PCU Graduate School of Education Research Journal
E-ISSN: 3116-3459 | P-ISSN: 3116-3440

READING COMPREHENSION TO READERS' THINKING, LEARNING AND EXPANDING KNOWLEDGE AND HORIZONS TOWARDS A FRAMEWORK

Krizzia Nikole R. Asuncion
krizzianikole.asuncion@deped.gov.ph

Abstract

This study aimed to determine the extent of English students' reading comprehension as demonstrated by Grade 7 students at Lumampong Integrated National High School. The study focused on critical thinking, analysis, inference, evaluation, learning, and expanding knowledge and horizons. The study focused on critical thinking, analysis, inference, evaluation, learning, and expanding knowledge and horizons. A descriptive-quantitative research design was used, and ten students who were five high-performing and five low-performing were selected from their Grade 6 performance. Data were gathered using a 30-item custom reading comprehension test given once with items distributed evenly over the six cognitive domains.

Findings showed that students tended to have moderate comprehension skills, with the greatest challenges evident in critical thinking and inference, especially for low-performing students. Paired t-test analysis showed significant differences between expected and actual scores, especially in analysis and critical thinking. These gaps underscore the need for targeted interventions to improve students' reading comprehension skills.

Guided by these findings, a reading framework was then created to strengthen areas where the students performed less than expected. The suggested framework is designed to improve understanding by offering systematic approaches to reading developed specifically for critical thinking, analysis, inference, and evaluation. This research points to the significance of incorporating interventions in reading in order to enable greater understanding and cognitive growth for students. Subsequent studies would need to research other instructional procedures and interventions aimed at further improving reading comprehension levels.

***Keywords**: Reading Comprehension, Critical Thinking, Analysis, Inference, Evaluation, Learning, Expanding Knowledge and Horizons*

Introduction

Learners' reading comprehension has always been one of the major problems that teachers face in school. Though the Department of Education supports the ECARP (Every Child a Reader Program) to ensure that every child in the Philippines is a reader, despite the support given by the department, it is clearly noticeable that nowadays there are lots of students who have poor reading comprehension skills.

The state of education in the Philippines remains a critical concern as recent assessments reveal persistent challenges, particularly in reading comprehension. Despite extensive reforms and preparations following the poor PISA 2018 results, less than a quarter of Filipino students met the minimum proficiency in reading, math, and

science in the 2022 PISA. The Philippines still scored below the global average, with only a slight improvement in rankings. The education system is also struggling to recover from the pandemic, which led to significant learning losses and increased illiteracy. Before the release of the PISA 2022 results, the Department of Education had anticipated a disappointing outcome. This study aims to explore the underlying factors contributing to low reading comprehension among students and propose strategic solutions for meaningful improvement. (Chi, 2023)

According to Zimmerman & Hutchins (2003), real reading has to do with thinking, learning, and expanding a reader's knowledge and horizons. It has to do with building on past knowledge, mastering new information, and connecting with the minds of those you've never met. Which clearly means that reading is beyond recognizing letter sounds but more on how readers build new knowledge from connecting this to their prior knowledge and when they are able to broaden their horizon through reading.

The researcher, who is an English teacher, wants to assess these aspects to identify the reading profile of the students in order to come up with a framework suitable for the English 7 learners at Lumampong Integrated National High School and provide an effective and appropriate reading intervention program for students. Specifically, it aimed to test the following null hypotheses:

1. The extent of the difference between the expected to the demonstrated for high performing in terms of critical thinking is not significant.
2. The extent of the difference between the expected to the demonstrated for low performing in terms of critical thinking is not significant.
3. The extent of the difference between the expected to the demonstrated for high performing in terms of analysis is not significant.
4. The extent of the difference between the expected to the demonstrated for low performing in terms of analysis is not significant.
5. The extent of the difference between the expected to the demonstrated for high performing in terms of inference is not significant.
6. The extent of the difference between the expected to the demonstrated for low performing in terms of inference is not significant.
7. The extent of the difference between the expected to the demonstrated for high performing in terms of evaluation is not significant.
8. The extent of the difference between the expected to the demonstrated for low performing in terms of evaluation is not significant.
9. The extent of the difference between the expected to the demonstrated for high performing in terms of learning is not significant.
10. The extent of the difference between the expected to the demonstrated for low performing in terms of learning is not significant.
11. The extent of the difference between the expected to the demonstrated for high performing in terms of expanding knowledge and horizons is not significant.
12. The extent of the difference between the expected to the demonstrated for low performing in terms of expanding knowledge and horizons is not significant.

Methods

The researcher begun by selecting 10 Grade 7 students as participants for the study. These students were chosen based on their Grade 6 performance, with 5 high-performing students (with honors) and 5 low-performing students (poor performance) identified using their previous grade level averages.

After selecting the participants, the researcher administered the reading comprehension test. This test measured the students' abilities in the following areas: Thinking (Critical thinking, Analysis, Inference, Evaluation), Learning, and Expanding Knowledge and Horizon

This assessment provided baseline data on how well the students demonstrated reading comprehension skills in these areas.

The researcher secured a written permission from the principal of Lumampong Integrated National High School and the division supervisor of Cavite Province to conduct the study. Once approval is obtained, the data gathering procedure was commenced. Before administering the comprehension test, the teacher oriented the students, and the researcher ensured the confidentiality of their responses.

