



# The Use of Mind Oneself Reading Strategy (MORS) to Enhance Thai Students' English Reading Comprehension การใช้กลยุทธ์การอ่านแบบมีสติรู้ตัวเพื่อส่งเสริมความเข้าใจ ในการอ่านภาษาอังกฤษของนักศึกษาไทย

Thanangkun Khamsri<sup>1\*</sup>  
ธนากร ขำศรี<sup>1\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Mae Fah Luang University

333 Moo 1, Thasud Sub - district, Muang District, Chiang Rai Province 57100

<sup>1</sup>มหาวิทยาลัยแม่ฟ้าหลวง

เลขที่ 333 หมู่ 1 ตำบลท่าสุด อำเภอเมือง จังหวัดเชียงราย

## บทคัดย่อ

การวิจัยครั้งนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อศึกษาผลกระทบของการใช้สมาธิที่มีต่อความเข้าใจในการอ่านของนักศึกษาไทยในระดับมหาวิทยาลัย โดยออกแบบการวิจัยจากปัญหาการอ่านที่สำคัญของนักเรียนไทย คือ การขาดสมาธิในการเรียนและการอ่าน กลุ่มตัวอย่างได้แก่นักศึกษาในระดับชั้นปีที่ 2 จำนวน 27 คน เครื่องมือที่ใช้ในการเก็บข้อมูลคือ แบบทดสอบการอ่านของโทเฟล แบบฝึกหัดและแบบรายงานตัวเอง แบบสัมภาษณ์ และแบบสำรวจตนเอง และทำการวิเคราะห์ข้อมูลโดยหา ค่าเฉลี่ย ความถี่ เปอร์เซนต์และวิเคราะห์เนื้อหาจากการสัมภาษณ์ ผลการวิจัยพบว่านักเรียนที่ฝึกฝนสมาธิโดยการนั่งสมาธิสามารถพัฒนาความเข้าใจในการอ่านโดยมีคะแนนทดสอบหลังการอ่านภาษาอังกฤษเพิ่มขึ้นโดยมีคะแนนเฉลี่ยที่ 16.14 ส่วนเบี่ยงเบนมาตรฐานที่ 3.57 ขนาดของผลกระทบคือ 0.37 และมีค่าความเชื่อมั่นที่ระดับ 0.01

## คำสำคัญ

กลวิธีในการทำสมาธิ การส่งเสริม ความเข้าใจในการอ่าน

\* ผู้เขียนหลัก  
อีเมล: thanangkun@gmail.com



## Abstract

The purpose of this research was to investigate the effects of Mindfulness Reading Strategy (MORS) on Thai university students' reading comprehension. This study was designed based on the prominent reading problems of Thai students' reading habits which was the lack of concentration while studying and reading. The samples were 27 students in the second year. The research instruments were the TOEFL's reading comprehension test, MORS worksheet and self-report, MORS interview questions, and MORS Self-observation Checklist. The data were analyzed by t-test, frequency and per cent, and content analysis. The analysis of the data showed that the students who practiced mindfulness concentration by sitting meditation could improve their reading comprehension as shown in their English reading comprehension Post-test ( $M = 16.14$ ,  $SD = 3.57$ ) with a small effect size (0.37) at the confidence level of 0.01.

## Keywords

Concentration Strategy, Enhancement, Reading Comprehension

## Introduction

Reading is an essential tool for all students for academic and professional achievement. According to Alderson & Urquhart (1984), English reading skills are important to academic studies, professional success, and personal development. Besides, Anderson (2003) noted that, with strengthened reading skills, students of English tended to make greater progress in other areas of language learning and other disciplines. This means that if students are proficient in reading, they will be able to utilize this skill in acquiring knowledge and in developing themselves. However, most Thai students in all educational levels do not possess good reading skills. Thai educators investigated the reading ability of Thai university students and found that most students, especially those who were not English majors, had low to medium English reading proficiency (Sucompa, 1998 ; Rattanawanitpun, 1999 ; Chinwonno, 2001 ; Anusornnarakarn, 2002). This finding is consistent with the results of the 7<sup>th</sup> edition of EF English Proficiency Index (EPI) in 2017. Thailand was ranked 53 from 80 with an average score of 49.78 which was categorized under "low proficiency" (EF English Proficiency Index, 2017). In addition, the data obtained from the TOEFL iBT test between January 2017 and December 2017 revealed that the English language skills' score of Thai students were as follows: reading and speaking (19/30), listening and writing (20/30), respectively (Educational Testing Service, 2018).



