**Route for Understanding:**

**Employing Before, During and After Activities in Reading**

**Ismael C. Casquejo, Ed. D.1**

1Master Teacher, Department of Education, Tanauan City Integrated High School,

Tanauan City, Batangas, Philippines

**ABSTRACT**

This study transpired in Tanauan City National High School with Grade 7 STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) students. The select students of the STEM class were the subjects because of their appropriate number in the classroom and their reading and comprehension were already diagnosed as they underwent tests and interviews to be able to be a part of the STEM class.

The study made use of qualitative and quantitative methods to gather data. The proponent introduced scaffolding for reading. A reading text was prepared. The intention was to have the students get a pre-test. Simple instructions were given to accomplish this first assessment. After the initial test, an intervention was given, and a post-test was administered. The reading text for the post-assessment was the same as the pre-test. Subsequently, the scores of the two tests were tabulated. These two data were compared to know the effectiveness of the intervention.

**Keywords:** Comprehension, Idea, Reading, STEM, Understanding

1. **INTRODUCTION**

English is a global language. Many consider it the second language of Filipinos. But, among other countries that do not speak it as a first language, Filipinos are commendable to have control of the language. In view of becoming globally at par with the rest of the world, aspired by the K-12 Curriculum, competency in the language is vital because of its worldwide influence. Taking this into consideration, it is no surprise that the Department of Education encourages programs and projects relating to the facility of the language. Among the orders and memoranda, educators can relate to DepEd Order No. 33 s. 2016 which is about the utilization of funds for early language development. True enough, the younger a person begins to learn a language, the easier it is to acquire. It is a directive like this that underlines the importance of the English language in education and the international aspirations the education sector wants the learners to fulfill which can be hastened if a global language like English is mastered.

Among the skills in learning a language, reading, and comprehension plays a fundamental role. Though Filipinos are quite admirable in the use of the language, there is a struggle among students nowadays with regard to reading and comprehension. Due to the advent of many internet activities that can replace reading, it has become a burdensome activity compared to the one click-of-a-button activity the technology offers. However, one cannot have a shortcut when learning a language, reading and comprehension are not negotiable. It should be practiced and experienced to have any mastery of the language.

Because of the importance of reading, the researcher, who is an English language teacher, focused on the topic. This study transpired in Tanauan City National High School with Grade 7 STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) students. The select students of the STEM class were the subjects because of their appropriate number in the classroom and their reading and comprehension were already diagnosed as they underwent tests and interviews to be able to be a part of the STEM class.

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Worth emphasizing is that the research does not intend to end with the STEM students, but only the beginning of introducing a reading strategy. This is not a new strategy but one that is probably overlooked. Regular classes in Tanauan City National High School exceed the regular class size due to the dense student population, so the researcher decided to start with the smaller class so the result could easily be gathered. Provided the established result of this study, it should be applied to other sections and grade levels in the school, even in the whole Division, for the improvement of comprehension or understanding of students.

1. **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE AND STUDIES**

Reading comprehension is the ability to construct meaning from a given written text (Lems & Miller, 2010). It appears so simple but this ability is not easily acquired by everyone. The available literature on the topic is keen to emphasize that even native speakers of the language have difficulties in comprehension. Similarly, McNamara (2007) stated that comprehension refers to the ability to go beyond words to understand the ideas and the relationships between ideas conveyed in a text. Reading and comprehension are skills necessary to know a language. The English language can be learned, among other skills, through reading. However, as the advent of technology commences with its first-phased characteristics, reading becomes less appealing and even burdensome because reading and comprehension require time, attention, and focus. Therefore, learners of today would rather use the easy access of technology for knowledge than undergo the rigors of reading. Technology has its own advantages but reading is simply necessary for the acquisition of the language.

In the Philippine public school setting, reading is emphasized by a number of projects and programs, set by the national education sector and individual schools may even have their particular programs. But, with these schemes, reading and comprehension remain a concern. Klinger et al. (2015), affirmed that significant reading comprehension problems may be explained by one of the general causes, including poor early reading instruction, inadequate background knowledge about the text, overall low vocabulary knowledge that interferes with understanding, inadequate practice in reading for meaning, and insufficient or inadequate instruction. There are a number of factors to consider addressing the issue. The teacher should be ardent in identifying the main block for the development of reading and comprehension, so it can be remedied. To be strict, there are concerns with those who cannot read even in the secondary school and those who can read but cannot comprehend or understand what they read.