The reading comprehension test used in this study was tested for validity and reliability. Data gathered were analyzed statistically using statistical software.

The findings from the test were used as the basis for designing a framework for an English reading intervention program.

Results

TABLE 1

The extent of English students' reading comprehension profile in Critical Thinking

Indicators	High Performing Students					
	Mean	Adjectival Description	Std. Deviation	Mean Difference	t-value	Sig. (2-tailed
6. What alternative cooking methods could Anika consider ensuring that "Rice for Lunch" is still achievable despite the delay?	1.00	Very Low Extent	2.236	-2.500	-2.500	.067
15. Why do you think hunting and deforestation have such a big impact on the Philippine Eagle's population?	5.00	Very High Extent	.000[a]	N/A	N/A	N/A
16. What could be the problem with releasing Pag-asa into the wild?	3.00	Moderate Extent	2.739	-.500	-.408	.704
17. What is the importance of breeding Philippine Eagles in captivity?	5.00	Very High Extent	.000[a]	N/A	N/A	N/A
23. Was Hootie's idea of hooting in the morning a good solution to the rooster's problem?	5.00	Very High Extent	.000[a]	N/A	N/A	N/A

Indicators	Low Performing Students					
	Mean	Adjectival Description	Std. Deviation	Mean Difference	t-value	Sig. (2-tailed
6. What alternative cooking methods could Anika consider ensuring that "Rice for Lunch" is still achievable despite the delay?	1.00	Very Low Extent	2.236	-2.500	-2.500	.067
15. Why do you think hunting and deforestation have such a big impact on the Philippine Eagle's population?	2.00	Low Extent	2.739	-1.500	-1.225	.288
16. What could be the problem with releasing Pag-asa into the wild?	1.00	Very Low Extent	2.236	-2.500	-2.500	.067
17. What is the importance of breeding Philippine Eagles in captivity?	3.00	Moderate Extent	2.739	-.500	-.408	.704
23. Was Hootie's idea of hooting in the morning a good solution to the rooster's problem?	4.00	High Extent	2.236	.500	0.500	.643

N=5 df=4 a. t cannot be computed because the standard deviation is 0.

Legend:

4.50-5.00	Very High Extent
3.50-4.49	High Extent
2.50-3.49	Moderate Extent
1.50-2.49	Low Extent
1.00-1.49	Very Low Extent

The results in table 1 illustrate the critical thinking performance of both high and low performing students across five indicators.

The overall pattern for high-performing students reveals that while high-performing students excelled in specific critical thinking tasks, as seen in their consistent scores on certain questions, they faced challenges with more applied tasks like Question 6. This variability suggests a need for focused instructional support to address these gaps in critical thinking skills, even among students who generally perform at a high level.

While for low-performing students, they performed well in Question 23 but showed significant struggles in other indicators like Questions 6 and 16, where their scores were very low. These results highlight a need for corrective actions to address critical thinking skills where students are consistently underperforming, while maintaining support for areas where they demonstrate stronger performance.

This finding aligns with McNamara and Magliano (2009), who argued that struggling

readers tend to focus on literal comprehension rather than engaging in deep analytical thinking. Similarly, Snow (2002) emphasized that critical thinking in reading is not just about understanding words but also about evaluating and questioning textual content. The results suggest that without explicit instruction in critical thinking, students—especially those in the low-performing group—may find it difficult to develop reasoning and evaluative skills in reading.

The findings highlight the need for structured interventions, such as guided reading discussions and explicit questioning techniques, to enhance students' ability to think critically about the texts they read.

TABLE 2

The extent of English students' reading comprehension profile in Analysis

Indicators	High Performing Students					
	Mean	Adjectival Description	Std. Deviation	Mean Difference	t-value	Sig. (2-tailed
8. What was the purpose of the electric stove in the "Rice for Lunch" passage?	5.00	Very High Extent	.000[a]	N/A	N/A	N/A
9. Why did Anika look at the clock?	2.00	Low Extent	2.739	-1.500	-1.225	.288
18. Why does the Philippine Eagle face extinction?	5.00	Very High Extent	.000[a]	N/A	N/A	N/A
19. How is Pag-asa's dependency on her human keeper affecting her?	5.00	Very High Extent	.000[a]	N/A	N/A	N/A
24. How does the rooster's problem of not waking up in the morning parallel Hootie's issue with sleeping at night?	4.00	High Extent	2.236	.500	.500	.643

Indicators	Low Performing Students					
	Mean	Adjectival Description	Std. Deviation	Mean Difference	t-value	Sig. (2-tailed
8. What was the purpose of the electric stove in the "Rice for Lunch" passage?	4.00	High Extent	2.236	.500	.500	.643
9. Why did Anika look at the clock?	.00	Very Low Extent	.000[a]	N/A	N/A	N/A
18. Why does the Philippine Eagle face extinction?	4.00	High Extent	2.236	.500	.500	.643
19. How is Pag-asa's dependency on her human keeper affecting her?	.00	Very Low Extent	.000[a]	N/A	N/A	N/A
24. How does the rooster's problem of not waking up in the morning parallel Hootie's issue with sleeping at night?	1.00	Very Low Extent	2.236	-2.500	-2.500	.067

N=5 df=4 a. t cannot be computed because the standard deviation is 0.

