

Technical and Vocational Strand-Based Worktext for Improving Reading Competence of Grade 12 Learners

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Abstract— Mastering the English language is important, with literacy playing a key role. Inadequate functional literacy among learners contributes to the high incidence of school dropout rates in the Philippines. Reading competence is a specific indicator of literacy. It is essential not only for academic purposes but also for everyday life.

The main goal of this study was to assess how effective is technical and vocational strand-based worktexts for improving the reading competence of the grade 12 learners. A quantitative approach, quasi-experimental design was employed by the researcher to treat the data on (1) pre-test and post-test scores of the respondents in reading, and a descriptive research design was utilized for (2) assessing the challenges experienced by the teachers in teaching reading among senior high school learners. The researcher collected data among grade 12 students enrolled in academic year 2021-2022, in a technical and vocational public secondary school.

The results revealed that grade 12 learners received a mean score of 10.58 with a standard deviation of 2.99 on their pre-test in reading, while they obtained a mean score of 17.42 with a standard deviation of 3.08 on the post-test. The computed T-value was 17.47, and the critical T-value was 0.000 at the 0.05 level of significance. Hence, the decision to reject the hypothesis indicates that there is a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores in reading among the student-respondents. The study suggested utilizing strand-based worktexts and developing reading materials across levels to improve students' reading competence.

Keywords— reading competence, strand-based worktext, technical-vocational school

I. INTRODUCTION

Students must acquire the five English macro skills to communicate effectively. According to Pablo (2018), these skills are the primary vehicles for learning a language and serve as the key for individuals to compete globally in a wide spectrum of communication. The four language macro skills were added by a fifth skill brought by rapid technological development. Three categories of these five macro skills were set, namely, Oral Skills (Listening and Speaking), Literacy Skills (Reading and Writing), and Receptive Skills (Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing, and Viewing). Mastering the English language is important, with literacy playing a key role. Inadequate functional literacy among learners contributes to the high incidence of school dropout rates in the Philippines. Reading competence is a specific indicator of literacy. It is essential not only for academic purposes but also for everyday life.

Reading is a complex cognitive process of decoding symbols to create or derive meaning. On one hand, reading competence is the level of comprehension a reader has achieved in engaging with the reading material. Therefore, one might know how to read but

may not be considered a competent reader. Based on the results of the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA), in year 2018, participating high school students in the Philippines got low scores in reading. Specifically, over eighty (80) percent of the Filipino students around fifteen years old did not reach the minimum level of reading proficiency. In year 2022, the country ranked 77th out of 81 countries, students scored 120 points lower than the average scores. The average score across all countries is typically around 475-495 points in each subject, however, the Philippine's score is 347 points in reading (Ines, 2023). This alarming scenario demands institutions to improve literacy and reading competence of learners. The president of the Reading Association of the Philippines, Frederick S. Perez mentioned, that one reason of low reading competence is that the students were not given proper instruction in developing literacy (Manlapig, 2020).

This proper instruction includes not only the techniques and strategies utilized by the teachers but also the learning materials, which are considered part of the process. Although the country's curriculum contains a

variety of learning materials for improving reading competence, there is a need for modification to cater to the demands and rapid evolution of literacy in 21st-century learning. Some learning materials require alteration or enhancement to increase students' interest in comprehending or engaging with the reading materials. The development of learning materials should be contextualized and localized, considering factors such as the learners, locality, resources, and other dynamics that would augment students' learning.

Given the above-mentioned circumstances, the researcher considered the research locale. The idea conveyed in English for Technical and Vocational Purposes (ETVP) was taken into consideration for assessing the effectiveness of strand-based worktexts on the reading competence of Grade 12 students. This study, therefore, highlighted the assessment of students' reading competence before and after utilizing strand-based worktexts.

II. OBJECTIVES/RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The objective of this study was to assess the effectiveness of technical and vocational strand-based worktext for improving the reading competence of grade 12 learners. Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. What are the pre-test and post-test scores of the students in reading?
2. Is there a significant difference between their pre-test and post-test scores in reading?
3. What are the challenges encountered by the teachers in teaching reading among senior high school learners?

