Improving the Reading Comprehension of Bachelor of Public Administration Students Through the Use of Scaffolding Strategies

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Abstract
With reading as the foundation of all academic learning it becomes imperative that the reading ability of the learners be assessed at the onset. In support of the government and of the university's program on literacy, teachers have developed innovations and/or interventions aimed at improving the reading comprehension of learners. It is in this vein that this study was conducted. It looked into the influence of scaffolding strategies in improving the reading comprehension of Bachelor of Public Administration students in Pangasinan State University during school year 2018 – 2019. Employing a quasi-experimental design, mean scores of the learners in the pretest and post test were computed to determine if there was a significant difference in their performance vis-à-vis reading comprehension before and after their exposure to the intervention- the utilization of scaffolding strategies. Results show that of the 36 total number of students in the experimental group 35 or 97.2% proved to be outstanding and only 1 or 2.8% was found satisfactory. The noteworthy performance of the students in the test affirmed the good there was to scaffolding strategies. It is hereby recommended that a parallel study using scaffolding strategies be conducted to see if it will yield similar results.

Keywords: comprehension, fluency, graphic organizers, literacy, scaffolding strategies

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Introduction

The future success of children, as Van Keer [1] claimed, lies in the ability to read fluently and understand what is read. Undeniably, reading has become an area of concern among the Filipinos in the past decade. The quick and continuous decline in the amount of time Filipinos spend on reading has been mainly observed among its youngest readers. Estacio [2] attributed the decline partly to the surge of electronic media such as the worldwide web, video games and portable digital devices.

The manner by which Filipinos receive information today would give credence to a remark that has once been made about us not being a nation of readers but, a nation of storytellers. Madriaga [3]surmised that ours is a culture of oral history passed on not through the written word but by word of mouth. Information we receive today are sourced out mainly from the television (62 percent) and the radio (57 percent). Moreover, newspapers and magazines are read by only 47 percent and 36 percent of the population respectively, based on a survey conducted by the government in 2003.

Literacy improvement is a high priority of the national government. In this vein it became imperative under the leadership of the former DepEd Secretary Br. Armin A. Luistro FSC to assess the reading ability of the students. This stems from the fact that reading serves as the foundation of all academic learning. The former secretary underscored that it will be a constant struggle for pupils who fail to master basic reading skills at the outset to successfully get through other disciplines. Consequently, this will deprive them of the opportunity to become literate and productive individuals. A student's success or failure in school is in part determined by his or her ability to read. This necessitates that students form the habit of reading to do well in all subjects. Indeed, a student who is a good reader has a better opportunity for greater achievement in class.

It is no wonder then that, where performance of students in the National Achievement Test is concerned, Dr. Yolanda Quijano, head of the DepEd's Bureau of Elementary Education, underscored reading problems as the main culprit for the students' poor performance in the said test. So, how does one increase his/her reading skills to ensure their academic progress is not hampered? There are certainly many methods but as any erudite and well-read person will recommend, nothing beats simply reading a lot at the earliest possible age. Sewjee [4[takes to task the teachers in coming up with a reading program to address the reading deficiencies of the students. More than just addressing the diagnosed reading deficiencies, the reading program in the process and in the long run, purports to up the reading level of the students as Karp [5] pointed out. This necessitates that the most critical elements of the reading program for it to be effective include the right kind and quality of instruction and the right level of intensity. As Hall [6[opined, fluency is vital for students to develop effective reading comprehension skills. Readers lacking fluency spend excessive time decoding, leading to less short-term memory available for comprehension. Students need to be able to decode well, in order to comprehend the text. Likewise, Ingerslev [7] suggests that regular independent reading time be provided for the students to practice the strategies. As pointed out by Dr. Michael Pressley [8], "Reading becomes better with practice, and comprehending becomes better with more reading practice".

It is in the above-stated context that this study was conducted. It looked into the influence of scaffolding strategies as intervention in improving the reading comprehension of Bachelor of Public Administration (BPA) students during school year 2018-2019.

