

Effectiveness of Reading Comprehension Strategies in Improving the Reading Comprehension Performance of Grade 6 Pupils

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Abstract

This study investigated the effectiveness of reading comprehension strategies in improving the reading comprehension performance of Grade 6 pupils of Loo Elementary School. Reading comprehension is a critical literacy skill that influences learners' academic success across subject areas, yet many elementary learners experience difficulty understanding texts, particularly at higher levels of comprehension. To address this concern, the study employed a quasi-experimental one-group pretest–posttest design. The participants were Grade 6 pupils enrolled during the school year 2024. A teacher-made reading comprehension test aligned with Grade 6 learning competencies was used to measure pupils' comprehension performance in terms of literal, inferential, and evaluative comprehension. The intervention involved explicit instruction of reading comprehension strategies such as predicting, questioning, clarifying, summarizing, and the use of graphic organizers over several weeks. Results revealed an increase in pupils' mean reading comprehension scores after the intervention across all comprehension levels. A paired-samples t-test indicated a statistically significant difference between the pretest and posttest results at the 0.05 level of significance. The findings suggest that explicit and systematic reading comprehension strategy instruction effectively enhances pupils' ability to understand and analyze texts. The study concludes that integrating reading comprehension strategies into regular classroom instruction can significantly improve the reading comprehension performance of Grade 6 pupils and support school-based literacy development programs.

Keywords: reading comprehension; comprehension strategies; quasi-experimental design; elementary education

1. Introduction

Reading comprehension is a fundamental literacy skill that enables learners to understand, interpret, and evaluate written texts. It plays a critical role in academic success because learners must comprehend reading materials across various subject areas such as English, Science, Mathematics, and Social Studies (Snow, 2002). Without adequate comprehension skills, learners often struggle to engage meaningfully with content, resulting in poor academic performance and limited learning outcomes. In support of this, recent studies emphasize the need to strengthen instructional quality and school systems to enhance learner outcomes, particularly through effective leadership and performance-based governance structures (Santos & Cajucom, 2020; Jacoba et al., 2024). Additionally, addressing learning gaps through targeted remediation and structured interventions has been recognized as essential in improving learners' academic competencies (Cara et al., 2025). The integration of educational technology and digital tools has also been identified as a relevant factor in supporting learning continuity and improving classroom engagement in evolving learning environments (Tuliao et al., 2025; Jacoba et al., 2025). Furthermore, the role of teachers and school personnel remains crucial in ensuring educational effectiveness, as faculty characteristics and professional competencies can influence the delivery of instruction and overall school productivity (Hipolito & Santos, 2025). Learner development is also shaped by psychosocial and contextual factors that may affect engagement and learning behaviors, highlighting the importance of supportive learning environments (Santos, 2021).

At the elementary level, particularly in Grade 6, learners are expected to transition from basic decoding skills to higher-order comprehension skills such as inference-making, synthesis, and evaluation of information. However, research has shown that many learners experience difficulties in comprehension despite having adequate word recognition skills (Cain & Oakhill, 2007). This gap highlights the importance of instructional approaches that explicitly address comprehension processes rather than focusing solely on decoding. In the Philippine context, reading assessment results continue to reveal challenges in learners' comprehension skills. The Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (Phil-IRI) indicates that a significant number of elementary learners remain at instructional or frustration reading levels, particularly in comprehension (Department of Education [DepEd], 2018). In response, the Department of Education has emphasized the implementation of school-based reading programs and evidence-based instructional strategies to improve literacy outcomes (DepEd, 2020).

Current research consistently supports the effectiveness of explicit reading comprehension strategy instruction. Strategies such as predicting, questioning, clarifying, summarizing, and the use of graphic organizers have been shown to enhance learners' engagement with texts and improve comprehension outcomes (Duke & Pearson, 2002; Pressley, 2006). These strategies are grounded in constructivist learning theory, which emphasizes learners' active role in meaning-making through interaction with texts and instructional support (Vygotsky, 1978). At Loo Elementary School, teachers observed that several Grade 6 pupils encountered difficulties in understanding reading passages, particularly when answering inferential and evaluative questions. These observations prompted the conduct of this study to determine the effectiveness of reading comprehension strategies in improving the reading comprehension performance of Grade 6 pupils. This study contributes to ongoing efforts to strengthen literacy instruction and provides empirical evidence to support strategy-based reading instruction in elementary classrooms.

