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Enhancing Literary Comprehension Skills of Grade 7 Students through Artistic Visualization Strategy

Annagel Diñise Dequito

Master's Scholar,

Cebu Technological University Main Campus

Philippines

ABSTRACT

When students create mental pictures in mind, they will achieve a whole new level of understanding of literature. Thus, solving the problem of poor reading comprehension. Through explanatory-sequential design, it looked into the effectiveness of artistic visualization in improving the Most Essential Learning Competency (MELC) reading comprehension skills of Grade 7 Students in terms of comprehending Philippine literary text. Findings revealed that the artistic visualization helped enhance the learner's comprehension skills in reading literary text, and there was a significant difference between the participants' pre-test and post-test performance after implementing the artistic visualization. Based also on the students' experiences, artistic visualization ignites motivation, facilitates better comprehension, fosters creativity, and poses a challenge to learners. Based on the findings and conclusion, using an artistic visualization learning prototype on the students' learning activity in reading is highly recommended.

Keywords: Artistic Visualization, Literary comprehension skills, Grade 7 students, Visualization; Strategy.

1. INTRODUCTION

The most important product is producing students who can comprehend literary texts well. Literary comprehension is an essential tool for developing knowledge. One way to build readers' comprehension is through literary text, which can be done by reading aloud, in book groups, or independently (Stearns, 2023). Different strategies were used to enhance comprehension. Previous research has addressed several aspects of using visualization as a strategy that focuses only on judgment, decision-making, cognitive learning styles, spelling skills, and comprehension in reading descriptive text, recount text, and expository text. (Eberhab,2021; Ademan, 2022; Puspa, 2017; Shatri, 2017; Nahari, 2016; and Ainul, 2019). Studies were primarily conducted in Indonesia.

Little is known in the Philippines; one study identified that only limited to one respondent, a 14-year-old boy, aims to use a visualization strategy to aid with learning difficulties in comprehending a Filipino language story (Pareňo, 2017). The study suggests continuing the strategy but transitioning from Filipino to English writing and exploring how it can target comprehension skills. With that, there is a gap in the comprehension of Philippine English literary texts or stories. Further, in the international assessment, administered by the Program for International Student Assessment in 2018, the country scored the lowest in reading. There are 79 countries involved, and over 600,000 countries have participated. The score on reading is 340 points compared to the average of 487. The result of the 2018 PISA was released in 2019. However, during the pandemic year 2019 and 2021, the Philippines no longer participated in the test and joined again in 2022. In relation, the recent findings of the Programme for International Student Assessment (2022), released on December 5, 2023, showed no improvements in reading performance. The country was ranked 76th out of 81 countries for 2022, while in 2018, it was ranked the lowest out of 79 participating countries in reading comprehension.

This study explored artistic visualization, a reading comprehension technique that involves creating mental images of the literary text being read. Readers engage their imagination, making the text more vivid and memorable. This helps them read comprehension and be active readers. Also, this method can help them focus on the reading material given by the teacher. It is a unique strategy to integrate into the teaching-learning process. The use of this strategy would also motivate them and make them engage with a lot of materials during the process. Considering also the learning context of the country, especially the decreasing reading proficiency of the students due to the two-year academic break, Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) emphasized that all students should have access to high-quality, inclusive education and foster opportunities for lifelong learning (Goal 4 | Department of Economic and Social Affairs) ,the researcher conducted this study assessed the effectiveness of the artistic visualization in enhancing the literary comprehension skills of the Grade 7 Students at Saint Alphonsus Catholic School Inc. during the school year 2023-2024 as a basis for designing a learning prototype. This research assessed the effectiveness of artistic visualization in improving the literary comprehension skills of the Grade 7 Students at Saint Alphonsus Catholic School Inc. during the school year 2023-2024 as a basis for designing a learning prototype.

2. METHODOLOGY

The study used the mixed-method (Explanatory-Sequential) approach because it involves both quantitative and qualitative data to determine to determine the impact of artistic visualization in reading comprehension. This study was conducted at St. Alphonsus Catholic School, now known as St. Alphonsus Catholic School (Lapu-Lapu City, Cebu), Inc. SACS is a Catholic school that provides kindergarten, elementary, and secondary education. Rev. Fr. Mateo O'Callaghan, a Redemptorist Father, founded the school in 1916 and named it in honor of its founder, St. Alphonsus d Liguori. The qualitative and quantitative respondents of this study were the Grade 7- Kindness students of Saint Alphonsus Catholic School Inc. enrolled during the Academic year 2023-2024. The school has six (6) sections in Grade 7; however, this study covered one section. The respondents comprised 43 students; 22, or 51.16 %, were female, and 21 or 48.83 % were male. A pre-test and post-test, each comprising 30 multiple-choice items assessing reading comprehension. The researcher adapted the Wayne Community College (Wayne Community College Test of Reading Comprehension. Retrieved from https://www.waynecc.edu) reading comprehension questionnaire. It is an informal individualized assessment tool used to record the learners' performance in terms of finding the main idea and comprehending specific information. The test questionnaire was modified to suit the needs of the 7th-grade learners and the curriculum topic of the particular grade level. Additionally, a semi-structured interview guide captured students' experiences in using artistic visualization in the classroom in improving reading comprehension.

