new worlds. A sample of the ways in which the students now used the Internet for their personal interests can be seen in the following comments:

I use the Internet for my personal interests such as wanting to read about tourist attractions in Thailand. I type key words on the Google web page. There are many tourist attractions that I want to visit. I read in Thai. I learn more about places of interests. Some web sites have information both in English and in Thai and when reading and comparing, I found that it is the same information. When reading for pleasure, I choose to read Thai because I don't want to worry about English difficulty. If I'm required to use English related to class subjects I use it in English (Amorn).

I e-mail my friends in Thai once a week... Once I read about the Mummy in English and I found it interesting. I used to read about this in Thai and I wanted to know whether I could find it on the Internet and what it would look like. I found pictures and captions in English. I came across difficult words but I guessed the meanings and could understand it. I also like reading about animals such as pandas in English and in Thai. I also like reading newspapers and read the Bangkok Post and I can understand it. I guess meaning from context and pictures and guess from news in Thai. I want to practise English and the first thing I need to learn is vocabulary (Juree).

I also search for information in English such as English songs and print out to sing along. I also read poems in English and short stories for my personal interests... I also follow links on the web page (Jira).

I type key words such as "poem" and read English poems. I also read news in the Bangkok Post. In addition, I like reading about other countries and I like pictures on web pages and read captions under the pictures. I sometimes use Thai such as TV's web sites... I use it for reading of my interests (Panu).

Mostly I read news in Thai. I use English when searching for information or when I want to read. Although I don't understand much, I just look and read. I also search for songs and poems both in Thai and in English but I mainly use Thai ... I also read about health in Thai. I mainly read news in Thai on the Internet... When I don't understand what I read in English, I feel discouraged and give up. Thus, if information is available in Thai, I prefer reading in Thai (Napak).

In their interviews, these students attributed much of their current extensive use of the Internet for reading in both Thai and English to the impact of my new English Internet program. Their testimony provides very strong support for my original research hypothesis, namely that the Internet has the potential to enhance EFL learning. There were, however, three students who were less enthusiastic about using the Internet, especially in English. They said that they still needed a 'push' from teachers to use the Internet in English and that unless there was real reason for doing so, they would not otherwise use it. They explained:

I mainly use it in Thai to search for information in some subjects and to read horoscopes. I also like listening to music online... Sometimes, I read about tourist

attractions in Thailand. I read in Thai. I also use an online English-Thai dictionary. I read news in Thai. I hardly use English. I don't use the Internet often because I don't know what I'm going to use it for. A lot of people use the Internet at the library. Sometimes, the Internet can't be accessed (Bua).

I hardly use the Internet except when teachers assign its use. I'm too busy with homework and assignments. If I'm not too busy, I sometimes use it to read about health in Thai. Sometimes, I read horoscopes in Thai. I don't have a computer at home and the access within the University is always occupied. Using at an Internet café is expensive – 20 baht per hour. I mainly use it when I'm assigned by teachers to find information in other subjects (Manee).

I hardly use it except when we are assigned to do group work in other subjects, not English. One teacher suggested we access an ESL web site (Prapa).

Despite the reluctance of these three students to use the Internet in English, the consensus was that students had been able to transfer Internet and reading skills developed in the new program to other learning contexts. Some students reported that they used search engines to find additional information in Thai for some of their subjects. One student said she used her new Internet skills to locate relevant information in English, which she then used in a subject that was taught in Thai. She did this on her own initiative, without any specific requirement from the lecturer of that subject.

Typical comments from students on this issue include:

It helped me in learning English because the program emphasised English learning. Searching for information was in English. I gained experience and skills from your program and applied them to my study especially finding information. It helped me to learn English better especially when undertaking examination in reading. My English skills increased (Napak).

In the Global Society and Living subject...I need to search for information on the Internet because I can't find any books in the library. We were required to find out about 'World Bank for Reconstruction and Development'. On the Internet most information is in English and a little bit is in Thai. I needed to read English and finally I got the information. I also compare between information in English and information in Thai and I can guess from date and year such as 27th December B.E. 2487. They have the same content. I can learn English from Thai although they are not literally translated but I can guess from the context (Jira).

In addition to being able to transfer skills in use of Internet and reading in English to other contexts, three of students said that learning about collaborative group work had helped them in their study of some other subjects. The students described this as follows:

(In the Listening and Speaking 3 subject) one of English native lecturers assigned us to plan to set up a language school and interview an English native speaker and then we have to plan how to set this up, the budget we need and so on. It's similar to your program that we need to think and plan. I think what we learned from your program can

be applied to use with this project ... we have to think and plan systematically starting from giving the name of the school (Napak).

We need to interview an English native speaker, and a Thai person as our customers in English...The teacher assigned this task and we need to work in groups and plan what to do. One student needs to think about interview questions, and another student needs to interview the customers. We need to think and plan in order to set a language school that meets our requirements, customers' needs and the budget (Manee).

[In your course] I learned how to plan what we have to do, and how to solve problems (Bua).

In sum the teaching program made a lasting impact on students in a number of ways. Students felt that they had learned skills that were of longer-term value to them. The most useful of these were skills in using the Internet and reading in English. Students were able to transfer these skills to other contexts, and did so regularly to locate information that was relevant to their study in other subjects. The majority also used these skills to pursue their own personal interests. Students' longer-term recollections of the new pedagogical practices of the program were generally very positive. Features that were regarded as especially positive were the more relaxed and friendly learning environment, and opportunities for more active participation in lessons with related opportunities to talk to other students.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has outlined the development and the implementation of my new teaching program which aimed at using the potential of the Internet to develop students' English reading. The chapter has also presented the evaluation of the effectiveness of the program, both from the teacher's perspective and from the students' perspectives. Finally, this chapter has reported on students' reflections one year after the completion of the program.

When developing the new teaching program, it soon became evident that I could not simply make Internet tasks an 'add-on' extra to the existing PRS course. To take advantage of the potential of the Internet as a resource for learning English, I needed to develop an integrated approach to its use. In Section 1 of this chapter, I outlined the nature of the new teaching program, and highlighted some of the pedagogical changes that were incorporated into this program. These changes were profound and required a rethinking of the theoretical underpinning of my teaching. They also impacted significantly on the implementation of the program, with the result that my new

teaching program differed significantly from my previous teaching. Changes included the articulation of goals that integrated 'content' with language learning; varied roles of teacher as 'authoritative' support and also as facilitator; and more active engagement of the students in learning tasks with the expectation that students work interactively and collaboratively with each other. The focus on the 'content' of travel plans to Australia provided students with genuine reasons for needing to learn how to use the Internet and also with genuine reasons for needing to read and then talk in English. The integration of the Internet into the program encouraged student's engagement in learning tasks, and fostered collaborative learning and communication in English. These tasks were selected and sequenced to provide support for students as necessary, but also to enable students to work increasingly independently.

In evaluating the effectiveness and impact of the program from the teacher's perspective, I first addressed the extent to which students had managed to achieve the learning goals. Analysis of data showed that overall, the students did succeed in meeting the learning goals of the program. They succeeded in developing the necessary technological skills that enabled them to use e-mail to communicate with each other and with me. They learned to use search engines to find information on the WWW. They extended their reading skills and strategies and evaluating skills in choosing relevant information. The fact that they had 'real' reasons for reading, talking and writing generated overall enthusiasm and energy for the program tasks. Although this enthusiasm differed somewhat between the two groups of students in the program, it was substantial in both groups and encouraged students to engage with English texts that were above their current abilities with English. This in turn encouraged them to extend their reading strategies as they engaged with digital texts in the preparation of their holiday plans. The students' abilities to work increasingly independently, to locate and read relevant information, and to prepare a final holiday plan provide evidence that they had indeed managed to achieve the program goals.

More broadly, the evaluation from the teacher's perspective highlighted the significance of the pedagogical changes that had been introduced in the program. In addition to changes in the way that reading was taught and to changes in the roles of teacher and students, there was a 'flow-on' effect from one aspect of the program to another. The decision to developing a 'content-based' program impacted on the way in which the Internet was integrated into my teaching. This integration of the Internet, in turn



impacted on what and how the students learned to read in English. The introduction of the content-based focus and the Internet also required more group work, and the inclusion of group work in turn impacted on the teacher and student roles. With more opportunities for student-student interactions, there was more ‘space’ for students to use their first language to support their use of the second language.

My evaluation, both from analysis of outcomes from the assessment tasks, and from my broader reflections on the impact of the program, convinced me that the pedagogical changes introduced in this program had been positive, and had resulted in markedly improved learning outcomes for students.

The evaluation from the students’ perspectives supported these conclusions. The overall response from students to the new teaching program was very positive. Students particularly liked the opportunity to learn to use the Internet, although they nominated the Internet as both the greatest strength of the course as well as a significant challenge. They believed the program had helped them learn the relevant technological skills they needed to locate relevant information. They unanimously agreed that the use of the Internet had helped them with their reading in English, and that it had helped them learn to read differently for different purposes. Students were able to describe the reading strategies they had learned in the program and were also able to be quite specific about the different strategies they used when reading digital texts in comparison to those they used with print texts. They also believed that the skills they had learned in the program could be transferred to other contexts.

Students were very conscious of the pedagogical changes that marked the new program, and generally were positive about them. They liked having opportunities to work in groups and noted the benefits of collaborative learning. They liked their more active role in the new program, and commented on the more friendly relationship they had with the teacher. The only area where real debate between students occurred was around the value of using L1 in the program and the extent to which the use of L1 supported their learning.

The students’ reflections 12 months later were significant in that they confirmed the main findings from the immediate post course evaluation and suggested a lasting positive impact of the English Internet program. The major longer-term benefits that

students nominated were learning to use the Internet and learning skills that helped them to read in English. These skills seemed to have had an interactive relationship in that increased confidence with the Internet encouraged students to read more extensively in English, especially for personal interest. In turn, the more reading in English students did, the more they were able to read in English and so the more they used the Internet.

The evaluations from both the teacher's and students' perspectives provide evidence that the principles and practices introduced in this program have broader implications for my own teaching and for teaching EFL more generally. I discuss these implications further in the next and final chapter of the thesis.

## **Chapter 7**

### **Conclusion and Implications**

#### **Introduction**

In this research project, I have sought to address some major concerns in the teaching of English in Thailand. In particular, I have sought to find a way forward to address the tension between the priority accorded to English by the Thai government, and the relatively low levels of English of most Thai people. In seeking a way forward, I have focused on the potential of the Internet in English language teaching. My purpose here was to investigate the extent to which the Internet could contribute to students' overall ELT, and, in particular, to students' abilities to read in English. In undertaking the research, I have focused on one research site, a Rajabhat university in Thailand, the Nakhon Pathom Rajabhat University (NPRU), my own workplace. Here I have investigated students' Internet practices and the potential offered by one English language program that incorporated use of the Internet. My focus on this one program has also enabled me to address questions about my own teaching practices, and about the implications of incorporating the Internet for program design and teaching.

The research for this project was undertaken in two stages. Since I knew relatively little about the extent to which Rajabhat University students' use of the Internet, nor their purposes for Internet use, Stage One of my research consisted of an ethnographic investigation of students' current Internet practices. In Stage One, I addressed my first research question:

#### **Research Question 1**

What is the potential of the Internet for supporting EFL development?