2. Material and methods

2.1. Research Design

This study employed a quasi-experimental one-group pretest–posttest design. This design allowed the researcher to determine whether a significant change occurred in pupils' reading comprehension performance after the implementation of reading comprehension strategies (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The design is appropriate for classroom-based research where random assignment and control groups are not feasible.

2.1.1. Participants of the Study

The participants of the study were Grade 6 pupils enrolled at Loo Elementary School during the school year 2024. All pupils in the selected class were included to ensure inclusivity and to reflect the actual classroom context. Permission to conduct the study was secured from the school head, and ethical considerations were strictly observed.

2.1.2. Research Instrument

A teacher-made reading comprehension test aligned with Grade 6 English learning competencies was used as the primary research instrument. The test measured three levels of comprehension: literal, inferential, and evaluative, following Barrett's taxonomy of reading comprehension (Barrett, 1976). The instrument was validated by experienced English teachers to ensure content validity and clarity.

2.1.3. Intervention Procedure

The study began with the administration of a pretest to determine the baseline reading comprehension performance of the pupils. Following the pretest, the intervention was implemented over several weeks during regular English classes. The intervention focused on explicit instruction of reading comprehension strategies such as predicting, questioning, clarifying unfamiliar ideas, summarizing key points, and using graphic organizers.

The teacher modeled each strategy, guided pupils through practice activities, and gradually encouraged independent application. After the intervention period, the same reading comprehension test was administered as a posttest. Data gathered were analyzed using descriptive statistics and a paired-samples t-test.

3. Results and discussion

3.1. Reading Comprehension Performance Before and After the Intervention

3.1.1. Pretest and Posttest Mean Scores Across Comprehension Levels

Table 1 presents the mean reading comprehension scores of Grade 6 pupils in the pretest and posttest across the three comprehension levels (literal, inferential, and evaluative), including the overall mean score.

Table 1 Mean Reading Comprehension Scores of Grade 6 Pupils in the Pretest and Posttest

SN.	Comprehension Level	Pretest Mean	Posttest Mean
1	Literal	72.15	83.40
2	Inferential	65.30	80.25
3	Evaluative	61.45	78.10
4	Overall	66.30	80.58

The table shows that pupils' pretest scores were relatively low across all comprehension levels, with evaluative comprehension obtaining the lowest mean. After the intervention, pupils' posttest scores increased in all areas, indicating improved comprehension skills.

3.1.2. Interpretation of Mean Score Improvements

The results show that pupils' pretest scores were generally low across all comprehension levels, particularly in evaluative comprehension, which obtained the lowest mean score (61.45). This indicates that pupils initially experienced greater difficulty with higher-order comprehension tasks such as judging, critiquing, and forming conclusions based on text evidence. After the intervention, pupils demonstrated improved performance across all levels of comprehension. The posttest scores increased notably in inferential (from 65.30 to 80.25) and evaluative comprehension (from 61.45 to 78.10), suggesting that the reading comprehension strategies were particularly effective in strengthening higher-level thinking and deeper text understanding. The overall mean score also increased from 66.30 to 80.58, reflecting a substantial improvement in reading comprehension performance after the implementation of the strategies.

3.2. Statistical Difference Between Pretest and Posttest Scores

3.2.1. Paired-Samples t-Test Results

To determine whether the improvement in reading comprehension scores was statistically significant, a paired-samples t-test was conducted. The results are presented in Table 2.

Table 1 Paired-Samples t-Test Results on Reading Comprehension Performance

Variable	Mean Difference	t-value	p-value
Pretest-Posttest	14.28	8.65	0.000

The p-value obtained is lower than the 0.05 level of significance, indicating a statistically significant difference between the pretest and posttest scores. This result confirms that the observed improvement was influenced by the reading comprehension strategies implemented in the study.