Pre-Gathering. Permission was secured from school principal and junior high school principal before conducting the study. Also, the researcher sent a letter to the parents, an informed consent form, a letter to the students, and an assent form. They were told and agreed about the study's primary objective and were oriented on the data-gathering process.

Before the intervention. The second step of the procedure is to let the Grade 7 students read the first story and a series of discussions without employing the strategy. After this, the researcher conducted the pretest to determine the skill level of the respondents on reading comprehension. In gathering the data, the researcher used the following technique. Pre-tests were given before the treatment to determine the student's skill level. (without employing the strategy)

During the intervention. The implementation of the research intervention was followed. During the strategy's implementation, the researcher also produced lesson plans by integrating visualization activities.

After the intervention. Following the implementation of the intervention scheme is the administration of the post-test. In gathering the data, the researcher used the following technique. Post-test- was given one month after to find out the student's improvement. The pre-test and post-test were different questions and included a common core of questions in which a rubric from the DEPED grading system was used for marking.

After the Posttest. After which, the interview commenced. The respondents were asked about their experiences with integrating artistic visualization. The respondent's answers were then recorded and later transcribed by the researcher. Quantitative data were computed using mean, standard deviation, and a paired t-test to determine the significance of performance differences. Qualitative data were analyzed through thematic analysis following Braun and Clarke's

(2006) framework, identifying key themes from student responses. This study employed thematic analysis following the framework of Braun and Clarke (2006) to identify patterns and themes in the qualitative data. The six-phase approach - familiarization, coding, theme generation, theme review, theme definition, and reporting—was systematically applied to ensure rigorous data analysis Quantitative and qualitative analyses were conducted. Pre-test and post-test scores were subjected to a paired t-test to determine to determine the impact of artistic visualization in reading comprehension. Descriptive statistics, including mean and standard deviation, summarized performance trends. Braun and Clarke's thematic analysis was employed to explore students' learning experiences with artistic visualization as an instructional tool. Findings provided insights into its impact on reading comprehension.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results provide insights into students' performance differences before and after implementing artistic visualization and their learning experiences. Table 1 presents the tabular presentation per competency for testing significant differences between the pre-test and post-test scores using paired T-test gathered from each student's raw scores in the four competencies and for the Whole Examination/Overall. The researcher utilized Paired T-test to determine if there were significant differences between the pre-test and post-test and post-test scores. All scores are assumed normal.

Table 1. "SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE MEAN OF PRETEST AND POSTTEST"

| Skills | Before | After | Diff | t | p- value | Interpretation |
|---------------------------|----------|------------|------|--------|-------------|----------------|
| Comprehending the | Mean: | Mean: 4.09 | 1.58 | 8.789 | 0.0000* | Significant |
| Worth of Ideas | 2.51 | | | | | |
| Mentioned in the | | Sd: 0.89 | | | | |
| Text | Sd: 0.94 | | | | | |
| Comprehending the | Mean: | Mean: 3.69 | 0.98 | 3.447 | 0.0000* | Significant |
| Conflict presented | 2.72 | | | | | |
| in the Text | | Sd: 1.19 | | | | |
| | Sd: 1.39 | | | | | |
| Comprehending the | Mean: | Mean: 3.79 | 0.96 | 5.325 | 0.0000* | Significant |
| Plot presented in | 2.83 | | | | | |
| the Text | | Sd: 0.74 | | | | |
| | Sd: 0.95 | | | | | |
| Comprehending | Mean: | Mean: 4.41 | 1.65 | 7.875 | 0.0000* | Significant |
| Specific | 2.76 | | | | | |
| information in the | | Sd: 0.70 | | | | |
| text | Sd: 1.19 | | | | | |
| Over-all | Mean: | Mean: 16 | 4.66 | 18.963 | 0.0000* | Significant |
| Examination | 11.34 | | | | | |
| | Sd: | Sd: 1.976 | | | | |
| | 0.935 | | | | | |

Significant Difference Between the Pre-test and Post-test Scores Using Artistic Visualization (n=43)

As gleaned from the table 1, there was a significant change in the scores of the students before and after the artistic visualization was applied. The results show that the computed p-value (0.0000) was less than $\alpha = 0.05$ with 42 degrees of freedom (df). This value is not significant at a 0.05 level of confidence since the computed p-value is less than the critical value, which is <.05.

