

Contextualization of Grade 7 Reading Instruction Through React Strategy

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Abstract

This study examined the effectiveness of contextualized Grade 7 reading instruction through the REACT Strategy in improving students' reading comprehension and determining their learning gains as inputs for the development of a reading training matrix. The study was anchored on Contextual Learning Theory (CTL), the REACT Strategy (Relating, Experiencing, Applying, Cooperating, and Transferring), and Coombs' System Approach. A quantitative quasi-experimental research design was employed involving 422 Grade 7 students from 13 sections of Pitogo High School during the School Year 2025–2026. A validated researcher-made 25-item pretest and posttest, supported by a Table of Specifications and implemented through contextualized Daily Lesson Logs, served as the primary research instruments. Data were analyzed using mean, standard deviation, and paired t-test. The findings revealed that students achieved a satisfactory level of learning before the intervention ($M = 18.30$, $SD = 3.451$) and a very satisfactory level after the implementation of contextualized reading instruction through the REACT Strategy ($M = 21.983$, $SD = 1.994$). The paired t-test confirmed a significant difference between the pretest and posttest scores, indicating that the intervention effectively improved students' reading comprehension. Students demonstrated enhanced ability to understand texts, identify key ideas and supporting details, infer meanings, and relate textual information to real-life experiences. These learning gains served as the basis for developing a teacher training matrix to strengthen contextualized reading instruction and improve instructional practices. The study concludes that contextualized reading instruction through the REACT Strategy is an effective approach for enhancing students' reading comprehension and recommends its continued implementation, supported by teacher training and regular monitoring. This study supports Sustainable Development Goal 4 (Quality Education) by promoting learner-centered, contextualized reading instruction that improves literacy and learning outcomes. Its sustainability impact lies in strengthening instructional practices and supporting the long-term development of effective, evidence-based reading programs in schools.

Keywords: Contextual Learning Theory, Grade 7 Reading Instruction, Learning Gains, Reading Comprehension, REACT Strategy, Reading Training Matrix, Reading Training Matrix

1. Introduction

Reading is a fundamental language skill that develops comprehension, critical thinking, and overall language proficiency (Krashen & Brown, 2020). Despite its importance, many learners continue to experience poor reading performance, particularly in English as a second language. To address this concern, the Department of Education promotes contextualized instruction that connects learning with students' real-life experiences and local culture. This study examines the contextualization of Grade 7 reading instruction through the REACT Strategy to improve reading comprehension and determine students' learning gains as inputs for a reading training matrix.

1.1 Background of the Contextualized Grade 7 Reading Instruction through REACT Strategy

Reading is essential for academic success and lifelong learning because it enhances comprehension, vocabulary, grammar, writing, and critical thinking (Krashen & Brown, 2020; Chandran & Shah, 2019). However, many learners continue to struggle with reading due to limited exposure to English and inadequate contextualized learning materials. In response, UNESCO and the Philippine Department of Education advocate contextualized instruction through RA 10533 and DepEd Order No. 32, s. 2015, allowing schools to localize learning materials and make instruction more relevant and meaningful. This study focuses on contextualizing Grade 7 reading instruction through the REACT Strategy to improve students' reading comprehension using authentic and locally relevant reading materials. It also aims to determine students' learning gains and provide inputs for teacher training and reading program development. (Culaste-Quimbo, 2021).

1.2 Themes and Insights from Related Literature on Contextualized Reading Instruction through REACT Strategy

Related literature shows that Contextual Learning Theory improves learning by connecting instruction to students' real-life experiences (Habibi et al., 2022). Through the REACT Strategy—Relating, Experiencing, Applying, Cooperating, and Transferring—students actively construct knowledge, collaborate with peers, and apply learning in meaningful contexts (Muslem & Yasin, 2021; Pratesyo, 2020). Studies further indicate that contextualized reading materials aligned with

learners' culture and environment increase engagement and reading comprehension (Firman et al., 2021; Habibi et al., 2022). Likewise, integrating the REACT Strategy enhances motivation, participation, and English language learning by connecting classroom instruction with authentic experiences (CORD, 2019; Johnson, 2020; Demircioglu et al., 2019; Fauziah et.al, 2020).