One of the problems which makes Thai students are low proficiency in English language may be because students' lack of concentration which is a result of the use of the social network, especially among teenage students. Students tend to spend most of their time being engaged in online socializing rather than reading. This online communication can distract students' attention while they are studying in the classroom. It results in students' lack of concentration or having a short attention span in tasks that require long engagement. Moreover, Maierbrugger (2016) said that Thailand is one of the most Smartphone-crazy countries in Asia, if not in the world, with statistics saying that Thais are spending an average of 2.5 hours a day on their device, with the most heavy use of social media platforms such as Facebook, Google+, Twitter, Instagram, Facebook Messenger and Line. This is consistent with what Luangphor Viriyang Sirintharo (1999) stated, globalization with boundless communication and the telephones and television stations operate 24 hours a day are the causes of people's lacking concentration on other matters. Therefore, concentration is a prior condition for doing all daily activities. Luangphor Viriyang Sirintharo (1999) also insisted that concentration can be practiced and it is the means of building up mind power. This is consistent with the teaching of Phra Brahmaganabhorn (P. A. Payutto, 2012) in that concentration leads to the intellect because doing the meditation makes the mind calm, clear, and more powerful, ready for doing tasks.

Even though concentration is the primary requirement for reading activity, there are few studies about the effects of concentration on reading comprehension. Most of the concentration research is in the field of science and psychology, medical science, and neuroscience. As Shapiro, Brown & Astin (2008) found that the applications of meditation in higher education were potentially broad, affecting cognitive, and emotional state of mind. Meditation can have a positive impact on academic performance and psychological well-being. In addition, Luders, Toga, Lepore & Gaser (2009) and La Zar et al. (2005) revealed that meditation on a regular basis could develop the brain in the sections which are important for conception, understanding, and emotion management and happiness.

According to the above issues, technology and distractions can interfere with learning and cause a loss of focus on activities. Therefore, practice of concentration can have a potential to promote one's ability to focus on a task at a time because concentration can be learnt and constructed as learners' behavior. It also directly affects students' capability to improve their reading comprehension to be better in the long term. Therefore, this MORS model might be another tool for teachers to use or apply in classroom in order to help students have a better reading skill.



## Research Objective

To investigate the effects of Mind Onself Reading Strategies (MORS) on Thai university students' reading comprehension

## Literature Review

### 1. Components of reading development

Reading as one of the four language skills is considered as a sophisticated mental process since it is an interaction between readers, text, and author. Comprehension in reading mostly depends on the readers' previous knowledge and at the same time the readers should have knowledge to choose appropriate reading strategies in order to help them comprehend the text and to link old and new knowledge of what they have read. Anderson & Pearson (1984) explained the mental process of reading as the interaction with the reader's schemata, which is regarded as old knowledge interacting with new knowledge in a text. Nuttal (1996) stated that schema theory is the basis for the three reading models: top-down model, bottom-up model, and interactive model. The "top-down reading model" explains that the reader uses his experiences or knowledge of the world to interpret the text whereas, when the reader builds up his interpretation of the text by recognizing the letters, words and sentences, he is applying a "bottom-up reading model" which can be described that the reader begins with the smallest units in language and builds up to the largest unit until the overall meaning is comprehensible. The "Interactive reading model" is the strategy that allows the reader to incorporate both Top-down and Bottom-up models to comprehend the text.

### 2. Reading process

An effective reading process works on both cognition and metacognition. Cognition refers to the thinking skills, the intellectual skills which allow one to perceive, acquire, understand and respond to information, respectively, while metacognition includes the abilities to pay attention, remember, process information, solve problems, organize and reorganize information, communicate and act upon information. All these abilities work in a close relationship, and interdependent style to empower oneself to function in each environment (Medalia & Revheim, 2012).

