

# Readiness of Senior High School Students for The 21st Century Literature

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**Abstract**— This paper aims to present the level of readiness of Senior High School Students in Sorsogon City for 21st-century Literature. It utilized a descriptive developmental method in which the main instruments used were proficiency test which covered (5) competencies from the subject’s curriculum guide and a checklist for their reading habits, reading preferences and reading resources. An unstructured interview was also utilized to validate the findings. A total of 150 respondents participated with 30 randomly selected representatives in each SHS track i.e. ABM, STEM, TVL, GAS, STEM and HUMMS. The tests were focused on the level of readiness of the students to the subject in terms of the selected competencies, factors affecting their readiness and if there is a significant difference when grouped according to strand. Based on the findings, it was concluded that Senior High School students in Sorsogon city are academically not ready for 21st-century literature. Their higher-order thinking skills such as analyzing, interpreting and applying and creating is low and needs attention, and that regardless of the strand, SHS students need to review literary competencies as it affects their level of readiness to the subject. A training matrix for the learners was proposed to enhance their writing and reading skills to gain a higher level of readiness for the 21st-century literature subject.

**Keywords**— 21st Century literature, level of readiness, literary competencies.

## I. INTRODUCTION

In 1995, the Philippine Studies journal of Ateneo de Manila University published New Philippine Writing by Prof. Torres which stated: “An alternative poetics is at work. Form is more open-ended than closed, looser, more improvisatory; the tone conversational, informal. And no one seems to think twice about making explicit statements in the name of personal passion or liberation. Despite the rise of ‘cause-oriented’ writing, formal matters of craft in no way seem endangered, thanks to the influence of writing workshops in leading universities.”. Indeed, there is an immense and strange emergence of literary works in the 21st century. The description of Torres of what a 21st literature contributed to the development of the problem of the

study. In the modern parlance, the term literature is associated with its academic context, referring to the enduring works of fiction, philosophy, history, etc. that have been studied for generations and shaped the foundations of our thought. Yet literature by its definition includes any and all written works, a fact that has never been more relevant than in our current Internet age, when the written word is more accessible and democratic than ever before. (Scheller, 2012)

Additionally, the “death of print” has been much heralded over the past decade, precipitated by the rising accessibility of devices like tablets and smart phones that have made the electronic medium cheaper and more universal. Book sales, as well as magazine and newspaper subscriptions, have diminished, but our appetite for information has grown larger and more impetuous. (Kaplan, 2002)

Senior High School students were all born in or just before the 21st century. This century is their century. Through literature we are in constant communication with those of the past and each other, making our 21st century classrooms worlds of potential.

P21 (Partnership for 21st century Skills) by Pacific Policy Research Center. Honolulu: Kamehameha Schools–Research & Evaluation, is a national organization that advocates for the 21st century readiness of every student, defines 21st Century Skills as a blend of content knowledge, specific skills, expertise, and literacy necessary to succeed in work and life. The North Central Regional Education Laboratory (NCREL) and the Metiri Group (2003) describe these skills as the outcome of 21st century learning, which emphasizes digital-age literacy, inventive thinking, effective communication, and high productivity.

As Bean and Moni asserted in a “Developing Students’ Critical Theory: Exploring Identity Construction in Young Adult Fiction (2003)” Critical analysis of novels has long been a staple of literary critics. Yet, what makes Critical Discourse Analysis so vital to today’s young adults is that the context in which they live their lives—electronically, globally, and instantly—makes this an

even more imperative approach to understanding who they are in their search for personal and spiritual identity.”

In other studies, highly promising results have been obtained by using discussion forums, where the topics concerned both at-home and in-class reading activities, as well as the Internet to have students read directly on the computer rather than by conventional means. Also emerging in the classroom are laptops which are increasingly used for reading activities (Jenkins, 2009; Sokal & Katz, 2008; Farris et al., 2009).

Palani (2012) is of the opinion that, effective reading is important avenue of effective learning and reading is interrelated with the total educational process and hence, educational success requires successful reading. He believes reading is the identification of the symbols and the association of appropriate meaning with them. It requires identification and comprehension. Comprehension skills help the learner to understand the meaning of words in isolation and in context.

Moreover, a study entitled “Differentiating Instruction in Response to Student Readiness, Interest, and Learning Profile in Contemporary Classrooms”, Tomlinson et .al, it was concluded that transformation in society and schools evolve, effective teachers in contemporary classrooms will have to learn to develop classroom routines that attend to, rather than ignore, learner variance in readiness, interest, and learning profile. Such routines may be referred to as “differentiating” curriculum and instruction.