Objectives of the Study

The study looked into the effectiveness of scaffolding strategies in improving the reading comprehension level of the BPA students in its hope to offer a solution to the gaps experienced by teachers and students in reading.

Consequently, the study dealt in determining the influence of scaffolding strategies in the improvement of students' level of reading comprehension. In essence, the results of this study may specifically guide the students and teachers in improving the students' level of reading comprehension through offering creative and quality instruction in reading.

Materials and Methods

Research Design

The research design used in this study was quasi-experimental. A quasi experiment, as Moore posits, established an interventional study used to estimate the causal impact of an intervention on target population without random assignment [9]. It analyzed data through statistics to measure the effectiveness of scaffolding strategies in improving the reading comprehension of BPA students.

Respondents of the Study

The respondents of this study were the 100 BPA students enrolled in Purposive Communication during the school year 2018-2019. The entire population of students were used as the respondents.

Research Instruments

The primary research instruments include the teacher-made reading comprehension test which was validated by five language and reading-teacher experts. It has a 60-item questions. A Table of Specifications was made prior to the making of the reading comprehension test.

Data Analysis

Mean was used to quantify the results of the pretest and posttest. T-test was used to determine the significant difference in the performance of the students before and after using the scaffolding strategies.

Results and Discussion

Table 1. Performance in English before Exposure to Scaffolding Strategies

	Frequency	Percentage
0-20	32	32.0
21-40	57	57.0
41-60	11	11.0
Total	**100**	**100**
Mean		21.76
Standard Deviation		2.69

Majority of the students (57.0%) performed satisfactorily in the given multiple test prior to the utilization of scaffolding strategies in Purposive Communication. Likewise, the data reveal that there were 32 students (32.0%) whose performance in the test was found poor. Only 11 students (11.0%) proved to be outstanding in terms of performance in the test before the exposure to scaffolding strategies. Apparently, the data corroborate Baird's [10] view on the need for intervention such as utilization of reading strategies to address students' reading deficiencies. Moreover, Mc Cabe [11] suggests the use of pedagogic approaches such as scaffolding strategies to improve students' comprehension of texts read.

Table 2. Performance in English after Exposure to Scaffolding Strategies

	Frequency	Percentage
0-20	0	0.0
21-40	15	15.0
41-60	85	85.0
Total	**36**	**100**
Mean		24.2
Standard Deviation		2.45

Results of the 60-item multiple choice test administered to the students in the experimental group after the utilization of scaffolding strategies turned out favorably as evidenced by the data in the table. The results of the posttest show that of the 100 total number of BPA students in the Purposive Communication class 85 or 85.0% proved to be outstanding and only 15 or 15.0% was found satisfactory. The noteworthy performance of the students in the test affirmed the good there was to scaffolding strategies. It afforded the students the opportunity to comprehend what they read after their exposure to scaffolding strategies.

The foregoing findings reflect similar results of studies conducted using interventions such as scaffolding strategies to improve students' reading comprehension and consequently their academic performance. Nederveld [12] concurred how scaffolding strategies led to improved reading abilities and progression in reading level of students.

Table 3. T-test of Difference between Pre-test and Post-test Results

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	Sig.
Pretest	100	21.76	2.69		
Posttest	100	24.72	2.45		
				-4.41	.000022

The significance threshold was set at 0.05.

The data in the table indicated that there was a statistically significant difference in their mean scores before and after utilization and/or exposure to scaffolding strategies. This is because the computed *t*- value is -4.41168 while the *p*- value is .000022 which means that the result is significant at p<.05. Thus, there is a significant difference in the performance of the BPA students in English (Purposive Communication) before and after the intervention or utilization of the innovation, the scaffolding strategies.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The results bring to the fore Biggs' [13] assumption that the learners' ability to use reading strategies is the most critical factor determining their reading comprehension and consequently their performance in reading assessments. Elliot [14] however, cautions that there is a need to match students individually to the intervention that shall work best.

All in all, the results of the study underscore the close relationship between strategy use and reading comprehension that shall provide support for the possibility that educators should enhance learners' reading comprehension through reading strategies that target different learning styles of the students.

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