**THE USE OF RECIPROCAL TEACHING METHOD TO READING COMPREHENSION OF GRADE 9 LEARNERS**

**ABSTRACT**

This study aimed to investigate the effectiveness of the use of the reciprocal teaching method to reading comprehension of Grade 9 learners. A quasi-experimental research design was employed, comparing the performance of learners exposed to traditional instruction with those who experience the intervention. A test questionnaire from Davao City NHS Reading Intervention Material for Grade 9 Learner were the instrument for data gathering to assess the learners’ reading comprehension levels before and after the intervention. The test questionnaires were then administered to 120 learners. The statistical tools used in this study were mean and t-test. Findings revealed that learners who experienced Reciprocal Teaching Method demonstrated a remarkable improvement in their reading skills, while those taught through traditional methods showed minimal progress. This means that there is a significant difference between the pretest and posttest scores of grades 9 learners when using the reciprocal teaching method. The experimental group demonstrated higher mean gain scores indicating that RTM was more effective in enhancing reading comprehension. These findings underscore the need to educators and curriculum to integrate RTM into reading instruction, ultimately improving literacy skills and academic performance among learners.

*Keywords: Reciprocal Teaching Method, Reading Comprehension, Grade 9 learners, Quasi-experimental.*

**1. INTRODUCTION**

Reading a book helps in gaining knowledge and advancing your vocabulary. Without comprehending a book's context, it is like reading without gaining knowledge. According to a study in Eastern Washington University (2023), a student needs to have reading comprehension abilities in order to build their critical thinking and memory skills, their focus, and their capacity to solve issues, which can help them in their future endeavors. Furthermore, reading comprehension is a crucial academic skill for high school pupils. It serves as the foundation for classroom instruction and gains significance across all subject areas as students advance through the grades (Rivera & Taglucop, 2019). However, the majority of junior high school students encountered difficulties with reading comprehension (Afrizatama, 2016).

In a global context, an international study that was conducted at the Islamic University of Riau, researchers found most of the student's difficulties in reading comprehension. Various factors are included such as the lack of motivation in reading habits, low reading skills, difficulty in understanding the reading text, and unfamiliarity with the reading material (Satriani, 2018). As a result of this difficulty, students' learning attainment is also negatively impacted, their ability to solve problems is hampered, and their ability to pursue further education and employment is hindered (Dodi et al., 2020). According to Oliveira (2022), Brazilian students often engage in rote learning practices in schools, which prioritize memorization over critical reading and understanding. This is especially common in public schools where there is less emphasis on developing higher-order thinking skills. The result is that students can recall facts but struggle with tasks that require deeper comprehension, such as making inferences or drawing conclusions from a text. In South Korea, English is a mandatory subject in schools, but many students struggle with reading comprehension in English due to differences in grammar, vocabulary, and cultural context.

Nationally, as reported by an article in Philippine Star (2019), that among 79 participating countries, the Philippines scored the lowest in reading comprehension in the 2018 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA). The results indicate that many Filipino students are having a hard time understanding and comprehending what they've read. In the study of Pimentel, G.S. (2023) titled “Reading Comprehension Skills in Filipino of the Second-Year students,” reveals the difficulties in understand long text. Hence, in order to prevent students from continuing to read texts emphasizing only words and ignoring meaning, teachers must be able to teach them metacognitive tactics whenever they are faced with the issue of students who lack basic comprehension abilities. Teachers should use one type of metacognitive practices such as Reciprocal Teaching Method (Ahmadi & Gilakjani, 2012).

In local setting, the Basa Dabaw Program (2024) the initiative was launched to address the reading difficulties among students in Davao City. Despite the efforts, challenges persist in effectively implementing classroom strategies to improve reading comprehension. Many studies have been conducted with the purpose of improving the reading comprehension of students using reciprocal teaching methods in local settings. The results showed that they could not establish a very significant improvement between the scores of the experimental and control groups due to the weakness of the data gathered. Further testing is recommended to come up with significant results (Alagar & Echeverria, 2010). Since Davao City public schools has many students still struggle with reading frustration, the researchers are encouraged to look for a possible solution to improve their reading comprehension, specifically the 9th grade students who rank high in frustration reading.