**II. OBJECTIVES**

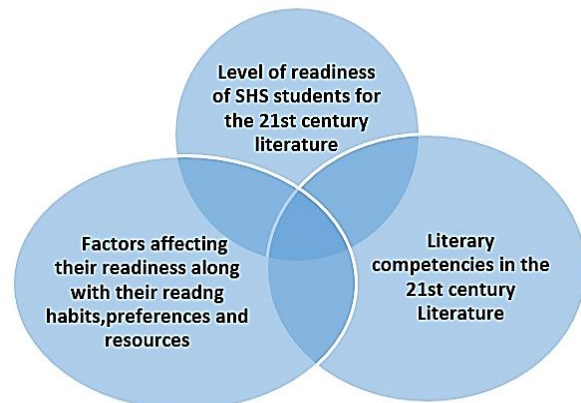
This study determined the level of readiness of Senior High School Students in Sorsogon City for the 21st century Literature. Most specifically, it answered the following; (1) Level of readiness of Senior High School students in Sorsogon City for the 21st century literature in terms of these competencies, a) identifying figures of speech and other literary devices in the text, b) inferring literary meanings from the literal language; c) understanding literary meanings in context, d) explaining the linguistic and socio-cultural contexts and discuss how they enhance the text’s meaning, and e) produce a creative representation of a literary text; (2) Factors affecting the readiness of the students for the 21st century literature along; a) Reading Habits, b) Reading Preferences and c) Reading Resources (3) Significant difference of the level of readiness when grouped according to strand and (4) Proposed output based from the result of study.

**III. METHODOLOGY**

This research is descriptive developmental in which quantitative and qualitative research methods were used to collect and analyzed the obtained data from the respondents. The instrument used were a proficiency test which was self-developed covering (5) competencies form the subject’s curriculum guide and a checklist for their reading habits, reading preferences and reading resources. Random stratified sampling which was proportionally taken was used in the study.

The respondents were students of Senior High School in the Sorsogon City Division from varied schools with a total of 150, specifically 30 from each of the (5) available SHS track i.e. ABM, STEM, TVL, GAS, STEM and HUMMS.

The appropriate statistical tools such as frequency, mean, percentage, ranking and chi-square were used to analyze the data and to answer the research objectives. An unstructured interview was also used to validate the findings of the study. After the results were analyzed and findings were obtained, the scale was used to interpret the respondents’ readiness on each strand. Show below is the conceptual paradigm of this paper.



*Fig. 1: Conceptual Paradigm*

**IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The presentation of data are as follows : (1) Level of Readiness of SHS students to the 21st century Literature in terms of the following competencies, a) identifying figures of speech and other literary devices in the text, b) inferring literary meanings from the literal language, c) understanding literary meanings in context, d) explaining the linguistic and socio-cultural contexts and discuss how they enhance the text’s meaning, and e) produce a creative representation of a literary text; (2) Factors affecting their level of readiness along with reading habits, reading preferences and reading resources (3) Significant difference of the level of readiness when grouped according to strands (4) Output proposed based on the result of the study.

1) Level of Readiness of SHS students to the 21st century Literature in terms of the following competencies

Table 1: Level of Readiness of SHS students from each track to the 21st Century Literature Competencies

Competencies	STEM		GAS		HUMMS		TVL		ABM		Average Mean	
	M	D	M	D	M	D	M	D	M	D		
A	92.7	R	77.7	SR	68.7	NR	93.7	VR	92.7	R	85.1	MR
B.	80.0	SR	37.3	NR	60.7	NR	86.7	R	88.0	R	70.5	NR
C.	36.3	NR	20.0	NR	25.7	NR	41.3	NR	43.7	NR	33.4	NR
D.	51.3	NR	54.0	NR	36.0	NR	56.7	NR	60.7	NR	51.7	NR
E.	85.3	MR	54.6	NR	48.0	NR	53.3	NR	47.3	NR	57.7	NR
Average Mean	69.1	NR	48.7	NR	47.8	NR	66.3	NR	66.5	NR	59.68	NR

Legend: M – Mean, D – Description | VR – very ready, R – ready, MR - moderately ready, SR – slightly ready, NR – not ready

On identifying figures of speech and other literary devices in the text, it can be gleaned that it got a mean of 85.1 which describe as “moderately ready”. This was obtained from an individual result where 3 out of the 5 strands namely ABM and STEM resulted to ready while TVL is very ready and only (2) resulted to not ready which are GAS and HUMMS. This means that the skill on identifying figures of speech and other literary devices in the text is generally already developed among these SHS students. This implied that their background knowledge along this competency is still rich as it being applied. TVL which obtained the very ready result showed their proficient skill on this competency. It is further supported from a follow-up unstructured interview from their English teacher that it might be because that competency has also been practiced on their subject on Reading and Writing Skills last semester.