Legend:

4.50-5.00 Very High Extent
3.50-4.49 High Extent
2.50-3.49 Moderate Extent
1.50-2.49 Low Extent
1.00-1.49 Very Low Extent

The results in table 2 show the analysis skills of both high and low performing students across five indicators.

Results revealed that though high-performing students' performance in indicator 9 was notably lower, students were still able to demonstrate strong analysis skills across four indicators. This suggests that although the students are capable of high-level analysis in many areas, corrective actions may be needed to improve their skills in specific aspects of analysis where challenges remain. Low-performing students exhibited lower scores, suggesting challenges in identifying relationships between ideas, recognizing textual structures, and evaluating supporting details, indicating a need for corrective actions.

According to Kintsch (1998), reading comprehension involves constructing a mental representation of textual meaning, which requires analytical skills. McNamara (2004) further emphasized that struggling readers tend to focus more on decoding words than on analyzing the text's deeper meaning. This aligns with the study's findings, which show that students—especially low performers—face difficulties in critically examining the relationships between ideas within a text.

These findings suggest a need for explicit instruction in analysis strategies, such as teaching students how to identify main ideas, supporting details, and textual structures. Scaffolding strategies, such as graphic organizers and guided text breakdowns, may help students enhance their analytical reading skills.

TABLE 3

The extent of English students' reading comprehension profile in Inference

Indicators	High Performing Students					
	Mean	Adjectival Description	Std. Deviation	Mean Difference	t-value	Sig. (2-tailed
1. Why did Anika shake her head when she looked at the clock?	5.00	Very High Extent	.000[a]	N/A	N/A	N/A
2. What can we infer about Anika's mood when she found the plug on the floor?	5.00	Very High Extent	.000[a]	N/A	N/A	N/A
3. What might Anika do next after realizing the stove was not plugged in?	5.00	Very High Extent	.000[a]	N/A	N/A	N/A
4. Based on the passage, what can we infer about Anika's cooking experience?	5.00	Very High Extent	.000[a]	N/A	N/A	N/A
5. What could be a possible consequence of Anika not plugging in the stove?	5.00	Very High Extent	.000[a]	N/A	N/A	N/A

Indicators	Low Performing Students					
	Mean	Adjectival Description	Std. Deviation	Mean Difference	t-value	Sig. (2-tailed
1. Why did Anika shake her head when she looked at the clock?	3.00	Moderate Extent	2.739	-.500	-.408	.704
2. What can we infer about Anika's mood when she found the plug on the floor?	2.00	Low Extent	2.739	-1.500	-1.225	.288
3. What might Anika do next after realizing the stove was not plugged in?	4.00	High Extent	2.236	.500	.500	.643
4. Based on the passage, what can we infer about Anika's cooking experience?	4.00	High Extent	2.236	.500	.500	.643
5. What could be a possible consequence of Anika not plugging in the stove?	2.00	Low Extent	2.739	-1.500	-1.225	.288

N=5 df=4 a. t cannot be computed because the standard deviation is 0.

Legend:

4.50-5.00 Very High Extent
3.50-4.49 High Extent
2.50-3.49 Moderate Extent
1.50-2.49 Low Extent
1.00-1.49 Very Low Extent

Table 3 shows the inference skills of both high and low performing students across five indicators. High-performing students demonstrated remarkable performance in making inferences. This suggests that this group possess strong inference skills, applying them effectively across different questions and does that require corrective actions. Low-performing students showed lower scores across 3 indicators, suggesting difficulty in connecting prior knowledge with new information and identifying implied meanings. Though they demonstrated some strength, there is still room for corrective actions to help students improve their inference skills.

This finding aligns with the study of Graesser, Singer, and Trabasso (1994), who emphasized that inference-making is one of the most complex aspects of reading comprehension, requiring higher-order thinking skills. Additionally, McNamara and Magliano (2009) found that struggling readers often focus too much on surface-level meanings, failing to interpret underlying messages in a text.

Given these findings, explicit instruction in inference strategies is necessary. Techniques such as context clue analysis, guided questioning, and making predictions can help students strengthen their ability to draw conclusions based on textual evidence. Providing diverse reading materials that encourage inference-making may also support students in improving their comprehension skills.

TABLE 4

The extent of English students' reading comprehension profile in Evaluation

Indicators	High Performing Students					
	Mean	Adjectival Description	Std. Deviation	Mean Difference	t-value	Sig. (2-tailed
7. What might be the most important thing for Anika to remember next time she cooks rice?	5.00	Very High Extent	.000[a]	N/A	N/A	N/A
10. Based on the situation, what might be the main lesson Anika learns from this experience?	5.00	Very High Extent	.000[a]	N/A	N/A	N/A
20. What can be inferred about the relationship between deforestation and the decline of the Philippine Eagle population?	5.00	Very High Extent	.000[a]	N/A	N/A	N/A
21. What is the best solution to the problem faced by the Philippine Eagle?	5.00	Very High Extent	.000[a]	N/A	N/A	N/A
25. Which of the following is the best title for the selection "The Owl and the Rooster"?	4.00	High Extent	2.236	.500	.500	.643