The task of addressing comprehension adequacy is not easy. O’Connor and Vadasy (2011) acknowledged that teachers today work with classrooms of increasingly diverse students and they do not attain proficient levels of reading. But, difficult as it is, teachers cannot just rest in this situation. Following this, Woolley (2011) advocated that it is important to note that without adequate support many students with reading comprehension difficulties may be unable to compensate for the many difficulties that they experience in understanding what they read. The support should not only be given in schools and by the teachers, but, the parents and guardians should be involved as well. All programs and projects can only go as far it would be supported by the parents and guardians.

 Jones (2016) maintained that to be a successful reader, you need to know what to do before you read, what to do while you are reading, and what to do after you have finished reading. This is what this research is trying to arrive at, to try to scaffold the reading process, that is, applying before, during, and after reading activities. Activities can be given throughout the reading process so that the learners can get the most from what they are reading. If comprehension happens when the reader and the text interact, then structuring the reading sessions may be able to help. Placing activities makes the learners active readers and not merely passive spectators. Accordingly, Blachowicz and Ogle (2008) said that good readers approach reading actively. Structuring the reading process may be able to make the readers relate more to the text.

Another important component in measuring comprehension is assessment. Klinger et al. (2015) suggested that reading comprehension measures should help teachers monitor the comprehension of their students over time and provide information that is useful in designing reading comprehension intervention programs. The results of the activities should be analyzed and be the basis of succeeding interventions. Certainly, the end in view is the improvement of the reading and comprehension level of students. Factors of inadequacy in comprehension must be considered and appropriate solutions must be developed for the benefit of the learners to have a brighter future and more globally at par with the rest of the world.

1. **METHODS**

**3.1 Research Questions**

This study specifically seeks to answer the following questions:

1. How familiar are the students with the before, during, and after reading strategies?

2. Is there any difference in comprehension level when activities are given before, during, and after reading?

3. What interventions/activities can be developed to enhance reading comprehension capacity?

**3.2 Research Design**

This study is a combination of qualitative and quantitative research. The respondents were given a pre-test and a post-test. This was in the form of a reading comprehension test. A prepared reading text from the internet was given and after reading, they were given a ten-item test. For the pre-test, a simple instruction was given. But for the post-test, they were given scaffolding, that is, instructions were provided before reading, during reading, and after reading. The after-reading activity was answering a graphic organizer.

After the scaffolding was done, the students were given a post-test. The two results were compared, and it indicated a difference of result for the two tests. The results of the pre-test and post-test were statistically treated to verify the difference.

For the qualitative part, students were interviewed about the test and the difference the scaffolding made in the post-test. There was also a focus group discussion to further verify the result and confirm the individual interview. The interview and focus group discussion were deemed completed when the responses of the students reached a saturation point, that is, they were already the same answers and there were no novel ideas already in their responses.

**3.3 Sampling**

The population of Grade 7 STEM Banzon students participated in this study. There are 29 students in all. They are select group of students because unlike the regular class, they underwent interview and entrance examination to be able to be a part of the STEM class. They have the same K-12 curriculum, but they have added elective subjects geared to Science and Mathematics.

**3.4 Data Collection and Analysis**

The quantitative data came from the reading comprehension assessment, which was in the form of a pre-test and post-test. They took the pre-test, after which, they underwent a post-test. In the post-test, the before, during, and after activities were implemented. The pre and post-test results were compared using appropriate statistical tools. A T-test was used to identify the differences in the result of the assessments.

Qualitative data were also used for this research. Interviews and focus group discussions among the students were done. Data from these methods were recorded and documented. Certain themes were deduced from these methods so as to establish valid premises significant to the nature of the study. The main focus of the discussion was the difference the intervention can give in their reading capacity.

**3.5 Ethical Issues**

Proper authorization was sought to conduct this study. Parents of the students were given informed consent to ask permission to conduct research with their children. Likewise, the anonymity of the participants was observed to safeguard their identity. The school head was informed of the research. Concerned teachers, especially the adviser, were notified about the study.

The students were briefed about the procedures of the research. They were informed that their test result would be used for a research. The interview and focus group discussion session were given enough preparation so that the students will be at ease during the interaction.

1. **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

1. During the focus discussion, the students were asked if they were familiar with employing before, during, and after reading activity strategies. The unanimous reply was that they were not familiar with such a strategy. This can be interpreted that they truly did not have any experience of such or they had, but, the process was not clear to them or it was called differently by their previous teachers.