In fact, it is a method of reading comprehension as an interactive one, in which readers interact with the text as their prior experience is activated and improves their motivation and interest (Malang et al., 2023). Moreover, students feel more invested in the learning process and are more driven to continue learning when teachers use the four essential reciprocal teaching strategies such as predicting, questioning, clarifying, and summarizing (Mafarja et al., 2023). Therefore, in this study, reciprocal teaching method will be used to improve the reading comprehension of Grade 9 learners.

* 1. **Objective of the Study**

The teaching of reading comprehension is recognized as a crucial component of the academic program. Thus, this study aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of the reciprocal teaching method in reading comprehension of Grade 9 leaners. Specifically, it seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. What is the mean gain score of students in the control group (students exposed to traditional teaching methods)?
2. What is the mean gain score of students in the experimental group (students exposed to reciprocal teaching methods)?
3. Is there a significant difference in the mean gain scores between the control and experimental groups?

**2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

This section of the study presents the relevant literature after the thorough investigation done by the researchers.

**2.1 Reciprocal Teaching Method**

Reciprocal teaching is a dynamic approach that aims to raise students' levels of comprehension and develop metacognitive habits, which are characterized by self-reflection, acknowledging one's own and others' knowledge, and developing organizational techniques for process management (Mafarja et al., 2023). The approach, which was first presented by Palinscar and Brown (1984), is a component of cooperative learning since it allows students to naturally communicate their thought processes through discourse. Moreover, this approach can also be used to improve students' reading achievement and comprehension of English reading texts. In addition to helping students retain what they read better, this strategy can increase their efficacy as readers (Rodli & Prastyo, 2017).

There is one theory that guides this research study. This theory is called Lev Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory of Cognitive Development. Vygotsky (1978) emphasized the role of social interaction in the development of mental abilities, speech and reasoning in children. Vygotsky's theory encourages collaborative and cooperative learning between children and teachers or peers (Mcleod, 2023). He found that activities, actions, and responses are just a few of the things that teachers can influence in a learning environment. Consequently, he advocated for increased interaction activities that foster cognitive development, including constructive criticism, group projects, and fruitful conversations (Serhat, 2020).

One of the most frequent issues teachers run into with reading is when students are having trouble with understanding what they've read. Nowadays, students have limited vocabularies causing them more difficult time comprehending the text. Thus, the Reciprocal

Teaching Method is a model that can be used to improve students' cognitive development and retention (Capanzana & Avilla, 2017). Gilakjani, A. P. (2016) emphasizes the significant role of effective reading strategies in enhancing students' reading comprehension abilities. He highlights that reading is an interactive process where readers construct meaningful representations of a text using various strategies. The study underscores that students should not be passive receivers of information but active participants in the reading process, employing different strategies to monitor and enhance their understanding.

In our research topic, when it comes to improving the reading comprehension of students, Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory of Cognitive Development will provide a helpful framework for analysis. Reciprocal teaching are effective educational strategies based on Vygotsky's ideas that can be used to improve the student's reading comprehension. One may evaluate the effectiveness of Vygotsky's and Reciprocal teaching as a strategy for enhancing students' reading comprehension by understanding the relationship between these components.

Furthermore, it is a technique that shares the responsibility of the teacher by having teachers and students take turns facilitating discussions about a certain book (Adlit Org, 2023). Four strategies—generating questions, summarizing, clarifying, and predicting—are used to support the discourse (Palinscar, 2013). Students are required to maintain concentration on the material they have read, and they can do this by employing four different ways to explain it to the class. Teachers take the lead in these discussions at first, demonstrating how it's done, but gradually step back so that students can take the initiative. After that, it becomes their duty to learn and teach the book in addition to just reading it (Carnevale & Marcela, 2024).

