

# Improved Reading Comprehension through Reading Enhancement Program

Jane A. Bugtong\*

*Teacher III, Department of English, Balayan National High School, Batangas, Philippines*

**Abstract:** Reading is one of the important macro-skills that can greatly contribute to the success and achievements of an individual. Without proper guidance and support from the parents and teachers, too often, children encounter various problems in understanding the text when reading which leads to frustration and loss of interest. Moreover, researchers have found that one of the key elements in enhancing students' comprehension is the utilization of different reading strategies. However, some teachers do not have a solid foundation for teaching these comprehension strategies. Therefore, teachers need to craft an enhancement program that focuses on improving the comprehension of students and on alleviating the reading difficulties that they are encountering during the reading process. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to improve the reading comprehension of students through a reading enhancement program. For data collection, the researcher demonstrated the reading strategies to thirty-five students of Grade 10. After, to measure the students' reading comprehension, the researcher conducted a pre-reading assessment at the beginning of the school year and a post-reading assessment. After that, improved comprehension was shown in Table 3 based on the reading assessment that was conducted for SY 2022-2023.

**Keywords:** Comprehension, effectiveness, enhancement, problems, process, program, reading, skills, strategies, understanding.

## 1. Introduction

Reading is one of the important skills that can contribute to the peak of success of an individual. All too often, if children encounter problems or barriers when reading, it outweighs their desire to read, especially if they do not have proper guidance.

Reading is fundamental to what works in society. There are cases where most adults could not even understand the simplest instructions like the labels in the medicine bottles. That is already an alarming thought - especially for the next generation of learners. Other cases happen when a person is filling out applications, which becomes impossible without the aid of someone who is a good reader. Difficulty in reading road or warning signs, following a map or guide and day-to-day activities leads to frustration, annoyance, and fear. In this fast-changing world, the ability to always read matters.

Reading is also beneficial when one is looking for a job. In any company or prestigious corporations with high compensation, they do require reading as an integral part of their performance in a particular task. Employees are given

memorandums or reports that must be read, and it entails immediate response. If a worker has poor reading skills, he could not instantly get the meaning and could not even make reactions towards the relayed message. Accomplishment of tasks is being affected.

Moreover, reading also helps develop one's mind—mind that needs exercise. If the mind grows healthy, then it would be easy to comprehend the written word. Language skills of young children will be enhanced if they inculcate in their minds the essence of reading. It also aids them to listen which only few people can really do. If a person is not a good listener, it may lead to negative results like misunderstandings, family conflict and other life trials—great or small.

It brings us to the world of curiosity where there are exciting discoveries. All discoveries happen through various and great learning tools—books, newspaper, magazines, mobile phones, social media apps with the aid of internet. To what tools they are interested in as long as they can read, it can definitely educate themselves. Reading is a means on how we can be benefited out of the teeming information we have around.

Besides curiosity and discoveries, reading makes a person become imaginative. With the learning tools mentioned above, amusement is just an inch away. When we read, we can travel around the world for free and we can be any of those characters we admire the most. Hence, the creative side is being unlocked. Endless possibilities are what reading can bring to one's life. To the same extent, those who could not comprehend well may not experience this kind of happiness, joy, and excitement.

When we start being curious, we also become conscious of our self-image, and it is one fundamental thing that reading can give. Some poor readers have low regard to themselves and even to their capabilities. They often feel that people around are always against them, that is why they do isolate themselves. In academics, they have unsatisfactory performances because they cannot read and comprehend the material they have in hand. Most of the time, they do give up on this kind of situation.

Understanding of words can contribute a lot to reading. Reading, which is still a dilemma in the field of education, has a big role in today's trend of educational system in the Philippines.

It is common knowledge that knowing how to read and write is an indicator that one is educated. It is also an accepted phenomenon that reading is a very relevant part in the

\*Corresponding author: [jane.bugtong@deped.gov.ph](mailto:jane.bugtong@deped.gov.ph)

development of an individual's whole being. Reading is said to be the training of the mind and the means to attain a deeper meaning of reality. Reading is a habit where students learn, gain knowledge, and develop new skills (Olivar, 2014) [1]. Understanding the significance of reading and in line with the implementation of the K to 12 Basic Education Program, the Department of Education (DepEd) implemented "Every Child A Reader Program" (ECARP), through DepEd Memorandum No.402 s.2004 [2] and Administrative Order No. 324 [3]. This aims to teach public elementary pupils with planned training in reading and writing to make them independent young readers and writers. Moreover, ECARP is also part of the ten-point education agenda of President Simeon Benigno Aquino III to ensure that the country's public schools produce well-equipped graduates who could cope to the different challenges in life.

