

# A Development of a Blended Learning Model for English Reading Instruction to Enhance Reading Achievement of University Students

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## Abstract

In the midst of multilingual societies and digital information depletion around the world, English reading skill obviously becomes an important skill for language learners. This is because it can acquire the successful learning especially in the world which has rapid advancement of education and technology. The ability to read is to assist strengthening the individual learning endlessly and give opportunities for improving the students' life by acquiring more knowledge from various forms of media in order to achieve personal, occupational, and professional goals. During the past few years, there are many studies which support the students' learning achievement with the blended learning. This is with the reason that it can enhance the students' learning autonomy, interactivity, and lifelong learning. Moreover, it can benefit both face-to-face and virtual modes of instruction, provides

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learning speeds and various learning styles, and also helps individual students to meet their own goals at their own pace. The purposes of this study are to develop and examine the quality of a blended learning model, implement and study the results, and explore the students' attitudes toward a blended learning model for English reading instruction. The instruments used are consisted of semi-structured interviews, the instructional model and documents, the English Reading Comprehension Test, and the questionnaire. The result shows that a blended learning model is appropriate for the students and can support the students' reading achievement at the significance level .05. Moreover, the students' attitudes toward a blended learning model for English reading instruction are high.

**Keywords:** Blended Learning, EFL Reading, English Reading Achievement

## 1. Introduction

With the world of globalization, at the present time, English reading skill becomes essential and noteworthy for second language learners. To explain this, the reading skill can acquire the successful learning especially in the world which has rapid advancement of education and technology. This is because the ability to read, particularly with English as the second language, is already in great demand as English continued to spread in order to develop their proficiency to achieve personal, occupational, professional or even educational goals (Grabe & Stoller, 2002, p. 2).

In the case of Thailand, noticeably, reading skill becomes one of the most vital skills in languages' learning for Thai students especially in the university level. This is because it becomes the road to knowledge as 'the more they read, the more they learn' (Piyankool, 2001). In addition, reading is one of the most important communicative skills in any academic or professional field because it can greatly expand vocabulary, improve

writing, and enhance general language competence (Sukavatee, 2007, p. 1). With the aforesaid importance of reading, it is stated that reading is important for Thai students because they have to get involved with reading every day, in everywhere. And they need to concentrate on it in order to complete their academic education and careers; as a result, this makes reading one of the most significant skills to acquire the successful learning, especially in the rapidly changing information-driven technological world.

It is obviously seen that most of the educators, instructional designers, and teachers are challenged significantly with the explosive growth of new distributive technologies (Miner, 2003, p. 22). They are required to provide the students with the skills they will need to excel in a technology-rich society to enhance the students' achievement and assist them in meeting learning objectives (Shelly, Cashman, E. Gunter, & A. Gunter, 2004, p. 18). Moreover, Meesuwan (2012, p. 95) suggested that learning tools like smartphones or tablets are required being used whether in or outside the classroom in order to discover the best learning method to the students.

In recent years, there have been a number of attempts to enhance university students' language learning achievement as well as to facilitate conventional courses using communication media. According to Shelly, Cashman, E. Gunter, & A. Gunter, 2004, p.18), there have been several studies which claimed that the best way to enhance the students' achievement and assist them in meeting learning objectives is to use Internet communication technology. This is also supported by Asunda (2010, p. 17) that the Internet provides an opportunity to develop on-demand learning and learner-centered instruction and training and also build up the learning environment with flexibility, distributed delivery, interactivity, effectiveness and collaboration (Khan, 2001, p. 13-16). Moreover, with the 21st century learning, it is inevitable for the teachers and the students to use technology in language classroom. This is with the reason that technology

should be used in the way that it enhances face-to-face instruction and becomes crucial for the change of language instruction in any kind of learning environment (Suwannasom & Novio, 2014, p. 79).

With this in mind, the Internet is significant to improve the students' learning; however, Internet alone, is not without limitation or drawbacks, for example, the facelessness or the lack of verbal and facial cues, body language, technological breakdowns, and the lack of discipline of students. Therefore, blended learning which is referred to the integration of traditional teaching methods and online learning tools is offered as a solution. Face-to-face learning can create energy and enthusiasm, build relationships, and cultivate a sense of community in the classroom while online learning offers scheduling flexibility, promote interactivity, foster community building, and provide a permanent record and expand time (Garrison & Kanuka, 2004, as cited in Ayala, 2009, p. 280). Furthermore, blended learning can support opportunities for teacher-student interaction, increase students' engagement in learning, add flexibility in the teaching and learning environment, and opportunities for continuous improvement (Vaughan, 2007, p. 1).