2. Pre-Test and Post-Test Result

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Learner** | **Pre-Test** | **Post-Test** | **Gain/Gap** |
| **1** | 3 | 3 | 0 |
| **2** | 5 | 9 | 4 |
| **3** | 6 | 6 | 0 |
| **4** | 6 | 6 | 0 |
| **5** | 6 | 7 | 1 |
| **6** | 7 | 8 | 1 |
| **7** | 7 | 10 | 3 |
| **8** | 7 | 7 | 0 |
| **9** | 3 | 5 | 2 |
| **10** | 5 | 7 | 2 |
| **11** | 7 | 7 | 0 |
| **12** | 7 | 8 | 1 |
| **13** | 6 | 6 | 0 |
| **14** | 3 | 7 | 4 |
| **15** | 5 | 5 | 0 |
| **16** | 8 | 8 | 0 |
| **17** | 6 | 6 | 0 |
| **18** | 5 | 5 | 0 |
| **19** | 5 | 9 | 4 |
| **20** | 8 | 8 | 0 |
| **21** | 5 | 9 | 4 |
| **22** | 8 | 8 | 0 |
| **23** | 6 | 8 | 2 |
| **24** | 5 | 9 | 4 |
| **25** | 8 | 9 | 1 |
| **26** | 8 | 8 | 0 |
| **27** | 7 | 9 | 2 |
| **28** | 5 | 5 | 0 |
| **29** | 7 | 6 | -1 |
| **TOTAL** | 174 | 208 | 34 |
| **Mean** | 6.00 | 7.17 | 1.17 |
| **Std Dev** | 1.488048 | 1.649003 | 1.582696 |
| **T-Test** | 2.837 |
| **T-Tab** | 0.0063 |

The result indicated the scores of the respondents on the reading passage. The result was individually taken before and after the intervention. The gap or gain was determined by getting the difference between the scores on before and after.

As shown, the mean score of the ten-point assessment was 6.00 (before) which later increased to 7.17 (after) with a mean gain of 1.17. A gain or positive difference implies that the intervention improved the score in reading comprehension. The standard deviation of the scores was 1.488048 (before) and increased to 1.649003 (after).

The t-test value (2.837) was higher than the t-tab (o. 0063). It can be construed that there is a significant difference between the scores before and after the intervention of the passage, thereby, proving that there is increase in understanding or comprehension.

3. The employing of before, during, and after reading strategies made a difference in the scores of the students. This strategy may be developed to be used in reading sessions. There are a lot of strategies of this kind available in books and online. The teachers must be resourceful in researching this kind of activities so that students may increase their comprehension capacity.

**Discussion**

1. Many strategies are available in books or online that can help students improve their reading and comprehension.

2. For the strategy in the post-test, this research utilized the Main Idea and Details Map. There are other strategies concerning before, during, and after reading activities, but for the intent and purpose of the study, this particular approach was used. The following are the instructions for this strategy. The website where this came from is provided after this strategy is laid out.

**Main Idea and Details Map**

**Before Reading**

1. Tell students that it is important that they are able to remember and tell about the most important part or main idea of a passage. They also need to be able to list details about the main idea. These skills help them understand and remember what they have read.

2. Remind the students of a recent passage that they all know. Or you may read a short passage to the class. Make transparency of the graphic organizer. Tell the students that they are going to help you fill in the important part of the passage and list details that support the main idea.

3. Have the students help you put information from the passage in the boxes on the graphic organizer.

4. Tell the students that they will be listening to or reading a passage and looking for the main idea and details that support the main idea.

**During Reding**

1. Read the passage out loud to the students or have the students read the passage themselves. You may pair the students and have them read it out loud to each other. They are to be listening for or looking for the main idea and supporting details.

2. You may want to have the students write them down as they find them. They may write them on paper or a marker board.

**After Reading**

1. **Main Idea and Details Map** – Have students complete the “Main Idea and Details Map” graphic organizer.

2. Have students share their results with the rest of the class. ([www.teacherweb.com](http://www.teacherweb.com))

3. The key intervention used in this study was the Main Idea and Details Map. There are other interventions like this, namely, Prior Knowledge Map, Events Map, Favorite Part, Fact and Opinion Chart, Timeline, and K-W-L Chart. Resourcefulness and creativity are important to engage students in reading. There are sources in books and online that can help.

1. **CONCLUSION**

1. The students are not familiar with the before, during, and after reading strategies but based on the interview conducted with them, the strategy helped make them understand the reading passages given to them. Only one strategy was used during this study. Many others can be helpful to improve the comprehension and understanding of the students.

2. There is a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test. The strategy helped improve their comprehension.

3. This strategy was used with STEM students and the test results and interview indicated that they were helped to understand more the reading passage. Hence, this should be applied and incorporated into reading sessions. Also, such a strategy may be helpful to students who are in the regular curriculum.

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