As we embrace the new educational system under the K to 12 Basic Education Program, different aspects are not being given emphasis like the current problems occurring inside the classroom. These various problems are so alarming not only to the teachers but to the Department of Education as well which is always aiming to attain and uplift the quality of education in the Philippines.

Typical reading difficulties of adolescents with mild disabilities include problems with vocabulary, word recognition, reading comprehension and reading rate.

All teachers must help, facilitate, encourage, and understand all the learners whether excellent or academically challenged. They must not blame the primary school level for the failures in reading. Therefore, the researcher as an English teacher who is concerned on improving the learners' comprehension sought to determine if the reading strategies are useful in the improvement of reading comprehension of Grade 10 students.

## 2. Literature Review

As Foreign Language Teaching Methods (2010) [4] stated, reading is a process undertaken to reduce uncertainty about meanings a text conveys. It is the process that results from a negotiation of meaning between the text and its reader. It is also the knowledge, expectations, and strategies a reader uses to uncover textual meaning all play decisive roles way the reader negotiates with the text's meaning.

Reading is a complex interaction between the text, the reader and the purposes for reading, which are shaped by the reader's prior knowledge and experiences, the reader's knowledge about reading and writing language and the reader's language community which is culturally and socially situated. The reading process involves 5 stages: Prereading, Reading, Responding, Exploring, Applying. Hughes (2007) [5].

No Child Left Behind (2018) [6] includes four important legal definitions: reading, essential components of reading instruction; scientifically based reading research, and diagnostic reading assessment. Pete has used the language in these legal definitions in cases when school districts failed to use research-based reading programs.

In essence, reading is a process to understand and reconstruct the meaning contained in reading material. Message or meaning contained in the text reading is a mutual interaction, active

interaction, and dynamic interaction between the reader has basic knowledge with the sentences, facts, and information contained in the text readings. The information contained in the literature is information invisible to the eye or can be referred to as the source of visual information. Knowledge base which was previously owned by the reader is the information stored in the memory of the brain / mind reader or can be called with nonvisual information sources. Both kinds of sources of information need to be owned equally by the reader. It means the ability to know visual information to be followed by the basic knowledge needed to comprehend a reading text. Vice versa, the knowledge base that has been held to proceed with the ability to understand visual information that a text reading. Other supporting capabilities that need to be held reader that is owned by the ability of connecting ideas with reading material. From the nature of reading which has been described can be argued that reading has many purposes and benefits in daily life. Any person who would do of course have an intention of reading why he needs to read the text which in turn could benefit after reading activities take place. The benefits of reading, among others (1) as a medium of recreation, (2) media self-actualization, (3) media informative; (4) media enhancer insight, (5) media to sharpen reasoning, (6) the media to learn a skill, (7) media forming emotional and spiritual intelligence; etc.

Because reading has many benefits in life, then reading activities need to be trained intensively in learning at school, mainly starting from the level of primary education. Learning to read in primary schools intensively trained in subjects Indonesian. In general, learning to read in primary schools are grouped into two kinds, namely reading the beginning and read further. In the following discussion then focused on learning to read the beginning and bagamana diagnose difficulties in its implementation if it turns out students' primary impediment in learning to read. Pembelajaran (2011) [7].

In Special Connections site, Lenz, (2018) [8] further developed the articles about reading and reading comprehension where he explicated that reading comprehension is the process of constructing meaning from text. The goal of all reading instruction is ultimately targeted at helping a reader comprehend text. Reading comprehension involves at least two people: the reader and the writer. The process of comprehending involves decoding the writer's words and then using background knowledge to construct an approximate understanding of the writer's message. He added that word identification is a process that results in a fairly exact outcome (i.e., a student either reads the word "automobile" or not) the process of comprehending text is not so exact. Different readers will interpret an author's message in different ways. Comprehension is affected by the reader's knowledge of the topic, knowledge of language structures, knowledge of text structures and genres, knowledge of cognitive and metacognitive strategies, their reasoning abilities, their motivation, and their level of engagement.