Indicators	Low Performing Students					
	Mean	Adjectival Description	Std. Deviation	Mean Difference	t-value	Sig. (2-tailed
7. What might be the most important thing for Anika to remember next time she cooks rice?	2.00	Low Extent	2.739	-1.500	-1.225	.288
10. Based on the situation, what might be the main lesson Anika learns from this experience?	4.00	High Extent	2.236	.500	.500	.643
20. What can be inferred about the relationship between deforestation and the decline of the Philippine Eagle population?	2.00	Low Extent	2.739	-1.500	-1.225	.288
21. What is the best solution to the problem faced by the Philippine Eagle?	2.00	Low Extent	2.739	-1.500	-1.225	.288
25. Which of the following is the best title for the selection "The Owl and the Rooster"?	1.00	Very Low Extent	2.236	-2.500	-2.500	.067

N=5 df=4 a. t cannot be computed because the standard deviation is 0.

Legend:

4.50-5.00 Very High Extent
3.50-4.49 High Extent
2.50-3.49 Moderate Extent
1.50-2.49 Low Extent
1.00-1.49 Very Low Extent

Table 4 presents the students' ability to evaluate textual content. The results show that high-performing students demonstrated well of their evaluation skills, meaning they could assess and judge textual information. Low-performing students had lower scores than expected, indicating their evaluation skills generally remain weak, and corrective action is necessary to help improve their ability to assess and evaluate information effectively.

This finding aligns with Duke and Pearson (2002), who emphasized that evaluation requires explicit instruction, as students need guidance on how to assess the credibility and relevance of information. Similarly, Zohar and Dori (2003) highlighted that metacognitive strategies, such as self-questioning and reflection, play a crucial role in developing evaluation skills.

The results suggest a need for structured interventions, including teaching students how to critically assess sources, recognize bias, and justify their interpretations with textual evidence. Strategies such as debates, think-aloud exercises, and comparative reading activities can help enhance students' ability to evaluate texts more effectively.

TABLE 5

The extent of English students' reading comprehension profile in Learning

Indicators	High Performing Students					
	Mean	Adjectival Description	Std. Deviation	Mean Difference	t-value	Sig. (2-tailed
11. What bird replaced the maya as the national bird of the Philippines?	5.00	Very High Extent	.000[a]	N/A	N/A	N/A
12. What has caused the number of Philippine Eagles to decrease?	5.00	Very High Extent	.000[a]	N/A	N/A	N/A
13. How have scientists tried to increase the number of Philippine Eagles?	5.00	Very High Extent	.000[a]	N/A	N/A	N/A
14. Who was the first Philippine Eagle to be bred in captivity?	5.00	Very High Extent	.000[a]	N/A	N/A	N/A
22. What did Hootie offer to do for the rooster in the story?	5.00	Very High Extent	.000[a]	N/A	N/A	N/A

Indicators	Low Performing Students					
	Mean	Adjectival Description	Std. Deviation	Mean Difference	t-value	Sig. (2-tailed
11. What bird replaced the maya as the national bird of the Philippines?	3.00	Moderate Extent	2.739	-.500	-.408	.704
12. What has caused the number of Philippine Eagles to decrease?	2.00	Low Extent	2.739	-1.500	-1.225	.288
13. How have scientists tried to increase the number of Philippine Eagles?	4.00	High Extent	2.236	.500	.500	.643
14. Who was the first Philippine Eagle to be bred in captivity?	4.00	High Extent	2.236	.500	.500	.643
22. What did Hootie offer to do for the rooster in the story?	.00	Very Low Extent	.000[a]	N/A	N/A	N/A

N=5 df=4 a. t cannot be computed because the standard deviation is 0.

Legend:

4.50-5.00 Very High Extent
3.50-4.49 High Extent
2.50-3.49 Moderate Extent
1.50-2.49 Low Extent
1.00-1.49 Very Low Extent

Table 5 shows the learning skills of high and low-performing students across five indicators. The consistent performance across indicators demonstrates that high-performing students excelled in learning tasks related to the reading comprehension materials. Their ability to grasp, retain, and apply information from the text is highly developed, leading to uniformly exceptional learning outcomes. Low-performing students have mixed abilities in learning tasks. While they showed relative strength in Questions 13 and 14, they struggled notably with Questions 11, 12, and 22, especially in the last one where no correct responses were provided. This indicates a

need for corrective action to enhance their learning skills, particularly in areas of consistent underperformance.

This finding aligns with Kendeou et al. (2008), who emphasized that reading comprehension is not just about understanding words but also about applying knowledge in real-life contexts. Miyamoto, Pfost, and Artelt (2019) connections between texts and real-world experiences. Encouraging students to reflect on their learning and apply it to different subjects can also help strengthen comprehension.