Reciprocal teaching builds students' self-esteem and motivates them to study, which in turn raises comprehension and academic achievement and helps them recognize their areas of weakness in areas where they are illiterate (Mehmood & Alvi, 2017). In a study at a secondary school in Myanmar that applied the reciprocal teaching method, results showed that the reciprocal teaching method has a stronger effect on students' English reading comprehension achievement than those students who are taught the traditional methods (Oo et al., 2021). According to Vaughn et al. (2022), teaching with reciprocity was more beneficial for kids who had learning impairments. It was shown that pupils' reading comprehension improved more when they were explicitly taught reciprocal teaching techniques than when they weren't. Anjum and Ali (2019), experimental research study, defined reciprocal as a successful method in aiding to improve the learner’s reading comprehension.

However, negative effects of using the reciprocal teaching method in improving reading comprehension of students are also evident in some studies. For instance, a study conducted in SMK Lab Business School in Tangerang found that students' reading comprehension scores were not significantly improved after being taught using the reciprocal method, as compared to those taught using a metacognitive strategy (Hamdani, 2023). Additionally, while reciprocal teaching has been shown to be effective in enhancing reading skills for students with low self-concept levels, it may not have the same impact on students with high self-concept levels (Christine & Ismayani, 2022). Reciprocal Teaching Method significantly enhances students' reading comprehension, emphasizing its effectiveness; however, individual student needs and learning styles should be considered for optimal results (Meida et al., 2022).

**2.2 Reading Comprehension**

Reading is one of the primary means of learning and knowledge acquisition since it requires both cognitive and language skills, from simple decoding to intricate comprehension structures that integrate one's prior knowledge of the world (Pick et al., 2021). Reading comprehension is the ability to process text, understand its meaning, and integrate it with prior knowledge (Yurko, 2020). Proficiency in reading comprehension is crucial for gaining knowledge, developing critical thinking abilities, expanding one's vocabulary, and achieving academic success (Khalilova, 2023). Moreover, for students, it is a crucial ability that aids them in fulfilling a variety of academic responsibilities, including text decoding, analysis, explanation, and expression of their own opinions regarding written materials (Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2016).

Good reading comprehension skills are essential for success in school. Children who develop strong reading comprehension skills are more likely to succeed in school and in life. Reading comprehension is the foundation for all other academic skills. It helps children build vocabulary, learn about the world, and understand complex concepts (Nowak, 2022). Without comprehension, children gain no meaning from what they read. Comprehension strategies are used to increase children’s understanding of the text to help them become active readers by engaging with the text (Brandon, 2021).

Vocabulary knowledge is where reading comprehension starts. Students with good vocabulary strategies understand what words mean and have the background knowledge to understand a given text. It also includes strategies for using context clues to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words. The reading comprehension process is over before it begins if students don’t have solid vocabulary knowledge or the ability to learn new words (Kampen, 2022). Furthermore, reading comprehension occurs when readers construct meaning as they interact with the written word in an exchange of ideas between themselves and the message in the text (International Encyclopedia of Education, 2010). While, according to Siddiek and Ibrahim (2013), reading comprehension is achieved through successful interaction between the reader and the text, which is the most important factor in comprehension.

A study by Pereira and Lima (2023) explored the challenges Brazilian high school students face in reading comprehension. The research identified that many students have difficulty with interpreting complex texts, especially in subjects like history and social sciences. While students can decode the text, they often cannot engage with the content at a deeper level, which affects their overall academic performance. The study suggested that curriculum adjustments and teacher training focused on developing reading comprehension strategies could help address these challenges. To improve literacy, there has been a growing recognition in Brazil that teacher professional development is key. Research by Gomes and Souza (2020) emphasized the importance of equipping teachers with strategies for teaching reading comprehension in an interactive and engaging way. However, many teachers, especially in rural areas, lack training in contemporary pedagogical methods that promote active engagement with texts. The study highlighted that even when teachers are provided with reading comprehension tools, they often struggle to implement them effectively due to a lack of ongoing professional development.