1.3 Local, National, and Global Context of Grade 7 Reading Comprehension

Globally, literacy remains a significant educational concern, with millions of children and adults experiencing inadequate reading skills. In the Philippines, reading proficiency remains below international standards, as reflected in the PISA 2022 results, where Filipino learners ranked among the lowest-performing countries in reading. To address these learning gaps, the Department of Education has implemented initiatives such as Catch-Up Fridays (DepEd Memorandum No. 001, s. 2024) and the Academic Recovery and Accessible Learning (ARAL) Program under Republic Act No. 12028 to strengthen reading proficiency through targeted interventions. These national efforts highlight the need for contextualized and learner-centered reading instruction to improve students' comprehension and academic performance.

1.4 Theoretical and Conceptual Basis of Contextualized Grade 7 Reading Instruction through REACT Strategy

This study is anchored on Contextual Learning Theory (CTL), which posits that learning becomes more meaningful when concepts are connected to learners' real-life experiences. Rooted in the educational philosophy of John Dewey, CTL emphasizes active participation, experiential learning, collaboration, and reflection. The study adopts the REACT Strategy—Relating, Experiencing, Applying, Cooperating, and Transferring—which encourages learners to connect prior knowledge with new concepts, actively construct understanding, collaborate with others, and apply learning to new situations. The study also adopts the Coombs' System Approach, where students' learning levels before and after the intervention serve as inputs, the implementation of contextualized reading instruction through the REACT Strategy represents the process, and the resulting learning gains provide outputs for a reading training matrix.

1.5 Research Gaps and Rationale for Contextualized Grade 7 Reading Instruction

Although previous studies support the effectiveness of contextualized learning and the REACT Strategy in improving reading comprehension, limited contextualized English reading materials remain available for classroom use. Persistent low reading proficiency, insufficient localized instructional resources, and the need for more meaningful reading interventions justify the conduct of this study. By contextualizing Grade 7 reading instruction through the REACT Strategy, the study seeks to improve students' reading comprehension while generating evidence that can support future reading programs and teacher training initiatives.

1.6 Alignment with Relevant Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

This study supports SDG 4 Quality Education by promoting contextualized and learner-centered reading instruction that enhances students' reading comprehension and language proficiency. It also aligns with the Department of Education's efforts to strengthen literacy through localized instructional materials and effective teaching strategies. The use of the REACT Strategy contributes to improving learning outcomes by making reading instruction more meaningful and relevant to learners' real-life experiences.

1.7 Importance of the Study to Multidisciplinary Sustainability

The study contributes primarily to educational sustainability by supporting the development of contextualized reading instruction that enhances students' literacy and academic achievement. It also promotes institutional sustainability by providing evidence that can guide teachers, school administrators, curriculum developers, and policymakers in designing effective reading programs, contextualized instructional materials, and professional development initiatives. Ultimately, improving reading comprehension strengthens learners' educational outcomes and supports long-term human capital development.

2. Material and methods

2.1 Research Design

The study employed a quantitative quasi-experimental research design using a researcher-made assessment test to measure students' reading comprehension before and after the implementation of contextualized Grade 7 reading instruction through the REACT Strategy. Quantitative research enables the collection and analysis of numerical data to identify patterns, determine relationships, and evaluate the effectiveness of interventions (Bhandari, 2023). A quasi-experimental design was adopted because participants could not be randomly assigned, yet it remained appropriate for determining the effect of the instructional intervention on students' reading comprehension (Sreekumar, 2024).

2.2 Locale of the StudyThe study was conducted at Pitogo High School during the School Year 2025–2026. The implementation involved all Grade 7 classes using contextualized reading instruction integrated with the REACT Strategy

during regular English classes. The intervention was carried out uniformly across all sections while allowing teachers to adjust instructional support according to learners' cognitive needs.

2.3 Respondents of the Study

The respondents consisted of 422 Grade 7 students enrolled in 13 sections at Pitogo High School. Two sections belonged to the Science, Technology, and Engineering (STE) program, composed of students who met the required academic qualifications under DepEd Order No. 41, s. 2004, while the remaining sections were heterogeneous classes representing learners with varied academic abilities, interests, and learning styles. All sections participated in the intervention to provide equitable access to contextualized reading instruction and to evaluate its effectiveness across different learner groups. The participants included 32 students each from Newton, Pythagoras, Courteousness, Honesty, and Humility; 33 students each from Compassion, Diligence, Gratitude, Hope, and Patience; 34 students each from Charity and Perseverance; and 31 students from Faith, resulting in a total of 422 respondents. This distribution ensured that all Grade 7 sections were represented in assessing the effectiveness of contextualized reading instruction through the REACT Strategy.