Accordingly, blended learning becomes an effective and appropriate alternative for EFL instruction since it can enhance the teacher's teaching method, benefit the students' learning ability, and power up the students' satisfaction.

## 2. Blended Learning Design for English Language Instruction

### 2.1 *The Importance of Blended Learning*

With the advancement of technology and developments of teaching and learning instruments which have varied in the ways of learning over decades, most of the teachers began to facilitate their conventional courses using communication media such as audio and

videotape, telephone and television. In addition, as a consequence of a high technology, a computer is considered being chosen as a well-liked tool of teaching in the rapid changing world specifically in higher education. That can be rational that technology is the integrating platform that seamlessly connects the real and virtual educational worlds (Garrison & Vaughan, 2008, p. 86). Moreover, with the rapid development of Information Technology (IT) in recent years, most of the teachers employ computers as teaching tools as to support and enhance teaching and learning. That is because it can increase students' information literacy capability which is necessary for the knowledge and information based society and encourage them to apply their capability to study activities as well as daily life (Korea Education and Research Information Service, 2001).

What is more, with the use of the computer, predominantly, Internet becomes "one of the most important economic and democratic mediums of learning and teaching" (Khan, 1997, p. 5) in the educational setting. With the widely spread of "internet technology and advances in computer and information technologies as well as networked learning made it possible to design and utilize new generation learning environments that are realistic, authentic, and engaging" (Caner, 2010, p. 78).

With this in mind, blended learning, also known as BL, has been popularly used in the academic setting for technical innovation in learning for many centuries in the past five years. According to Sharma & Barrett (2007, p. 7), blended learning refers to a language course which combines a face-to-face classroom component with an appropriate use of technology. As Clark (2003, p. 8) said, to highlight what drives blended learning new and motivated is the exciting and powerful array of web-based options that have cascaded on to the market over the last few years. It is also to be considered under the condition of learning which blends or combines traditional face-to-face learning environments with e-learning instruction by

engaging students in both online and offline activities (Garrison & Vaughn, 2008; Graham, 2006; Klein, Noe, & Wang, 2006; Mortera-Gutierrez, 2006; Shemla & Nachmias, 2007 as cited in Deutsch, 2010, p. 42).

Moreover, Aycock, Garnham, & Kaleta (2002) also supported that the power of blended learning is its flexibility and pedagogical effectiveness. This is because it emphasizes active learning techniques, increases student's interaction with other students and the instructor. Consequently, many teachers and researchers are eager to integrate the blended learning perspective in their classrooms with the purposes of improving the students' learning outcomes and fostering a continuous process of learning which is rooted in the idea that learning is not just a one-time event (Singh & Reed, 2001, p. 6; Deutsch, 2010, p. 26).

Accordingly, the idea of blended learning which combines a face-to-face classroom component with an appropriate use of technology (Sharma & Barrett, 2007, p. 7) is beneficial for the teachers to design their language classroom and enhance the students' learning outcome. It is provided language teachers and students with many more opportunities to explore the most suitable mix of teaching and learning styles for a given task. It is also offered directions that have attracted attention and are now considered an important component or venue in any language learning curriculum (Marsh, 2012, p. 4).

## 2.2 *Effectiveness of Blended Learning in English Language Learning*

There are plenty of successful studies in the literature that deal with the implementation of blended learning into the courses from the secondary to tertiary educational levels both in Thailand and other countries.

One interesting study was Sukavatee's research (2007). This research was a development of the social constructivism blended learning module for enhancing reading engagement and English reading ability of

upper secondary school students. Fifty-three upper-secondary Grade 11th students at Chulalongkorn University Demonstration Secondary School were chosen as the sample group. The results of this study implied that the social constructivism blended learning module benefited the low reading ability students, improved their reading ability, and suited their diverse collaborative learning behavior.

In the year 2009, Thunglap designed a construction and efficiency validation of blended learning instruction media on Interpretative Reading (EN202) for undergraduate students of Ramkhamhaeng University. The purposes of this research were to construct and validate the efficiency of blended learning instruction media using a web-based tool developed for undergraduate students at Ramkhamhaeng University studying interpretative reading (ENG 202). For collecting the data, the constructed text, exercise, tests, and questionnaires were used. The subjects of the study were thirty undergraduate students who were registered for ENG 202 at Ramkhamhaeng University. The findings revealed that the efficiency of the constructed tool was at 80.2/80.46 which was higher than the criteria 80/80 evaluation, and the students' level of achievement after studying the construction media and the learners' satisfaction were at a high level.