The teaching of reading comprehension is recognized as a crucial component of the academic program. Since reading comprehension is a vital skill for many academic courses, problems can seriously affect students' academic progress and, as a result, their future societal employment (Okkinga et al., 2016). According to Fata and Muti (2017), when it comes to reading difficulties, there are many aspects that influence the impairment in comprehending the reading text. The findings showed that new words and long texts were seen by the students as a major obstacle to comprehending a reading text (Satriani, 2018). Furthermore, it was also found, according to Prihantini (2020), that most of the students had difficulties with creative comprehension. The factors contributing to students' difficulties were inadequate instruction presented by the teacher, a lack of students' interest, and vocabulary difficulties.

**3. METHOD**

**3.1 Research Design**

This study is quantitative research that employs a quasi-experimental research design. According to Loewen and Plonsky (2016), quasi-experimental research designs examine whether there is a causal relationship between independent and dependent variables. Simply defined, the independent variable is the variable of influence, and the dependent variable is the variable that is being influenced. In our study, Reciprocal Teaching will be the independent variable and will influence the dependent variable which is the reading comprehension of students. Furthermore, Quasi-experiments are studies that aim to evaluate interventions but that do not use randomization. Similar to randomized trials, quasi-experiments aim to demonstrate causality between an intervention and an outcome (Harris et. al., 2023).

A cause-and-effect link between an independent and dependent variable is established through quasi-experimental design just like in true experiment. However, a quasi-experiment does not depend on random assignment, in contrast to an actual experiment. On the basis of non-random criteria, subjects are instead divided into groups (Thomas, 2024). Therefore, quasi-experimental research design will be used in this study to determine the effect of the intervention to the dependent variable in the absence of randomization. The researchers will select students to be on the experimental group based on their similarities on key variables.

The research design stated above is applicable to this study since quasi experimental research design assigned the respondents to groups based on non-random criteria. Therefore, we can assign students on experimental group effectively. Since this research design is not characterized by random assignment, we can give an intervention to the target respondents in our study. Moreover, the main focus of this study is to investigate if reciprocal teaching method is an effective strategy in improving the reading comprehension of Grade 9 learners.

**3.2 Research Respondents**

The respondents of this study were two (2) class size of Grade 9 learners from two (2) Public Schools in Davao City who were enrolled for school year 2024-2025. The respondents were randomly selected from a total of Grade 9 learners. There were one (1) class size learners for traditional method and another one (1) class size learners for experimental method.

**3.3 Data Collection**

The researchers used a test questionnaire as an instrument for data gathering. The researchers adopted pretest and posttest questionnaires based on Davao City NHS Reading Intervention Material for Grade 9 Learner to assess the students’ reading comprehension levels before and after the intervention. A Likert scale will be used to measure responses, with the results categorized using range of means to determine the impact of the teaching method. According to Budert-Waltz et al. (2023), pretest-posttest is a quasi-experimental strategy in experimental study. Furthermore, a pre-test will be given to respondents before they would be given an intervention.

**3.4 Data Analysis**

The researchers utilized quantitative data analysis to assess the effectiveness of the reciprocal teaching method in improving the reading comprehension of Grade 9 learners.

In analyzing the data, a Likert scale will be used to measure responses, with the results categorized using range of means to determine the impact of the teaching method from pretest and posttest questionnaires. According to Budert-Waltz et al. (2023), pretest-posttest is a quasi-experimental strategy in experimental study. Quantitative research design used as a quasi-experimental design, which allows us to compare the outcomes of an experimental group that receives the reciprocal teaching method with a control group that receives traditional teaching methods. After the application of intervention, a post test will be given to determine whether there's a difference between the scores of the respondents before and after the intervention. The scores will also be evaluated through a statistical tool: t-test and will be analyzed thoroughly.