### 3. Mindfulness Concentration in reading

Concentration plays a crucial role in doing all daily life activities from the simple to the difficult. In addition, doing tasks with concentration will bring success and great impact on quality of life. Rusbult (1989) describes concentration as a "master skill" that affects learners' activities



and if they have good concentration, they will learn more while studying and perform better on exams. Gonzalez (2014) stated that concentration is the skill of being present and aware, moment by moment, regardless of circumstances.

#### **4. Advantages of concentration on general and physical development**

##### **4.1 Child development as a whole**

Concentration is an important and a basic element in doing activities because when a child has powerful concentration, he / she will not easily be disturbed by the surroundings such as noises, or mobile phones. Williams, Teasdale, Segal, & Kabat-Zinn (2007) explain that practicing mindfulness concentration can promote all activities in one's life. It brings out the active, developmental, and educational features of such practice. In addition, Montessori (1936) mentioned that the first essential for the child's development is concentration. The child who concentrates is immensely happy. Also, she added that a child concentrates when he focuses his attention and his energy on a single exercise, or a single task as a reading activity.

##### **4.2 Brain development**

Besides developing a child as a whole, concentration also affects brain development. Recently, Congleton, Hölzel & Lazar (2015) revealed a study on the power of mindfulness that can literally change the brain. They conducted the study in 2011 with participants who completed an eight-week mindfulness program. The results found, in a scientific method, that there was a significant increase in the density of the gray matter which is the brain's area of perception and memorization. Even though this finding is just the beginning of the story, neuroscientists have also shown that practicing mindfulness affects brain areas related to perception, body awareness, pain tolerance, emotion regulation, introspection, complex thinking, and sense of self. Moreover, Congleton, Hölzel & Lazar (2015, 34) asserted that mindfulness should no longer be considered as 'a nice-to-have', but it is 'a must-have'. Therefore, it is quite obvious with the scientific result that mindfulness is literally important for everyone, especially students.

#### **5. How to Practice Mindfulness Concentration**

There are various ways to practice mindfulness concentration to make the mind calm and ready to do activities. Williams, Teasdale, Segal & Kabat-Zinn (2007) categorized concentration practice into three types which are (1) intentional which is concerned with cultivating an awareness and mindfulness of present moment reality and the choices available to oneself, (2) experiential which is focused directly on present moment experience rather than being preoccupied by abstractions, and (3) non-judgmental which allows oneself to see things as he or she is without a



mental assignment of critical labels to his or her thought, feeling, and perception. In the Buddhist way, there are 40 ways of doing concentration practice. The Lord Buddha commended one of the tranquility meditation practices, Anapanasati, focusing on breath, which everyone should have and should practice because it is very useful, easy, and comfortable. Furthermore, Luangphor Viriyang Sirintharo (1999) said that a person should keep in mind that each time when doing concentration, it gives an advantage to the mind even though it may only be a few minutes at a time. He said, only 3 or 5 minutes at a time should be sufficient. According to the Buddha's way of practicing mindfulness concentration (Anapanasati), His Holiness Somdet Phra Nyanasamvara the Late Supreme Patriarch (2008) created a way to practice mindfulness concentration by focusing on inhaling and exhaling their breath by counting the pair of breathing from one to 10 as inhale (1) – exhale (1), inhale (2) - exhale (2), until inhale (10) - exhale (10). The steps are as follows:

Round 1: 1-1, 2-2, 3-3, 4-4, 5-5

Round 2: 1-1, 2-2, 3-3, 4-4, 5-5, 6-6

Round 3: 1-1, 2-2, 3-3, 4-4, 5-5, 6-6, 7-7

Round 4: 1-1, 2-2, 3-3, 4-4, 5-5, 6-6, 7-7, 8-8

Round 5: 1-1, 2-2, 3-3, 4-4, 5-5, 6-6, 7-7, 8-8, 9-9

Round 6: 1-1, 2-2, 3-3, 4-4, 5-5, 6-6, 7-7, 8-8, 9-9, 10-10

To conclude, concentration is very essential for doing things in daily life, reading also is not excepted. Therefore, according to different scholars, mindfulness concentration can be promoted through various types of concentration practices. However, all the practices have the similar goal which is to promote the students' concentration on doing tasks while studying which may result in helping students' English reading comprehension more improve.