- 1.1 What are students' current Internet practices?
- 1.2 What are students' perceptions of and attitudes towards use of the Internet?
- 1.3 What factors support or limit students' use of the Internet?

Outcomes from Stage One of the research then provided me with a necessary basis for the development of an English language program which incorporated the Internet. The teaching and case study evaluation of this program was undertaken in Stage Two of the research. Here I addressed the second of my research questions:

## Research Question 2

What are the pedagogical implications of use of the Internet in EFL?

2.1 What principles need to inform EFL programs which incorporate extensive use of the Internet?

2.2 What benefits can flow from such program?

2.3 What implications for EFL pedagogies arise from such program?

In this final chapter, I first summarise the key findings from the research before turning to a discussion of the broader significance of the findings: for my own teaching practices, and for EFL more generally. Finally, I discuss some of the limitations of this research and implications for future directions in research.

### **Section 1: Summary of Major Research Findings**

This section briefly revisits major findings from the research before discussing their broader significance.

As indicated in Chapter 2, to date there has been limited research on Internet use and its impact on ELT in Thailand. However, the research that has been undertaken found that Internet use is not widespread, that levels of technological skills are limited, and that most people experience problems with access.

Major findings from Stage One of my study supported those of existing research. Stage One revealed that most students who participated in the research lacked prior experience and expertise in using the Internet before arriving at the University. Despite being introduced to some aspects of Internet use in their initial university study, few students had become extensive users. In contrast to young people, particularly in Western countries, the most common use was for study purposes in order to complete assignments, with only a few using the Internet for entertainment. Their limited use was caused not only by their limited knowledge and skills in Internet technology and English language, but also by problems of access and the demands of time in their normal classes. In addition, although students were encouraged to use the Internet by their lecturers, in fact, outcomes from the research indicated that Internet use in specific subjects was primarily as an add-on tool, rather than as an integral part of the study that students were engaged with. Overall, the research indicated that integration of the Internet in current English teaching practices at NPRU is limited. Despite this, the

research outcomes also showed that students were generally interested in the Internet and were enthusiastic about its potential to help them learn English.

The case studies of four students who were relatively heavy Internet users revealed that in contrast to other students, they used the Internet more often, and for a greater variety of purposes. Their more extensive use meant that their levels of technological skills were greater. In turn, these supported their access to digital texts, which encouraged their English development. These students used strategies to engage with digital texts that were similar to those used by proficient English speaking Internet users. Specifically, they read for meaning and used the context of texts to guess unfamiliar vocabulary items and grammatical patterns. Significantly, however, they also made strategic use of Thai to support their access to English texts, suggesting that use of their L1 helped them to engage with the Internet in L2.

A number of specific implications were drawn from Stage One of the research. These included the need for the following actions that:

- students be encouraged and supported to use the Internet as soon as they arrived at University, and be taught the necessary technological skills to do so;
- the Internet be integrated fully into subjects, rather than used as an add-on extra;
- opportunities be provided for students to switch between Thai and English while using the Internet;
- opportunities be provided for students to use a range of relevant strategies to assist them to read digital texts in English, with opportunities to talk about what they are reading on the Internet; and
- students be provided with greater access to the Internet.

These implications were significant for shaping the program that I taught and evaluated in Stage Two of the research. Of most significance was the fact that what I had to design was a radically different kind of program from the one that I had previously taught. The nature and significance of changes in this program are discussed in further detail later in this chapter.

The effectiveness and the impact of the Internet-English program in Stage Two were evaluated from teacher and student perspectives. The analysis of data in the teacher evaluation highlighted students' achievements of program goals. Here, students developed essential technological skills of using search engines to locate information on

the WWW, evaluating needed information, and reading digital texts in English, and thus were able to complete subsequent integrated-skill tasks. More broadly, the teacher evaluation revealed the significance of pedagogical changes in teaching reading, and especially students' development of meta-linguistic and meta-cognitive awareness, as well as the changed roles of teacher and students.

The evaluation from students' perspectives provided evidence of their positive responses to the Internet-English program. Students believed that through their participation in the program, in spite of some challenges, they had significantly developed their technological skills. They stated that the Internet was a powerful tool to assist them in English reading and overall English skills development. Students noted that the reading processes they used when encountering digital texts were both similar to and different from those they used in reading traditional print texts. Moreover, students were aware that the new program offered a pedagogy radically different from that of their usual classrooms. Students liked their role as 'active learners', and they were conscious of the benefits of 'collaborative learning'. Overall, they expressed positive attitudes towards this new learning experience. Students also appreciated the move between the role of the teacher as *confidence builder* or *lecturer* and the role of the teacher as *scaffolding builder* or *facilitator*. Students' reflections a year later revealed the ongoing impact of the program, especially in regard to learning to use the Internet and in developing skills that helped them in learning English. These skills seemed to increase students' confidence in using the Internet to read English more extensively, especially when reading for their own preferences.

Overall, research Stage Two provided evidence that the new program had a positive impact upon students' development of English skills, especially reading, as well as upon students' development of technological skills.

## **Section 2: Significance of the Research**

In Chapter 1, I argued that the significance and contribution of my research lay in the following areas:

- in providing a model for improving my own teaching;
- in implications for pedagogy if this model is adopted more broadly
- in implications for other teachers and students in other contexts; and

- in the questions that the research raises for the appropriateness of Communicative Language Teaching in contexts where English is taught as a foreign language.

Here I address these claims in more detail.

### ***2.1 Providing a Model for My Own Teaching; with Radical Shifts in My Own Teaching Philosophy***

Perhaps the most significant outcome from my research has been the shift that has occurred in my own teaching philosophy. As indicated in previous chapters, one of the motivations for the research was my concern about my own teaching practices. I sought to improve my own teaching by integrating the Internet in my programs. However, I had not anticipated that this decision would lead me to such a radical rethinking of my whole approach to teaching and learning. What I found was that full integration of the Internet was not possible in the kind of program that I had previously taught. There were a number of key elements here that motivated a rethinking of my teaching philosophy.

A key element in an integrated Internet program was that students were exposed to real texts. In order to provide a focus for the program, I needed to select relevant content and to set a major task (the development of a travel plan) for students to complete. Students were therefore broadly directed to content on the Internet that was relevant to their task. In order to engage with this content, students needed to talk, read and write about it, and consequently, even though my interest remained with the teaching of reading, the program needed to include all aspects of language (listening, speaking, reading, and writing). This in turn led me to question my traditional understandings of the notion of literacy. It also raised questions about the integrated nature of language development and the problems of programs that attempt to separate talking from writing and from reading (as was the case with existing Rajabhat courses). Such questions were informed by the literature both on Communicative Language Teaching and that relating to Content-based Instruction.

Because the students were inexperienced with computer technology, and because the content that they were accessing was challenging for them, I needed to use both Thai and English in my interactions with the students. The students, in turn, used both Thai and English in their discussions with each other, and in their searches on the Internet for

relevant information. The program therefore raised questions about the role of L1 in supporting L2 development. It also raised questions about my role in the program. It was no longer appropriate for me to ‘direct’ and control the teaching in the way that I had in my previous teaching. However, the students needed considerable support both with the computer technology and with the English content. I therefore needed to provide support when needed, but to withdraw that support as students became more confident and more able to work in groups and independently. These changes in my own and in the students’ roles raised questions about teacher-directed versus learner-centred pedagogy and were informed by the literature on Vygotsky and scaffolding.

In order to highlight the way in which my pedagogical practices have changed, Table 7.1 below, summarises the major differences between the teaching practices in the new teaching program and my earlier teaching practices in the *Paragraph Reading Strategies* course.

**Table 7.1: Comparison of the PRS course and the Internet-English program**

| Features             | Paragraph Reading Strategies course   | Internet-English program  |
|----------------------|---|---|
| Language focus       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Emphasised reading; non-integrative</li> <li>Each reading is self-contained</li> </ul>   | Communicative project: Integrated skills: reading, listening, speaking and writing multiple texts   |
| Computer skills      | None  | Using e-mail, search engines, word processing   |
| Curriculum content   | Structured course: Analysing words, guessing word meanings, using dictionaries, scanning, skimming, recognising textual cohesion, and recognising text organisation   | <p><i>Content-based and communicative project</i> – researching information to develop a holiday plan to a city in Australia</p> <p><i>Reading strategies:</i> skimming, previewing, predicting; scanning, guessing word meanings, using reference skills (following hyperlinks), and evaluating web pages</p>  |
| Cognitive Activities | <p>Teacher</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Giving an overview of the course</li> <li>Advising reading strategy for each lesson</li> <li>Teaching and explaining aspects of vocabulary, grammar, and culture</li> </ul> | <p>Teacher</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explaining and giving an overview of the teaching program</li> <li>Demonstrating computer and Internet skills</li> <li>Discussing features of hypertexts and advising reading strategies and how to read hypertexts</li> <li>Introducing language structures used in group speaking and writing tasks</li> <li>Eliciting students’ prior knowledge and activating the existing knowledge</li> </ul> |



|                           |   |   |
|---------------------------|---|---|
|                           | <p>Students</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Completing pre-reading activity</li> <li>• Practising reading texts, and completing written exercises individually, both in class and out of class.</li> <li>• Checking the students' answers</li> </ul> | <p>Students</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Group discussing and choosing a city of destination and specifying when to travel</li> <li>• Jigsaw reading – searching for information on the WWW, evaluating information and saving web sites</li> <li>• Making notes and recording information</li> <li>• Sharing obtained information in groups</li> <li>• Making notes when sharing information</li> <li>• Discussing, arguing, convincing and collaboratively planning a holiday trip</li> <li>• Writing a draft of a holiday plan following the given guidelines</li> <li>• Writing the plan on a word processor and sending it to other students and the teacher via e-mail</li> </ul> |
| Meta-linguistic awareness | Discussing reading strategies   | Discussing features of digital texts and specific reading strategies  |
| Meta-cognitive activity   | No reflection on how to learn   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reflecting students' awareness of how to learn</li> <li>• Teacher facilitated regular reflections on learning strategies</li> </ul>  |
| Teacher's roles           | Teacher-dominated: Preparing texts and exercises, teaching and explaining, controlling and supervising the class, providing corrective feedback, and assessing students' learning achievement   | Planner or manager of the classroom activities, students' needs analyst, confidence builder, scaffolding builder (facilitator/helper/guide/supporter), assessor, program evaluator, and researcher  |
| Students' roles           | Receptive/quiet learners: students did as told; complete tasks alone  | Active learners: students genuinely involved in doing tasks, collaborating with peers, solving problems, less dependent on teacher, more self-reliant   |
| Texts and materials       | Textbook prepared by the teacher; texts were copies from books and real-life sources  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hypertexts: Students self-search of information related to holiday plan from the Internet</li> <li>• Handouts of reading, speaking and writing tasks</li> </ul>  |
| Assessment                | Students' answers to exercises, written sub-tests, final examination (multiple-choice test type), class attendance  | Ongoing process<br>Assessing students' performances and completed tasks (students' e-mail messages, treasure hunt exercises, written notes and recorded information from reading, notes of information from group discussion, drafts of holiday plans, and written holiday plans)   |

As Table 7.1 indicates, the overall result of my pedagogical journey was the development of a program that was radically different from those that I had previously taught. In this new program, the focus was on the content – the information necessary for the groups of students to develop a negotiated travel plan. This content, and the final

task that students were required to complete, provided a context for students to use English as a tool to find information to create a holiday plan, and thus students had 'real' reasons for reading and for subsequent speaking, listening and writing, both in English and in Thai.