Thus, it can be implied that through a series of practice and exposure to students of a certain skill there will be retention on their part. This is true since the basic reading and writing skills they practiced in other language subjects are congruent to the competencies demanded from them in their literature subject. This is anchored to the concept on schema which lay dormant for nearly fifty years. Cognitive psychologists Bartlett (1932), Ausubel (1963), Rumelhart (1975) and Anderson (1977) examined the notion of schema—how humans organize and construct meanings in their heads. Bartlett defined it as the "active organization of past reactions or past experience". (cited in Anderson & Pearson, 1984, p. 257).

GAS and HUMSS which resulted to not ready may generally implied that they have less exposure to the competency or their background knowledge on that may not be sufficient that they haven’t applied it to a different text. Since this competency may function differently depending on a given a text or literary piece, it is important that students should retain basic concepts and learn to apply it in varied texts. A literature teacher mentioned in an unstructured interview that students may fail on identifying figures of speech in a given literary piece or even labeling a text on its type of figure of speech but they perform better when ask to make example of their own on a given figures of speech. On inferring literary meanings from a literal language, only ABM with a mean of 88.0 and TVL in 86.7 obtained the ready level. On the other hand, STEM got 80.0 which is slightly ready and GAS with 37.3 and HUMSS 60.7 are not ready. It can also be gleaned that TVL and ABM from being ready on the first competency, have also showed a desired readiness level in another competency. However, generally, the findings brought the not ready level in general for this competency. It means that SHS students’ proficiency on inferring literary meanings from a literal language may not make them ready for the subject. Since this competency is a foundation for higher reading skill, it can be alleged that this would have an effect on the other competencies which demand higher level of thinking and reading skills. According to Torberg (2000) in order to know a word we must be able to spell it, pronounce it, conjugate it, understand it when used, use it ourselves and even translate it. From this, it is further implied that for better literary analysis, there should be an even better understanding of the literal

language used in the text. The third competency being tested which is to understand meanings in context have showed the SHS non-readiness for the 21st century literature. This is because it can be gleaned from the table that STEM having a mean of 36.3, GAS - 20.0, HUMMSS - 25.7, TVL – 41.3, ABM – 33.4, have all resulted to not ready.

Understanding meanings in context is necessary to build interpretations on their own, hence, low proficiency level on this competency is seen as challenge to be able to cope with the 21st century literature. This is emphasized by other researchers which took a stance on

interpreting the characteristics of proficient readers which understanding meanings in a given context is highlighted. For instance, Paris, Wasik, & Turner (1991) stated that skillful readers had the ability to comprehend on two levels, both understanding locally (e.g. the words and sentences that the author has written) and also in global contexts (e.g. using cognitive tools to interpret beyond the text, relating with the entirety of the text). On the 4th competency, explaining the linguistic and socio-cultural contexts and discuss how they enhance the meaning of the texts, it can be gleaned from the table that SHS students are not ready.

Table 2: Level of Readiness in Each Competency

Competencies	Mean	Description
a) Identify figures of speech and other literary devices in the text)	85.1	Moderately ready
b) Inferring literary meanings from the literal language.	70.5	Not ready
c) Understand literary meanings in context	33.4	Not ready
d) Explain the linguistic and socio-cultural contexts and discuss how they enhance the text's meaning.	51.7	Not ready
e) Produce a creative representation of a literary text	57.7	Not ready
Average Mean	59.68	Not ready

The table above shows that the competency on identifying the figures of speech and other literary devices in the text) got a mean of 85.1 which describe as “moderately ready” out of the other four (4) competencies being tested. This means that the students are not yet ready in the 21<sup>st</sup> century literature. From this, there could be a generalization that they are only good

in identifying figures of speech and other literacy devices in the text but not in inferring literary meanings from the literal language and context, explain the linguistic and socio-cultural contexts and discuss how they enhance the text’s meaning and in creating a representation of a literary text in the 21<sup>st</sup> century Literature

2) Factors affecting their Readiness

2.1. Reading Habits

Table 3: Respondents' Reading Habits

	F	Rank
<b>A. Reasons for Reading</b>		
I read for fun and entertainment.	144	1
I read for educational purposes.	125	2
I choose to read when I'm bored.	73	3
I read because its exciting .	60	4
I read to escape from reality.	38	5
<b>B. Frequency of Reading</b>		
If it is not asked from school, I read 1-2 times a week.	84	1
If it is not asked from school, I read 3-5 times a week.	54	2
I don't read at all even if its not asked from school.	5	3

As shown in the table above, most of the SHS students read for fun and entertainment if it's not assigned from

school and second only to that is for educational purposes which can be gleaned as a continuation of their

learning goal from the school. Though low in rank there are still students who choose to read if they're bored, for excitement and to escape from reality.