## Research Methodology

### 1. Participants

The participants of this study were an intact group of twenty-seven students, nineteen females and eight males with an average age between 18 to 20 years old. They were all second-year students majoring in Retailing Business Management at a private university in the North of Thailand. These students had taken two English courses; one on Listening and Speaking English for Daily-Life Communication (011101) and the other, Reading and Writing English for Daily-Life Communication (011102) during the first semester of the 2016 academic year at the university under the study.

## 2. Instruments

2.1 The MORS instructional model is a guideline for MORS implementation. On the basis of mindfulness concentration, multiple strategy instruction and relevant, just-right reading materials, MORS instructional model was developed to motivate learners' abilities in reading comprehension, self-control, autonomous learning, and critical thinking. It was also used as a tool for learners to increase concentration in completing their tasks. The activities were divided into three parts according to the reading process: Pre-reading, While-reading, and Post-reading. Each part showed the steps in reading activities and the roles of the teacher and students in each activity.

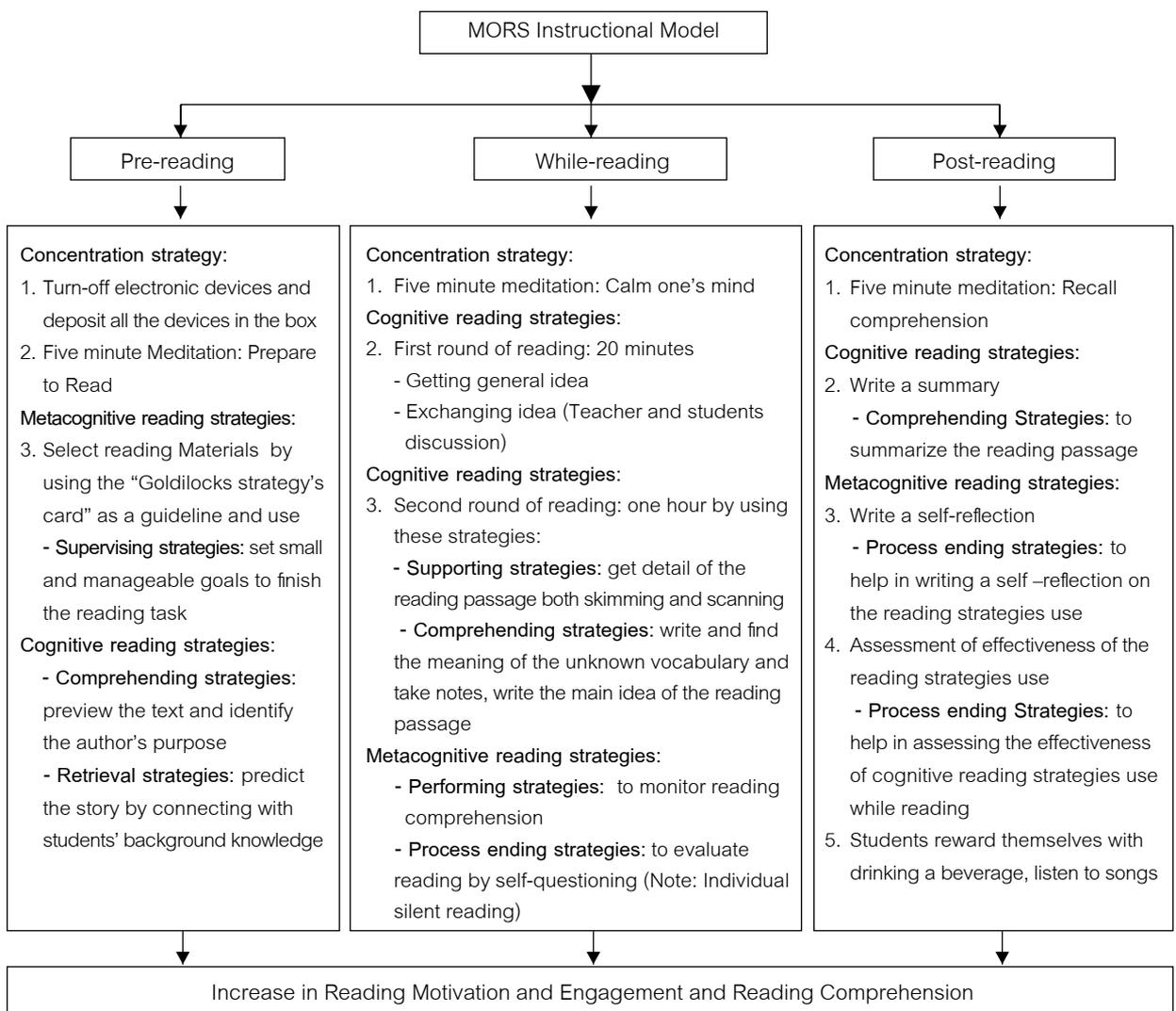


Figure 1.1 MORS Instructional Model



2.2 The MORS reading materials employed in this study consisted of passages that represented 3 sources of cultural content (Cortazzi & Jin, 1999). The first is source cultural material, which drew on the students' own culture (Thai culture) as content to help students become aware of their own cultural identity. The second source of materials concerned the target culture. This set of materials consists of reading passages about the culture of native English speaking countries namely the United States, the Great Britain, and New Zealand. The third type of materials is international culture material, which includes a wide range of materials from a variety of cultures of ESL and EFL countries around the world, for example Japan, Brazil, or China. There were altogether twenty-four narrative and informational reading passages used in this study, and all reading tasks related to the three types of cultural contents (eight passages for each culture type).

2.3 MORS Instructional Procedure was implemented in 10 weeks. The overall teaching procedures were divided into three sections. First, Pre-reading stage, students turn-off electronic devices and deposit all the devices in the box (5 minutes). Next, to get ready for reading, students do sitting meditation by focusing on their breath both inhale and exhale and at the same time they have to count for their breath as 1-1, 2-2, 3-3, 4-4, and 5-5, Then, they have to begin again by counting 1-1, 2-2, 3-3, 4-4, 5-5, and 6-6 until to 10-10 (5 minutes). After that teacher assigns students to select a reading passage according to their interest and gives students MORS worksheet and students select reading materials by using "Goldilocks strategy" as a guideline (10 minutes). Then students set small and manageable goals to finish the reading task (10 minutes), preview the text and identify author's purpose (15 minutes), and predict the story by connecting with students' background knowledge (15 minutes).