TABLE 6

The extent of English students' reading comprehension profile in Expanding Knowledge and Horizons

Indicators	High Performing Students					
	Mean	Adjectival Description	Std. Deviation	Mean Difference	t-value	Sig. (2-tailed
26. What problem did the use of the same numbers for the 24-hour day create?	5.00	Very High Extent	.000[a]	N/A	N/A	N/A
27. How did the Romans solve the confusion caused by the 12-hour time system?	4.00	High Extent	2.236	.500	.500	.643
28. What does the Latin term "meridies" mean?	4.00	High Extent	2.236	.500	.500	.643
29. Why did the Romans consider noon an important time of day?	4.00	High Extent	2.236	.500	.500	.643
30. What can be learned from the Roman use of "meridies" in creating A.M. and P.M.?	3.00	Moderate Extent	2.739	-.500	-.408	.704

Indicators	Low Performing Students					
	Mean	Adjectival Description	Std. Deviation	Mean Difference	t-value	Sig. (2-tailed
26. What problem did the use of the same numbers for the 24-hour day create?	2.00	Low Extent	2.739	-1.500	-1.225	.288
27. How did the Romans solve the confusion caused by the 12-hour time system?	2.00	Low Extent	2.739	-1.500	-1.225	.288
28. What does the Latin term "meridies" mean?	1.00	Very Low Extent	2.236	-2.500	-2.500	.067
29. Why did the Romans consider noon an important time of day?	4.00	High Extent	2.236	.500	.500	.643
30. What can be learned from the Roman use of "meridies" in creating A.M. and P.M.?	2.00	Low Extent	2.739	-1.500	-1.225	.288

N=5 df=4 a. t cannot be computed because the standard deviation is 0.

Legend:

4.50-5.00	Very High Extent
3.50-4.49	High Extent
2.50-3.49	Moderate Extent
1.50-2.49	Low Extent
1.00-1.49	Very Low Extent

further highlighted that intrinsic motivation and metacognitive strategies influence students' ability to learn from reading.

The results suggest the need for explicit instruction in reading-to-learn strategies, such as note-taking, summarization, and making

Table 6 presents the performance of high and low-performing students in expanding their knowledge and horizons across five indicators. high-performing students generally demonstrate strong abilities in expanding their knowledge and horizons. They performed very well on most indicators, especially Question 26 where they achieved a perfect score. However, there was more variation in responses to other questions, particularly Question 30, where the performance was somewhat lower. This suggests that while students are effective in expanding their understanding, there are specific areas where corrective action could be beneficial. Low-performing students generally struggled with indicators related to expanding their knowledge and horizons, with a tendency towards underperformance and variability in their responses. While they showed better performance on Question 29, their overall ability to expand their knowledge and make connections was limited, suggesting a need for corrective actions in these areas.

This finding aligns with Bakhtiari Moghadam et al. (2021), who emphasized that exposure to diverse texts encourages reflection and perspective-taking, essential for expanding knowledge. Similarly, Scheiter et al. (2014) found that prior knowledge significantly affects a student's ability to integrate new information from texts.

These results suggest the need for strategies that encourage students to connect reading materials with real-world experiences, such as discussion-based learning, exposure to a

variety of texts, and inquiry-based reading activities. Encouraging students to ask questions, reflect on different perspectives, and explore interdisciplinary topics can further enhance their ability to expand their knowledge and horizons through reading.

TABLE 7

The Extent of the Difference between the Expected to the Demonstrated in Critical Thinking for both High and Low Performing Students

Critical Thinking	Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Findings
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference					
				Lower	Upper				
High Performing Students Expected Demonstrated	1.200	1.789	.800	-1.021	3.421	1.500	4	.208	Not Significant
Low Performing Students Expected Demonstrated	2.800	1.304	.583	1.181	4.419	4.802	4	.009	Significant

Table 7 shows the extent of the difference between the expected to the demonstrated in critical thinking for both high and low performing students.

The study found that the difference between expected and demonstrated critical thinking performance for high-performing students is not statistically significant. This suggests that while they engage in basic comprehension tasks, their ability to critically analyze, evaluate, and reflect on content appears underdeveloped. The study suggests that critical thinking is a complex cognitive process that often requires explicit instruction and regular practice. In typical classroom settings, students may not be adequately challenged to engage in deeper reasoning tasks, leading to stagnation in critical thinking development. Enhancement activities might be necessary for this group to increase their ability to think critically.

On the other hand, the study found a significant difference between the expected and demonstrated critical thinking skills of low-performing students. This finding aligns with the literature that critical thinking skills often require explicit instruction and a conducive learning environment to develop effectively. The lack of focused guidance can hinder students' ability to fully develop critical thinking, impacting their overall reading comprehension. Addressing these gaps through strategic interventions could enhance the critical thinking capabilities of students and support better comprehension outcomes.

TABLE 8

The Extent of the Difference between the Expected to the Demonstrated in Analysis for both High and Low Performing Students

Analysis	Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Findings
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference					
				Lower	Upper				
High Performing Students Expected Demonstrated	.800	1.304	.583	-.819	2.419	1.372	4	.242	Not Significant
Low Performing Students Expected Demonstrated	3.200	2.049	.917	.655	5.745	3.491	4	.025	Significant

Table 8 shows the extent of the difference between the expected to the demonstrated in analysis for both high and low performing students.

Results revealed that there is no significant difference between the expected and demonstrated analysis skills of high-performing students. This indicates their analysis skills align with baseline expectations. Literature underscores analysis as a higher-order skill often requiring direct instruction for development. Gauche and Pfeiffer Flores (2022) note that students struggle with complex texts without structured support, confirming that abilities may stagnate without targeted interventions. McNamara (2004) similarly observes that capable readers may prioritize decoding over deeper analysis unless prompted. Therefore, while high-performing students reach expected

levels, additional instructional strategies might enhance their analytical skills.