It can be implied from the frequency of their reasons of reading that Senior High School students like entertainment from what they are reading as it boosts their interest to read. This further implies that giving them reading materials for educational purposes may be effective if it could also give them enjoyment at the same time.

It can also be considered that since Senior High School students were majority in their adolescence stage, they would really be reading for fun because this stage is constantly in search of the new and enjoyable hallways of good and engaging reading. As Bean and Moni (2011) stated, most adolescent readers view characters in young adult novels as living and wrestling with real problems close to their own life experiences as teenagers and they find it more entertaining and meaningful.

On the frequency of reading, it can be gleaned in the table that most of them read 1 -2 times a week with a frequency of 84. dents who don't read if it's not assigned from school. It can be implied that students still read even if it is not asked from them, that Senior High School students manage to have their own choice when to read. Such students haven't developed good habit of reading even if it is not assigned to them, a situation that can have a negative influence on their academic performance. This finding agrees with Issa et.al (2012) that engaging in reading continuously considerably influences ones studying skills and subsequent academic performance.

Hence, the present study proves how lack of good reading habits among students affect and will affect their academic performance. In an unstructured interview of the researcher to an English teacher she cited one common reason why students fail in reading skills and that is when they lack good reading habits, worst, they don't have any interest reading at all.

**2.2 Reading Preferences**

*Table 4: Respondents' Reading Preferences*

<b>READING PREFERENCES</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>Rank</b>
<b>A. Reading Format</b>		
I prefer reading from Smartphone.	35	2
I prefer reading from a tablet.	12	4
I prefer reading from a computer.	16	3
I prefer reading print books.	89	1
<b>B. Genre</b>		
I prefer reading fiction.	72	1
I prefer reading non- fiction.	35	3
I prefer poetry.	36	2
<b>C. Reading Subject</b>		
I like to read about celebrities.	25	6
I like to read about fictional characters.	68	1
I like to read about people/characters like me.	46	3
I like to read stories with people/characters different from me.	44	4.5
I like to read about characters in my age tackling with tough issues	44	4.5
I like to read about historical figures.	55	2

The findings reveal that the SHS students still prefer to read print books than with the given (3) technological devices. This is obtained since there is a difference of 54 between the reading print books than reading in smart phones.

This is an indication that despite the emergence of technological devices which can be used as a tool for reading, the Senior High Students still prefer reading print books.

However, based on the results there are still a number of students who prefer reading in a tablet, smart phone and

computer which is statistically 63 in total out of 150. Because of their low performance in the proficiency test, it concurs that these new forms of reading format may not really have induced critical reading skills to the students, only enjoyment and comfort. These analyses agree with Slavin et al. (2011), who found no conclusive impact by the practice of using computers to enhance reading performance. Chen (2011) also found on his study on the impact of technology to academic performance no positive association between the use of new technologies and academic achievement but rather just an increased interest and motivation to learn.

On the given genres, it can also be seen from the data that students prefer reading fictional stories that non-fiction and poetry. This reveals that those students are more interested reading fictional stories than non-fiction. This is supported when under preference on the subject they liked to read, fictional characters rank 1

versus reading historical figures and people or character like them.

It implies that students are motivated to read if it will be pushed to them to imagine things, thus, learning from those imaginations.

**2.3. Reading Resources**

*Table 5: Respondents' Reading Resources*

READING RESOURCES		
I read stories from watt pad.	80	2
I download e-book files .	61	4
I go to the library to find something to read .	74	3
I listen to audio books.	26	9
I use podcast app.	8	12
I search for books to be read in the internet.	89	1
I have read a flash fiction.	36	8
I have listened to a spoken word poetry.	58	5
I have read a chick literature .	21	10.5
I have read a Manga .	39	7
I know what is a graphic novel.	21	10.5
I know what is a doodle .	50	6

It can be gleaned that the SHS students do search for books to be read from the internet with a frequency of 89 than searching in the library with a frequency of 74. It only means that students make use of the internet as their resources for a reading material. With the findings that downloading or reading e-book files got a frequency of 61 it is revealed that students are really oriented on how to make use of today's technological advances even as a reading resource.

poetry ranked 1 at a frequency of 58. Hence, this revealed that SHS students are inclined to self-expression as also revealed on why they choose fiction as shown in Table 4 over other literary genres. Since spoken-word poetry is listening on how a literary piece is being delivered, it can be implied that Senior High School students who are dominantly adolescents needs more manifestation of emotions from what they are reading rather than just feeling the emotion of just simply reading.