Next, While-reading stage, to calm the mind, students do concentration sitting meditation by focusing on their breath both inhale and exhale and at the same time they have to count for their breath as 1-1, 2-2, 3-3, 4-4, and 5-5, Then, they have to begin again by counting 1-1, 2-2, 3-3, 4-4, 5-5, and 6-6 until to 10-10, for 5 minutes. After that students read the passage that they choose for 20 minutes to get the general idea and exchange the idea between teacher and students. Then, students read the passage for the second time for one hour to get the details of the reading passage, write and find the meaning of the unknown vocabulary and take notes, write the main idea of the reading passage, and make self-questioning to monitor reading comprehension and write answers. At this stage teacher facilitates learning by providing some guidelines or some advices about the reading passages when students had any problems or questions.



Finally, Post-reading stage, to recall comprehension, students do concentration sitting meditation by focusing on their breath both inhale and exhale and as the same time they have to count for their breath as 1-1, 2-2, 3-3, 4-4, and 5-5, Then, they have to begin again by counting 1-1, 2-2, 3-3, 4-4, 5-5, and 6-6 until to 10-10, for 5 minutes. For reading task, students reward themselves with drinking beverage or listening to songs. Next, students complete activities of reading task as assigned and explained in MORS worksheet: answer questions about reading, draw a mind mapping, write a summary of the reading passage about 50-60 words, write a reflection on reading strategies use, and assess effectiveness of reading strategies use. Students submit MORS worksheet and self-report to teacher in class. Teacher rates the students' mind map and summary writing based on rubrics.

2.4 The MORS Evaluation Materials: MORS worksheet and self-report and Rubrics for Mind Mapping and Summary Writing. The MORS worksheet and self-report were specifically designed for this study to help students to monitor their reading performance and understanding of reading passages, to identify their weaknesses and strengths in each reading by answering questions in order to be clues to improve reading skills for the next reading, and to assess the effectiveness of reading strategies both cognitive and metacognitive strategies that students chose while reading. The Worksheet includes tasks that correspond to the three reading sections indicated in the MORS Instructional Model: Pre-reading, While-reading, and Post-reading, and each part consists of mindfulness concentration component and multiple reading and language learning strategies component.