However, for low-performing students, the results show that there is no significant improvement in their analysis skills. This aligns with research indicating the challenges students encounter in text analysis without direct guidance. Gauche and Pfeiffer Flores (2021) emphasize structured support for effectively interpreting complex texts, while Bloom's taxonomy (1956) highlights the role of analysis as essential for comprehension. The findings point to a gap in analytical skills that limits students' ability to identify key text components, underscoring the necessity of targeted instructional strategies.

TABLE 9

The Extent of the Difference between the Expected to the Demonstrated in Inference for both High and Low Performing Students

Inference	Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Findings
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference					
				Lower	Upper				
High Performing Students Expected Demonstrated	5.000[a]	.000	.000	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Not Tested
Low Performing Students Expected Demonstrated	2.000	1.000	.447	.758	3.242	4.472	4	.011	Significant

High Performing Students = a. The correlation and t cannot be computed because the standard error of the difference is 0.

Table 9 shows the extent of the difference between the expected to the demonstrated in inference for both high and low performing students.

The findings indicate that no significant difference between expected and demonstrated outcomes. The consistent mean score of 5.000 and lack of variability suggest mastery in inference-making, corroborating existing research on its importance in reading comprehension, as highlighted by Graesser, Singer, and Trabasso (1994). However, to promote further growth in higher-order thinking, instructional strategies should challenge these students more.

In contrast, it was revealed that low-performing students did not demonstrate significant improvement in inference skills. Inference generation is essential for deeper comprehension, allowing students to make connections beyond explicit content, as emphasized by Graesser, Singer, and Trabasso (1994). The results indicate that these students face challenges in inferencing, necessitating explicit instruction to help them connect implied meanings within texts. The lack of progress highlights the need for focused instructional interventions to support their development in this critical skill area.

TABLE 10

The Extent of the Difference between the Expected to the Demonstrated in Evaluation for both High and Low Performing Students

Evaluation	Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Findings
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference					
				Lower	Upper				
High Performing Students Expected Demonstrated	.200	.4472	.200	-.3553	.7553	1.000	4	.374	Not Significant
Low Performing Students Expected Demonstrated	2.800	1.095	.490	1.440	4.160	5.715	4	.005	Significant

Table 10 shows the extent of the difference between the expected to the demonstrated in evaluation for both high and low performing students.

The difference between expected and demonstrated evaluation skills in high-performing students is not significant. This finding is consistent with existing literature, which identifies evaluation as a high-level cognitive skill requiring deep engagement with text. Jones, Conradi, and Amendum (2016) emphasize that explicit instruction is vital for students to develop critical assessment abilities regarding text quality and reliability. While high-performing students exhibit a basic level of

proficiency, further targeted instructional strategies may be necessary to enhance their evaluative capabilities.

For low-performing students it was shown that there is no significant improvement in their evaluation skills. Evaluation, essential for assessing text quality and validity, is not demonstrated effectively without specific teaching methods. Jones, Conradi, and Amendum (2016) argue for explicit instructional approaches to cultivate critical judgment of information. The findings highlight the urgent need for pedagogical interventions to aid low-performing students in improving their evaluative reading skills.

TABLE 11

The Extent of the Difference between the Expected to the Demonstrated in Learning for both High and Low Performing Students

Learning	Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Findings
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference					
				Lower	Upper				
High Performing Students Expected Demonstrated	5.000[a]	.000	.000	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Not Tested
Low Performing Students Expected Demonstrated	2.400	1.673	.748	.3223	4.4778	3.207	4	.033	Significant

High Performing Students = a. The correlation and t cannot be computed because the standard error of the difference is 0.

Table 11 shows the extent of the difference between the expected to the demonstrated in learning for both high and low performing students.

The results indicates that there is no significant difference between the expected and demonstrated learning skills of high-performing students. Both expected and demonstrated recorded consistent mean scores of 5.000, suggesting mastery in learning skills. This aligns with existing literature, indicating that high-performing students effectively retain and apply knowledge when given structured learning. Kendeou et al. (2008) highlight that effective learning through reading involves both comprehension and application. However, while these students met performance expectations, ongoing exposure to diverse texts may be required to further enhance their learning.

In contrast, the findings for low-performing students suggest that the students' learning from texts did not improve significantly. According to Kendeou et al. (2008), learning from reading encompasses both comprehension and the application of knowledge. However, classroom environments may not always emphasize this application. The study revealed that students often struggled with internalizing and applying information, pointing to the need for enhanced development of learning skills.

TABLE 12

The Extent of the Difference between the Expected to the Demonstrated in Expanding Knowledge and Horizons for both High and Low Performing Students

Expanding Knowledge and Horizons	Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Findings
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference					
				Lower	Upper				
High Performing Students Expected Demonstrated	1.000	.7071	.3162	.1220	1.8780	3.162	4	.034	Significant
Low Performing Students Expected Demonstrated	2.800	1.0955	.4899	1.4398	4.1601	5.715	4	.005	Significant

Table 12 illustrates the extent of the difference between the expected to the demonstrated in expanding knowledge and horizons for both high and low performing students.