Students were provided with the opportunity to encounter real-world texts without the teacher's selection and preparation. Although some of these texts were beyond students' current abilities with English, with strong support from the teacher, and with specific support in terms of appropriate reading skills, students were able to engage with these texts. The implementation of a content based curriculum, in turn, changed the roles of both teacher and students.

The teacher's role varied with the demands of the program. At times the teacher needed to provide direct teaching input and expert advice. At other times, the teacher needed to step back and allow the students to work more independently, providing support only when requested. The students now took on more active roles: in discussions with the teacher; in group work; in locating relevant information; in undertaking independent work outside of the class; and in negotiating decisions about the final nature of the travel plan. As a result, classroom interactions were more dynamic than was previously the case. They were not limited to the interactions between teacher and students but also included interactions among students when pursuing activities.

The most obvious pedagogical differences can be summarised as follows:

- a shift from reading to the integration of all aspects of English language development;
- reading strategies became a means to an end (of being able to locate and read relevant information), rather than an end in themselves;
- differences in the roles of teacher and students, with the inclusion of more group and independent work for students, and with the teacher taking on a range of roles from providing expert input and strong scaffolding to facilitator;
- the inclusion of a deliberate meta-linguistic and meta-cognitive focus through ongoing discussions with students;
- differences in the kinds of texts and teaching materials that were used; and
- differences in assessment practices.

Significantly, in conjunction with these pedagogical changes, my whole teaching philosophy underwent a significant change. This has resulted in the articulation of my

*interactive approach*, which has been described in Chapter 6, and which is based on the following principles:

- 1) Students need to be encouraged to be actively engaged in genuine use of English for communication in a context. That is, they need to be engaged in meaningful learning tasks that involve integrated skills and authentic texts and materials;
- 2) Students need a collaborative learning environment in which they take part in social interaction in the ZPD;
- 3) The teacher plays an authoritative role in planning teaching programs, providing scaffolding of explicit instruction, guidance and support for students;
- 4) Students need to be guided to develop ‘meta-linguistic awareness’ in order to support their language learning; and
- 5) Students need to be encouraged to develop ‘meta-cognitive awareness’ in order to promote lifelong learning skills which are essential for the knowledge-based society.

The pedagogical changes outlined above, and the principles that underpin my interactive approach to teaching, have enabled me to develop a new model of teaching. Thus one major outcome of my research has been the development of my own improved model for teaching. This model provides a response to my research question about the pedagogical implications of use of the Internet in EFL, and more specifically to my sub-question about the principles that need to inform EFL programs which incorporate extensive use of the Internet.

This model will impact directly on my own future teaching and, as I will argue later in the chapter, the principles that inform this model are likely also to have implications for others working in similar contexts.

Before turning to the implications for others, however, I focus on some of the broader practical and theoretical implications that can be drawn from my research regarding implications of incorporating the Internet in EFL programs.

These include:

- Potential of the Internet in supporting EFL;
- Implications for understanding and teaching reading;
- Challenge to simplistic calls for CLT implementation.

### **Potential of the Internet for Supporting EFL Development**

The findings of Stage Two of the research confirm that the Internet is potentially a very powerful resource for English as a Foreign Language teaching and learning. Most particularly, the Internet enables teachers to address one of the greatest challenges faced

by teachers of EFL: that of constructing reasons for students to want to engage with language learning beyond the immediate goals of the classroom and the immediate pressures of passing examinations. By opening up worlds of information and entertainment via the Internet, as well as possibilities for engaging interactively with others, students are likely to become highly motivated to learn English (Johnson, 2002; Kung & Chuo, 2002; Kavaliauskiene, 2003). The Internet, because it primarily uses English, provides a driving reason for learning English. As Kasper (2002a) argues, the Internet provides a highly motivating learning environment that encourages students to interact with language in new ways. However, as my discussion in the previous section indicates, if the use of the Internet is to be more than an additional activity tacked on to traditional programs, then fundamental changes need to take place in the way that many foreign language programs are planned and implemented.

In Thailand this presents a number of challenges. As I indicate in section 3 of this chapter, these include traditional approaches to EFL, challenges of Thai government policy, English levels of teachers, teachers' heavy workloads, the constraints of the examination system, and the need for professional development. Despite these constraints, a major implication of my research is that implementation of the Internet in EFL education requires a fundamental rethinking of traditional approaches to teaching and to teacher education if it is to succeed.

### **Potential of the Internet for Understanding and Teaching Reading**

Since my original interest in this research concerned the potential of the Internet to assist students in their abilities to read in English, it is relevant to focus specifically on the implications that arise from incorporating the Internet in EFL programs both for teaching and understanding literacy.

My research outcomes from Stage Two indicate that the students read more widely and used different strategies for reading than did students in my previous programs. As indicated earlier, students in the new teaching program were given more flexibility and responsibility in finding and choosing texts and negotiating meanings. Students faced considerable challenges in locating and then reading 'real' texts that were not modified for instruction in any way. Although students were enthusiastic about engaging with

these texts, they required carefully guided support to help them do so. Students also needed to learn to read somewhat differently.

In most of their previous English courses, including my own previous *Paragraph Reading Strategies* subject, students were encouraged to read English texts intensively (Grellet, 1981). That is, they were encouraged to read word by word, and paragraph by paragraph, and to focus closely on the meaning of the text. In contrast, when locating information for their travel plans on the Internet, students needed to read differently. They needed first to establish the relevance of a text before reading closely. At times they did not need to read the whole text, rather they needed to extract selected details of information that were relevant to their purposes for reading. At other times, having located relevant texts, they needed to read sections closely and for details of information. The Internet thus provided the impetus and the opportunity for students to engage with both extensive and intensive reading (Grellet, 1981) of a variety of texts, and pushed them to persevere despite the challenges they experienced. In addition, they were able to draw on the context of the texts that they were reading to predict and guess the meanings of unfamiliar words including the contexts provided by multimedia and hyperlinks. Students thus needed to draw on reading strategies that were relevant for print texts (skimming, scanning, previewing, predicting, reading for gist of meaning), but also needed to develop new strategies for digital texts (online navigation, scrolling, evaluating relevance). This impetus provided by the Internet that pushed students beyond their current ability levels proved to be a powerful motivating factor in the new teaching program. Other researchers working in different contexts have similarly pointed to the value of the Internet in supporting and encouraging students' reading (Derewianka 1997; Pino-Silva, 2006).

In sum, my research highlights the potential of the Internet to assist students to develop the knowledge and skills to become effective, and increasingly independent readers. EFL students, such as those who participated in my research, will continue to need strong support in their initial engagement with Internet texts, as well as support to learn how to read effectively on the Internet. However, the impetus provided by the Internet provides a strong motivating 'push' factor that is likely to encourage students to engage with texts that are beyond their current level of English ability. The fact that students in my research continued to read in English outside of class (something they had rarely done previously), and were proactive in locating texts that were relevant to their

program, is evidence of the power of the Internet as a resource for supporting EFL programs. It appears that the Internet can encourage students to read in English at the outer limits of their ZPD (Hammond & Gibbons, 2005).

My research led me to change my practices in teaching reading. In addition, it forced me to rethink my understanding of what is involved in reading, and more generally of what is involved with literacy.

Literacy in contemporary society is shaped by the impact of ICT, especially the Internet. Therefore, as my research has shown, reading needs new skills and strategies to handle hypertexts which are characterised by hyperlinks, multimedia, being non-static, and providing vast amounts of information. In rethinking what is involved in reading, at this point I return to Freebody and Luke's (1990) argument that successful readers need at least to undertake the four roles of *code breaker*, *text participant*, *text user* and *text analyst*. As I argued in Chapter 3, this 'four roles' model provides a very useful framework for integrating the kinds of skills and strategies that are required in both print based reading and Web based reading. Outcomes from my research support this argument.

In my new teaching program, I would argue, students developed across all four roles. As *code breakers*, they decoded multimodal texts on the Internet and traced hyperlinks for further information. Here they needed to develop skills in handling icons and the combination of signs, symbols, pictures, words, texts and images that appear in the computer display (Street, 1998; Snyder, 2002). As *text participant*, the students employed a range of reading strategies. They read selectively and strategically, extensively and intensively in order to locate the information that they needed for the task at hand. Students also used a variety of knowledge sources such as background knowledge, topic of texts, headings and subheadings to predict and to make sense of texts. As *text users*, students engaged in 'reading related events' (Freebody & Luke, 1990:12), where, in groups, they discussed their reading, and shared information in order to work together to complete a particular task. As *text analysts*, students needed to evaluate informational resources and critically follow hyperlinks. To cope with the enormous volume of information on the Internet, the students began to develop skills in evaluating and selecting relevant information. Here students needed to consider

purpose, subject area, type of information, authority and reputation, accuracy, currency and maintenance (Ryder & Graves, 1997; McMillin, 1998; Cooke, 2001).

Clearly, in the one short program implemented as part of my research, students had only begun to develop across all four roles. However, it is important to note that this one short program served to highlight the potential offered by the Internet for students to develop more extensively across all four roles. Traditional EFL reading programs, including my own previous program, had focused on the roles of *code breaker* and *text participant*, but few encouraged students to take on the roles of *text user* and *text analyst*.

An important consequence of incorporating the Internet into EFL reading programs, I would argue, is the need to adopt a more comprehensive understanding of what is involved in reading. Internet reading seems necessarily to require readers to become more critical. As Burbules (1997) argues, when readers pursue hyperlinks, they need to make connections within and across texts using their own determination whether to continue on the same web page or move to another web page. In doing this, readers need to interpret links, the author's purpose for creating links and their own purpose for following the links. Similarly, Todd (2000:107) argues that Internet reading involves the ability to look critically at information that serves readers' needs, while Shetzer & Warschauer (2000:175) claim that reading online becomes 'critical literacy' as readers need to evaluate the information they encounter.

As I indicated in Chapter 2, the Thai government has stated that Thai graduates need global literacy involving English literacy and digital literacy with an emphasis on developing graduates with knowledge and skills in collaborative learning, critical thinking skills, problem solving skills, and skills in life-long learning. For EFL teachers of reading, the Internet offers a powerful resource for encouraging and supporting their students to engage with more comprehensive and critical reading in English, but it also requires a rethinking of what it means to read. Where EFL teachers and students embrace a rethinking of reading, they may be in a strong position to realise some of the aims of the Thai educational reform policy.

### **Questions about Simplistic Calls for CLT Implementation**

A further important outcome from my research is that it raises questions about the appropriateness of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) methodology in EFL contexts. More specifically, it raises questions about what are sometimes simplistic calls for this Western approach to be implemented uncritically in contexts where inadequate attention has been paid to the particular needs and expectation of both teachers and students.