Yarahmadi (2011) investigated the effect of blended instruction (face-to-face instruction accompanied with online instruction) on reading comprehension ability of Iranian EFL learners. Two intact classes containing ninety sophomore female and male students of English Translation at Islamic Azad University of Arak Branch, Iran participated. The findings found that the use of online instruction as a supplement to in-class instruction proved to be a powerful tool for improving students' achievement in reading. Apart from that, the use of blended learning (use of online instruction as a supplement to face-to-face instruction) was extended to other language course and other college levels. Blended learning increases the options for greater quality and

quantity of human interaction in a learning environment. Blended learning offers learners the opportunity to be both together and apart. Learners can interact at anytime and anywhere because of the benefits that computer-mediated educational tools provide.

### 3. Significance of the Study

Reading is the fundamental skill for acquiring information, and the main channel of language input. It also becomes a vital skill for studying a second language as well as plays an important role among four skills mentioned by many research studies. Furthermore, reading is also essential to succeed in the society because it is the only one skill which makes students become wise, creative, and reasonable (Khuhaphinun, 1999, p. 22). Saengpakdeejit (2009, p. 22) supported that reading skill plays a dominant role in learning because it will contribute enormously to success in their study both inside and outside the classroom. However, there are several students who face difficulties in reading. This affects from students themselves who lack of their proficiency in their reading skill and importantly the teachers' style of teaching. There are many research studies identifying that only the traditional style of teaching or online instruction does not totally enhance the students' reading achievement. For enhancing the students' ultimate goal of reading comprehension, it is highly considered to implement two different styles of instruction: face-to-face and online modes in order to enhance the students' reading achievement. This present study attempts to develop a blended learning model for English reading instruction to enhance reading achievement of university students who enroll on Intensive English course at Mae Fah Luang University in the first semester, academic year 2014.

The result of this study will lead to a better understanding of the development of a blended reading instruction which is emphasized on



face-to-face classroom teaching method and online-mediated activities. Moreover, it can develop the students' reading ability and skills for autonomous learning and lifelong learning. In addition, it can support English language instruction with the use of technology to facilitate the students' autonomous language learning. It also facilitates the teachers' instruction and students' language learning both inside and outside classroom. Apart from that, it is to add value to the traditional face-to-face teaching method.

#### 4. Purposes of the Study

There are three main purposes of the study:

1. to develop and examine the quality of a blended learning model for English reading instruction to enhance reading achievement of university students
2. to implement and study the results of a blended learning model for English reading instruction to enhance reading achievement of university students
3. to explore the students' attitudes toward a blended learning model for English reading instruction

#### 5. Framework in Blended Learning Model

##### *5.1 The Development of Blended Learning Model for English Reading Instruction*

A blended learning model for English reading instruction to enhance reading achievement of university students is designed with ten relevant components: objectives, learning environment, students' role, teachers' role, contents, instructional strategies, instructional materials, instructional procedures, evaluation, and feedback. Each component is relevant to each other as shown in the figure below:

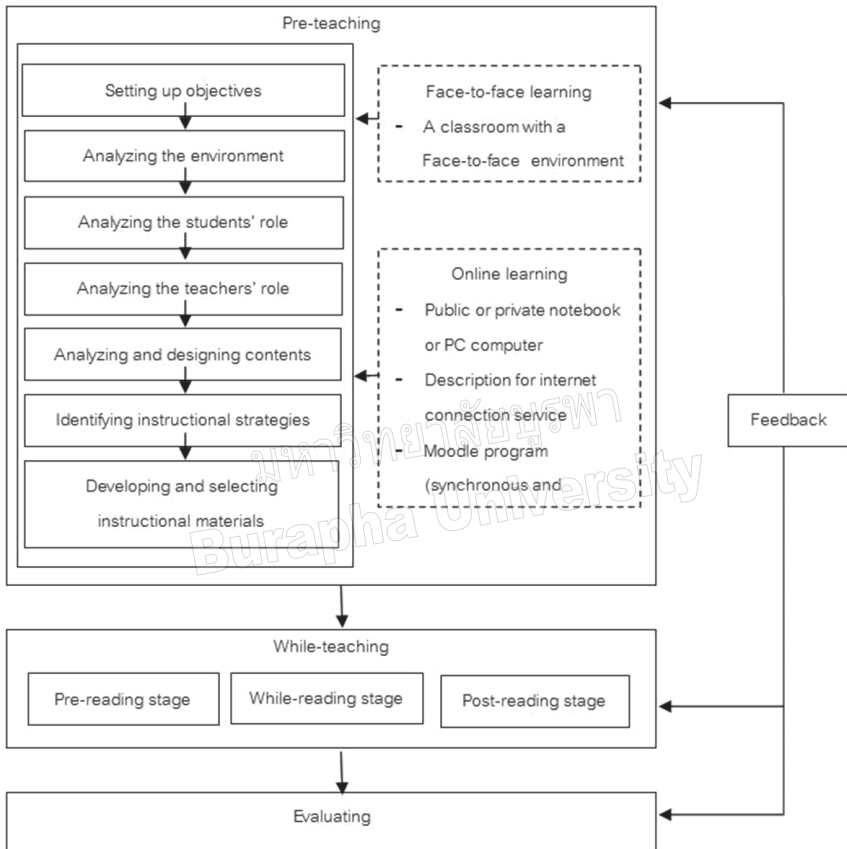


Figure 1 Blended Learning Model for Reading Instruction

## 6. Research Methodology

### 6.1 Participants

The participants of this study were forty-two first year students who attended the Intensive English during the summer semester, the academic year of 2014 at Mae Fah Luang University. All of them were non-English major students and they were selected by purposive sampling based on the classes assigned by English Department, Mae Fah Luang University.

## 6.2 Research Instruments

For this study, there are five instruments as follows:

- Semi-structured interviews were used with the purpose of eliciting the information from teachers and students.
- The blended learning model was designed for the instruction in the classroom and via online.
- Seven lesson plans and an instructional manual were used in order to present a guideline for the teachers to conduct the instruction and propose step by step about the information according to rationale, instructional materials, activities, teacher's role, students' role, evaluation, learning environment, and other suggestions which are useful for implementation of the model.
- The English Reading Comprehension Test consisting 32 items was used for pre-testing and post-testing students.
- The questionnaire in the format of five-point Likert scale was used in order to evaluate the students' attitudes toward teaching and learning using the instructional model.

All of these instruments were evaluated by the experts and tried out before implementing the blended reading instruction.

## 6.3 Validity and Reliability of the Instruments

- Semi-structured interviews for students and teachers were evaluated by five experts to evaluate the topics used and the completeness of the interviews topics and the appropriateness of language use.
- Blended learning model was evaluated by twelve experts to evaluate the appropriateness of the instructional model.
- Lesson plans were evaluated the appropriateness of the components' specification of the lesson plan (in general), the appropriateness of the components in the lesson plans (by component), and the use of language by twelve experts. The instructional manual was evaluated the

completeness and the appropriateness of language use by twelve experts.

- The English Reading Comprehension Test was evaluated by five experts for ensuring the content validity and the appropriateness of language use. It was also trying out and then analyzed the level of difference and power of discrimination of the test and calculated the test reliability by using Cronbach Coefficient.

- The questionnaire was evaluated by three experts for the content validity and the appropriateness of the factors used in the questionnaire.

#### 6.4 Research Procedures

There are three stages for designing the research procedures:

##### **Stage 1: Developing and Examining the Quality of the Instructional Model**

The researcher studied a background information which was involved with the students' problems in English reading and the state and problems of teaching and learning in a reading classroom, and the related theories: blended learning, constructivism learning theory, 21st century learning, and ESL/EFL reading. In addition, before designing the components of the blended learning model, the researcher studied the experts' instructional model who were specialized in the design of instructional process in order to enhance the reading achievement of university students and created the blended learning instructional model and proposed to the twelve experts to examine the quality of a blended learning model.

##### **Stage 2: Implementing and Studying the Results of the Instructional Model**

In this stage, the instructional model and instructional documents which were developed, evaluated by the advisor and experts, tried out, and revised for the appropriateness and completeness of the instructional model and instructional documents were tried out with forty-two first year students

who studied Intensive English course at Mae Fah Luang University during the first semester, academic year of 2014 and studied the results of the instructional model. Before the instruction, the students were asked to complete the pre-test in order to assess their reading ability. At the end of the instruction, the students were required to take a post-test.