Findings suggest that there is no significant difference between expected and demonstrated performance in expanding knowledge and horizons for both high and low performing students indicating a lack of substantial improvement in this area, which reflects students' challenges in broadening their knowledge through reading. According to Bakhtiari Moghadam, Narafshan, and Tajadini (2023), diverse reading experiences are crucial

for expanding worldview. The findings demonstrate that high-performing students do not show significant differences in critical thinking and related skills despite meeting expectations, highlighting the need for more challenging reading opportunities (Kendeou et al., 2008). Conversely, low-performing students exhibited significant gaps, indicating difficulties with higher-order thinking skills without proper instruction, as noted by previous researchers. To rectify these issues, it is recommended that high-performing students be provided with advanced materials and tasks, while low-performing students require structured instruction that focuses on foundational skills in critical thinking and comprehension. These targeted strategies aim to enhance reading comprehension for all students effectively.

TABLE 13

Proposed Reading Comprehension Framework for Grade 7 Learners: Enhancement and Intervention Program

Component	Objective	Strategies/Activities Activities	Persons Involved
1. **Critical Thinking**	To enhance deeper reasoning and the ability to critique and evaluate ideas in texts.	**Enhancement Program** Engage students in **advanced debate activities** and introduce texts with ambiguous arguments. This will sustain and challenge their reasoning capabilities. *Have students work in small groups to discuss and debate the main points of a story or article with ambiguous endings. Each group must present their interpretation and justify their reasoning.*	Students who met or exceeded the expected level of reading comprehension, Teachers
		Intervention Program Implement structured lessons using **questioning techniques** that guide students to evaluate texts step-by-step. Provide **guided reflection** where students are prompted with questions like "What would happen if…?" to help them think critically about the material. *Pair students and give them a short story or article. Use guiding questions (e.g., "Why did the character make this decision?") to help them think critically about the text.*	Students who did not meet the expected level of reading comprehension, Teachers
2. **Analysis Skills**	To improve students' ability to break down and interpret text structures and content.	**Enhancement Program** Provide students with texts that require deeper analysis. Include tasks such as comparing different interpretations or analyzing cause-and-effect relationships. **Example Activity:** *Use graphic organizers to help students visually break down the text and analyze elements such as themes, characters, and plot development.*	Students who met or exceeded the expected level of reading comprehension, Teachers
3. Inference Skill	To enhance students' ability to draw conclusions based on implicit information in texts.	**Enhancement Program** Present more complex texts that require students to infer motives, themes, or outcomes that are not explicitly stated. Use questioning techniques that push students to explain the reasoning behind their inferences. **Example Activity:** *Use mystery or detective stories where students must infer who the culprit is based on the clues given in the text.*	Students who met or exceeded the expected level of reading comprehension, Teachers
		Intervention Program For students who need improvement, provide structured guidance on how to infer information. Use sentence starters like "From the text, I can infer that..." to help students form their inferences. **Example Activity:** *Use short, straightforward texts with clear hints for inference, gradually increasing difficulty as students improve. Have students explain their reasoning behind their inferences.*	Students who did not meet the expected level of reading comprehension, Teachers
4. Evaluation Skill	To strengthen students' ability to assess the credibility and quality of information in texts.	**Enhancement Program** Engage students in evaluating more complex texts, focusing on arguments, bias, and credibility of sources. Encourage the use of checklists to evaluate these aspects. **Example Activity:** *Provide articles with differing perspectives on a topic and have students assess the credibility and logic of each argument.*	Students who met or exceeded the expected level of reading comprehension, Teachers
5. Learning Through Reading	To ensure students show their understanding of the text and can apply the knowledge gained from reading to real-world contexts.	**Enhancement Program** Assign real-world tasks where students can apply what they've learned from their readings to problem-solving scenarios. **Example Activity:** *Assign research projects that require students to read and synthesize information on a current issue and propose solutions based on their reading.*	Students who met or exceeded the expected level of reading comprehension, Teachers
		Intervention Program For students who need improvement, provide simpler texts on familiar or community-related topics. Guide them through exercises where they summarize information and explain its relevance to their lives. **Example Activity:** *Use a short, informative article related to their community or interests. Have students summarize the main points and explain how it relates to their own experiences in small groups.*	Students who did not meet the expected level of reading comprehension, Teachers
6. Expanding Knowledge and Horizons	To broaden students' understanding of diverse perspectives and ideas through reading.	**Enhancement Program** Expose students to a variety of culturally diverse texts, and engage them in discussions and reflective activities that connect these perspectives to their own experiences. **Example Activity:** *Assign students to read stories from different cultures and compare them to their own, focusing on what they can learn from the different perspectives.*	Students who met or exceeded the expected level of reading comprehension, Teachers
		Intervention Program or students who need improvement, use simpler, culturally relevant texts that	Students who did not meet the expected level of reading

Table 13 shows the proposed reading comprehension framework based from the findings.

This Reading Comprehension Framework is designed to address the findings of the study and to provide a structured approach for improving students' reading skills while sustaining areas of strength. The framework includes maintenance programs for areas where students performed well and corrective programs for areas needing improvement. These are integrated within six key components of reading comprehension: critical thinking, analysis, inference, evaluation, learning, and expanding knowledge and horizons.

Discussion

Based on the results of the study, it was observed that high-performing students demonstrated better reading comprehension skills than low-performing students, particularly in critical thinking, analysis, inference, evaluation, learning, and expanding knowledge and horizons. In spite of the results, significant gaps were still evident, particularly in analysis and inference, where both groups demonstrated poor performance.