2.5 A Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL)'s Reading Module was used as a pre - and post-test to measure the students' reading comprehension after studying MORS. This study utilized only the reading comprehension section in order to use the testing scores to identify students reading comprehension. The TOFEL reading comprehension test consists of 50 items in multiple choice format. The total of 50 points is calculated by assigning one point to each correct answer. In the test, the reading part takes 55 minutes, and students read six passages, followed by 9-12 multiple-choice questions of each passage. The passages are considerably similar to MORS reading passages in terms of grade levels and reading ease.

2.6 The MORS Interview Questions were aimed to gather information about students' impressions towards MORS. This interview was an individual interview with the students whose Post-test score increased more than five scores and the students whose Post-test score decreased more than one score. The duration of the interview for each student was ten minutes.



2.7 The MORS Self-observation Checklist was constructed based on Montessori's approach (Montessori, 1936), mindfulness concentration practice (Williams, Teasdale, Segal, & Kabat-Zinn, 2007), and strengthening attention exercises (Brett & Kate, 2014). The Checklist consisted of eight items of Mindfulness Concentration. Each item required a binary response, yes or no, format. The students responded 'yes' or 'no' to the questions. Then, the 'yes'/'no' nominal scale was converted to numeric scale (yes = 1, no = 0). The frequency of the students who answered 'yes' and 'no' were later calculated into percentages.

### 3. Instrument Validity and Reliability

The validation of the instruments: MORS worksheet and self-report, interview questions, and MORS self-observation checklist were obtained from an expert validation and a pilot study.

### 4. Research procedure

The data were collected from the reading class, which met three hours per week for 14 weeks during the designated period as follows:

On the 1<sup>st</sup> week, the TOEFL's Reading comprehension Test was given to students in the first class as a Pre-test.

From the 2<sup>nd</sup> week to the 10<sup>th</sup> week, the data from MORS worksheet and self-report were collected from the students in order to see the progress of students' reading ability from their tasks regarding finding the main idea, identifying the purpose of reading, writing a summary, and identifying the cognitive and metacognitive reading strategies that they used while reading.

On the 11<sup>th</sup> week, the TOEFL's Reading comprehension Test was administered as a Post-test.

On the 12<sup>th</sup> week, the data from the MORS Self-observation Checklist were collected from the students.

On the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> weeks, the semi-structured interview was conducted with 13 students; 8 students who got Post-test scores higher than the Pre-test (5 score increase), and 5 students who got Post-test scores lower than the Pre-test (1 score decrease).

### 5. Data collection

In order to be corresponded to the research objective "To investigate the effects of Mind Oneself Reading Strategies (MORS) on Thai university students' reading comprehension." The instruments used to collect the data were TOEFL's Reading Test, the MORS worksheet and self-report, the MORS Self-observation Checklist, and Interview Questions. The data obtained were analyzed by t-test, frequency and percentage, and content analysis was used as a method of analyzing the data from the interview.



## Results

### The effects of MORS on reading comprehension

Table 1

Comparing result of students' reading comprehension between Pre-test and Post-test scores

	N	Mean	SD	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Sig.</i> (1-tailed)	<i>Effect size d</i>
Pre-test	27	13.56	2.87	3.273	26	0.001*	0.37
Post-test	27	16.14	3.57				

\* $p < 0.01$

Table 1 indicates that when comparing the students' TOEFL reading comprehension scores between Pre-test and Post-test, the students got significantly higher scores,  $t(26) = 3.273$ ,  $p < 0.01$ , in their English reading comprehension Post-test ( $M = 16.14$ ,  $SD = 3.57$ ) than in their Pre-test scores ( $M = 13.56$ ,  $SD = 2.87$ ), with a small effect size (0.37) at the confidence level of 0.01

In addition, the data from the MORS worksheet and self-report revealed that during Pre-reading stage, in the mindfulness concentration component, the data from the first MORS worksheets and self-reports from the thirteen students indicated that the students whose Post-test scores increased turned off their mobile phones and deposited them in the box that the teacher provided in front of the classroom. They also reported that they did not pay attention to any noises from inside or outside the classroom whereas most of the students whose Post-test score decreased, reported that they only focused on the reading task and always knew what they were doing. Some of them did not deposit their phones in the box, nor did they turn them off because they would use the dictionary application on their mobile phone to find unknown vocabulary. This might indicate that the students' reading comprehension improved because they were not disturbed by their mobile phone, which made them concentrate more on their reading.