In the study of Reis, et. al (2010) [9], they used a randomized design to investigate the effects of an enriched reading program, Schoolwide Enrichment Reading Model (SEM-R), with blocks

of independent reading on oral reading fluency (ORF), reading comprehension, and attitudes toward reading for students in Grades 3-5. The authors used SEM-R in comparison with basal reading programs to investigate the addition of planned enrichment strategies and independent reading on students' reading achievement. Students and teachers were randomly assigned to either the SEM-R treatment with 1 hr of SEMR and 1 hr of basal instruction or to the control group with 2 hr of basal instruction. The authors found statistically significant differences favoring the SEM-R treatment group in ORF. These results suggest that an enriched reading program that challenges and engages students may produce higher ORF than a standard basal program.

Celestino (2014) [10] in his study sought to find out the factors that influence the reading comprehension of students as measure to improve the reading performance of freshmen students from the College of Information Technology and Computing Sciences (CITCS) of Quirino State University. The study utilized a descriptive method with a three-part standardized questionnaire in data gathering. Findings showed that students in general have less serious problems on reading difficulties, but a strong correlation between availability of reading materials at home, and the seriousness of home and family-related and student-related difficulties in reading comprehension of the college freshmen was realized.

A study of Blas, *et. al* (2018) [11] revealed that English has been the medium of instruction since the beginning of the 20th century in the Philippines during the arrival of the Americans. This has been incorporated holistically in the society through the educational system, communication, mass media, publications, and social media. It is given therefore that Filipino learners are bilingual-- i.e., speaking both Filipino (the native tongue) and English as Second Language (ESL). After a century though, proficiency in the language is still a difficulty and an anxiety, especially from public school learners. In Taytay Senior High School (a public senior high school), Grade 11 students were observed of certain levels of difficulties in reading, writing, speaking and listening. In this study, the researchers probed deeper into the following: a.) the difficulties experienced by grade 11 students b.) the factors that led to such difficulties and c.) the articulated ways to help them overcome such difficulties in English proficiency. As a descriptive study, the researchers used pre-survey, survey, FGD and extensive literature review as methodologies. The survey results revealed problematic stages in vocabulary, training and knowledge, confidence and self-esteem and interest. Articulated in the FGD furthermore were issues of generation, practice/articulation, and system as factors that led to difficulties in reading writing, speaking and listening. On the other hand, Grade 11 students underscored power of mind, the use of native language and practice as methodical solutions to the problem. Further directions of this study could include elaboration of the FGD results that pertain to issues of generation, practice/articulation and system. The use of native language could also be expounded on future studies.

In addition to reading are the benefits of reading strategies wherein Banditvilai (2020) [12] investigated the effectiveness

of reading strategies on reading comprehension of the second-year English major students who enrolled to study English Reading at the faculty of Liberal Arts and Science, Kasetsart University, to find out whether, after being trained in reading strategies, they were able to apply any of these strategies to their reading processes. The data were collected from a questionnaire and reading tasks and semi-structured interviews. The statistical techniques used were the mean value and standard deviation. The analysis of qualitative data and summary of key points were made from the interview. The findings were that reading strategies had a positive effect on the students' reading comprehension. The students had favorable attitudes towards skimming, scanning, making predictions and questioning and they could apply these strategies to their reading processes, and they helped them to comprehend the text better.

### 3. Methodology

The main objective of this research was to improve the reading comprehension of students through a reading enhancement program. The researcher utilized these strategies: 1) use of short reading texts or stories; 2) employ word of the day in the classroom; and 3) use memory vocabulary card. The strategies were instituted to thirty-five Grade 10 students, pointed out that 20 of the 35 students were not aware of the strategies. First the given strategies were demonstrated by the teacher during class discussion and the second step, the strategies were practiced by the whole class, down to small groups and individual. After, the researcher administered the Individual Reading Inventory (IRI) to determine if the reading comprehension level of the students has improved based on the strategies under the reading enhancement program. The researcher employed the index, a tool which measures the familiarity of the students in reading strategies used before, during, and after reading. The researcher consistently used these techniques year-round, SY 2022-2023.

### 4. Results

The researcher identified first the reading difficulties encountered by Grade 10 students through a questionnaire which led to the result that students have difficulties in comprehension (reread to make sense), vocabulary (have few vocabulary words and forget vocabulary words) as shown in Table 1. Using these data, the researcher crafted a reading enhancement program, demonstrated in Figure 1, focused on the reading strategies that would alleviate reading difficulties and improve the comprehension level of the students. The researcher conducted a pre-reading assessment at the beginning of the school year and a post-reading assessment. After that, improved comprehension was shown in Table 3 based on the pre and post reading assessment that was conducted for SY 2022-2023.