2.4 Sample and Sampling Procedure

The study used purposive sampling, a non-probability sampling technique in which participants were selected based on their relevance to the research objectives (Nikolopoulou, 2022). All 422 Grade 7 students from the 13 sections of Pitogo High School were included to evaluate the effectiveness of contextualized Grade 7 reading instruction through the REACT Strategy.

2.5 Research Instrument

The study utilized a validated researcher-made 25-item pretest and posttest aligned with the Grade 7 English learning competencies and supported by a Table of Specifications (TOS) to ensure content validity and alignment with the instructional objectives. A Daily Lesson Log (DLL) based on the Department of Education's First Quarter Lesson Exemplar was developed to implement contextualized reading instruction using locally relevant reading materials and the REACT Strategy (Relating, Experiencing, Applying, Cooperating, and Transferring) throughout the lessons to enhance students' reading comprehension and engagement. The research instruments were validated by English teachers, research experts, and the school's research coordinator to ensure clarity, relevance, and alignment with the Grade 7 learning competencies. After incorporating the validators' recommendations and securing administrative approval, the pretest and posttest were administered to the participants.

2.6 Data Gathering Procedure

After securing approval from the school principal and research coordinator and obtaining parental consent, the researcher conducted a Learning Action Cell (LAC) orientation for Grade 7 English teachers on the study procedures and implementation of the REACT Strategy. The pretest was administered, followed by eight weeks of contextualized reading instruction using a common lesson plan, weekly performance tasks, summative assessments, and LAC sessions. After the intervention, the posttest was administered, and the collected data were encoded, analyzed, and interpreted.

2.7 Data Analysis Techniques

The data were analyzed using mean and standard deviation to determine students' reading comprehension levels before and after the intervention. A paired t-test was used to determine the significant difference between the pretest and posttest scores.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Level of Learning of Grade 7 Students

3.1.1 Level of Learning Before the Contextualization of Reading Instruction through REACT Strategy

The pretest results showed that the 422 Grade 7 students obtained an overall mean score of 18.30, interpreted as Satisfactory, with a standard deviation of 3.451. The STE sections, Newton and Pythagoras, achieved Very Satisfactory performance, while the remaining heterogeneous sections obtained Satisfactory ratings. Newton recorded the highest mean score (20.965), whereas Hope obtained the lowest (15.000), indicating variations in reading comprehension among the sections before the intervention. The findings indicate that students possessed basic reading comprehension skills but still required instructional support to improve performance. Reading proficiency is essential for academic success because it develops comprehension, critical thinking, and learning across subject areas (Culaste-Quimbo, 2021). Consistent with RA 10533 and DepEd Order No. 32, s. 2015, contextualized instruction makes learning more meaningful by connecting lessons to learners' culture and experiences. Likewise, contextual learning improves students' reading, speaking, listening, and writing skills by relating classroom instruction to real-life situations (Muslem & Yasin, 2021).

3.1.2 Level of Learning After the Contextualization of Reading Instruction through REACT Strategy

The posttest results showed that the Grade 7 students attained an overall mean score of 21.983, interpreted as Very Satisfactory, with a standard deviation of 1.994. All 13 sections improved from their pretest performance, with every

section achieving a Very Satisfactory rating. Newton obtained the highest mean score (24.000), while Hope, despite having the lowest posttest mean (20.156), also reached the Very Satisfactory level. The lower standard deviations indicate more consistent student performance after the implementation of the REACT Strategy. The results demonstrate that contextualized reading instruction through the REACT Strategy enhanced students' reading comprehension, engagement, and mastery across both STE and heterogeneous sections. This finding supports the importance of reading in developing language proficiency (Krashen & Brown, 2020) and agrees with studies showing that contextualized learning materials increase learners' confidence and participation (Visconde and Lasaten, 2018). Moreover, Contextual Learning Theory emphasizes connecting learning to real-life situations (Habibi et al., 2022), while the REACT Strategy promotes meaningful learning through Relating, Experiencing, Applying, Cooperating, and Transferring (CORD, 2019). The strategy also improves reading comprehension by enabling students to connect texts with their own experiences (Firman et al., 2021; Habibi et al., 2022; Fauziah et al., 2020).