List 1-Likert Scale for Score Interpretation

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Raw Score (Out of 20) | Percentage (%) | Interpretation |
| 18 – 20 | 90 % - 100 % | Excellent – Outstanding Reading Comprehension Skills |
| 15 – 17 | 75 % - 89 % | Very Good – Strong comprehension with minor gaps |
| 12 – 14 | 60% - 74% | Satisfactory – Adequate comprehension but needs improvement |
| 9 – 11 | 45% - 59% | Needs Improvement – Struggle with comprehension, requiring support |
| 0 – 8 | Below 45% | Poor – Limited comprehension; requires significant intervention |

**4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

**4.1 Mean Gain Score of Students in the Control Group**

Table 1 represents the mean gain score of students in the control group, who were exposed to traditional teaching methods. The group consisted of 60 students. The pretest results show a mean score of 8.53 (SD=2.84), while the posttest results slightly increased to 8.98 (SD=2.95), resulting in a mean gain score pf 0.45 (SD=2.00). This minimal increase shows that the traditional teaching method had little impact on improving the students’ reading comprehension skills.

**Table 1: Mean Gain Score of Students in the Control Group (Traditional Method)**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Group** | Control Group (Traditional) |
| **N** | 60 |
| **Pretest Mean****(SD)** | 8.53 (2.84) |
| **Posttest Mean****(SD)** | 8.98 (2.95) |
| **Mean Gain Score (SD)** | 0.45 (2.00) |

The observed minimal improvement in the Control Groups’ reading comprehension scores aligns with existing research on traditional teaching methods. For instance, a study by Rahimi and Sadeghi (2015) found that conventional reading instruction resulted in limited gains in student comprehension.

The result of this study is supported by the study of Afrizatama (2016), which states that majority of junior high school students encountered difficulties with reading comprehension. In addition, children struggle with reading because they've received poor or inadequate reading instruction. However, when these and other risk factors are identified early, though, many children’s reading difficulties can be prevented (Washington, 2024).

**4.2 Mean Gain Score of Students in the Experimental Group**

Table 2 represents the mean gain score of students in the control group, who were exposed to Reciprocal Teaching Method. The group consisted of 60 students. The pretest results show a mean score of 9.5 (SD=2.47), while the posttest results increased to 10.75 (SD=2.98). This yielded a mean gain score of 1.25 (SD=2.47), which shows a noticeable improvement in the students’ reading comprehension skills after the intervention.

**Table 2: Mean Gain Score of Students in the Experimental Group (Reciprocal Teaching Method)**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Group** | Control Group (Traditional) |
| **N** | 60 |
| **Pretest Mean****(SD)** | 9.5 (2.47) |
| **Posttest Mean****(SD)** | 10.75 (2.98) |
| **Mean Gain Score (SD)** | 1.25 (2.47) |

The significant improvement observed in the Experimental Groups’ reading comprehension scores aligns with existing research on interactive instruction strategies. For instance, Rahimi and Sadeghi (2015) investigated the effect of reciprocal teaching on EFL learners’ reading comprehension. Their study revealed that students taught using RT strategies outperformed those receiving traditional instruction in all aspects of reading comprehension.

Similarly, Gomaa (2015) examined the impact of reciprocal teaching intervention strategies on fifth-grade students with reading disabilities. The findings indicated that RT significantly improvedreading comprehension skills among these students. This finding is aligned in a study at a secondary school in Myanmar that applied the reciprocal teaching method, results showed that the reciprocal teaching method has a stronger effect on students' English reading comprehension achievement than those students who are taught the traditional methods (Oo et al., 2021). According to Vaughn et al. (2022), teaching with reciprocity was more beneficial for kids who had learning impairments. It was shown that pupils' reading comprehension improved more when they were explicitly taught reciprocal teaching techniques than when they weren't.

There is one theory that guides this research study. This theory is called Lev Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory of Cognitive Development. Vygotsky (1978) emphasized the role of social interaction in the development of mental abilities, speech and reasoning in children. Vygotsky's theory encourages collaborative and cooperative learning between children and teachers or peers (Mcleod, 2023). He found that activities, actions, and responses are just a few of the things that teachers can influence in a learning environment. Consequently, he advocated for increased interaction activities that foster cognitive development, including constructive criticism, group projects, and fruitful conversations (Serhat, 2020).