### Stage 3: Exploring the Students' Attitudes towards the Instructional Model

The questionnaire was distributed to the students in order to explore the students' attitudes toward the instructional model. The questionnaire was evaluated by three experts in the areas of the appropriateness and completeness of evaluated items used in the questionnaire. It was involved with their attitudes towards a blended learning model, face-to-face instruction, and online instruction.

#### 6.5 Data Analysis and Statistical Procedures

For this study, the data was analyzed as shown in the following lists:

- The blended learning model

The consistency of the components of the instructional model and the appropriateness of the components' description was evaluated based on the Index of Item Objective Congruence (IOC) criteria and then the findings were presented by the mean rating ( $\bar{X}$ ) and standard deviation (S.D.) of each item.

- The face-to-face and online lessons

The appropriateness and completeness of the face-to-face and online lessons were evaluated based on the five rating scale and then the findings were shown by the mean rating ( $\bar{X}$ ) and standard deviation (S.D.) of each item. The efficiency of the lessons was evaluated according to the efficiency of the E1/E2 evaluation.

- The instructional documents: instructional manual and lesson plans

The appropriateness and the completeness of the instructional manual and lesson plans were evaluated based on the five rating scale and then the findings were presented by the mean rating ( $\bar{X}$ ) and standard deviation (S.D.) of each item.

- The English reading achievement tests of university students

The pre-test and post-test were assigned to the students to do before learning with a blended learning model and after they finished learning with a blended learning model. The t-test Dependent Sample was used for evaluating the comparison of the English reading achievement of university students by using a blended learning model for English reading instruction.

- The students' attitudes toward a blended learning model for English reading

## Instruction

The students' attitudes toward a blended learning model for English reading Instruction was analyzed by the five rating scale and then the findings were presented by the mean rating ( $\bar{X}$ ) and standard deviation (S.D.) of each item.

## Findings

*Finding One: Developing and Examining the Quality of a Blended Learning Model*

The Findings of Developing of a Blended Learning Model

A blended learning model for English reading instruction designed by the researcher was based on the background information: 1) the students' problems in English reading, 2) the state and problems of teaching and

learning in a reading classroom, and 3) the related theories: blended learning, constructivism learning theory, 21st century learning, and ESL/EFL reading.

The Findings of Examining the Quality of a Blended Learning Model

In order to examine the quality of a blended learning model, the consistency of the components of the instructional model and the appropriateness of the components' description were proposed to twelve experts who specialize in four different areas: language, curriculum and instruction, educational technology, and computer technology.

For the consistency of the components of the instructional model, the evaluation was presented below:

**Table 1** Mean Ratings for the Evaluation for the Consistency of the Components of the Instructional Model

Evaluation for the Consistency of the Components of the Instructional Model	Mean	Meaning
Setting up Objectives	0.92	Appropriate
Analyzing the Environment	1.00	Appropriate
Analyzing the Students' Role	1.00	Appropriate
Analyzing the Teachers' Role	0.83	Appropriate
Analyzing and Designing Contents	1.00	Appropriate
Identifying Instructional Strategies	0.92	Appropriate
Developing and Selecting Instructional Materials	0.83	Appropriate
Designing Instructional Procedures	1.00	Appropriate
Evaluating the Learning Outcome	0.92	Appropriate
Giving Feedback	0.83	Appropriate
Mean	0.93	Appropriate

n = 12

From the above Table 1, it can be seen that there is no component from the above table that is under 0.50. The mean score for the consistency of the ten components of the instructional model which is evaluated from twelve experts is 0.93. This means all ten components of the instructional model are consistent to each other and appropriate to use for a blended learning instruction

For the appropriateness of the components' description, the evaluation is presented below:

**Table 2** Mean Ratings for the Evaluation for the Appropriateness of the Components' Description

Evaluation for the Appropriateness of the Components' Description	Mean	Meaning
Setting up Objectives	1.00	Appropriate
Analyzing the Environment	1.00	Appropriate
Analyzing the Students' Role	0.83	Appropriate
Analyzing the Teachers' Role	0.92	Appropriate
Analyzing and Designing Contents	1.00	Appropriate
Identifying Instructional Strategies	1.00	Appropriate
Developing and Selecting Instructional Materials	0.92	Appropriate
Designing Instructional Procedures	1.00	Appropriate
Evaluating the Learning Outcome	0.92	Appropriate
Giving Feedback	0.92	Appropriate
Mean	0.95	Appropriate

The above Table 2 shows the mean ratings for the evaluation for the appropriateness of the components' description. It can be seen that the mean ratings for the appropriateness of the components' description is 0.95. This



means all ten components are appropriate for the components' description.