As discussed in Chapter 3, a number of criticisms have been made of attempts to implement CLT in EFL contexts such as Thailand. These include concern with the emphasis in CLT on fluency at the expense of accuracy; its emphasis on learner centredness, and the cultural appropriateness of an approach that draws on Western assumptions about the nature of teaching and learning. Outcomes from my research generally reinforce such criticisms, and suggest that, while aspects of CLT are of value, this approach needs to be modified when adopted in Thailand. In what follows I will focus on just two specific areas that were highlighted by my research and that challenge assumptions that underpin CLT. These are:

- the role of the teacher; and
- the role of L1 in supporting L2 development.

#### *The Role of the Teacher*

There is a real tension in EFL contexts such as Thailand regarding the role of the teacher. As I have explained in Chapter 2, in Thailand, traditionally the role of the teacher is a dominant one in the teaching-learning process. Teachers are treated with great respect and are regarded as ‘experts’ who are not to be challenged or questioned. Despite this, the Thai educational reform policy specifically encourages the adoption of CLT on the grounds that English language programs need to place more emphasis on actual communication in English, as a way of improving Thai students’ levels of English. Part of this emphasis on CLT includes an emphasis on the need for English classrooms to be learner centred, rather than teacher directed. As noted in Chapter 2, the term learner centred is generally interpreted in the Thai context as ‘learning-centred’ with an emphasis on how students learn. However, the policy does raise problems for



English language teachers who are supposed to implement the reform policy. In fact, as I have previously noted, CLT has not been widely implemented in the Thai context.

I believe my research offers a way forward here. In Chapter 3, I raised Hammond's (1990) argument of the third possibility of a classroom between teacher-centred and learner-centred in which direct teaching is very important at certain stages. Then, the teacher steps back to allow space for students' genuine exploration, interaction and use of the language. Programs can thus be both teacher directed and learner centred. In my new teaching program, this is the approach that I adopted.

In my program I provided direct input to the students about the purposes of the program and the purposes of specific tasks. I also provided direct input about how to use the Internet and about specific reading strategies. However, I also provided opportunities for learner-centred pedagogical practices where students worked in groups and independently. As a result both teacher's and students' roles were different in this program from the usual case. I actually became a different kind of teacher altogether; providing explicit teaching but also a lot of scaffolding and guiding, then stepping back and allowing students to move together for group work where they had an opportunity to collaborate and use this as a learning process. As a result students took on more active learning roles in this program than was the case in my previous teaching.

The example of both teacher directed and learner centred pedagogy that is provided in my new teaching program offers a possible solution to the tension faced by other Thai teachers. It provides a way of reconceptualising the roles of teacher and students in English classrooms, where the traditional authoritative role of the teacher is maintained, but with the space for students to take on more active roles and to become more independent learners. As I reported in Chapter 6, I had not expected students in my new program to be particularly positive about group work as they were unaccustomed to this pedagogical practice. In fact, students reported that they had found the group work in the program to be valuable and they had enjoyed working with each other. I would suggest that one of the reasons for their positive evaluation was that this group work was balanced with direct teacher input – a more familiar pedagogical practice. Finally, because the teaching program provided opportunities for teacher input as well as student focused learning, it also provided opportunities for balancing fluency and accuracy.

*Role of L1 in Supporting Learning of L2*

A key feature of CLT is its emphasis on learning in and through the target language. In CLT classes, teachers and students are therefore discouraged from using L1. Along with others (Cook 1999, 2001; Murakami, 2001; Forman, 2005), my research encourages a reappraisal of the value of L1 in supporting learning of L2.

Outcomes from Stage One of my research indicated that English language programs could productively build on the enthusiasm that students had for the Internet. However, students who participated in Stage One clearly valued opportunities to switch between Thai and English, both as they learned necessary technical skills, and as they accessed the Internet. Outcomes from Stage Two confirmed students' preference for being able to switch between Thai and English when learning to use the Internet and when accessing information or e-mailing each other. In addition, Stage Two provided evidence that code switching between Thai and English was helpful in a number of other ways.

Firstly, using Thai helped overcome difficulties in communication between the teacher and students and between students. Classroom talk in my program was mainly in English when brainstorming students' background knowledge, and Thai was used only when students did not know the English words or did not understand clearly. Although students were encouraged to use English when working in groups to discuss travel plans, they were allowed to use Thai if they found difficulty in English. Opportunities for students to switch between English and Thai encouraged student participation, ensured understanding and relieved the pressure of struggling to speak English. It also enabled students to focus on the longer-term goal of the program – that of completing a detailed travel plan.

Secondly, Thai was used in explaining the overview of the teaching program and nature of tasks, so that everyone understood exactly what they were expected to do. At this stage, students needed to have an explicit understanding of all the features of the program.

Thirdly, Thai was used as a tool in building students' confidence by providing scaffolding to students or explicit instruction. It was mainly used in advising and demonstrating how to use the computer and the Internet – crucial skills for learning English in this project – in order to ensure students' full understanding. However,

technical terms in English were used. Using Thai not only facilitated communication and students' understanding, but also saved time.

Furthermore, Thai was used in the process of developing meta-linguistic and meta-cognitive awareness, thereby encouraging students to reflect upon their perceptions. It was used to talk about texts on the Internet and to talk about the relevant reading strategies. Discussing in both Thai and English helped facilitate this process.

Finally, Thai was used as a tool in collaborative talk among students. As indicated in Chapter 6, when reporting and sharing information, and when discussing and negotiating their holiday plan, students frequently switched to Thai in order to convey meaning. It can be argued that, in this case, L1 assisted collaborative talk to be more interactive and successful. Thus, students could develop L2 by the aid of L1. This finding is similar to the claim made by Antón and DiCamilla, (1999) that L1 is used as a tool in collaborative dialogue to provide an opportunity for L2 acquisition.

In sum, my research supports others who argue that the use of L1 provides a positive support for the learning of L2, and that rather than being a limitation or obstacle, it serves to facilitate L2 communication. My research also indicates that use of L1 helps to build students' confidence in using L2 and saves time when there is a need to explain or clarify specific points. In EFL contexts, local teachers and students speak the same L1, and thus it can help in communicating clear meaning. There is a proviso here however. Use of L1 can be fruitful, but teachers need to be aware of when and why L1 is used. L1 can be particularly helpful when explaining program goal and requirement of specific activities to students (Larsen-Freeman, 2000). L1 has an additional advantage for local teachers in EFL contexts who may lack confidence in their own English competence. Thus in EFL environments, strategic use of L1 can facilitate communication between the teacher and students and among students (Tarnopolsky, 2000; Forman, 2005) and allow more time to be spent addressing program goals. However, L1 should not be excessive (Nation, 2003).

### **Section 3: Implications for ELT, Limitations of the Research and Future Directions**

As I argued in Chapter 1, one of the contributions of my thesis lies in the implications of the research for the Thai EFL context and the broader EFL context. In this section I

address this argument in more detail. I also discuss limitations of the research and possible directions for future research.

### ***3.1 Implications of Research Outcomes for ELT in Thailand and Other Asian Countries***

The outcomes of my research will impact very directly on my own future teaching. The work that I have undertaken in the thesis has impacted on my theoretical understandings of language, literacy and learning. My reconceptualised model of teaching, described earlier in this chapter, and the principles that underpin this model will shape the design and implementation of future courses that I will teach at NPRU. In addition, it is my intention to make much greater use of the Internet as a resource for learning than was previously the case. In line with outcomes from my research, this will be done in a way that fully integrates the Internet into my teaching program. Thus one of the major implications of the research outcomes will be the impact that it has on my own future teaching.

In addition, I believe there are a number of implications that arise from my research more broadly for ELT in Thailand.

My research has provided evidence that the Internet is a powerful resource for learning. It has also shown that full integration of the Internet into English program requires shifts in theoretical understandings as well as pedagogical practices. Implications that arise from these outcomes are therefore likely to impact on a number of areas, including:

- approaches to EFL;
- Thai educational policy;
- cultural understandings of teachers and students;
- practical issues: curriculum, timetable, pressures resulting from high teaching loads;
- teacher education and professional development;
- assessment practices; and
- access to the Internet and to computer technology.

Along with others (e.g. Kasper, 2002a; Johnson, 2002; Pino-Silva, 2006), I have argued that full integration of the Internet offers powerful possibilities for supporting students

in their English language development. However, an important implication of my research is that in order for this potential to be realised, Internet use needs to be more than something which is tacked on to traditional EFL programs. As I explained earlier, this realisation led me on a pedagogical journey that resulted in a complete rethinking of my teaching philosophy and a rethinking of my pedagogical practices. My research therefore implies that full realisation of the potential offered by the Internet requires a similar rethinking of approaches that are currently used in EFL teaching in Thailand. In earlier sections I have outlined the tension that currently exists between Thai educational policy with its support for Communicative Language Teaching, and current teaching practices which typically emphasise the learning of grammar and other skills. I believe that the approach I developed in my research offers a constructive response to that tension, and provides a way forward that is appropriate for both policy makers and for teachers in the Thai EFL context. It is also an approach that is more sympathetic to Thai values and practices than Western versions of CLT.

However, if my approach to EFL were to be adopted more widely, there are a number of practical constraints that would need to be addressed. Currently in NPRU, the English curriculum is organised around subjects that prioritise either spoken English or writing or reading. That is, each subject prioritises only one of these aspects of English. My research indicates that it is more productive to integrate these skills. To do so, however, would require some reorganisation of the curriculum and timetable, as well as the cooperation of other lecturers whose workloads may be affected. Many of these lecturers face demands of high work loads and may be reluctant to change patterns of work that they are familiar with. They may also be reluctant to undertake the professional development that would be necessary to implement the kinds of changes implied by my research. Indeed, professional development would need to address beliefs and attitudes towards the potential of the Internet in enhancing ELT; knowledge and skills in using computers and the Internet, as well as changes to pedagogical practices. In order to implement these changes, it would be necessary to have the support of the University executive as well as some inducements to staff. In addition, the examination system would need to change. As I have indicated in Chapter, 2, currently examinations at NPRU focus primarily on grammar, vocabulary and reading. Any substantial adoption of my approach to EFL would require changes in the examination system. Finally, if any substantial changes were to be implemented, they

would impact on teacher education programs for undergraduate and possibly post-graduate students. In other Thai EFL contexts, similar practical constraints would need to be addressed in order to implement substantial changes.

An additional important implication that arises from my research for integration of the Internet in ELT is that of access. Along with others (e.g. Stamper, 2002; Borton, 2003; Vateulan, 2004; Todd, 2005) my research highlighted the problems that many Thai students face in terms of access to the Internet. Any substantial use of the Internet in Thai EFL would therefore require better access to the Web, and greater availability of computers. In addition, students need more and better support to learn how to use the Internet. Interestingly, my research showed some shift in students' use of Internet between those who participated in Stage One of the research and those who participated in Stage Two. This suggests that despite difficulties of access, students are very keen to use the Internet, and would make good use of any additional resources that were available to them.

These practical constraints highlight the difficulties to be faced in implementing educational change in Thai EFL, and suggest the need to 'hasten slowly'. It is my intention to begin by incorporating the Internet into individual subjects that are based on the pedagogical principles that I outlined earlier in this chapter. I hope to influence others by example.

The possibilities offered by my research and the constraints that exist in the Thai context are relevant for others working in the broader EFL context in other countries. They are especially relevant for EFL in other Asian countries where the teaching and learning culture is similar to that of Thailand.