According to Snow (2002) reading comprehension is not just about decoding words but involves higher-order cognitive processes, such as inference-making and critical evaluation. The results of this study is aligned with McNamara and Magliano (2009), who stated that struggling readers often focus on literal comprehension rather than engaging in deep analytical thinking. This supports why low-performing students typically faced challenges in drawing conclusions and making logical inferences from texts, as they lacked the cognitive skills to connect prior knowledge with new information.

Further analysis also revealed that low-performing students showed statistically significant differences between expected and demonstrated scores, mainly in critical thinking and analysis. This suggests that they need structured interventions to improve their ability to analyze and evaluate textual information. Kintsch (1998) highlighted that comprehension needs the construction of a mental representation of textual meaning, which is often weak in struggling readers due to limited exposure to higher-order questioning techniques.

In addition, there is a statistically significant difference in comprehension skills between high-performing and low-performing students. This is aligned with studies by Cain, Oakhill, and Bryant (2004), which found that students who develop strong inferencing and analytical abilities early are tend to have better reading comprehension. Likewise, Graesser, Singer, and Trabasso (1994) argued that reading comprehension is heavily influenced by a student's ability to generate inferences, a skill that must be explicitly taught rather than assumed to develop naturally.

Furthermore, the significant differences observed in the paired t-test results indicate that interventions focusing on higher-order thinking skills can help bridge the gap between expected and actual comprehension levels. This supports findings from Duke and Pearson (2002), who highlighted the importance of explicit instruction in comprehension strategies, such as questioning, summarization, and inferential reasoning, to enhance students' ability to engage critically with texts.

Incorporating structured reading intervention programs and activities were proposed in order to enhance students' reading comprehension skills. These include teacher training, instructional workshops, and the integration of scaffolded reading strategies into the curriculum. It is further suggested that interventions aimed at developing critical thinking, inference, and evaluation skills be

implemented across different grade levels to strengthen students' reading comprehension foundation.

One of the study's limitations is its small sample size, which may not fully represent the broader student population. Additionally, the study focused solely on reading comprehension skills, excluding other potential factors such as motivation, background knowledge, and metacognitive awareness, which also impact comprehension.

Given these limitations, future research should explore larger population and the long-term effects of targeted interventions and consider additional variables such as student engagement and instructional strategies. Developing a structured reading framework tailored to students' comprehension needs is essential to improving literacy outcomes.

Reference

Baker, L., & Brown, A. L. (1984). Metacognitive skills and reading. In P. D. Pearson, R. Barr, M. L. Kamil, & P. Mosenthal (Eds.), *Handbook of reading research* (pp. 353-394). Longman.

Bakhtiari Moghadam, Z., Narafshan, M. H., & Tajadini, M. (2023). The effect of implementing a critical thinking intervention program on English language learners' critical thinking, reading comprehension, and classroom climate. *Asian-Pacific Journal of Second and Foreign Language Education, 8*, 1-18.

Bloom, B. S. (1956). *Taxonomy of educational objectives, handbook: The cognitive domain.* David McKay.

Cain, K., Oakhill, J., & Bryant, P. (2004). Children's reading comprehension ability: Concurrent prediction by working memory, verbal ability, and component skills. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 96*(1), 31-42.

Chi, M. (2023). The state of education in the Philippines: Challenges and reforms. *Philippine Educational Journal.*

Doe, J. (2017). Make sure you follow the APA format properly: Do a Google search of the proper APA citation. *Journal of Proper APA Citation, 1*(2), 3-4.

Duke, N., & Pearson, P. D. (2002). Effective practices for developing reading comprehension. In A. E. Farstrup & S. J. Samuels (Eds.), *What research has to say about reading instruction* (3rd ed., pp. 205-242). International Reading Association.

Gauche, G., & Pfeiffer Flores, M. (2021). The role of inferences in reading comprehension: A critical analysis. *Theory & Psychology, 32*(2), 326–343.

Graesser, A. C., Singer, M., & Trabasso, T. (1994). Constructing inferences during narrative text comprehension. *Psychological Review, 101*(3), 371–395.

Jones, J. S., Conradi, K., & Amendum, S. J. (2016). Matching interventions to reading needs: A case for differentiation. *The Reading Teacher, 70*(3), 307–316.

Kendeou, P., Bohn-Gettler, C., White, M., & van den Broek, P. (2008). Children's inference generation across different media. *Journal of Research in Reading, 31*, 259–272.

Kintsch, W. (1998). *Comprehension: A paradigm for cognition.* Cambridge University Press.

McNamara, D. S. (2004). SERT: Self-explanation reading training. *Discourse Processes, 38,* 1-50.

McNamara, D. S., & Magliano, J. (2009). Toward a comprehensive model of comprehension. *Psychology of Learning and Motivation, 51*, 297-384.

Snow, C. (2002). *Reading for understanding: Toward an R&D program in reading comprehension.* RAND Corporation.

Zimmerman, S., & Hutchins, C. (2003). *7 keys to comprehension: How to help your kids read it and get it!* Random House.

Zohar, A., & Dori, Y. J. (2003). Higher-order thinking skills and low-achieving students: Are they mutually exclusive? *Journal of the Learning Sciences, 12*, 145-181.