Table 1  
Reading difficulties met by Grade 10

Reading Difficulties Met by Grade 10 Students	Weighted Mean	Rank	Verbal Interpretation
<b>A. Difficulty Regarding Vocabulary</b>			
1. Difficulty in understanding large words that I read	3.17	2	Encountered Most of the Time
2. Forget vocabulary that I learn	3.17	2	Encountered Most of the Time
3. Have few vocabulary words	2.70	9	Encountered Most of the Time
<b>B. Difficulty Regarding Comprehension</b>			
1. Have difficulty in grasping the main idea of text	2.83	5	Encountered Most of the Time
2. Read slowly	2.53	11	Encountered Most of the Time
3. Have difficulty in identifying the main points	2.77	8	Encountered Most of the Time
4. Difficulty in comprehending the words in a text	2.70	9	Encountered Most of the Time
5. Reread to make sense	3.43	1	Encountered Most of the Time
<b>C. Difficulties on conceptual and topic level</b>			
1. Limited use of title, pictures as part of story orientation	2.83	5	Encountered Most of the Time
2. Limited use of prior knowledge in reading new texts	2.83	5	Encountered Most of the Time
3. Difficulty in elaborating, inferring, predicting or summarizing while reading	2.93	4	Encountered Most of the Time

Table 2  
Pre-assessment in reading

		Comprehension Level									
SECTION		1	2	3	4	5	TOTAL	Independent	Instructional	Frustration	Capacity
1	LOPEZ-JAENA	10	7	14	25	20	76	0	9	14	12

Table 3  
Post-assessment in reading

		Comprehension Level									
SECTION		1	2	3	4	5	TOTAL	Independent	Instructional	Frustration	Capacity
1	LOPEZ-JAENA	26	22	24	28	30	130	10	17	8	0

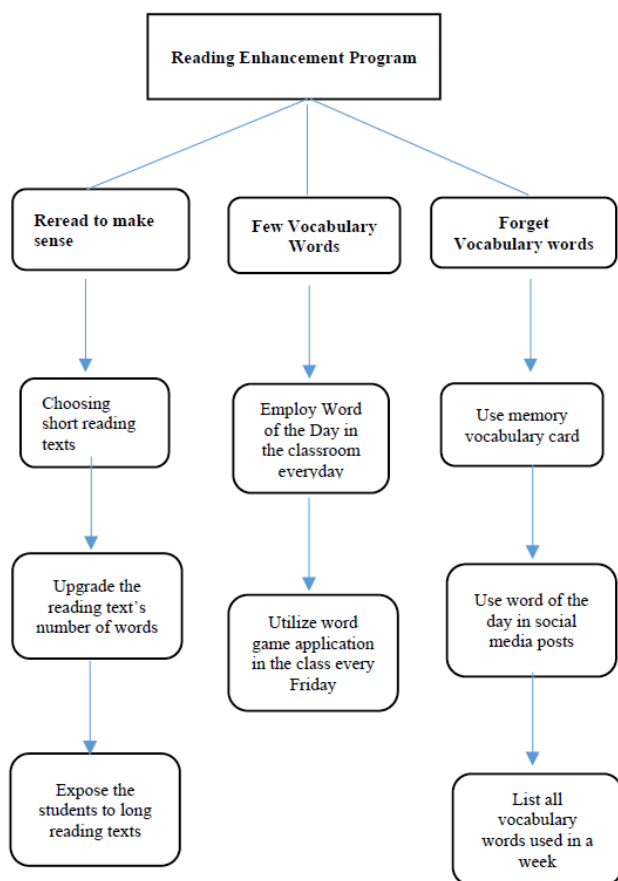


Fig. 1. Action plan

## 5. Conclusion

Based on the results, the following conclusions were drawn.

- Grade 10 students find it hard to grasp the meaning of the text because of its length.

- Most of the Grade 10 students want to read the given story twice or several times to fully get the main idea and its concept.
- In crafting reading enhancement program, there should be careful analysis first on the main reading difficulties encountered by the students.
- Consistent use of reading strategies based on what the students need can help them understand the reading text and improve their comprehension level.

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