3.2 Significant Difference in Students' Learning Before and After the Contextualization of Reading Instruction through REACT Strategy

3.2.1 Difference Between the Pretest and Posttest Results

The paired t-test results revealed a significant difference between the pretest and posttest scores of all 13 Grade 7 sections. In every section, the computed t-value exceeded the tabular value at the 0.05 level of significance, resulting in the rejection of the null hypothesis. All sections demonstrated higher posttest mean scores than pretest mean scores, confirming that students' reading comprehension improved after the implementation of contextualized reading instruction through the REACT Strategy. The findings indicate that contextualized reading instruction through the REACT Strategy significantly enhanced students' reading comprehension by connecting reading materials to learners' real-life experiences and local contexts. This supports the view that reading strengthens overall language proficiency (Krashen & Brown, 2020) and that comprehension develops through meaningful cognitive interaction with texts (Pratesyo, 2020). The results are also consistent with Contextual Learning Theory, which promotes active engagement through authentic learning experiences (Firman et al., 2021; Habibi et al., 2022), and with the REACT Strategy, which encourages students to relate, experience, apply, cooperate, and transfer knowledge in meaningful situations (CORD, 2019; Johnson, 2020).

3.3 Learning Gains as Inputs for the Reading Training Matrix

3.3.1 Identified Learning Gains of Grade 7 Students

The findings showed that the contextualization of Grade 7 reading instruction through the REACT Strategy resulted in measurable learning gains that served as the basis for the proposed reading training matrix. Students demonstrated improved reading comprehension, including better understanding of texts, identification of key ideas and supporting details, inference of meanings, and application of textual information to real-life experiences. These gains provided evidence for developing a teacher training program focused on contextualized reading instruction. The observed learning gains support Contextual Learning Theory, which emphasizes connecting new knowledge with learners' real-world experiences through the REACT processes of Relating, Experiencing, Applying, Cooperating, and Transferring (Habibi et al., 2022). Likewise, reading comprehension develops through cognitive interaction and meaningful engagement with texts (Pratesyo, 2020). Guided by these findings, the proposed training matrix aims to strengthen teachers' competencies in designing contextualized reading materials, implementing learner-centered instructional strategies, and improving students' reading comprehension through evidence-based classroom practices.

3.3.2 Proposed Reading Training Matrix

The proposed training matrix focuses on enhancing teachers' knowledge and skills in implementing contextualized reading instruction through the REACT Strategy. It includes orientation sessions on contextualized instruction, workshops on developing localized reading materials, collaborative lesson planning, demonstration teaching, assessment development, and reflective action planning. These components were developed based on the learning gains observed among Grade 7 students and are intended to sustain improvements in reading comprehension and instructional practice. The proposed training matrix emphasizes continuous professional development by enabling teachers to design culturally relevant instructional materials, implement effective contextualized reading strategies, monitor learners' progress using valid assessment tools, and engage in reflective practice. Consistent use of contextualized reading activities promotes meaningful learning experiences, allowing students to relate classroom lessons to authentic situations and improving both language proficiency and reading comprehension. These findings are supported by Visconde and Lasaten (2018), who emphasized that contextualized and localized learning materials increase learners' confidence, participation, and ability to relate lessons to real-life situations.

4. Conclusion & Recommendations

The study concludes that Grade 7 students initially demonstrated satisfactory reading comprehension skills before the implementation of contextualized reading instruction through the REACT Strategy. Following the intervention, their level of learning improved to a very satisfactory level, with a statistically significant increase in pretest and posttest scores,

confirming the effectiveness of the strategy in enhancing reading comprehension. The students also demonstrated improved ability to understand texts, identify key ideas and supporting details, infer meanings, and relate textual content to real-life experiences. These learning gains provided the basis for the development of a teacher training matrix designed to strengthen contextualized reading instruction and sustain improvements in students' reading comprehension.

The implementation of contextualized Grade 7 reading instruction through the REACT Strategy is recommended to further strengthen students' reading comprehension and learning gains across different learning areas. Schools are encouraged to consistently apply this instructional approach and provide technical assistance through regular monitoring and evaluation to ensure its effective implementation. The proposed teacher training matrix may also be adopted to enhance teachers' competencies in designing and delivering contextualized reading materials through practical classroom applications, learner-centered activities, effective lesson planning, and data-driven instructional practices that support the continuous improvement of students' reading performance.

The study was limited to Grade 7 students of Pitogo High School and focused specifically on the contextualization of reading instruction through the REACT Strategy using the First Quarter reading lessons. The findings were based on the respondents' pretest and posttest performance during the implementation period and served as the basis for the proposed teacher training matrix. Consequently, the results are confined to the context, participants, and scope of the study.

Compliance with ethical standards

The author declares no conflict of interest. This study received no external funding. Participation in the study was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained from the participants prior to data collection. Data were collected using non-invasive research methods, and all information obtained from the Grade 7 students and Pitogo High School was treated with strict confidentiality, with no identifying information disclosed.

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