### ***3.2 Limitations of the Research and Possible Directions for Future Research***

This research was conducted with small groups of students in one university in Thailand. While it provides insights into rural Thai students' use of the Internet and the potential of the Internet to assist such students to learn English, questions necessarily remain about the extent to which outcomes from the research can be generalised to other students and other contexts. My claim here, in line those typically made by qualitative researchers, is that the research outcomes provide insights, rather than proof, and that the findings in this one context are likely to be relevant to those in similar

contexts. If further research were conducted with students from similar backgrounds in related educational contexts, I would expect outcomes to be similar, but I acknowledge the need to be cautious when drawing conclusions and implications from the research. Further research in similar and also in different contexts is needed to substantiate (or reject) findings from this research.

Limitations also lie in the time scale of the research. Stage One of the research, where I investigated students' current Internet practices, was undertaken over quite a short period of time. This stage of the research was primarily ethnographic in nature, and thus the short time for the research was a limitation. The advantage that I had here however, was that, as a lecturer at NPRU, I was already familiar with the educational context and the broader cultural context in which the students were living and studying. I was thus able to bring both insider and outsider perspectives to the research, and I would argue that, despite the short time scale here, the insights from Stage One were sufficient to inform Stage Two.

Stage Two of the research was undertaken in one semester (14 weeks) and it was additional to the students' normal class. Sometimes, students were not able to come to my class because of the pressure of completing work in other subjects. As the semester progressed, this increasingly became an issue, with the result that students were pressured for time to complete tasks that were included in my program. Despite this, a majority of students did complete the program and, as I have indicated previously, responded favourably to it. If this program, or other similar programs, were taught as part of the normal University curriculum, students could be expected to experience less time pressure (since such a program would be part of their study, rather than additional to it) and could therefore be expected to participate at least as fully as did the Stage Two students.

A more serious limitation lies in the nature of the students who participated in Stage Two. Initially, from a possible field of 28, 17 students volunteered. For a combination of reasons, however, only 10 were able to complete the program. Presumably, those who volunteered, and then persisted, were the one who were most interested in the program and in the use of the Internet in EFL. It is therefore possible that they were atypical of other students at NPRU. Where broadly my research findings confirm those of previous researchers, it is difficult to be sure that outcomes from my research were

not influenced by the particular nature of the students who participated in it. Further research into the use of the Internet in EFL in Thailand and in other Asian countries is needed to address this issue.

Finally, perhaps the greatest limitation of the research was the fact that Stage Two was undertaken with a small group of students. Class sizes in Thailand are rarely so small, with numbers of students at time reaching around 50. Some of the pedagogical practices that I implemented in my new teaching program, especially those involving groups, would be more difficult to implement successfully with larger classes. In addition, it would be very difficult to provide the level of support that was possible in my program for classes with significantly larger numbers. Thus, although I maintain that the principles underpinning my reconceptualised model of teaching remain relevant, pedagogical practices may need to be modified to take account of the demands of working with large classes. Further research needs to be conducted around use of the Internet with larger classes.

Although constraints of the educational system in Thailand and other Asian countries are substantial, my research confirms that the Internet offers a powerful and exciting way forward in the teaching of EFL.



## **Appendices**

Appendix 1: Questionnaire for research Stage One

Appendix 2: Group interview questions for research Stage One

Appendix 3: Students' diary guidelines for research Stage One

Appendix 4: Questionnaire for research Stage Two

Appendix 5: Group interview questions for research Stage Two

Appendix 6: Follow-up interview questions for research Stage Two

Appendix 7: Students' diary guidelines for research Stage Two

Appendix 8: Treasure Hunt exercise

Appendix 9: Program tasks

Appendix 10: Handout with guidelines and language patterns of how to share information and how to discuss and plan a holiday trip

Appendix 11: Handout with guidelines of how to write a holiday plan

Appendix 12: Holiday plan to Sydney

Appendix 13: Holiday plan to Canberra

## Appendix 1: Questionnaire for research Stage One

### QUESTIONNAIRE (แบบสอบถาม งานวิจัยระยะที่หนึ่ง)

Please write your name and put a cross (x) in front of the word(s) or statement that is right for you. (โปรดเขียนชื่อ และกาเครื่องหมาย x หน้าข้อความซึ่งตรงกับความเป็นจริง)

Name.....

1. Gender:    ( ) Male                      ( ) Female
2. Age:        ( ) Below 19              ( ) 19-21              ( ) Over 21
3. How would you describe yourself as an Internet user?
  - ( ) I am a light Internet user (1-3 hours per week) (ใช้อินเทอร์เน็ตน้อยที่สุด)
  - ( ) I am a medium Internet user (4-6 hours per week) (ใช้อินเทอร์เน็ตปานกลาง)
  - ( ) I am a heavy Internet user (more than 6 hours per week) (ใช้อินเทอร์เน็ตบ่อยที่สุด)
- No. 4-5. Please write 1, 2, 3,...to indicate the most frequent use of the Internet respectively. (โปรดเขียนหมายเลข 1, 2, 3,... ตามลำดับการใช้อินเทอร์เน็ต จากมากที่สุดไปยังน้อยที่สุด)
4. Where do you use the Internet?
  - ( ) In the Self-access Language Learning Centre (ศูนย์การเรียนรู้ภาษาด้วยตนเอง)
  - ( ) In the library (ห้องสมุด)
  - ( ) In the Computer Centre (ศูนย์คอมพิวเตอร์)
  - ( ) At home (ที่บ้าน)
  - ( ) At an Internet café (ร้านซึ่งให้บริการอินเทอร์เน็ต)
  - ( ) Other (Please specify) อื่น ๆ (โปรดระบุ) .....
5. How do you use the Internet? (นักศึกษาใช้อินเทอร์เน็ตอย่างไร)
  - ( ) E-mail
  - ( ) Search engines
  - ( ) Chat room
  - ( ) Newsgroups
  - ( ) Mailing lists
  - ( ) Creating web pages
  - ( ) Other (Please specify) อื่น ๆ (โปรดระบุ) .....

6. In what language do you use the Internet? (ใช้อินเทอร์เน็ตเป็นภาษาใด)

( ) Thai

( ) English

( ) Both

( ) Other (Please specify) อื่น ๆ (โปรดระบุ) .....

How much do you use it in each language? (นักศึกษาใช้อินเทอร์เน็ตมากน้อยเพียงใดในแต่ละภาษา)

.....  
.....  
.....

When do you switch between Thai and English? Why?

(นักศึกษาเปลี่ยนการใช้ภาษา ระหว่างภาษาไทยและภาษาอังกฤษเมื่อใด และเปลี่ยนเพราะเหตุใด)

.....  
.....  
.....

7. Why do you use the Internet? (Please explain)

(นักศึกษาใช้อินเทอร์เน็ต เพื่อจุดประสงค์ใด โปรดอธิบาย)

.....  
.....  
.....

8. Do you think the Internet could help you learn English? If so, how?

(นักศึกษามีความเห็นว่ายินเทอร์เน็ตมีส่วนช่วยในการเรียนภาษาอังกฤษหรือไม่ อย่างไร โปรดอธิบาย)

.....  
.....  
.....

***Thank you for your cooperation***

## Appendix 2: Group interview questions for Research Stage One

### GROUP INTERVIEW QUESTIONS (RESEARCH STAGE ONE)

1. Can you tell me when you first used the Internet? (When? Where? Why? How long? How often? In what language? etc.)

(นักศึกษาช่วยเล่าถึงการเริ่มใช้อินเทอร์เน็ตเป็นครั้งแรก (เริ่มใช้เมื่อไร ที่ไหน และใช้เพื่อจุดประสงค์ใด การใช้อินเทอร์เน็ตแต่ละครั้งใช้เวลานานเท่าไร และใช้ภาษาใด))

2. Do you use the Internet often – tell me about this?

(นักศึกษาใช้อินเทอร์เน็ตมากน้อย เพียงใด อย่างไร)

3. What do you use it for – can you tell me about this?

(นักศึกษาใช้อินเทอร์เน็ต เพื่อจุดประสงค์ใด)

4. Can you tell me about a typical day in your life and how you typically use the Internet? (not for group interviews)

(ให้นักศึกษาเล่าถึงการใช้อินเทอร์เน็ตในชีวิตประจำวันของนักศึกษาเอง (สัมภาษณ์รายบุคคล))

5. How important do you think the Internet is (นักศึกษามีความเห็นว่ายินเทอร์เน็ตมีความสำคัญอย่างไร)

to you? (ต่อตัวนักศึกษาเอง)

to Thai people? (ต่อประชาชนชาวไทย)

to people in other countries? (ต่อคนทั่วโลก)

6. Do you think the Internet can help you learn English? How?

What impact has it had for you? (นักศึกษามีความเห็นว่ายินเทอร์เน็ตมีส่วนช่วยในการเรียนภาษาอังกฤษหรือไม่ อย่างไร มีผลกระทบต่อนักศึกษาอย่างไร)

Do you think it could be used to help students in their English classes? How?

(และคิดว่าเราสามารถใช้อินเทอร์เน็ตในการเรียน การสอน ภาษาอังกฤษในชั้นเรียนได้อย่างไร)

7. Would you use the Internet more if you had more access?

(หากนักศึกษามีโอกาสเข้าถึงอินเทอร์เน็ตได้มากกว่าที่เป็นอยู่ในปัจจุบัน นักศึกษาจะใช้อินเทอร์เน็ตมากขึ้นหรือไม่ อย่างไร)

Do you have a computer at home?

(นักศึกษามีคอมพิวเตอร์ที่บ้านหรือไม่)

## Appendix 3: Students' diary guidelines for research Stage One

### STUDENTS' DIARY GUIDELINES

#### (Research Stage One)

(แนวทางการจดบันทึกประจำวัน งานวิจัยระยะที่หนึ่ง)

Date (วันที่):

Time (เวลา):

Place (สถานที่):

Tasks (กิจกรรม):

Keep a diary as a weekly basis following these guidelines:  
(จงจดบันทึกรายสัปดาห์ตามแนวคังต่อไปนี้)

Questions (คำถาม):

1. Did you use the Internet? (นักศึกษาใช้อินเทอร์เน็ตหรือไม่)
2. Where did you use it? (ใช้ที่ไหน)
3. What did you use it for? (ใช้เพื่อจุดมุ่งหมายใด)
4. In what language did you use the Internet? (ใช้อินเทอร์เน็ตเป็นภาษาอะไร)
5. How long did you use it? (ใช้นานเท่าไร)
6. Did you find any problems in using the Internet? If yes, what were they?  
(พบปัญหาในการใช้อินเทอร์เน็ตหรือไม่ อย่างไร)
7. Did it help you learn English? How?  
(นักศึกษาคิดว่าอินเทอร์เน็ตมีส่วนช่วยในการเรียนภาษาอังกฤษหรือไม่ อย่างไร)



6. In what language do you use the Internet? (ใช้อินเทอร์เน็ตเป็นภาษาใด)

( ) Thai

( ) English

( ) Both

( ) Other (Please specify) อื่น ๆ (โปรดระบุ) .....

How much do you use it in each language?

(นักศึกษาใช้อินเทอร์เน็ต มากน้อยเพียงใด ในแต่ละภาษา)

.....  
.....  
.....

