

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Students in Taiwan are randomly arranged into normally distributed classes, which means each class is made up of students with different levels of academic performance. That is, in the same class there are so called the “good students,” those who are good at their studies, as well as the “slow ones,” those who can not do well in their studies. With this practice of “normal” distribution, it is thus very important for teachers to have an approach suitable for different kinds of students in the same class. As a class is composed of students of different learning styles and with different aptitudes, it doesn’t seem possible that a single way of teaching or supervising will work for all of them. It is essential for teachers to cope with the differences in order to teach effectively. After all, the instruction will not be a successful one if only a small number of students can follow what the instructor teaches, and the majority don’t quite understand the content of the instruction.

BCT (Basic Competence Test) started to be held twice yearly in 2001. Examining the test questions, we can find that there are altogether forty-five multiple choice questions in the English exam. The exam in English can be divided into three parts: the first part contains twenty questions concerning grammar and vocabulary; the

second part of the exam is the cloze test, in which there are about ten to fifteen questions; the last part of the exam is the reading comprehension test in which there are ten to fifteen questions. To get a high score, the ability in reading comprehension is the key because both the cloze and the reading comprehension parts require good reading comprehension. Bernice McCarthy (1972) developed the 4Mat system to help teachers organize their teaching based on differences in the way people learn, so that every student in the same class can benefit from the curriculum designed by the teacher and improve his/her ability. The researcher of this study wished to explore the use of 4Mat to see if it can help all students in class to improve their reading comprehension.

The purpose of this research is to explore the possibility of the 4Mat system and see if it is an effective approach to improve students' reading comprehension. It is assumed that by using this approach, not only will individual students' learning preference be taken care of, but they can also be challenged and encouraged to stretch into other kinds of learning preferences.

This research aims at answering the following questions:

1. Will the participants be able to read strategically with the help of the 4Mat system approach?
2. How do the learners of different learning styles improve?

The researcher expects that the results of the study can help English teachers in

Taiwan find a helpful teaching approach to promote students' ability in reading comprehension and read strategically.