*Finding Two: The Comparison of English Reading Achievement of University Students by Using a Blended Learning Model for English Reading Instruction*

In order to compare of the English reading achievement of forty-two university students by using a blended learning model for English reading instruction, the students were assigned to do the pre-test before learning with a blended learning model and the post-test after they finished learning with a blended learning model. In this part, the t-test Dependent Sample is used for evaluating the comparison of the English reading achievement of university students by using a blended learning model for English reading instruction. It is shown in the Table 3 below:

**Table 3** The Average Score Comparison of English Reading Achievement of University Students by Using a Blended Learning Model for English Reading Instruction by Pre-Test and Post-Test Scores

Scores	n	$\bar{X}$	S.D.	t	p
Scores for Pre-Test	42	11.48	4.82	23.554	*.000
Scores for Post-Test	42	18.67	6.10		

\* Significant level at .05

From the Table 3, the mean level of English reading achievement of university students before learning with a blended learning model is 11.48 (4.82) and the mean level of English reading achievement of university students after learning with a blended learning model is 18.67 (6.10). This means it is at the significant level .05.

*Findings Three: The Students' Attitudes toward a Blended Learning Model for English Reading Instruction*

The researcher designed a questionnaire to survey the students' attitudes toward a blended learning model for English reading instruction. In the questionnaire, the students were asked about their attitudes toward a blended learning model, face-to-face instruction, and online instruction after they finished learning a blended learning model. The results of the findings were shown below:

**Table 4** The Mean Rating for the Students' Attitudes toward a Blended Learning Model for English Reading Instruction

No	Statements	$\bar{X}$	S.D.	Meaning
Blended Learning Model				
1	Studying with blended learning model enhances your knowledge and enjoyment.	4.33	.72	High
2	Studying with blended learning model is attractive.	4.36	.62	High
3	Studying with blended learning model is convenient. You can study and review anytime anywhere.	4.31	.68	High
4	You can study the new lessons before attending in the classroom.	4.55	.50	Highest
5	You have an opportunity to study both in and outside the classroom.	4.74	.45	Highest
6	You can interact with peers and teacher when you study with blended learning model.	4.64	.49	Highest
7	There is a clear explanation of contents and exercises.	4.26	.83	High
8	Overall, you like to study with blended learning model.	4.48	.59	High
9	The teaching and learning duration is appropriate.	4.52	.51	Highest
10	The instructional materials are concise.	4.64	.53	Highest

No	Statements	$\bar{X}$	S.D.	Meaning
11	The instructional procedures are appropriate and concise.	4.24	.76	High
12	The contents are appropriate and interesting.	4.45	.67	High
Face-to-Face Instruction				
13	You can use your prior knowledge about the text during you study with face-to-face in the classroom.	4.48	.67	High
14	During your study with face-to-face in the classroom, you know how to use reading strategy.	4.43	.67	High
15	You do not feel alone when you study face-to-face in the classroom.	4.05	.76	High
16	Studying with face-to-face in the classroom helps you prepare your language and reading ability.	4.43	.63	High
17	You have an opportunity to participate with your peers and teacher in the classroom.	4.43	.70	High
Online Instruction				
18	Studying online is a modern way of learning.	4.36	.73	High
19	Studying online is attractive and easy to use.	4.45	.67	High
20	It is convenient to study online.	4.40	.70	High
21	You can use various tools: online and offline to communicate with your friends and teacher.	4.52	.63	Highest
22	You can share your ideas with your friends and teacher when you study online.	4.45	.63	High

According to the Table 4, the questionnaire is divided into three main parts: blended learning model, face-to-face instruction, and online instruction. For blended learning model, five out of twelve items are at the highest level. They are the items 'You have an opportunity to study both in and outside the classroom.' (mean = 4.74), 'You can interact with peers and teacher when you study with blended learning model.' (mean = 4.64), 'The instructional

materials are concise' (mean = 4.64), 'You can study the new lessons before attending in the classroom.' (mean = 4.55), and 'The teaching and learning duration is appropriate' (mean = 4.52). This means the students are highly satisfied the blended learning model. Apart from that, there are seven items which are at the high level. They are the items: 'Overall, you like to study with blended learning model.' (mean = 4.48), 'The contents are appropriate and interesting.' (mean = 4.45), 'Studying with blended learning model is attractive.' (mean = 4.36), 'Studying with blended learning model enhances your knowledge and enjoyment.' (mean = 4.33), 'Studying with blended learning model is convenient. You can study and review anytime anywhere.' (mean = 4.31), 'There is a clear explanation of contents and exercises.' (mean = 4.26), and 'The instructional procedures are appropriate and concise.' (mean = 4.24).