Based also on the mean difference, the result denotes that after using the strategy, students showed a significant change in reading comprehension. This result denotes that after using the strategy, students showed a significant change in reading comprehension.

The technique uses their creativity in reading and making visualizations. The strategy was not on reading activities alone but also on making some drawings. Further, this study also demonstrated that students significantly improve their comprehension of the story when the teacher utilizes an artistic visualization strategy.

Student's comprehension was improved based on the findings and results of the quantitative data in this research. To expand it deeper, based also on students' responses to their experiences in table 2, it was revealed that the visualization ignites motivation, facilitates better comprehension, fosters creativity, and poses a challenge to learners.

Ignites Motivation. The first theme of the students' learning experiences is Ignites Motivation. It was revealed that artistic visualization captured the students' interest and motivated them to read and learn more about the story.

Facilitates Better Comprehension. In another context, the second theme of the student's experiences in artistic visualization facilitates better comprehension, and the participants revealed their thoughts when asked how artistic visualization helps them understand the story better.

Fosters Creativity. In a different context, as to what they like the most about the use of artistic visualization strategy, most of the participants answered that visualization fosters creativity with these categories: unique visuals, creative visualization, and creative visual representations, and with this positive response.

Table 2. STUDENT'S LEARNING EXPERIENCES ON THE USE OF ARTISTIC VISUALIZATION

| THEMES | CATEGORIES | | | |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|--|--|--|
| | • Fun experienced | | | |
| Ignites Motivation | Motivates to read | | | |
| Facilitates Better Comprehension | Cultivate Critical Thinking | | | |
| | Collaborative learning | | | |
| | Unique and creative visuals | | | |
| Fosters Creativity | Creative visual representations | | | |
| | Lack of Prior Experience/ Exposure | | | |
| Poses a challenge to learner | Limited Vocabulary | | | |

*Significant when p-value <.05.

Poses a challenge to learner. The last theme is that artistic visualization poses a challenge to learners with the following categories: lack of prior experience/ exposure and limited vocabulary. From the disclosed responses, another clear theme is the challenges that the students encountered. Adam King (2023) states that the common problems of the method. Lack of imagination is one of those problems faced by the students. Some readers have a problem in terms of creating mental images while reading the literary text, making it difficult to visualize the story and understand it well. Second is the limited vocabulary; they may find it challenging to create mental pictures of unfamiliar words found in the story. Third, difficulty with mental imagery. Few readers may have trouble creating mental images altogether since they are not used to it, making visualization a challenge.

Remember, visualization can be established effectively by practice. By fostering this strategy, we empower learners to become more proficient and active readers. By knowing the challenges that happen during the visualizing process while the students are reading and implementing some methods to lessen them, readers can enhance their

capability to make mental images and improve their comprehension. By building vocabulary, practicing imagination, creating a visualization space, and more practice, the method will be a powerful tool for improving reading comprehension skills.

4. CONCLUSION

Results have indicated that by using artistic visualization in reading, the performance of the students has improved as it showed a significant difference in pre-test to post-test scores per competency and the changes of categorization in (comprehending specific information in the text) Based on the student's gathered experiences, what is promising about artistic visualization is its power to ignite motivation, facilitate better comprehension, and foster creativity in the classroom. Therefore, the integration of creative visualization in reading is an innovative method to make learners better comprehend stories, as confirmed by the results and established by the anchored theory.

4.1 Recommendations

From the findings and conclusion presented in this study, the following recommendations are at this moment offered: Integrating visualization exercises into reading instruction is a powerful strategy that enhances students' comprehension and engagement with texts. Visualization should be embedded in storytelling activities to help students grasp key elements such as the value of ideas, plot, conflict, and specific details of a narrative. Emphasizing the creation of mental images, particularly when reading Philippine texts, can further develop learners' interpretative abilities. Educators should encourage students to refine these visualization skills by applying them before, during, and after reading. Through consistent practice, students not only enhance their understanding but also become more motivated and imaginative readers. Moreover, teachers can use visualization activities to foster creativity, improve reading comprehension, and ignite enthusiasm for learning. Future researchers may consider enhancing and modifying this instructional approach to better align with learners' needs, thereby utilizing it as an effective strategy for teaching reading.

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