When do switch between Thai and English? Why?

(นักศึกษาเปลี่ยนการใช้ภาษา ระหว่างภาษาไทยและภาษาอังกฤษเมื่อใด และเปลี่ยนเพราะเหตุใด)

.....  
.....  
.....

7. Why do you use the Internet? (Please explain)

(นักศึกษาใช้อินเทอร์เน็ต เพื่อจุดประสงค์ใด โปรดอธิบาย)

.....  
.....  
.....

8. Do you think the Internet could help you learn English? If so, how?

(นักศึกษามีความเห็นว่ายินเทอร์เน็ตมีส่วนช่วยในการเรียนภาษาอังกฤษหรือไม่ อย่างไร โปรดอธิบาย)

.....  
.....  
.....

9. What Internet applications would you like teachers to adapt and use in an English class?

(นักศึกษาต้องการให้อาจารย์ผู้สอนใช้อินเทอร์เน็ตในการสอนภาษาอังกฤษอย่างไรบ้าง)

.....  
.....  
.....

10. Would you be willing to participate in an English teaching program incorporating the Internet? Why?

(นักศึกษามีใจเข้าร่วมเรียนในโปรแกรมการสอนภาษาอังกฤษโดยใช้อินเทอร์เน็ตหรือไม่ และเพราะเหตุใด)

.....  
.....  
.....

***Thank you for your cooperation.***

## Appendix 5: Group Interview questions for research Stage Two

### INTERVIEW QUESTIONS (Research Stage Two)

Interview questions used in the research Stage Two have been adapted from Greenfield (2003).

#### *Perceptions*

1. Do you think the Internet helps you in learning English? (reading skills, writing skills, vocabulary, grammatical structures, navigating web pages, reading at your own pace, communication skills) If so, how?  
(นักศึกษาคิดว่าอินเทอร์เน็ตมีส่วนช่วยในการเรียนภาษาอังกฤษหรือไม่ อย่างไร เช่น ทักษะการอ่าน การเขียน คำศัพท์ ไวยากรณ์ การอ่าน web page การอ่านตามความสามารถของนักศึกษา ตลอดจนทักษะในการสื่อสาร)

  - What skills have you developed from searching for and reading hypertexts?  
(นักศึกษาได้มีการพัฒนาทักษะใดจากการสืบค้นและการอ่าน hypertexts)
  - How have your language abilities and cultural knowledge increased after learning in this program?  
(นักศึกษาได้มีการพัฒนาความสามารถทางภาษาอังกฤษ และเพิ่มพูนความรู้ทางวัฒนธรรม จากการเรียนในโปรแกรมการเรียนนี้หรือไม่ อย่างไร)
  - How do you think this program will help you in your normal subject “Paragraph Reading Strategies”?  
(นักศึกษาคิดว่า การเรียนในโปรแกรมนี้มีส่วนช่วยในการเรียนวิชา การอ่านอนุเจต (Paragraph Reading Strategies) หรือไม่ อย่างไร)

2. Tell me about the teaching and learning situations in the program.  
(นักศึกษาช่วยเล่าเกี่ยวกับสถานการณ์ในการเรียนการสอนในโปรแกรมนี้)

  - How do you think the teacher and students’ roles in this program are different from those in your normal classes?  
(นักศึกษาเห็นว่าบทบาทของครูและบทบาทของนักเรียนในรายวิชานี้แตกต่างจากบทบาทของครูและบทบาทของนักเรียนในรายวิชาปกติหรือไม่ อย่างไร)
  - How do you find working with other students help you learn English? (social aspect)  
(นักศึกษาคิดว่าการทำงานกับเพื่อน เป็นคู่หรือกลุ่มมีส่วนช่วยในการเรียนภาษาอังกฤษหรือไม่ อย่างไร (มองในแง่สังคม))
  - Were there things about the program that you liked?  
(สิ่งใดที่นักศึกษาชอบเกี่ยวกับโปรแกรมนี้)
  - Were there things about the program that you didn’t like?  
(สิ่งใดที่นักศึกษาไม่ชอบเกี่ยวกับโปรแกรม)



3. What do you think were the strengths and weaknesses of the program?  
(นักศึกษาคิดว่าอะไรคือจุดเด่น และอะไรคือจุดด้อยของโปรแกรม)
4. Do you think reading hypertexts is different from reading print texts? If so, how?  
(นักศึกษาคิดว่า การอ่านเนื้อหาจาก Internet (hypertexts) แตกต่างจากการอ่านเนื้อหา จากสิ่งพิมพ์ เช่น หนังสือ หรือไม่ อย่างไร)  
  
And what strategies did you use when reading hypertexts?  
(นักศึกษาใช้กลวิธีการอ่านใดในการอ่าน hypertexts)
5. Do you think you can apply knowledge and skills you have learned in this program to other courses and to using English in 'real life'? If so, how?  
(นักศึกษาคิดว่า จะสามารถประยุกต์ใช้ความรู้และทักษะที่ได้ฝึกจากการเรียนใน โปรแกรมนี้กับการเรียนในรายวิชาอื่น ๆ และประยุกต์ใช้ในชีวิตจริงได้หรือไม่ อย่างไร)

*Attitudes* (เจตคติ)

6. Tell me what tasks you liked most in this program and what tasks you disliked most.  
(ให้นักศึกษาช่วยบอกเกี่ยวกับกิจกรรมที่ชอบมากที่สุด และกิจกรรมใดที่ไม่ชอบมากที่สุด ในโปรแกรม)
  - Do you think tasks in the program stimulated you in learning?  
(นักศึกษาคิดว่ากิจกรรมในโปรแกรมมีส่วนกระตุ้นในการเรียนหรือไม่ อย่างไร)
  - What aspects of using the Internet do you like and find them easy to use?  
(การใช้ อินเทอร์เน็ตในลักษณะใดที่นักศึกษาชอบและพบว่าง่ายในการใช้)
  - What aspects of using the Internet do you dislike and find them difficult to use?  
(การใช้ อินเทอร์เน็ตในลักษณะใดที่นักศึกษาไม่ชอบและพบว่ายาก)
  - Do you think using search engines to find information easy or difficult?  
(นักศึกษาคิดว่า การใช้ search engines ในการค้นหาข้อมูลง่ายหรือยากอย่างไร)
7. How did you feel about teaching and learning activities at the beginning of the program in June and at the end in September?  
(นักศึกษามีความรู้สึกอย่างไรเกี่ยวกับกิจกรรมการเรียนและการสอนในโปรแกรมตั้งแต่ต้นจนถึงสิ้นสุด โปรแกรม (เริ่มตั้งแต่เดือนมิถุนายน ถึงเดือนกันยายน))
8. What do you think about this teaching program?  
(นักศึกษามีความคิดเห็นอย่างไรต่อโปรแกรม)
9. Do you have any suggestions for program like this in the future?  
(นักศึกษามีข้อเสนอแนะอย่างไรบ้างต่อ โปรแกรมการสอนในลักษณะนี้ในอนาคต)
10. Are there any other comments you want to make about the program or about what you have learned in the program?  
(นักศึกษามีข้อคิดเห็นอื่น ๆ อีกหรือไม่เกี่ยวกับโปรแกรม หรือเกี่ยวกับสิ่งที่นักศึกษาได้เรียนรู้ จากโปรแกรม)

## Appendix 6: Follow-up interview questions for research Stage Two

### FOLLOW-UP INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

#### (Research Stage Two)

1. What do you remember about the program that I taught you last year?  
(นักศึกษาจำอะไรได้บ้างเกี่ยวกับโปรแกรมการเรียนเมื่อปีที่แล้ว)
  - 1.1 What (if anything) do you think you learned from that program?  
(นักศึกษาคิดว่าได้เรียนรู้อะไรจากโปรแกรม)
    - About computers and the Internet? (เกี่ยวกับคอมพิวเตอร์และอินเทอร์เน็ต)
    - About traveling to Australia? (เกี่ยวกับการท่องเที่ยวประเทศออสเตรเลีย)
    - About English? Culture? (เกี่ยวกับภาษาอังกฤษและวัฒนธรรม)
    - About learning atmosphere? (เกี่ยวกับบรรยากาศการเรียนการสอน)
  - 1.2 Do you think the program helped you with English? If so, how?  
(นักศึกษาคิดว่าโปรแกรมการสอนช่วยในการเรียนภาษาอังกฤษหรือไม่ อย่างไร)
  - 1.3 Do you think the program helped you with reading on the Internet? If so, how?  
(นักศึกษาคิดว่าโปรแกรมนี้อ่านเกี่ยวกับการอ่านจากอินเทอร์เน็ตหรือไม่ อย่างไร)
  - 1.4 Did it help you with anything else?  
(นอกจากนี้โปรแกรมช่วยด้านอื่น ๆ อีกหรือไม่)
2. Do you think you have used anything you learned in that program in other learning situations? If so, what? And how?  
(นักศึกษาคิดว่าได้นำความรู้ใดบ้างจากการเรียนในโปรแกรม และใช้อย่างไร)
3. Since your participation in the program, have you used the Internet more?  
(หลังจากการเข้าร่วมโปรแกรมแล้ว นักศึกษาใช้อินเทอร์เน็ตมากขึ้นอีกหรือไม่)
  - 3.1 If so, in what language? (ถ้าใช่ ใช้เป็นภาษาใด)
  - 3.2 Do you switch from Thai to English or from English to Thai? If so, when do you switch and why? (เปลี่ยนจากการใช้ในภาษาไทยเป็นภาษาอังกฤษหรือไม่ เปลี่ยนเมื่อไร และทำไม)
  - 3.3 Where do you use it? (ใช้อินเทอร์เน็ตที่ไหน)
  - 3.4 What do you use it for? (ใช้เพื่ออะไร)
4. What do you think about role of the Internet more generally in helping you learn English? (นักศึกษาคิดว่าอินเทอร์เน็ตมีส่วนช่วยในการเรียนภาษาอังกฤษอย่างไร)
5. Would you like teachers to use the Internet in English classes? If so, how?  
(นักศึกษามีความประสงค์ให้อาจารย์ใช้อินเทอร์เน็ตในการสอนภาษาอังกฤษหรือไม่ อย่างไร)

## Appendix 7: Students' diary guidelines for research Stage Two

### STUDENTS' DIARY GUIDELINES (Research Stage Two) (แนวทางการจดบันทึกประจำวัน งานวิจัยระยะที่สอง)

Date (วันที่):

Time (เวลา):

Place (สถานที่):

Tasks (กิจกรรม):

Keep a diary as a weekly basis following these guidelines:

(จงจดบันทึกรายสัปดาห์ตามแนวคั้งต่อไปนี้)

*Major question* (คำถามหลัก):

What was your general reaction to the lesson today?