For face-to-face instruction, there is only one item which is at the mean level 4.48. It is 'You can use your prior knowledge about the text during you study with face-to-face in the classroom'. There are three items which are at the mean level 4.43. They are 'During your study with face-to-face in the classroom, you know how to use reading strategy.' (mean = 4.43), 'Studying with face-to-face in the classroom helps you prepare your language and reading ability.' (mean = 4.43), and 'You have an opportunity to participate with your peers and teacher in the classroom.' (mean = 4.43). The item 'You do not feel alone when you study face-to-face in the classroom.' is at the mean level 4.05.

For online instruction, there is only one item which is 'You can use various tools: online and offline to communicate with your friends and teacher.' (mean = 4.52) that reaches the highest mean level. Whilst, there are four items which are at the high mean level. They are the items 'Studying online is attractive and easy to use.' (mean = 4.45), 'You can share your ideas with your friends and teacher when you study online.' (mean = 4.45), 'It is

convenient to study online' (mean = 4.40), and 'Studying online is a modern way of learning' (mean =4.36), respectively.

## Conclusions

1. For developing and examining the quality of a blended learning model for English reading instruction to enhance reading achievement of university students, it can be found that the blended learning model is appropriate for both the students and teachers in the reading classroom. It can support the students' reading ability and skills for autonomous learning and lifelong learning for the purposes of educational and occupational goals; on the other hand, it is supported English reading instruction with the use of technology to facilitate the students' autonomous language learning.

Moreover, the mean rating for the experts' evaluation for the consistency of the components of the instructional model and the appropriateness of the components' description is appropriate. There are ten components which are 1) setting up objectives, 2) analyzing the environment, 3) analyzing the students' role, 4) analyzing the teachers' role, 5) analyzing and designing contents, 6) identifying instructional strategies, 7) developing and selecting instructional materials, 8) designing instructional procedures, 9) evaluating the learning outcome, and 10) giving feedback.

Apart from that, the blended learning lessons which are evaluated by twelve experts are appropriate and complete. For face-to-face lessons, the appropriateness is at the highest level 4.50, and the completeness is at the level 4.57. For online lessons, it is appropriate at 4.73 level and complete at the 4.57 level. Besides, the efficiency of the lessons which is tried out with nine first year students who studied in Business Chinese major in the first semester, academic year 2014 at Mae Fah Luang University, Chiang Rai, Thailand is 80.90/88.54 and 80/81.41 for twenty first year students who study

in Business Chinese Major in the first semester, academic year 2014 at Mae Fah Luang University, Chiang Rai, Thailand. This is according to the criteria 80/80 evaluation. It can be concluded that the blended learning model which is designed by the researcher is efficient and appropriate to use for the reading instruction.

2. The samples who studied with the blended learning model have reading achievement before learning with the blended learning model at 11.48 and after learning with the blended learning model at 18.67. It can be seen that the students' reading achievement after learning with the blended learning model is higher than before learning with the blended learning model. When it is analyzed, it reaches the significant level .05 ( $t = 23.554$ , S.D. = 6.10).

3. The students' attitudes toward a blended learning model for English reading instruction is high. The students are satisfied with the blended learning model at the high level 4.46, face-to-face instruction at the high level 4.36, and online instruction at the high level 4.44.

## The Discussion of the Findings

Regarding to the present study which is attempted to develop a blended learning model for English reading instruction to enhance reading achievement of university students, three main areas are discussed as follows:

1. The discussion of the developing and examining the quality of a blended learning model for English reading instruction to enhance reading achievement of university students