At the While-reading stage, there was a difference between students who had an improvement in reading and those who had no improvement in terms of their concentration. All eight students who improved their comprehension reported that they made themselves relaxed without closing their eyes while reading by being silent for one to two minutes whereas those who did not improve their reading comprehension closed their eyes five to ten minutes and were silent



for thirty seconds to one minute. It showed that the students who improved their comprehension only preferred to stay silent with themselves for a while to relax whereas the students who did not improve their reading comprehension did both closing eyes and being silent. Therefore, it can be said that being silent for one to two minutes resulted in relaxing and increasing concentration which may have a potential to increase reading comprehension.

Lastly in the Post-reading stage, all the students in the improvement group reported that they used their imagination while reading as if they were a part of the story and they spent about one hour and a half on reading, whereas the students in the no-improvement group spent only ten to thirty minutes on reading. This indicated that students in the improvement group have a longer attention span and unconsciously increase their concentration by using their imagination while reading which could enhance their reading comprehension.

In conclusion, the data from the MORS worksheet and self report indicated that mindfulness concentration could make students more focused on doing reading tasks. It also affected the reading comprehension of both the students who could improve and who could not improve in reading comprehension.

According to the interview with thirteen students who were selected from the results of the Post-test scores (eight students whose Post-test scores were five points higher than the Pre-test scores and five students whose Post-test scores were one point lower than the Pre-test scores), there were five out of thirteen students who had a positive attitude toward mindfulness concentration (three students from the improvement group and two students from the no-improvement group). They found mindfulness concentration useful and expressed that it could help them have a longer attention span while doing reading tasks. They reported that they felt comfortable, calm, and relaxed as follows:

*“Of all the three components, I like mindfulness concentration more than others because after I did the meditation, I realize that my concentration is increased. I can focus more on reading activities and doing tasks. Moreover, it makes me understand the reading passages better because meditation makes me ignore the surroundings and only concentrate on what I am doing.”* (Student No. 14).

*“Actually, I don’t like meditation and I rarely do it. However, when I do it in class, I realize that mindfulness concentration is very useful. I have more concentration on reading and better understand the reading passages. Even though I felt uncomfortable and it seemed too long for the first time, but for the fifth time of*

*meditation I felt more comfortable and calm while doing meditation. Also, I felt that it is not too long as the first time.” (Student No. 21).*

*“I like sitting meditation because it makes me concentrate on what I am doing at this moment and help me understand the reading passage better and more easily.” (Student No. 18).*

In support of the positive results concerning the effects of MORS on the students' reading comprehension, the data from the MORS Self-observation Checklist revealing that the students' behavior reflected the evidence of their concentration during reading was reported in Table 2.

**Table 2**

Number of students, and percentage of Mindfulness Concentration behavior in reading during the practice of Mind Oneself Reading Strategies (MORS)

Items	Number of students (N=27)	Percentages	Meaning / Interpretation of concentration
1. I focused on reading task at hand for at least 15 minutes.	26	96.29	Very high
2. I always did a single task at a time.	20	74.07	High
3. I maintained my attention and remained alert to the reading task over prolonged periods of time.	25	92.59	Very high
4. I kept quiet while reading.	26	96.29	Very high
5. I paid full attention in reading at all times.	25	92.59	Very high
6. I finished the reading task on time.	26	96.29	Very high
7. I read the directions every time before doing the exercises.	26	96.29	Very high
8. I could continue reading the passage even though there was a disturbing noise.	22	81.48	Very high



As per Table 2, the MORS Self-observation Checklist, it was found that after students had already selected a reading passage that interested them, most students maintained a very high concentration as they reported the following reading behavior: focused on the reading task at hand for at least 15 minutes, kept quiet while reading, finished the reading task on time, read the directions every time before doing the exercises at a very high level (N = 26, 96.29 per cent) but some students reported that they maintained their attention and remained alert to the reading task over prolonged periods of time, and paid full attention in reading at all times at a very high level (N=25, 92.59 per cent). Some of them could even continue reading the passage even though there is a disturbing noise at a very high level (N = 22, 81.48 per cent).