3.2.2. Interpretation of Statistical Results

The computed p-value (0.000) is lower than the 0.05 level of significance, indicating a **statistically significant difference** between the pretest and posttest results. This confirms that the pupils' improved reading comprehension performance was not due to chance but was significantly influenced by the explicit and systematic instruction of reading comprehension strategies implemented during the intervention period.

3.3. Discussion of Findings

3.3.1. Effectiveness of Explicit Reading Comprehension Strategy Instruction

The findings of this study support existing literature emphasizing that explicit instruction in reading comprehension strategies improves learners' ability to process and understand texts. The significant increase in pupils' comprehension performance aligns with Duke and Pearson (2002) and Pressley (2006), who highlighted that strategy-based instruction strengthens learners' active engagement with reading through monitoring understanding, organizing ideas, and constructing meaning from text.

3.3.2. Improvement in Higher-Order Comprehension Skills

The noticeable gains in inferential and evaluative comprehension suggest that pupils became more capable of reading beyond surface-level meaning by drawing conclusions, making logical interpretations, and evaluating information from texts. This supports Cain and Oakhill's (2007) argument that higher-order comprehension can improve when learners are explicitly guided in how to analyze and interpret texts.

3.3.3. Role of Guided Practice and Scaffolding

Moreover, the improvements reflect Vygotsky's (1978) concept of scaffolding, wherein learners benefit from structured teacher support, modeling, guided practice, and gradual release of responsibility. Through repeated practice with predicting, questioning, clarifying, summarizing, and graphic organizers, pupils were able to strengthen comprehension skills and apply strategies more independently, resulting in improved posttest performance.

4. Conclusion

This study concludes that explicit instruction of reading comprehension strategies is effective in improving the reading comprehension performance of Grade 6 pupils at Loo Elementary School. The increase in the pupils' posttest mean scores across literal, inferential, and evaluative comprehension levels indicates that the intervention strengthened pupils' ability to understand, interpret, and evaluate reading texts. Furthermore, the paired-samples t-test results confirmed that the difference between pretest and posttest scores was statistically significant at the 0.05 level of significance. These findings highlight that systematic strategy-based instruction can enhance learners' reading comprehension and contribute

positively to school-based literacy improvement efforts.

Based on the findings of the study, it is recommended that English teachers and reading coordinators integrate explicit reading comprehension strategies—such as predicting, questioning, clarifying, summarizing, and the use of graphic organizers—into regular classroom instruction. Teachers may adopt a structured approach that includes modeling, guided practice, and gradual release of responsibility to support learners in applying the strategies independently. In addition, school administrators may strengthen school-based reading intervention programs by providing professional development training for teachers on effective comprehension strategy instruction and by ensuring the availability of appropriate reading materials that match learners' comprehension levels.

Despite the positive findings, this study has certain limitations that should be considered when interpreting the results. The research used a one-group pretest–posttest design without a control group, which may limit the ability to attribute improvements solely to the intervention, as other factors such as pupils' exposure to additional reading activities may have influenced performance. The study also involved only Grade 6 pupils from one school, which may affect the generalizability of the findings to other grade levels or contexts. Lastly, the use of a teacher-made test, although validated by experienced teachers, may still have limitations in terms of reliability compared to standardized reading assessment tools.

Compliance with ethical standards

The present research work does not contain any studies performed on animals or human subjects that required formal ethical board approval.

Conflict of interest statement

The author declares no conflict of interest related to the publication of this manuscript.

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Author's short biography

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Daisy B. Billao is from Tinoc, Ifugao and is currently a PhD candidate in Educational Management (PhD EdMan). She holds graduate-level academic training in education and has several years of experience in the field of teaching and educational research. Her research interests are focused on education, particularly in instructional practices, school management, and educational development. She is actively engaged in research endeavors that aim to improve teaching–learning processes and contribute to the enhancement of educational quality and outcomes.