To develop and examine the quality of a blended learning model for English reading instruction to enhance reading achievement of university students, the researcher studies the background information: the students'

problems in English reading and the state and problem of teaching and learning in a reading classroom, and the related theories: blended learning, constructivism learning theory, 21st century learning, and ESL/EFL reading. In addition, a blended learning model is designed based on the study and synthesis of Saylor, Alexander, & Lewis (1981), Briggs, Gustafson, & Tillman (1991), Joyce & Weil (1996), Dick, L. Carey & J. Carey (2001), and Kemp, Morrison, Ross, & Kalman (2010) instructional models, and then chose ten components to design the blended learning model to enhance reading achievement of university students. They are: setting up objectives, analyzing the environment, analyzing the students' role, analyzing the teachers' role, analyzing and designing contents, identifying instructional strategies, developing and selecting instructional materials, designing instructional procedures, evaluating the learning outcome, and giving feedback. The blended learning model is evaluated for the consistency of the components of the instructional model and the appropriateness of the components' description by twelve experts. For the consistency of the components of the instructional model, it is found that the mean level is 0.93 which is appropriate. Also, the appropriateness of the components' description is at 0.95 mean level. With this in mind, it is shown that the blended learning model is appropriate to use for the reading instruction. Apart from that, the instructional documents: instruction manual and lesson plans are developed and examined. The researcher designs the instructional manual in order to describe the general information of the instructional model and the lesson plans for guiding the teachers to conduct the instruction. They both are evaluated by twelve experts. For the instructional manual, it is evaluated the appropriateness and the completeness of the instructional manual which is at the high mean level 4.45. And the appropriateness and completeness of the lesson plans are also at the high level 4.48. This means both of them are appropriate and complete at the high level. From these findings, it can

be observed that the blended learning model is designed systematically and aimed to power up the students' knowledge and supported their learning outcome. And the teachers design the instructional model which is responded to the students' needs. This is supported by Moore, Bates, & Grundling (2002, p. 71) that the teachers are required to be concerned with the instructional model which becomes the facilitation of successful learning experiences from which the students can demonstrate their newly acquired knowledge, skills, and attitudes. This is also noticed that the blended learning model has the potential to enhance and support the traditional learning system and becomes an integral part of the learning tools (Itmazi & Tmeizeh, 2008).

According to the study, it is found that the efficiency of the lessons is 80/81.41 which meets the criteria 80/80 evaluation. This is because the blended learning instruction is beneficial for the students both for face-to-face in the classroom and via online. For face-to-face in the classroom, it aims to arouse the students' interest, provide language preparation for the text, and activate the students' prior knowledge about the text before the students read the text. This is agreed with Barron, Orwig, Ivers & Lilavois (2002, p. 180) who identified that online learning represents the way of instruction taking place when the teachers and the students are separated by distance or time. Moreover, it is focused on interactive exchanges that involve the use of technology. The students have opportunity to communicate with synchronous and asynchronous tools which are very effective to the students.

2. The discussion of the implementing and studying the results of a blended learning model for English reading instruction to enhance reading achievement of university students

According to the implementing of the blended learning model with the samples, the results of the blended learning model after completing



the pre-test and post-test meet the significant level .05. This is with the reasons that the blended learning model is designed systematically and evaluated by twelve experts in order to prove if it is efficient for the reading instruction. With this finding, the blended learning model enhances the students' reading ability and skills for autonomous learning and lifelong learning for the purposes of educational and occupational goals. According to Cuban (1993), face-to-face learning is the first component which refers to the process of teaching and learning the teachers teach directly to the students using the lessons as instruments to exchange their ideas. The next is online learning which is emphasized the method involving with technology (Ko & Rossen, 2010). This is similar to Shelly, Cashman, E., & A. Gunter (2004, p. 18) who supports that using Internet communication technology can enhance the students' achievement and assist them in meeting learning objectives.

3. The discussion of the students' attitudes toward a blended learning model for English reading instruction to enhance reading achievement of university students

According to the survey of the students' attitudes toward a blended learning model for English reading instruction, the students were asked about their attitudes toward the use of blended learning model, face-to-face instruction, and online instruction. The students are highly satisfied with the blended learning model. They reveal that, with the blended learning model, they have an opportunity to study both in and outside the classroom. Plus, they can interact with their peers and teacher when they study with blended learning, and they also study the new lessons before attending in the classroom. For face-to-face instruction, they can use their prior knowledge about the text during they study with face-to-face in the classroom, know how to use reading strategy, prepare their language and reading ability, and participate with their peers and teacher in the classroom. For online instruction, they prefer to study with it. That is because it is attractive and easy to use;

moreover, there are various tools: online and offline to communicate with their friends and teacher. This is supported by Sukavatee (2007) that blended learning instruction benefits much more from the learning in terms of self-pacing, and learning styles. Besides, it promotes diverse collaborative learning behavior in low reading ability students who contribute more when working online than face-to-face. There is also a learning flow and students are able to continue reading or do the working outside classroom, with multiple selections of resources to read.

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