**4.3 Significant Difference in Mean Gain Scores Between Control and Experimental Groups**

To determine whether the difference in mean gain scores between the control and experimental groups was statistically significant, an independent samples t-test was conducted. The results shown in Table 3 reveal a t-test value of 1.67 and p-value of 0.005. Since the p-value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis of no significant is rejected, indicating that the intervention had a real impact on student learning.

**Table 3: Test of Significant Difference in Mean Gain Scores Between Control and Experimental Groups**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  **Group** | Control Group(Traditional) | Experimental Group(Intervention) |
|  **Mean Gain**  **Score** | 0.45 (2.00) | 1.25 (2.47) |
|  **t-value** | 1.67 |
|  **p-value** | 0.005 |
|  **Interpretation** | Significant |

The results presented in Table 3 revealed a statistically significant difference in the mean gain scores between control group and experimental group, as evidenced by t-value of 1.67 and a p-value of 0.005. The p-value, which is lower than the 0.05 level of significance, indicates that the observed difference in gains scores did not occur by chance, but rather due to the effectiveness of the Reciprocal Teaching Method. The statistical significance confirms that the experimental group (intervention) significantly outperformed the control group in terms of gain scores. The result of this study is supported by the study of Rodli and Prastyo (2017), which states that Reciprocal Teaching can be used to improve students' reading achievement and comprehension of English reading texts. Since in addition to helping students retain what they read better, this strategy can increase their efficacy as readers.

The significant increase in the performance of the experimental group suggests that the use of the intervention method, such as Reciprocal Teaching or Active Learning Strategies, is more effective in improving students’ learning outcomes compared to traditional teacher methods. This finding is consistent with Palincsar and Brown (1984), who found that Reciprocal Teaching significantly enhances students’ reading comprehension and critical thinking skills through predicting, questioning, clarifying, and summarizing. Similarly, Rahimi and Sadeghi (2015) emphasized that active teaching strategies lead to better students’ engagement and higher academic performance.

The significant difference further supports the study of Slavin (1995), who posited that cooperative and interactive learning methods yield better academic results than traditional instructions. This result implies that educators should consider incorporating intervention-based instructional approaches to promote active learning, critical thinking, and improved comprehension among students. Furthermore, the findings suggest that educational institutions should invest in teacher training and curriculum development to implement evidence-based teaching strategies, ultimately enhancing overall student achievement.

**5. CONCLUSION**

This study aimed to investigate the difficulties encountered by Grade 9 learners in reading comprehension and assess effectiveness of the Reciprocal Teaching Method (RTM) in improving their comprehension levels. The findings revealed a statistically significant difference between the pretest and posttest mean scores of the students taught using RTM compared to those taught using the traditional teaching method. The experimental group demonstrated higher mean gain scores, indicating that RTM was more effective in enhancing reading comprehension. These results align with previous research, such as Gomaa (2015) and Rahimi and Sadeghi (2015), which support the effectiveness of interactive and cooperative learning strategies in improving comprehension. The study highlights the importance of shifting from conventional teacher-centered instruction to evidence-based strategies like RTM to foster deeper understanding and engagement among students. These findings underscore the need to educators and curriculum developers to integrate RTM into reading instruction, ultimately improving literacy skills and academic performance among learners. By doing so, teachers can cultivate a generation of proficient readers and thinkers, equipped to navigate and contribute meaningfully to an ever-evolving society.

**6. RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the findings of this study, teachers are encouraged to integrate the Reciprocal Teaching Method (RTM) into their reading instruction to enhance students’ comprehension skills through interactive strategies such as predicting, questioning, clarifying, and summarizing. School and administrators and policymakers should consider incorporating RTM into the curriculum and providing professional development programs to equip educators with the necessary skills to implement this method effectively. Additionally, further research is recommended to explore the long-term impact of RTM on students’ reading proficiency across different grade levels and subject areas, as well as its effectiveness when combined with other instructional strategies to maximize learning outcomes.

Consent

As per international standards or university standards, respondents’ written consent has been collected and preserved by the author(s).

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