

**The Effects of Graphic Organizers on Taiwanese Tertiary Students'
EFL Reading Comprehension and Attitudes
Towards Reading in English**

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**A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of
the degree of Doctor of Education**

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November, 2005

ABSTRACT

The present study was a one sample pre- and post-session, quasi experimental design, conducted during an intensive English course in 2003 in Taiwan. Participants were fifty tertiary level freshmen from a medical college in Southern Taiwan. In order to understand the effects of graphic organizers on participants' EFL reading comprehension and attitudes towards reading in English, quantitative and qualitative data were gathered.

Research has shown that the graphic organizer is effective in facilitating reading comprehension and learning attitudes when students construct their own graphic organizers cooperatively in group-work in the post-reading session. The purpose of the present study was three-fold. First, the study investigated the effects of two different types of graphic organizer strategies, teacher- and student-generated on Taiwanese TVES (Technological and Vocational Education System) tertiary freshmen's EFL reading comprehension achievement. Secondly, the study explored participants' attitudes towards EFL reading after the use of the two types of organizer strategies. Thirdly, the study examined the participants' attitudes towards the use of the two types of organizer strategies.

The study was conducted in two stages. During the first stage, the teacher-generated graphic organizer strategy was employed. In the second stage, participants generated graphic organizers in a group-work setting. Two comprehension tests generated by the researcher as a pre- and post-test were administered.

Following analysis of the qualitative and quantitative data three important conclusions can be made. First, the student-generated graphic organizer strategy had significantly positive impact on the students' reading comprehension. However, the ceiling effect of language proficiency inhibited low-scorers' comprehension performance. Secondly, the use of student-generated graphic organizers in a group-work setting had a significantly positive impact on students' attitudes towards EFL reading, particularly those of the low-scorers.

Thirdly, students' attitudes towards the use of two graphic organizer strategies did not show any significant differences.

Although these conclusions are based on a small sample, the findings of this study suggest that the use of graphic organizers is an effective pedagogical tool for promoting EFL reading comprehension and improving attitudes toward EFL reading, particularly when students generate their graphic organizers cooperatively,

Key words: EFL reading, tertiary students, graphic organizers, reading comprehension, attitudes towards reading.