(นักศึกษามีปฏิกิริยาโต้ตอบอย่างไรต่อบทเรียนในวันนี้)

*Sub-questions* (คำถามย่อย):

1. What did you find easy?

(กิจกรรมใดบ้างที่นักศึกษาคิดว่าง่าย)

2. What did you find difficult?

(กิจกรรมใดบ้างที่นักศึกษาคิดว่ายาก)

3. Did you use the Internet? If so, did it help you learn English? How?

(นักศึกษาใช้อินเทอร์เน็ตหรือไม่ หากใช้ คิดว่าอินเทอร์เน็ตมีส่วนช่วย ในการเรียนภาษาอังกฤษหรือไม่ อย่างไร)

4. What was your attitude towards the lesson? (interesting, motivating, exciting, useful, meaningful, encouraging)

(นักศึกษามีเจตคติอย่างไรต่อบทเรียนในวันนี้ (เช่น น่าสนใจ ดึงดูดใจ น่าตื่นเต้น มีประโยชน์ มีความหมาย กระตุ้นให้เกิดการเรียนรู้ เป็นต้น))

## Appendix 8: Treasure Hunt exercise

### TREASURE HUNT

The purposes of this activity are to enable students to:

1. Use search engines to find information on the Internet; and
2. Scan and find needed information.

Instructions:

Find the answers to these questions using search engines.

- Write down the address of the sites you want to visit again.
  - When you finish compare your answers with other people in the class.
1. How many states and territories are there in Australia? What are their names?
  2. What is the population of Australia?
  3. When was the Opera House opened?  
How long did it take to build? What was the name of the architect?
  4. You want to convert 5,500 Thai Baht to AUD dollars. How much will you get in Australian currency?
  5. What is the birthday of the Statue of Liberty? What is its weight?
  6. What is the price of an adult ticket to see Penguin Parade at Phillip Island, Victoria, Australia?
  7. The city of Geneva in Switzerland is located between the two mountain ranges. What are the names of these two mountain ranges?
  8. What is the price for a 20-week General English course at the University of Brighton in the UK?
  9. When was Celine Dion born?
  10. When did Leonardo da Vinci begin his famous fresco named *The Last Supper*?

In developing this activity I have drawn on the web site Internet Treasure Hunts for ESL Students (<http://iteslj.org/th/>).

The Treasure Hunt activity is used in Stage Two of my doctoral research project: *The Impact of the Internet on English Language Teaching: A Case Study at a Thai Rajabhat University*.

## Appendix 9: Program tasks

### Two Weeks in Australia

Tasks:

In your group, you need to:

1. Choose destination and specify when to travel
2. Two people need to find out about:
  - Passport and visa requirements
  - Flight information
  - Australian currency
  - Local time in the city you would like to visit
  - The weather in that city
- Three people need to find out about:
  - Tourist attractions
  - Activities
  - Special events
  - Accommodation
  - Transportation
3. Use search engines to search for relevant web sites and find out needed information
4. Complete charts and make notes
5. Save web sites and web pages onto a floppy disk or in e-mail  
(1-5 will take 5 weeks)
6. Come back to your group and share information. You need a secretary to write down the information
7. Plan a two-week holiday and budget the cost of the whole trip  
(6-7 will take 3 weeks)
8. Write the holiday plan on word processing, attach file with an e-mail and send it to students in other groups and the instructor  
(2 weeks)

## **Appendix 10: Handout with guidelines and language patterns of how to share information and how to discuss and plan a holiday trip**

### **Worksheet 5**

*Objective 7:* Participate in discussing, arguing, reasoning, convincing, and collaboratively planning a holiday trip.

- Come back to your group. Report and share the information from your notes and charts.
- Discuss, negotiate, argue, give reasons, encourage and convince other members in the group to agree with you.
- Make suggestions about what flight to choose, where to visit, where to stay, what to do and how to travel in that city
- Listen to other people and make notes (This will be the basis for planning the holiday trip and writing the plan)
- Discuss, argue and collaboratively make a holiday plan (Use mainly English but you are also allowed to use Thai if you find difficulty).
- Provide reasons to support your argument.

Examples:

#### **Sharing information**

Passport requirements

I have found out that we need to apply for a passport at the .....

Documents we need are.....

In applying we need to.....

We must pay.....as a fee and it will take.....days to get the passport.

Visa requirements

We need to apply for a visa at the .....

The type of visa we need is.....

Documents we need are.....

In applying we need to .....

We must pay.....as a fee and it will take.....days to get the visa.

Australian currency

We need to convert from Thai Baht to Australian dollar. One dollar equals.....Baht.

Local time

The time in Australia is....hours ahead of the time in Thailand.

Weather

It's.....in Australia. The maximum temperature is..... The minimum temperature is.....

**Discussion, argument, giving reasons, encouraging and convincing**

Do you think what airline should we choose? I think we should....

What flight? What about...?

I think we should visit.....and spend.....days there.

What activities should we do? We can....

We may join Jazz Festival.

Where shall we stay? I think we should stay at.....because.....Why don't we stay at....?

I think we can get there by....

We may rent a four-wheel drive.

How much is the rent per day?

***Everyone needs to write down the conclusion of the discussion.***

## **Appendix 11: Handout with guidelines of how to write a holiday plan**

### **Worksheet 6**

*Objective 8:* Develop skills in writing the draft of and the holiday plan using a word processor.

In your group, write your holiday plan (from the draft you have written in objective 7) on a word processor. You may copy pictures from a web page as well as URLs and paste on the word processing, name and save the file, attach the file with an e-mail and send it to students from other groups and the instructor. Follow the guidelines below:

- 1) Title
- 2) Date and duration
- 3) City/destination
- 4) Airline
  - Flight
  - Type of ticket
  - Price
  - Departure
  - Arrival
- 5) Where to visit (plus descriptions and reasons)
- 6) Where to stay (plus details) Why
- 7) What to see and what to do
- 8) How to travel to each place
- 9) Total cost of the whole trip per person (Thai Baht and Australian dollar), which includes:
  - Passport and visa cost
  - Air ticket
  - Admission fees to enter particular places (if any)
  - Accommodation
  - Travel cost in the city
  - Food
  - Shopping e.g. souvenirs



## Appendix 12: Holiday plan to Sydney

### Two Weeks in Sydney

**Date:** 1<sup>st</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> October 2003

**Destination:** Sydney

**Airline:** Thai Airways

**Flight:** TG 991

**Type of ticket:** Economy class

**Price:** 28,500 Thai Baht (AUD 1,017)

**Departure:** Bangkok, 1<sup>st</sup> October 2003, 18.15

**Arrival:** Kingsford Smith, Sydney, 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2003, 06.15

**Duration:** 9 hours, Non-stop

#### Where to Visit:

**2<sup>nd</sup> October 2003**

- check in at Stellar Suites
- go to Sydney Opera House

Its distinctive white sails and prominent position jutting into the harbour make this the most widely recognised landmark of urban Australia. A source of controversy in Australia since it was built between 1958 and 1973, it has been called both "a bunch of mussels stuck in the mud" and "the building of the century."



Go Royal Botanic Gardens



### 3 October 2003

- go to Sydney Harbour Bridge

The Sydney Harbour Bridge is one of Sydney's most famous landmarks. Completed in 1932, the construction of the bridge was an economic feat as well as an engineering triumph.



- go to the Powerhouse Museum ( open 10 am - 5 pm )

The Powerhouse Museum, Australia's largest and most popular museum is located in Darling Harbour. Its collection of 385,000 objects is unique and diverse spanning social history, music, science, technology, design, industry, decorative arts, transport and space exploration.

The Museum has an ever-changing program of exhibitions and houses 22 permanent exhibition spaces and five temporary exhibition spaces. These fascinating exhibits along with more than 250 interactives bring the Powerhouse Museum to life.



- have dinner on cruise ( 7 pm ) , price 127 AUD

Sydney's most elegant way to dine afloat, the John Cadman Cruising Restaurant is synonymous with luxurious dining and first class service with Captain Cook Cruises. Enjoy a three course a la carte dinner from the extensive menu, prepared by International chefs with a comprehensive selection of fine Australian Wines. The state of the art 'MV Sydney 2000' offers three separate dining areas, atrium, 360 degree viewing deck, dance floor and music with the John Cadman Trio.

4 October 2003

- go to Darling Harbour



Darling Harbour is one of Sydney's most popular recreation spots with over 1.3 million people visiting the sunny foreshore precinct each year. The area has a colourful history playing an integral role in Sydney's early market days when it was used for receiving fresh produce and timber from Parramatta and the north coast.

- Sydney Harbour Adventure

Adventure seekers, imagine racing at 75 km per hour through Sydney Harbour, under the Sydney Harbour Bridge past the Opera House and the Australian Navy Fleet before skimming around Fort Denison and the Prime Minister's Sydney Residence. Then head to quieter waters and unleash the full power of the Jet.



© HarbourJet

- go to the Art Gallery of New South Wales ( 10 am-5 pm )



Comprehensive historical collection of Australian and European Art. Other collections include Aboriginal & Torres Strait gallery, Asian Art, Western Art, Contemporary Art, photography, and the Brett Whiteley Studio.

### 5 October 2003

- check in at Rd Kestrel Hotel Manly Beach
- go to Manly Beach



Manly is at the northern end of Sydney Harbour and has a harbour beach and one of Sydney's longest and most beautiful ocean beaches. The surfing beach at Manly is about three kilometres long and has three names, North Steyne, South Steyne and Queenscliff. It is an ideal 'city escape' for visitors who enjoy swimming, surfboarding or windsurfing and is the gateway to the Northern Beaches. Manly has numerous restaurants, cafes and pubs - some with discos.



**6 October 2003**

- go to Oceanworld Manly ( 10 am- 5.30 pm )

The aquarium was completely rebuilt and redesigned in 1992. The aquarium has won many national and international awards for customer excellence. It's a fantastic way to spend the day with your friends and family while enjoying the beautiful marinelife, and being intrigued by some of the worlds most venomous creatures.



- go to the Manly Art Gallery and Museum ( admission cost 3.50 AUD )



The Manly Art Gallery & Museum, magnificently situated on Sydney Harbour, four minutes walk from Manly Wharf. Opened in 1930, by Manly Council, it was the first metropolitan regional gallery in NSW. The Gallery has become a popular destination for thousands of local, interstate and international visitors each year.

**7 October 2003**

- check out / go to Sydney Central Station for go to blue Mountains
- check in Penrith Lakes

**8 October 2003**

- go to Blue Mountains



The Blue Mountains provides the best training and conference environment available. rugged wilderness, ancient surrounds, fine food and quiet, unobtrusive friendliness.

- Scenic World (Scenic Skyway) prices adult 10.00 AUD

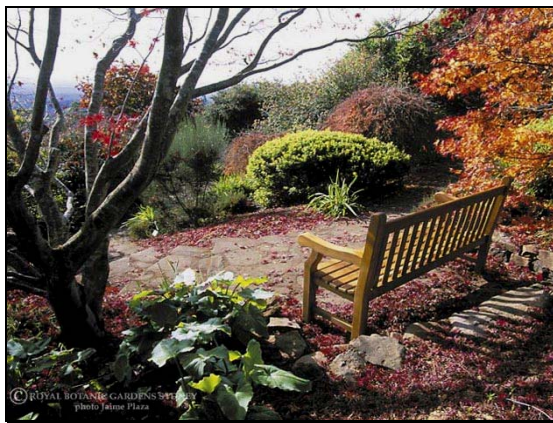


Australia's only horizontal passenger carrying cable car  
A 7 minute ride 200 metres above the Jamison Valley  
Superb views of the Three Sisters, Katoomba Falls, Mt Solitary and Orphan Rock  
Can take up to 32 passengers  
Operates every 10 minutes

9 October 2003

- go to Mount Tomah Botanic Garden ( open 10am-4pm) / entry charges adult 4.40 AUD

Mount Tomah Botanic Garden is the cool-climate garden of the Royal Botanic Gardens. It covers 28 hectares on the summit of a basalt-capped peak 1000 metres above sea level in the world heritage listed Greater Blue Mountains. The theme of this Garden emphasises cool-climate plants from around the world, especially those from the southern hemisphere.