III. METHODOLOGY

The researcher employed quantitative research particularly quasi-experimental research design for determining the effectiveness of using technical and vocational strand-based worktext for improving the reading competence of grade 12 learners. A test questionnaire was distributed among purposively selected students. These students were identified learners with low reading profiles based on the conducted school-based pre-reading assessment. There were one-hundred twenty three (123) respondents who answered the test questionnaire. The study also utilized descriptive research design in determining the challenges encountered by the teachers in teaching reading among senior high school learners. A researcher-made survey questionnaire was distributed to fifteen (15) language teachers.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. Reading Competence of Grade 12 Students

Score	Pre-test		Post-test	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
0 – 5	1	3.0	-	-
6 – 10	15	45.5	-	-
11 – 15	16	48.5	13	39.4
16 – 20	1	3.0	14	42.4
21 – 25	-	-	6	18.2
Total	33	100	33	100
Mean	10.58		17.42	
SD	2.99		3.08	

Legend:

- 0-5 Poor
- 6-10 Below Average
- 11-15 Average
- 16-20 Above Average
- 21-25 Excellent

Table 1 shows the result of the pre-test and post-test on reading of the respondents. As exposed on the table, in the conduct of pre-test, sixteen (16) or 48.5% of the

student-respondents obtained a score ranging from 11-15 interpreted as average which ranks first with the highest number of respondents. Only one (1) student or 3.0% of the total number of respondents obtained 16 – 20 scores or above average. There were no students who reached excellent or the score range of 21-25. In the post-test result, fourteen (14) or 42.4% of the student-respondents got a score ranging from 16-20 interpreted as above average, while six (6) or 18.2% obtained 21-25 scores equivalent to excellent in post-test.

The implementation of the RISE Worktext in the study of Logo, Dabu and Gabelo (2023) yielded a remarkable improvement in students' reading profiles, transitioning them from frustration levels to either instructional or

independent levels. This positive outcome underscores the effectiveness of the RISE Worktext in preparing students for their research courses in senior high school.

Table 2. Significant Difference between the Results of Pre-Test and Post-Test in Reading

Variable	Mean	Std. Dev.	df	t Comp. Value	p value	Decision	Interpretation
Pretest	10.58	2.99	32	17.47	0.000	Reject Ho	Significant
Posttest	17.42	3.08					

Table 2 shows that the pre-test result in reading got a mean of 10.58; with a standard deviation of 2.99 while the mean of post-test is 17.42 with a standard deviation of 3.08, with the computed value of 17.47 and critical t-value is 0.000 at 0.05 level of significance. Thus, the null

hypothesis (H0) is rejected. This data shows that there is an increase in the scores of the student-respondents in their reading after the utilization of technical-vocational strand-based worktext.

Table 3. Challenges Encountered in Teaching Reading among Senior High School

Indicator	Teachers		
	WM	VI	R
1. Lack of reading materials.	3.25	S	9
2. Lack of cooperation of parents in teaching pupils how to read.	3.72	MS	1
3. Incompetence of pupils in adapting how to read.	3.51	MS	3
4. Insufficient time allotment for teaching reading among the pupils.	3.41	MS	7
5. Large number of non-readers.	3.43	MS	6
6. Lack of instructional materials.	3.13	S	10
7. Low motivation of the pupils in learning how to read.	3.32	S	8
8. Distracting factors such as learning environment, peers, etc.	3.59	MS	2
9. Absence in the involvement in reading programs or projects.	3.48	MS	4
10. Lack of prior knowledge in skills in reading.	3.46	MS	5
Average Weighted Mean	3.43	MS	

Table 3 reveals the data on the challenges experienced in teaching reading among senior high school. For the teacher respondents, Lack of cooperation of parents in teaching pupils how to read ranks at 1 with the weighted mean of 3.72 or equivalent to moderately serious. Lastly, Lack of instructional materials received a weighted mean of 3.13 or serious. The average weighted mean in the problems encountered by the respondents on the teaching reading among senior high school learners is 3.43 or moderately serious.

V. CONCLUSIONS

The findings from the pre-test and post-test on reading demonstrate a significant improvement in the reading skills of the student-respondents. Initially, nearly half of the students scored in the average range, with minimal representation in the above average and no students achieving an excellent rating. However, the post-test results reveal a notable shift, with 42.4% of students

advancing to above average and 18.2% reaching the excellent category. This means that the utilization of technical-vocational strand-based worktext was effective in enhancing the reading skills of the students. The shift from a majority scoring in the average range to a substantial number of students achieving above average and excellent scores in the post-test indicates a marked improvement. It suggests that the interventions not only helped students move beyond average performance but also enabled a significant number to reach excellence in their reading abilities.

The teaching of reading to senior high school students is significantly hindered by two main challenges: lack of parental cooperation and insufficient instructional materials. Among these, the lack of parental cooperation is the most pressing issue, rated as moderately serious, suggesting it is a frequent and impactful problem. The

insufficient instructional materials, while slightly less critical, are still serious enough to affect teaching effectiveness.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the drawn conclusions, the researcher suggested possible recommendations for future considerations. Teachers should continue the implementation of the strand-based worktext for improving the reading competence of their students. Since strand-based worktext was found effective, the teachers should develop similar materials for other strands. For school heads, they should offer sufficient assistance for conferences and teacher training concerning teaching reading among learners. They should provide support to teachers who are developing materials for reading. Teachers should propose an activity or reading program that allows the cooperation and participation of parents. The parents should take part in helping and assisting their children at home enhancing their reading competence.

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