## Discussion

Mindfulness Concentration, the heart of the components of the Mind Oneself Reading Strategies (MORS), played a major role in the reading processes because it holds their attention so that they can ignore all distractions for a proper state of mind so that they could be relaxed, calm their minds, be aware of what they were doing moment by moment, and maintaining long focus on reading. As Mrazek, Franklin, Phillips, Baird & Schooler (2013) studied whether a 2-week mindfulness-training course would maintain their attention and improve cognitive performance with 48 undergraduate students. They found that mindfulness training improved both GRE reading-comprehension scores and working memory capacity while simultaneously reducing the occurrence of distracting thoughts during completion of the GRE and the measure of working memory.

Hence, in this study, students meditated for five minutes in each of three sections; the Pre-reading stage (5 minutes), the While-reading stage (5 minutes), and the Post-reading stage (5 minutes). The total time of meditation during the class was 15 minutes. Even though it was a brief meditation, this strategy should help students maintain their concentration and engagement for the whole class time. According to the results from the MORS Self-observation Checklist, most of the students reported that they concentrated on the reading tasks at very high level when using Mind Oneself Reading Strategies (MORS). For example, students focused on reading task at hand for at least 15 minutes after the five minutes sitting meditation. This allowed them to maintain their focus of attention and remain alert to the reading task over prolonged periods of time, keep quiet while reading and pay full attention to reading at all times. These behaviors were consistent with what Mikulas (1990) stated which is, mindfulness concentration is the ability to keep one's attention on



a particular object, or domain, also concentration helped students to keep staying on the process and getting the task done. Furthermore in this study, the students' Post-test results showed that by considering each individual student, more than half of the total number of students (N=18) got higher Post-test scores than Pre-test scores.

According to the interviews, one of the students said that in fact she did not like reading but when she did a meditation during three reading stages, she felt that it helped her increase concentration on her reading activities. This was because she felt composed, even though there was noise, and she could still focus on the tasks. In addition, she said that before she had learned MORS, she could sometimes tell the main idea of the story she read but did not have much concentration to stay engaged in the material in while- and post-reading activities. After she studied MORS, she could stay focused on the reading tasks longer, grasp the main idea of the story easily, and learn more new vocabulary. She reported that the MORS worksheet was a good reading guide to her to understand the story she read. This result was consistent with Rusbult (1989) who described concentration as a "master skill" that affects learners' activities and if they have good concentration, they will learn better during their studies and perform better on exams.

In addition, the results from the MORS worksheet and self-reports indicated that the students improved their Post-test scores because they were not disturbed by mobile phones. MORS therefore helped them concentrate on their reading in spite of distractions. In the Pre-reading stage, the section of mindfulness concentration, students had to deposit their mobile phone in a box to decrease distractions. They did not pay attention to any noises from inside or outside the classroom. As a result, they could have more concentration on reading tasks. On the other hand, some students, who could not improve the Post-test scores, did not deposit their mobile phones in the box because they gave reason that they would use applications on their mobile phones to find unknown vocabulary because they did not have a dictionary. It was noticeable that this group of students tended to easily lose their concentration due to distractions from applications on their mobile phones.

This situation is consistent with the results from the MORS Self-observation Checklists which showed that the students' concentration behaviors in doing reading activities were at a high level, on average. This is because there were a few students who did not deposit their electronic devices and they were at times interrupted by those devices such as sending messages or checking news on social media applications. However, this was only a minor aberration because overall the students' concentration behaviors after studying MORS were at a very high level. For further study in this issue, researchers can use quasi-experimental design to compare the reading comprehension improvement of students between a control group and an experimental group.



## Conclusion

In conclusion, the data from the Pre-test and Post-test, the MORS Worksheet and Self-report, Interview Questions, and MORS Self-observation Checklist showed that MORS had an impact on students reading comprehension. The students attempted to practice meditation in order to obtain mindfulness concentration on their reading even though some of them had not had experience and did not like meditation. Also, the Post-test score of the students' reading comprehension is significantly different after practicing meditation, it might be a sign for teachers and educators to bear in mind that instilling mindfulness concentration on students can help them to overcome distractions from both inside and outside the classroom.

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