This implies that current trends nowadays have been part of the reading and literary circle which enable students modify how they will engage themselves in these circles. Moreover, it can be concurred that the development and proliferation of technology will continue to facilitate an increase in the number of e-book readers, digital book readers and all forms where internet is the main resource. This analysis can be associated with Hughes-Hassell & Rodge, (2007) who stated that students are spending some of their free time reading. However, many of the activities that students' chose instead of reading for student's time were ones that contained a social aspect. When given the choice students are choosing other activities such as talking on the phone, using e-mail or internet, listening to music/going to concerts and shopping or going to the mall instead of reading. It

From the findings, it is also revealed their familiarity on doodle, next is flash fiction, Manga and graphic novel. These 21<sup>st</sup> century genres are already familiar to the Senior High students who are about to take 21<sup>st</sup> Century Literature subject. This implies that in their familiarity on the genres of 21<sup>st</sup> century is anchored to their reading resources and preferences which are mainly digital devices.

In terms of their knowledge and encounter to the different forms of 21<sup>st</sup> century literature, spoken-word

This data supports the findings of Schmar-Dobler (2003) and Moorman (2009) on their study which both talk about the constantly changing role of technology in education and literacy.

Moorman (2009) in his qualitative study on the impact of technology to literature specifically mentioned that students are being exposed to different types of text which has expanded from books and written to text, to new digital forms of text such as web-pages and blogs.

**3) Significant Difference of the Level of Readiness of SHS students when grouped according to track**

Table 6. *Significant Difference of the Level of Readiness to SHS Track*

Statistical Bases	Statistical Analysis
Df	16
Level of Significance	0.05
Tabular value	26.296
Computed $X^2$	23.1
Decision $H_0$	Do not reject
Interpretation	Not significant

The above table shows that at 5% level of significance with 16 as degrees of freedom, the tabular value of 26.296 is greater than the computed chi square value of 23.1. Thus, we fail to reject the null hypothesis. This means that there is no significant difference between the level of readiness of the five group of respondents. These findings also revealed that generally SHS students are not prepared for the 21<sup>st</sup> century Literature in terms of their literary competencies.

On the other hand, the present study’s implication on the level of readiness is in contrast with that of Halko (2012) who pointed out that the common philosophy of “ready for school” and “ready for academic subjects” place an undue burden on the students by expecting them to meet the expectations of school.

A more constructive way to consider school readiness is to remove the expectations from the child and place those expectations onto the schools and the families. Young children have wide ranging needs and require support in preparing them for the high standards of learning they will face.

However, the researcher believes that the level of readiness is determined to find out the weaknesses of the students on the subject at hand and shape interventions to make them even more prepared for it. towards the subject to be learned, changing the environment to suit the learning are all included in the readiness.

**4) Proposed training design based on the result of the study**

Based on the findings of the study and the implications brought by it, the researcher hereby proposed a Training/Course Design Matrix suited to the competencies of the subject and skills needed to be developed.

The training matrix is still anchored to their reading preferences but also exposing them to things that they may actually have interests too and will enhance their readiness for the subject. This may be implemented for the incoming SHS students and current SHS students who is about to take the subject.

**V. CONCLUSIONS**

Based on the findings, the researcher concluded that Senior High School students in Sorsogon City are academically not ready for the 21<sup>st</sup> century literature. Their higher order thinking skills such as analyzing, interpreting and applying and creating is low and needs attention. Their social empowerment may not translate to their academic readiness for the subject, socially they are given their exposures to various literary genres and reading resources nowadays, but not academically. Regardless of the strand, SHS students need to review literary competencies as it affects their level of competencies. An intervention is highly needed to enhance their academic readiness and also taking into account their common reading preferences, habits and resources as those are conclusively, affecting drastically their target readiness for the subject.

**VI. RECOMMENDATIONS**

The researcher would like to recommend that the SHS students should conduct intense review of the literary elements, practice higher order thinking skills i.e. enrichment classes as guided by the teachers. Language and literature teachers should also conduct various preparations to cope with the demands of the subject. The teachers should also take into consideration their reading preferences to elicit good reading competency without sacrificing the competencies. Each strand may demand different teaching styles and strategies, but, integration of the subject to their courses/strand will make it a more meaningful and authentic learning experience for them. The output of the study which is a training matrix course for incoming SHS and current SHS students should be forwarded to the authorities for its more systematic implementation. Further study is recommended to provide other scope and arrays of development on some stakeholders that are not covered by the present study.

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