We would like go to The Tomah Botanic Garden because it is beautiful so much .

**10 October 2003**

- Have lunch on the Nepean Belle (cruise) / time 12.30pm-2.30pm



- Check out
- go to The sable pier one Sydney hotel by train

**11 October 2003**

- go to Sydney Tower

The Centrepoint Tower or the AMP tower is a spectacular in the Sydney Skyline. It is 305 metres and (1000feet) above the city of Sydney. It is a wonderful tourist attraction and there are modern show.



**Sydney Tower**

- Sydney Tower area is market street.



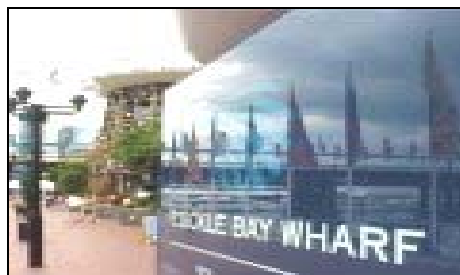
**12 October 2003**

- go to Sydney Aquarium (open 9am-10pm daily ) / ticket adult 23 AUD

One of the world's best aquariums, two enormous tanks – one swimming with fish found in Sydney Harbour ,while the magnificent Great Barrier Reef section has thousands of colourful fish and coral outcrops



- go to the Cockle Bay Wharf



### **Cockle Bay Wharf**

On the city side of Cockle Bay is Cockle Wharf, an ideal place to stop for an alfresco bayside refreshment at one of many restaurant, brasseries, and cafes. This stylish waterside complex brings a rush of excitement and entertainment to the city side of Darling Harbour.

**13 October 2003**

- go to Taronga Zoo by ferryboat (open 9am- 5pm) /ticket 10AUD

The panoramic views of the Zoo and Sydney Harbour are simply breathtaking aboard The Sky Safari's 21 six-passenger gondolas, which operate between the Zoo wharf and the Top Entrance.



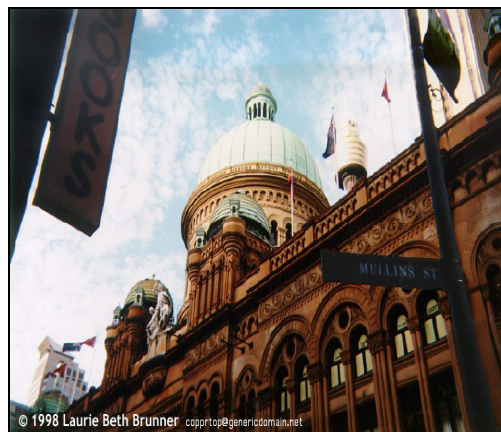
**entrance**

- go to Taronga Zoo market street.

**14 October 2003**

- go to The Queen Victoria Building

This 1898 sandstone building began life as a Sydney produce market. The market closed at the end of World War I. By the 1950s the building was threatened with demolition. Refurbished at a cost of over \$75 million, the QVB re-opened in 1986 as a shopping gallery with more than 190 shops. The building is adorned with sweeping staircases, enormous stain glass windows, statues of Queen Victoria and her dog Islay.





- go to Town Hall Arcade
- go to the malls on Pitt Street

**15 October 2003**

- Check out

to be on the alert go to airport by taxi

**Accommodation**

**2 October 2003 – 4 October 2003 to stay at Stellar Suites**



- Hotel Facilities :**
- Conference facilities
  - Laundry and dry cleaning
  - Guest laundry
  - Safe deposit box ( on request )
  - Smoking and non –smoking room
  - Parking (available on request at extra cost )

- Room Facilities :**
- Individually controlled air conditioning
  - Remote control colour television
  - Direct dial telephone
  - AM / FM digital Radio
  - Shower over bath
  - Hairdryer
  - Kitchenette with microwave
  - Tea and coffee making

facilities

We choose Stellar Suites because it not expensive and place not far we plan.

5 October 2003- 7 October 2003 to stay at Rd Kestrel Hotel Manly Beach



- Room Facilities :**
- Air-conditioning
  - AM / FM radio
  - Colour TV
  - Ironing facilities
  - Hairdryers
  - Mini – bar
  - Tea and coffee making facilities

- Hotel Facilities :**
- 24-hour reception
  - Restaurant
  - Cocktail bar
  - outdoor spa
  - Souna
  - Swimming pools

We choose Rd Kestrel Hotel Manly Beach because it's beautiful . it's not expensive and near the Manly beach.

7 October 2003 – 10 October 2003 to stay at Penrith Lakes



We choose Penrith Lakes because it's not expensive , of the weather clear and beautiful.

**11 October 2003 – 15 October 2003 to stay at The Sebel Pier One Sydney**



- Hotel Facilities :**
- Restaurant and wine bar
  - 24-hour business facilities
  - In room dining
  - Non-smoking rooms
  - 24-hour reception , concierge and room service
  - Day spa room
- Room Facilities :**
- Dining and writing table
  - Bathrobes
  - Voice mail
  - Hairdryers
  - Internet connection
  - Bathroom amenities
  - Iron and ironing board
  - Electronic room key

**We choose The Sebel Pier One Sydney because it's not expensive and place not far we plan.**

**Total cost of the whole trip per person**

Fee passport : 1,005 Baht  
Fee Visa : 1,850 Baht  
Air ticket : 28,500 Baht  
Hotel at stellar suites : 3,023 Baht  
Hotel at Rd Kestrel Hotel Manly Beach : 1,925 Baht  
Hotel at Penrith Lakes : 1,495 Baht  
Hotel at The Sebel Pier One Sydney : 3,396 Baht  
From Airport to stellar suite by taxi : 140 Baht  
Ticket Sydney Harbour Bridge : 140 Baht  
Ticket Powerhouse Museum : 280 Baht  
Dinner Cruise : 3,472 Baht  
Sydney Harbour Adventure : 2,100 Baht  
Taxi cost come in Manly Beach : 140 Baht  
Ticket Ocean World Manly : 462 Baht  
Admission The Manly Art Gallery and Museum : 98 Baht  
Cost The Nepean Belle (Luncheon Cruise) : 924 Baht  
Ticket Sydney aquarium : 644 Baht  
Ticket Taronga Zoo : 280 Baht  
Food about : 30AUD per day : 11,760 Baht  
Shopping about : 20,000 Baht  
**Total cost 80,497 Baht = 2,875 AUD**

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## Appendix 13: Holiday plan to Canberra

# Two weeks in Canberra

**Date:** 14<sup>th</sup> October 2003 to 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2003

**Duration:** 15 days

**City / destination:** Canberra

**Airline**

### **Bangkok to Sydney**

Flight out : 14<sup>th</sup> October 2003 / Thai Airways Int'l TG 991 E

Departing : Bangkok Int'l (BKK), Bangkok, Thailand (time 18:15)

Arriving : Kingsford Smith (SUA), Sydney, NS, Australia (time 06:15)

### **Sydney to Bangkok**

Flight back : 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2003 / Thai Airways Int'l TG 980

Departing : Kingsford Smith (SUD), Sydney, NS, Australia (time 22:20)

Arriving : Bangkok Int'l (BKK), (time 08:30)

**Price of Thai Airways** = 25,945 Bath

We must go to Sydney before go to Canberra because no flight from Bangkok to Canberra.

### **Sydney to Canberra**

Flight out : QF 1509

Type of ticket : Super sever

Price : \$ 100 adult

Departure : From Sydney (time 10:40)

Arrival : To Canberra (time 11:30)

Flight back : QF 1432

Type of ticket : Red e-Deal

Price : \$ 71 adult

Departure : From Canberra (16:40)

Arrival : To Sydney (17:30)



## Where to visit

- **Lake Burley Griffin** : we want to visit there because it beautiful.

Lake Burley Griffin, beautiful but artificial lake. The city the north of the lake. There you can go shopping and cycling around the lake.

- **Hills and mountains** : We want to visit there because it has spectacular views and we think it has exciting activities to do.

Hills and mountains, Canberra is situated amongst a number of hills and bushland. Hills include Mt. Majvra 888 m. hight, Mt. Ainslie 843 m. hight, Red Hill 720 m. hight and Mt. Pleasant 663 m. hight. There are several trails that make ideal walks and bike ridea that spectacular views of the city.



- **National Museum of Australia** : We want to visit there because we want to learn about history of Australian and culture.

National Museum of Australia opened in March 2001, the centenary of Federation of Australia. Here you can see a history of Australia and culture through a blending of exhibits, technology and hands on activities. So, you can see the gallery of the first Australians indicates the country's heritage.



- **Aboriginal Tent Embassy** : We want to visit there because we want to know about it .

Directly in front of **Old Parliament House** is the Aboriginal Tent Embassy. It was established in 1972, and although has been pulled down and rebuilt over the years is currently standing. The land on which the tents are situated was originally Aboriginal land with numerous artifacts being found on the site.

The Aboriginal Tent Embassy is standing up for its land rights. The Aboriginal flag first received recognition at this point. You will also notice a fire which has been burning for many years, which the Aboriginal Tent Embassy and people will not let go out.

There is a really interesting exhibition inside of the Aboriginal Tent Embassy. You can read various articles and documentation, as well as see a wide selection of photographs and Aboriginal artwork.



- **The Australia War Memorial**: We want to visit there because we want to know about war in Australia.

The Australian War Memorial was opened in 1941, and looks down upon Canberra and Parliament House. It is open everyday between 10.00am-5.00pm and hosts a large collection of pictures and documentation about the War. In addition Anzac Parade gives you an opportunity to reflect on the human cost of war. There are several memorials along Anzac Parade, with large war relics being kept at Treloar Technology Centre, (corner Vickers and Callon Streets in Mitchell).



## What to do:

- Canberra spring's flowers festival
- Shopping
- Cycling
- Walking , Aboriginal Tour, Camel
- Snowy mountain
- Dawn Drifter
- At Monarto Zoological Park



**How to travel to each place:** We can get there by minibus-tour

**Where to stay:** We stay at Hotel Heritel and Canberra Waldorf because they are comfortable and have good service.

- **The hotel heritage** is ideally located near the major attraction of the Parliamentary Triangle and two of Canberra's cosmopolitan shopping villages, accommodation at the Heritage hotel ensures easy access to all the action.



- **Canberra Waldorf** is comfortable and many facilities, coffee shop, pub, IID phone, swimming pool.

**Total cost of the whole trip per person:** ADU 65,552 ( ThB 183,472 )

- Passport ฿1,005
- Visa ฿1,850
- Air tickets 1) BKK – Sydney – BKK = ThB 25,945  
2) Sydney – Canberra = ADU 100  
Canberra – Sydney = ADU 75
- Accommodation = ADU 1,540 ( \$ 110 per night / person )
- Travel cost = ADU \$ 88.00 per day
- Food
- Shopping = ADU 7,008

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